

The Age of Elizabeth I

Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603) was Queen of England and Ireland from November 1558 until her death. Sometimes called The Virgin Queen, Gloriana, or Good Queen Bess, she was the fifth and last monarch of the Tudor Dynasty.

Elizabeth's reign was known as the Elizabethan era, famous above all for the flourishing of English drama, led by playwrights such as William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, and for the seafaring prowess of English adventurers such as Sir Francis Drake.

No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than swept through England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the Long Parliament. England became a people of the book, and that book was the Bible.

It was read at churches and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened, kindled a startling enthusiasm. As a mere literary monument, the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue.

But far greater was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits, but it was impossible for her to silence or tune the great preachers of justice and mercy and truth who spoke from the Book.

The whole mood of the nation felt the change. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class.

Can the United States learn from this example – the power of the Word – from the Elizabethan period?

Absolutely! The Bible is God's message to us, and we should be heeding it.

– Beecher Hunter