

Wade G. Dudley, *Drake: For God, Queen, and Plunder* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, Inc., 2003),xiv+97 pages.

English Protestant apologists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sometimes saw a divine purpose in England's being on an island: it had helped secure her from Roman Catholic invasion. From the Spanish Armada that was deemed invincible and the abortive attempts of the exiled Stuarts in the long eighteenth century to take back the throne through to Napoleon Bonaparte's imperial ambitions, God, it seemed, had kept England safe by means of the English Channel. England's island status had also led her to become a naval power with a long succession of naval heroes down through the years, of which the subject of this biography was one of the first to achieve legendary status.

Part of a series of concise military biographies, this biography understandably focuses on Francis Drake (c.1540–1596) as a naval warrior and pirate. Dudley, a specialist in early modern European military and naval history, notes again and again that Drake had “a knack for destruction, a nose for plunder” (p.75), hence part of the subtitle, “For...Plunder.” But Dudley is well aware that there is more to Francis Drake than mere passion for piracy and its monetary rewards. He was a deeply religious man (p.17, 50, 86), a “Protestant to the core” (p.49), who could pray in 1587, while on the way to harass England's Catholic enemy, Spain, “God grant we may live in His fear as the enemy may have cause to say that God doth fight for Her Majesty [Elizabeth I]...” (p.57). In fact, Dudley notes that Drake's 1587 campaign led to “the shattering of Catholic solidarity, and helped guarantee the survival of Protestantism” (p.64).

On the basis of the New Testament, this reviewer would assert that the kingdom of God does not come through force of arms but through deeds of love and mercy, and—if violence be done against the people of God—through the deaths of the martyrs. Holy wars may have been part of the old covenant context, but since the inauguration of the new covenant the only thing that can be described as such a war is the Lamb's war for the hearts and souls of men and women. And yet God has used the wars of this age to preserve and chasten his people. God kept England free from Roman Catholic conquest during the era of the Reformation so that some of her sons and daughters in succeeding centuries might be burning and shining lights for the gospel. And thus it was that in the furtherance of the rule of this new covenant God made use of Francis Drake's naval exploits.

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