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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE "HENRICIAN" CHURCH AND THE NATIONAL CONVERSION TO ANGLICANISM UNDER THE MONARCH'S SEVERE SCRUTINY

Most historians nowadays tend to agree that the starting point of the English Reformation was the fiasco of the divorce proceedings in London. The Legatine Court, which Cardinal Campeggio presided over, came to a decision that "the case was too high, and notable known through all the world, for us to make any hasty judgement."[1] Having consulted on this matter with Clement VII, the Legate instructed that the court was adjourned and the case was referred to Rome. Henry VIII, determined not to give in, embarked on a course of implementing all possible tactics – from persuasion to threatening – in order to make the Pope change his mind. Undoubtedly, one of the means of exerting pressure upon Clement VII was calling a meeting of the English clergy in Canterbury in 1531, which acknowledged that their monarch was, "so far as the law of Christ allows, supreme head of the English Church and clergy" (Hughes, vol. I, 227–229; Delumeau, vol. I, 98). This, however, had no effect and the Pope remained unmoved. In response to no reaction, Henry VIII went further and forced Parliament to pass the Act of Annates, on the basis of which certain papal revenues were halted. One month later the English clergy resigned from the Pope's judicial power over them and accepted the king's jurisdiction. That course of events prompted Charles V's ambassador to reflect that "it looks as if the king [Henry VIII] had proclaimed himself a new pope in England" (Lecler 303). The ambassador confided his observation to his Emperor, but suffice it to say the link between England and Rome still existed, at least officially. At the end of 1532 the necessity of pronouncing Henry's marriage

[1] Quoted after the article: *St. John Fisher, Bishop and martyr* available from: www.catholictradiion.org, p. 2.

to Catherine annulled became urgent because Anne Boleyn had been pregnant. Meanwhile and unexpectedly, archbishop Cranmer, who was a devoted and obedient servant of the Crown, was authorised by the Pope to handle any theological disputes occurring in England. The decision was confirmed and even enlarged by the Act of Appeals passed in the English Parliament. These decisions enabled Thomas Cranmer to perform his duties speedily. No sooner had he granted his consent for the divorce with Catherine of Aragon than he crowned Anne Boleyn queen of England. In 1534 Parliament voted on another law – the Act of Supremacy, which in a way completed the English Reformation. Henry VIII was made the Supreme Head of the Anglican Church, but this newly established institution had no doctrines, which would regulate canons of faith.

Fig. 1. The picture depicts the English clergy accepting the king's jurisdiction (Unknown author)

Source: http://history.wisc.edu/sommerville.

The essential aim of this paper is to present the evaluation of the consequences of the doctrinal reform in the king's realm, with reference to Anglicans and those who dared profess a different religion. To make this assessment, the paper first shows how a formulary of faith was created and how under the pressures of time, new versions of doctrinal reform were being debated and which one and why, finally met with the king's approval. This analysis should also give an answer to the question of whether or not the doctrinal reform paved the way for Protestant Christianity. Additionally, the paper attempts to assess to what extent the new doctrine differed from the one prior to the Reformation.

Under normal circumstances the setting up of a new Church is preceded by forming an ideology, which becomes the basis of a new religion. With the establishment of the Anglican Church it was different. First, Henry VIII was made the Head of his Church and then the churchmen faced the task of working out and fitting doctrines into the "Henrician" Church. The doctrinal reform, which had to be carried out, was by no means easy. Whilst formulating a formulary of faith, at least two crucial issues had to be taken into account. First and foremost, from the point of view of Rome, England was now a heretical country, and this was a good enough pretext for a Christian king of France or a Roman Emperor to declare a war on England. Second, Henry VIII and the majority of his subjects, though they may have been somewhat anticlerical, were still devoted greatly to the Catholic Church. Despite the fact that the English disapproved of hypocritical and uneducated priests as well as corrupt and worldly monks, at the time of Henry's rift with Rome and ultimate break-up, the majority were on the whole satisfied with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Moreover, the English clergymen were conscious equally of the evils, which had spread within the church and needed to be rooted out. This rather general understanding of religious abuses, clear to all Englishmen, did not resolve the existing problems. All churchmen agreed however, that those who would be made responsible for formulating faith must do it with great caution so as to meet the expectations of all subjects of the Crown, who after all, presented a variety of opinions. Above all, the outcome of this work must provide a sound basis for the unity of the English Church.

The first attempt to define the creed for the Anglican Church was made in July 1536 by the English Convocation, which issued the *Ten Articles*. The document upheld traditional teachings of the Catholic Church on the sacraments of the Eucharist, baptism and penance. The remaining four, although not entirely discarded, were passed over in silence (Elton 256–260). The Catholic rituals as well as pictures of saints were retained intact. Neither did the reform question the meaning of prayers for the dead. However, holy masses were no longer considered to be a way of helping the dead souls to reach salvation, consequently a definition of purgatory was carefully avoided (Dickens 243–245).

The *Ten Articles* defined new doctrines of faith but in numerous parts they were either not well-thought through or left considerable room for ambiguous interpretations. Thus the document of July 1536 managed neither to suppress the fears arising in conservatives nor satisfy the ambitions of advocates of reforms. Six months after completion of the *Ten Articles* English church officials were ready to gather again to deliberate on a new, and this time more acceptable definition of faith. Formally, it was Thomas Cromwell who supervised the meeting, but he met with little success in his attempts to impose his more radical views on the conservative participants.[2] Several months of heated debates resulted in yet another questionable compromise, the tangible fruit of which was *The Institutions of a Christian Man*, known also as *The Bishops' Book*.[3] The previously defined doctrines were revised and set out in *The Institutions of a Christian Man*. The keynote of this book was the sufficiency of Scripture in doctrine and the Bible being asserted as the highest and ultimate authority in matters of religion. The other four sacraments, previously rejected, were brought back but transubstantiation was not explicitly defined. In a general overview, both the *Ten Articles* and *The Bishops' Book* failed to make a decisive step, either forward to more radical changes or backward to traditional doctrines. Henry VIII came to the conclusion that *The Institutions of a Christian Man* could not be a basis of belief for his newly founded Church (?). Thus the outcome of the bishops' deliberations was never presented to Parliament. *The Bishops' Book* was, however, published by Berthelet in September 1537 and was only recommended for the private use of the parish clergy. At present, many historians see little historical value in this publication, yet they point to its importance in terms of linguistic and literary studies. J. A. Froude speaks of *The Institutions of a Christian Man* in the following words:

> in point of language beyond question [*The Institutions of a Christian Man* is] the most beautiful composition which had as yet appeared in English prose. (Froude 245)

Assistance in working out a formulary of faith for the Anglican Church was offered to Henry by foreign theologians and reformers. For instance, H. Bullinger and W. Capito sent to the English court their books dedicated to the monarch, simultaneously presenting their views on doctrinal reforms. The works offered, though accepted gladly, came in for much criticism. It became self-evident that Henry VIII could not afford to be influenced and much as he disapproved of his own churchmen's judgements, he acted in

[2] Amongst those notable and eminent church officials there were orthodox bishops of English dioceses: R. Strokesley, S. Gariner, H. Latimer, N. Shaxton, W. Barlow, W. Repps, R. Sampson and T. Goodrich.

[3] [Bishops], *The Institutions of a Christian Man*, Berthelet 1537.

the same way with European theologians. On behalf of the king Thomas Cranmer advised W. Capito that his *Responsio de Missa, Matrimonio et jure Magistratus in Religionem* had been cordially received and deeply appreciated, but regrettably the monarch did not share the author's opinion in terms of holy masses (Cranmer 340). Similarly, a Swiss reformer H. Bullinger was informed that the receipt of his *De Scriptvrae Sanctae Avthoritate* had pleased Henry VIII, who even requested the book to be translated into English. Nonetheless, the king found some of the author's statements unacceptable.[4] The rejection of both offers must be viewed not in the sense of Henry's conceit and pride, but rather in a wider context: in the light of theological attrition amongst the Crown's subjects and the uncertain political situation, any overt sympathy towards German or Swiss reformers would have been an act of light-mindedness.

The events, which occurred at English universities, illustrate best the internal conflict over the formulary of faith. The execution of bishop John Fisher, along with six monks and a dozen priests, who would refuse to swear loyalty to the new regime, gave rise to discontent amongst a number of orthodox lecturers at St. John's College. After the elections of a Master in 1537, the scholars stubbornly ignored George Day – the nominee appointed by Thomas Cromwell and singled out Nicholas Wilson. Their newly appointed candidate who had in the past presented a bad attitude to the royal supremacy was simply pardoned and released from imprisonment. The courage that the fellows of St. John's demonstrated was shortly converted into submissiveness. The following year George Day was replaced with a royal candidate – John Taylor, and this time no one protested.

In the meantime, Oxford University became an open arena of mutual recriminations about heretical and popery sympathies. Robert Huycke, who in 1535 was dismissed from the position of the principal at St. Alban's Hall, returned to grace once he had recanted and regained Thomas Cromwell's favour. Oddly enough, Robert Smith, who was R. Huycke's successor at St. Alban's Hall, was also accused of holding improper opinions and sympathising with the Pope's supremacy. Similarly, the Warden of New College John London was compelled to defend himself against unfounded slander. The fact that he managed to regain his position after the passing of *The Six Articles* suggests that his timely subservience was evidently effective. John London proved he was worthy of being a trusted servant by sending two of his employees from College to the Mayor's office for interrogation because they had been overheard discussing the papal supremacy. The identical atmosphere of mutual distrust and denunciation

[4] Nicholasa Partridge's letter [in:] *Epistolae Tigurinae* [...] *1531–58*, Cambridge 1848, p. 396–398.

permeated the discussions of the fellows at Corpus Christi. The example of a group of evangelicals who were caught red-handed eating meat in Lent 1538 illustrates clearly the sort of practices people resorted to. In order to pay back old grievances against his colleagues, Longland informed Thomas Cromwell via Thomas Cranmer about the incident of consuming meat during Lent (Cranmer 381–384). Nobody would ever have learnt of this, had one of the miscreants not been bribed and revealed the names of the "offenders." The accused confessed to committing this offence and defended themselves by claiming that they had been eating meat solely for the sake of health and in secret so as to avoid tempting others. It seems unlikely that any repercussions followed this denunciation, since Longland was calling indignantly for punishment for the same offence in August 1539 (Fowler 120–126). This example shows explicitly the overwhelming paranoia of recriminations which in the late fifteen thirties began to echo loudly in the kingdom.

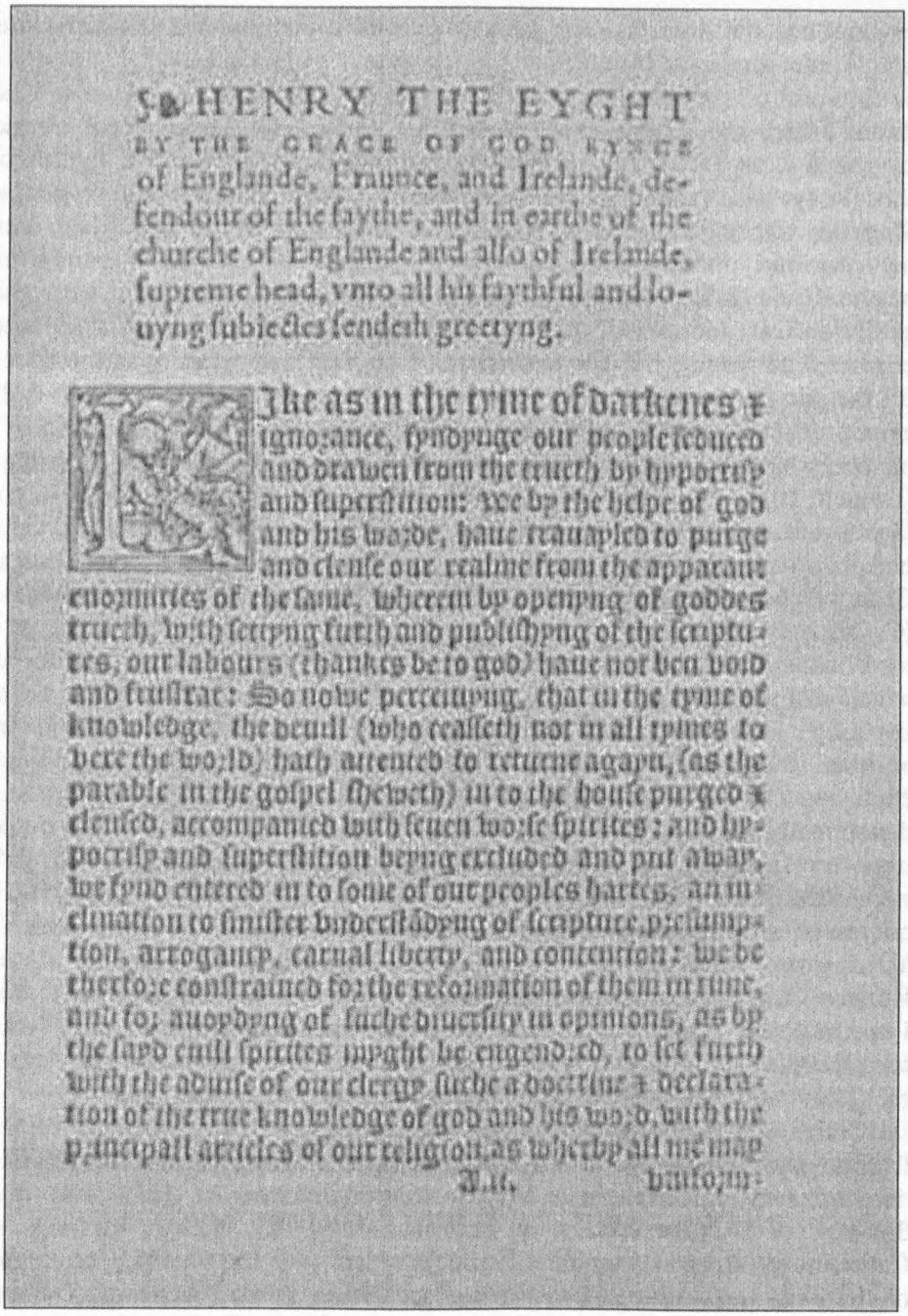
Under existing circumstances the only way of bringing a halt to these continuous accusations and bickering was a clear definition of belief and practice. Henry VIII himself stepped in and instructed members of Parliament in the session of April 1539 to define a satisfactory formulary of belief. Acting accordingly, a committee of three evangelicals and three conservative bishops was set up and Thomas Cromwell was chosen to preside over their meetings. Unsurprisingly, this evenly balanced body was unable to compromise, and consequently failed to produce the outcome both the king and nation had expected. Determined to sort out this issue, Henry VIII made Parliament sit in session again in December 1539. It was then that the Act for Abolishing Diversity of Opinion was voted on and passed into a statute (Delumeau, vol. I, 99). The new law defined the framework and substance of faith and the whole formulary was drawn up in *The Six Articles*. On the basis of Article 1 transubstantiation was retained and anyone who questioned it exposed themselves to the death penalty. Article 2 permitted communion in one kind to the laity. The next two points stated unequivocally celibacy for priests and the inviolability of monastic vows. The two final articles regulated issues concerning the legality of private masses and the necessity for oral confessions to a priest (Dickens 246–247; Elton 284, 286–288). The whole doctrinal reform was written down and published in 1543 entitled: *The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition of a Christian Man*. This publication is more commonly known as *The King's Book* since this one, as opposed to *The Bishops' Book*, was authorised by the king himself. Henry VIII was involved in both forming its draft and later preparing the final version of which was to become law. The king's active participation is visible in his manuscript corrections of the first draft of the Act and in several documents, which formed the basis of the printed

work. Thus the doctrinal reform was successfully completed thanks to the king's intervention.

In spite of the penalties, which could now be inflicted upon those who dared breach the new law; in practice not too many martyrs were created by the Act of The Six Articles. Amongst the most well known figures of those days one needs to mention bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Shaxton, who were forced to resign from their sees. Myles Coverdale, who had previously made a name for himself thanks to his vernacular translation of the Great Bible, was forced into exile. The most sensational trial and execution was undoubtedly that of Thomas Cromwell. He was charged and convicted of heresy, but the real cause of his fall from grace was the fiasco of the king's marriage with Anne of Cleeves. Henry VIII had willingly agreed to the proposed marriage solely on the basis of Hans Holbein's picture, which due to Cromwell's intervention had been made "too flattering" (Daniell 101). On Anne of Cleeve's arrival the monarch set out from Greenwich to Rochester to meet his fiancé. He was so disappointed with her plain looks that Anne was nicknamed "My Flanders Mare" and Thomas Cromwell, who had singled her out from the European courts, was beheaded (Cawthorne 22).

Thomas Cromwell's execution ushered in a period of persecutions, during which neither Catholics, nor Lutherans nor Anabaptists could feel safe in the king's realm. Although there was no drastic increase noticeable in the number of dissenters convicted, still the subjects of the Crown – as Joseph Lecler puts it – were watched and scrutinised "with the aid of a spying and denouncing whip" (Lecler 310). Neither Lutherans nor Anabaptists could hope for the king's grace, since according to the "Henrician" creed they were identified with heretics. Such dissenters were usually charged with crimes of a religious nature. The Roman Catholics found themselves in a far worse situation. The English Civil Code regarded members of the Roman Catholic Church as traitors and loyalty or even sympathy to the Pope in Rome was viewed as the worst offence. According to Henry VIII, such people questioned his royal and religious authority, and this meant that they were considered to be political offenders (Lecler 311).

Under these new circumstances Thomas Cranmer happened to be the first target for a savage attack. Throughout his career the archbishop had demonstrated unshakeable loyalty to the monarchy. In 1533, after the downfall of Thomas Wolsey, he had proclaimed that Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon was invalid and presided over the wedding ceremony of the king and Anne Boleyn. In the late fifteen thirties, however, Thomas Cranmer began to reveal his passive agreement to the king's religious policy and despite his dedication to Henry VIII he dared to criticise the sovereign's irrevocable decisions on religious matters. Once Thomas Cranmer's viewpoint



HENRY THE EYGHT
BY THE GRACE OF GOD KYNGE
of Englande, Fraunce, and Irelande, de-
fendour of the faythe, and in earthe of the
churche of Englande and also of Irelande,
supreme head, vnto all his faythful and lo-
uyng subiectes sendeth greetyng.

Like as in the tyme of darkenes & ig-
noraunce, synderuge our people seduced
and drawen from the trueth by hypocrisy
and superstition: we by the helpe of god
and his worde, haue trauayled to purge
and clense our realme from the apparaunt
enormities of the same, wherein by openyng of goddes
truech, with settyng furth and publishyng of the scriptu-
res, our labours (thankes be to god) haue not ben void
and frustrat: So nowe perceiuyng, that in the tyme of
knowledge, the deuill (who ceaseth not in all tymes to
vexe the worlde) hath attempted to returne agayn, (as the
parable in the gospel sheweth) in to the house purged &
clensed, accompanied with seuen worse spirites: and hy-
pocrisy and superstition beyng excluded and put away,
we fynd entered in to some of our peoples hartes, an in-
clination to sinister vnderstādyng of scripture, presump-
tion, arrogancy, carnal liberty, and contention: we be
therfore constrained for the reformation of them in time,
and for auoydyng of suche diuersity in opinions, as by
the sayd euill spirites myght be engendred, to set furth
with the aduise of our clergy suche a doctrine & declara-
tion of the true knowledge of god and his worde, with the
principall articles of our religion, as whereby all me may
A.ii. vnder-

Fig. 2. The cover page of *The Necessary Doctrine and Erudition of a Christian Man*, known also as The King's Book

Source: http://history.wisc.edu/sommerville.

in this matter became public knowledge, the opponents conceived a sinister plot against him. The archbishop's foes from the Privy Council[5] suggested to the monarch that only if Cranmer was arrested would his accusers not fear to testify against him. Henry VIII granted his permission, and only Anthony Denny's and William Butts' intervention[6] saved the archbishop from arrest (Cattley Reed 24–29). This failure to have Thomas Cranmer put in custody did not stop the conspirators from further attempts to discredit him. In Kent a special commission was formed, which was to analyse again the charges made against the archbishop. The members of this "self-appointed jury" were so biased in favour of the plotters that one further intervention of Denny and Butts had to be requested to ask for the sending of someone influential from the king's court, who would successfully defend the accused. Eventually the fabricated charges of heresies against Thomas Cranmer were dropped (Nichols 253).

No sooner had the conspiracy failed than another attempt was made to discredit Cranmer through the prosecution of one of his diocesan priests. Richard Turner, who was a preacher and curator in Chatham, was accused of holding and expressing in public heretical views. Amongst the charges made against him there was one of particular interest i.e. he had been suspected of having translated the holy mass into English and celebrating this new kind of service in his church. Consequently, he was summoned before the Council, interrogated and crossed-examined by bishop S. Gardiner and finally found guilty on the grounds of *The Six Articles*. Since Thomas Cranmer, shortly after his own trouble, was unable to intervene to help his subordinate, again Anthony Denny and William Butts were asked for their assistance.[7] John Foxe in *Acts and Monuments* presents in detail the way W. Butts approached the monarch with the intention of helping R. Turner:

> spying his time, when the king was in trimming and in washing, Buts brought with him in his hand this letter. The king asking what news, Buts pleasantly and merrily beginneth to insinuate unto the king the effect of the matter, and so, at the king's commandment, read out the letter [...] the hearing and consideration whereof so altered the king's mind, that whereas before he commanded the said Turner whipped out of the country, he now commanded him to be retained as a faithful subject. And here of that matter an end (Cattley Reed 34).

[5] The Privy Council is a body of the monarch's closest advisors on legislation, justice and administration. Under the reign of Henry VIII, the monarch in collaboration with The Privy Council was able to enact laws and injunctions by mere proclamation. In the 16th century laws were made by the Sovereign more frequently on the advice of the Council, rather than on the advice of Parliament.

[6] The incident, however, is full of obscurities and historians argue who of these two influential friends of the king's – A. Denny or W. Butts – was more genuine in his attempt to assist the victim of this plot. See more about this event in: Nichols 263.

[7] R. Morice's letter printed in: Cattley Reed 31–34.

Thomas Cranmer and his diocesan priest were saved thanks to such figures as William Butts and Anthony Denny. Interestingly enough, both Butts and Denny, though ridding the king's court of powerless preferment, were in fact amongst the most eminent and influential residents of the court.

The failure to convict Thomas Cranmer and Richard Turner did not discourage the radical faction within the Privy Council, which continued its witch-hunt for supposed heretics in the king's realm. The intensification of their activity commenced at Windsor in 1543. Several people of humble origin and associated with the Town Council or Windsor chapel such as Anthony Peerson, Robert Testwood or John Marbeck were arrested (McConica 220–222). Their detention was a part of a well-thought through plan. According to which, the interrogators hoped that those arrested would reveal the surnames of prominent figures who sympathised with religious dissenters in the kingdom. The main initiator of this heretic-hunt was a canon of St. George's – John London. He suspected that some members of the Privy Council supported financially such radicals like A. Peerson or J. Marbeck. The latter was examined with particular rigour in the hope that he possessed some discrediting information about Philip Hoby and Simon Heynes. Philip Hoby, a diplomat and a member of the Privy Council, sympathised with evangelicals whilst Simon Heynes, who was W. Butts' bosom-friend, was a Cambridge radical who had risen in status during the king's divorce with Catherine of Aragon. The attempt to incriminate these two reformers failed, but those who were to provide evidence for their guilt were executed. The rescuing factor for P. Hoby and S. Heynes was ironically J. London's carelessness and overestimation of his influence. The canon overreached himself in his investigations and was himself found guilty of perjury whilst those whom he had attempted to oppress were pardoned (Searle 180–191). On August 31st 1544 the king's court declared a general amnesty for the people who were members of the Privy Council or its associates and were falsely charged. Thus the vicious attack on the faction of reformers in or about the Privy Council had fallen through.

William Butts, the royal physician and king's confidant, died in November 1545. It is noteworthy and perhaps not mere coincidence that attempts to discredit radicals at the court and around it were reinforced one year after Butts' death. W. Butts maintained frequent and confidential contact with the monarch, who trusted him implicitly, and this made him an ideal protector of those who happened to be in trouble. The king's confidant – though managing to save archbishop Cranmer and Richard Turner – was unable to help Edward Crome, Anne Askew or Catherine Parr.

Edward Crome, who found favour in both Anne Boleyn's and Thomas Cranmer's eyes, delivered controversial sermons both at London churches and the king's court. Although in the past he had been suspended from his

position, it was his preaching against the sacrificial nature of the mass, given at the Mercers' Chapel in Lent 1546 which caused him real trouble (Pollard 257–266). He was immediately arrested after the sermon and compelled to recant it.

This incident turned out to be the starting point of a thorough investigation carried out at the king's court and around it, the aim of which was to detect all heretics and their sympathisers. The first victim of this heretic-hunt was bishop Latimer. This bishop of Worcester, who had already retired, was charged with persuading Edward Crome to deliver heretical sermons, and on the basis of these charges H. Latimer was incarcerated in the Tower of London.

No comparable punishment to that of H. Latimer was to be inflicted upon Anne Askew, who rejected the sacrament of transubstantiation, claiming that it was based on a false concept. According to this woman, the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper does not alter substance and they should be treated as mere symbols of the body and blood of the Lord. After her imprisonment in the Tower, she was tortured into not only repudiating her firm belief but also revealing the names of those who shared her viewpoint in this matter. Despite the inhumane torment she was exposed to, Anne Askew remained unmoved and no names were extracted from her. She was eventually released, but her persistence in her faith led to a second incarceration. This time she underwent such agonising torture that she was unable to walk unaided to the place of her execution. This notorious woman was carried there on a chair and even at the stake she did not recant her faith (Bainton 1973; Bale 1849; Deen 1959). The history of the last months of her life is closely connected with bishop Nicholas Shaxton. This bishop of Salisbury was also suspected of holding false sacramental belief, and only managed to escape the flames by a timely recantation, which was printed with a preface begging for Henry's mercy (McConica 223–225). Having shown himself harmless, Nicholas Shaxton was sent to persuade Anne Askew to renounce her opinions, and since she proved adamant, he preached a sermon of recantation at her execution. Hardly had Anne Askew been burnt when another heretical sermon was delivered by a lecturer of St. John's – John Taylor. The preacher dared express his heretical views at St. Edmunds in Berry, for which he was subsequently placed in confinement. Only the signing of a recantation letter saved his life.

The cases of Edward Crome's, Nicholas Shaxton's and John Taylor's recantation are only a few examples to illustrate how the political machinery, which Henry VIII set in motion with the founding of his new church, compelled the subjects of the Crown to turn down their old faith and accept the one imposed by the king. Those, who in spite of pressure and persuasion, still rejected the new doctrine, as in the case of Anne Askew, indicates where their obstinacy would have led them to.

In conclusion, it is clear that the primary question of whether or not the doctrinal reform paved the way for Protestant Christianity still leaves much room for further studies. Perhaps, it only showed the light. A new formulary of faith was introduced in the minimal scope due to Henry VIII's reluctance. The answer becomes even more complicated when one takes into account the king's commitment to orthodox Catholic teachings, and contrasts this with his long-term toleration, if not support, of the Protestant-minded subjects of the Crown such as archbishop Cranmer. Perhaps Henry VIII lived in conviction (and rightly if this was so) that sudden alterations must not be implemented beyond the nation's toleration. On the other hand, the monarch ruled with a harsh hand and sent his wives, ministers and ordinary subjects of the Crown to the scaffold irrespective of their devotion and loyalty. Leopold von Ranke's remark illustrates best what has been under discussion: "In Henry VIII there is no [...] inward enthusiasm, no real sympathy with any living men; men are to him only instruments which he uses and then breaks to pieces" (Ranke 169).

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Ustanowienie Kościoła 'Henrykańskiego' i narodowe przejście na anglikanizm pod ścisłym nadzorem monarchy

Bezspornie w historii szesnastowiecznej Anglii reformacja, jaka dokonała się za panowania Henryka VIII, stanowi jedno z najważniejszych i najbardziej fascynujących wydarzeń dla badaczy cywilizacji brytyjskiej, gdyż zerwanie więzów z Rzymem i ogłoszenie się przez króla głową Kościoła anglikańskiego na zawsze zmieniło charakter narodowej religii w kraju.

Jednym z najważniejszych zadań, jakie należało wykonać, a które wynikały z angielskiej reformacji i z ustanowienia anglikanizmu w Albionie, było opracowanie doktryn religijnych dla tworzącego się Kościoła. Prześledzenie w niniejszym opracowaniu całego procesu formułowania się nowej doktryny religijnej dostarcza dowodów na to, że niechęć Henryka VIII do większych teologicznych zmian wynikająca z niepewnej sytuacji dyplomatycznej i ideologicznego napięcia, jakie panowało w społeczeństwie angielskim, a także niewielkie zainteresowanie ortodoksyjnych humanistów tym problemem sprawiły, że reforma doktrynalna została przeprowadzona w stopniu minimalnym.

Te niemalże kosmetyczne poprawki, jakie dokonano w kanonie wiary, nie uchroniły jednak przed prześladowaniami tych wszystkich, którzy nie przyjęli nowej formuły wiary i pozostali wierni swoim dotychczasowym przekonaniom religijnym. W świetle dekalogu Henrykowskiego od momentu ustanowienia „nowej wiary" za heretyków uznawano już nie tylko anabaptystów i luteranów, a także katolików Kościoła rzymskiego. Co więcej, ustawodawstwo angielskie zaczęło traktować katolików rzymskich jako zdrajców, stawiając ich na równi z przestępcami o charakterze politycznym.

Praca prowadzi do konkluzji, że osoby najbardziej prominentne, jak na przykład Tomasz Morus, wystawione były zawsze na największe niebezpieczeństwo. Tymczasem osoby niezajmujące pierwszoplanowych pozycji, jak Thomas Cranmer czy Nicholas Shaxton, choć niejednokrotnie doświadczali politycznych prowokacji, to mimo to przetrwali okresy „czystek". Ich jedynym ratunkiem, by zachować życie, było ukorzenie się i przyjęcie narzuconej odgórnie religii. Natomiast dla dysydentów, takich jak Anna Askew czy Robert Testwood, okres królewskiego reżimu stał się okazją, by oddać życie w obronie swojej wiary.