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978-0-521-79385-8 - King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom

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This book shows King James VI and I, of Scotland and England, in an unaccustomed light. Long regarded as inept, pedantic, and whimsical, James is shown here as an astute and far-sighted statesman whose reign was focused on achieving a permanent union between his two kingdoms and a peaceful and stable community of nations throughout Europe.

James sought closer relations among the major Christian churches – English, Calvinist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox – out of the conviction that they shared a common heritage and as a way of easing tensions in an era of recurring religious wars. As a result of these efforts and of British diplomacy wherever conflicts arose, James helped to secure and maintain a European-wide peace during most of his reign as king of Great Britain. In the major international crisis of his career, the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, he worked tirelessly to try to reconcile the warring parties, despite opposition to his efforts at home and abroad, and came closer to succeeding than historians have recognized. James was a European by education and instinct, and he made Britain a major and constructive force in the international relations of his day.

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KING JAMES VI  
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OF CHRISTENDOM

W. B. PATTERSON

*University of the South  
Sewanee, Tennessee*



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## PREFACE

This book describes the efforts of King James VI and I to achieve a religious reconciliation among Christians of many persuasions – English Protestants, Lutherans, Calvinists, Roman Catholics, and Greek Orthodox. James saw religious reconciliation as the key to a stable and peaceful Christendom at a time when religious disputes exacerbated the conflicts among states. Despite the mistrust and opposition some of his efforts generated, they brought significant benefits to Britain and the continent.

While this is a study centered on James's ecumenical and irenic ideas and activities – not a political biography, nor a church history of his reign, nor an account of his foreign policy – it is broadly conceived. The book deals with the whole course of James's reign in Scotland and England in order to show how his vision of a reunited Christendom arose, how it developed in the context of domestic and foreign events, what various statesmen, scholars, and theologians contributed to it, and how he applied that vision to specific political and religious problems. The onset of a European war in the last part of James's reign thwarted his hopes for achieving a lasting peace, but in that crisis he came closer to attaining his objectives than is generally recognized. This book puts several aspects of James's reign in a new perspective: his foreign policy, his relations with the papacy, his part in the controversy over the Oath of Allegiance, his friendship with leading European intellectuals, his interest in the Greek East, his close relations with leaders of Protestant churches abroad, and his peace diplomacy in the early years of the Thirty Years' War. The resulting picture of James – very different from the one which prevailed until quite recently – is of a shrewd, determined, flexible, and resourceful political leader who had a coherent plan for religious pacification aimed at resolving urgent problems in the wake of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation.

I have been fortunate in having received generous support for my research and writing, including a Short-Term Fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington in the autumn of 1975, a semester in residence at the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of

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Wisconsin–Madison in the winter and spring of 1976, and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship at the Newberry Library in Chicago in 1979–1980. The Committee for Faculty Research and the Dean of the Faculty at Davidson College, North Carolina, made it possible for me to spend parts of several summers in the 1970s in Rome, Geneva, Paris, and Oxford, and the Joint Faculties' Research Grants Committee and the Fund for Faculty Development at the University of the South provided similar support for parts of several summers in the 1980s and early 1990s in London and Oxford. The Conant Fund administered by the Board for Theological Education of the Episcopal Church awarded me a fellowship for the 1992–1993 academic year, which I spent at the University of Virginia. It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the help and encouragement of the staffs at the libraries and archives at which most of my research has been carried out: the E. H. Little Library at Davidson College; the Jessie Ball duPont Library and the Library of the School of Theology at the University of the South; the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia; the Memorial Library at the University of Wisconsin–Madison; the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington; the Newberry Library in Chicago; the Bodleian Library and the Exeter College Library in Oxford; the Cambridge University Library and the Sidney Sussex College Library in Cambridge; the British Library, the Public Record Office, and the Lambeth Palace Library in London; the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh; the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris; the Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire in Geneva; the Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Théologie Protestante in Montpellier; and the Vatican Library and Secret Archives in Rome. Special thanks are due to Sue Armentrout, Interlibrary Loan Librarian at the University of the South, for having obtained hundreds of books and articles for my use.

Most of the writing of the final draft of this book was done at the University of Virginia in 1992–1993, where I held a Mellon Appalachian Fellowship. I am immensely grateful to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which funded the Appalachian Fellowship, and the Faculty Scholars Program at the University of Kentucky in Lexington which awarded the fellowship to me and administered it. Alice Brown, Director of the Faculty Scholars Program, and Robin Weinstein, Extension Coordinator, provided practical assistance throughout the year. Alexander Sedgwick, Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Virginia, and Melvyn P. Leffler, Chair, and other members of the History Department were extremely hospitable. Most important for my project, Martin J. Havran, my mentor at the University of Virginia, devoted many hours to conversations with me, which were immensely beneficial. I read papers based on drafts of two chapters to the Medieval Circle, chaired by Everett



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U. Crosby, and the History Department Workshop, chaired by Duane J. Osheim, where I received many helpful criticisms and suggestions.

Over the long period of gestation this book has required, I have benefited from the advice and encouragement of a large number of scholars. They include George H. Williams, Christopher Hill, the late Sir Geoffrey Elton, David L. Clark, Patrick Collinson, Simon Adams, Frederick Shriver, Georgianna Ziegler, Andreas Tillyrides, John Barkley, Ruzica Popovitch, James K. Cameron, Robert W. Henderson, Robert Kingdon, Hugh Trevor-Roper, Baron Dacre of Glanton, Donna B. Hamilton, Sir John Elliott, Brian G. Armstrong, Stephen Foster, John Tedeschi, Mark A. Kishlansky, John Booty, John Platt, Francis Edwards, Kevin Sharpe, Margo Todd, Peter Lake, Kenneth Fincham, Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., David Underdown, Glynne Wickham, Guy F. Lytle, III, Anthony Milton, Thomas F. Mayer, Francis C. Oakley, Arthur P. Monahan, W. Speed Hill, David Norbrook, Colin Davey, George Core, and Susan J. Ridyard. Among the many students who have helped me in a variety of ways, I am especially grateful to Charles Skinner, Paul Gallis, Martin Grey, Robert Bryan, William Eskridge, Robert Company, Russell Snapp, Carleton Cunningham, Lisa Frost Phillips, Robert Ingram, Benjamin Stone, and Kevin Sparrow. In preparing the final typescript, Sherry Cardwell, Word Processor in Print Services at the University of the South, has been unfailingly professional and sympathetic.

Three historians were especially helpful to me as I wrote my final draft. John Morrill, Jenny Wormald, and Martin J. Havran read every chapter with their accustomed good humor and critical acumen. They saved me from many errors and started me on many fruitful lines of inquiry. The final shape of the book owes a great deal to their counsel, for which I am extremely grateful. Of course, the final result is my own responsibility, including any remaining errors and all idiosyncratic judgements.

I have received permission from the following to reprint parts of my earlier articles and chapters in collections of essays: Ecclesiastical History Society for "King James I's Call for an Ecumenical Council," *Studies in Church History*, VII (1971), "The Peregrinations of Marco Antonio de Dominis, 1616–24," *ibid.*, XV (1978), "Educating the Greeks: Anglican Scholarships for Greek Orthodox Students in the Early Seventeenth Century," *ibid.*, XVII (1981), "King James I and the Protestant Cause in the Crisis of 1618–22," *ibid.*, XVIII (1982), and "Pierre Du Moulin's Quest for Protestant Unity, 1613–18," *ibid.*, XXXII (1996); *Harvard Theological Review* for "James I and the Huguenot Synod of Tonneins of 1614," 65 (1972) – copyright 1972 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College; and Cowley Publications for "The Synod of Dort and the Early Stuart Church," in Donald S. Armentrout, ed., *This Sacred History: Anglican Reflections for John Booty* (1990). Some of the discussion of conciliarism is

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presented in expanded form in my article, “Hooker on Ecumenical Relations: Conciliarism in the English Reformation,” in A. S. McGrade, ed., *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community* (Tempe, Ariz.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997), published by the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Arizona State University.

My wife Evelyn Byrd Patterson has been my closest collaborator and most valuable critic since I began this project more than two decades ago. I deeply cherish her continuing encouragement.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
HMSO	Her/His Majesty's Stationery Office
PRO	Public Record Office
SP	State Papers
Vat. Arch.	Vatican Secret Archives

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## A NOTE ON DATING AND QUOTATIONS FROM MANUSCRIPTS

Britain followed the Julian calendar during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, while most other countries in western Europe followed the Gregorian calendar. The Julian calendar was ten days behind the Gregorian calendar. In addition, the new year in Britain began on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, rather than January 1. For all British documents, including the despatches of ambassadors abroad, I have kept the Julian or old style of dating, except that I have made the new year begin on January 1. Other documents bear the original date, which can be assumed to be according to the Gregorian or new style of dating. In presenting quotations from manuscripts written in English, I have preserved as far as possible the original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.