THE ENGLISH REFORMATION
HENRY VIII #3

Prayer
Scripture: Psalm 19:7-14
Hymn: 240 "The Statutes of the Lord"

THE MIND OF ENGLAND AT THE BREAK WITH ROME:

King Henry VIII was pope in England with more power than the Pope of Rome had ever had in England. King and pope had always shared power over religion in England. After the break with Rome, all power centered in the king. King-worship was at its height. Henry had an uncanny knack for sensing the mood of the majority of his people and keeping them back of him. The majority were more interested in preserving the King's Peace than in questioning his religious policies. In London and the surrounding region the party of change prevailed. The prevailing spirit was more anti-clerical than Protestant. There was a strong nationalist spirit. To Henry and his people it was intolerable for England to be subjected to the will of pope and emperor. Too long English questions had been judged and decided by foreign standards and interests and never by English interests. Henry brought change to England without a strong military force. Skillfully he carried Parliament and Convocation (the meeting of the clergy) along so that change came without civil war. Both Catholics and Protestants were put to death for opposing the king, but the number of martyrs was small compared to the rivers of blood shed in most of the countries on the continent.

THE TEN ARTICLES:

Very soon after the break with Rome there was talk of a set of articles that would express the beliefs of the Church of England. Cranmer, Cromwell and Latimer had leanings toward a Lutheran type of Reformation. The older bishops strongly opposed change. Henry favored no change in the doctrine or worship. There were prolonged discussions until the king finally put his pen to the task of a set of articles that could be set forth with authority. In 1526 there was published "Articles devised by the Kyng's Highnes Majestie to stabylsh Christen quietness"—the first doctrinal symbol of the Church of England became known as THE TEN ARTICLES. Foxe described them as intended "for weaklings newly weaned from their mother's milk of Rome." Five dealt with doctrines and five with ceremonies. The Bible, the Three Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian), and the doctrinal decisions of the first four Ecumenical Councils (Nicea, 325; Constantinople, 381; Ephesus, 431; Chalcedon, 451) were to be the standards of orthodoxy. Baptism was declared necessary to salvation—children dying without it would be lost. The Sacrament of Penance was retained with confession and absolution. Amendment of life was a necessary part of penance. The real corporeal presence of Christ's body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the Eucharist was taught with no mention of Transubstantiation. Faith and charity were declared necessary to salvation. Images were retained in the churches but all incensing, kneeling or offerings to images were forbidden. Saints and the Virgin Mary were to be invoked as intercessors but not because they were more merciful than Christ. Clerical vestments, sprinkling with holy water, carrying candles and sprinkling with ashes were declared good and laudable. Purgatory and prayers for the dead were denied. No mention was made of the other four sacraments, confirmation, marriage, last unction, and ordination.
The Ten Articles were followed by the Injunctions of 1536 that warned the clergy to observe all the laws for the abolition of papal supremacy and all the laws on the supremacy of the King as the head of the Church of England. It also enjoined the clergy to preach against the pope's usurped power within England. The clergy were to expound the Ten Articles to the people, explaining why superfluous holy days should not be observed and exhorting people to shun superstitions such as images, relics, and priestly miracles. They were to exhort the people to keep God's commandments, to fulfill works of charity, to provide for their families, and to give to the poor money they had formerly wasted on pilgrimages, images and relics. The clergy were to see that parents and teachers instructed children in the Lord's prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. The sacraments were to be duly administered in the parishes and the clergy were to set an example of good moral living and to be diligent in the study of Scripture.

The Injunctions of 1538 ordered the clergy to provide "one whole Bible of the largest volume in English," somewhere in each church so that every Christian could read and follow it. The clergy were to preach a sermon at least every quarter in which they declared the gospel of Christ and exhorted the people to works of charity, mercy, and faith as taught in Scripture. They were to warn the people against trusting pilgrimages, images and relics, against kissing or licking images and relics, against prayer beads and other superstitions. The clergy were not to permit candles before images in the churches--this was detestable idolatry.

THE BISHOPS' BOOK:

A committee of clergy, mostly bishops, was appointed to prepare a manual of instruction containing the rudiments of Christianity and a Catechism. The committee met great difficulty because of diversity of opinions. Finally they put together a small book in four parts giving an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, of the seven Sacraments, of the Ten Commandments, of the Lord's Prayer and of the Ave Maria. Two other parts were added. One was drawn from the Ten Articles on justification by faith and the other strongly denied Purgatory. The king was supposed to revise the book before publication but never found time for it. Finally it was issued in 1537 by the archbishops and the bishops. Popularly it came to be known as "The Bishops' Book." The clergy were ordered to read a portion of it from the pulpit to the people each Sunday. The Catechism was published about the same time and enjoyed wide usage.

TRANSLATIONS OF SCRIPTURE:

One of the most important changes brought by the Ten Articles and the Injunctions was permission to hear and read the Bible in English. Since the time of Wyclif this had been forbidden. Tyndale's translation had been publicly condemned by the King in a council in May, 1530, and copies of it had been publicly burned. Tyndale had been tracked by emissaries of the English government in the Netherlands and Germany until he was arrested May, 1535, and imprisoned in Vilvorde Castle near Brussels. He had been betrayed by an Englishman and a Romanist that he had trusted as a friend. He begged the jailor for a warm coat, a lamp, his Hebrew Bible, a Hebrew grammar and a dictionary. He translated from Joshua to II Chronicles before he was tried and condemned as a heretic. On October 6, 1536, he was strangled and burned, crying at the stake, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

Archbishop Cranmer, in the Convocation of 1534, moved the bishops to petition the king for an English version of the Bible prepared by
trusted scholars rather than by heretics. The next year, 1535, Cromwell persuaded Miles Coverdale to have a translation ready. Coverdale worked from the Vulgate and Luther's Bible to produce a translation inferior to that of Tyndale who worked from the Greek and Hebrew. Coverdale's translation enjoyed a large sale and the king licensed it to obey the Injunctions of 1536 which had ordered an English Bible in all churches before August 1537.

The Archbishop in August, 1537, commended to Cromwell a translation which he considered much better than Coverdale's, a translation which he hoped would be licensed until the Bishops could bring forth an even better translation. This Bible was Tyndale's Bible. Tyndale had entrusted a friend, John Rogers, to finish his work. Rogers had translated from II Chronicles to Jonah. He completed the Old Testament from Coverdale's version. The completed work was published under the name of Thomas Matthew and was dedicated to the king. Thus Tyndale's Bible which had been burned was introduced into the parish churches and became the foundation of all succeeding translations of the Bible into English. The government found this Bible too accurate and some revisions were made in 1538-39. The new edition became known as "The Great Bible!"; it was also called "Cranmer's Bible" because Cranmer wrote the preface. It was the large Bible placed in the churches in obedience to the Injunctions of 1538.

HENRY'S TRIUMPH OVER ALL OPPOSITION:

Henry VIII scoffed at the pope's excommunication. The pope's calls for action against Henry brought no action. The king of France did not want to drive Henry to the protection of the Spanish. The Emperor did not want to drive Henry into alliance with the French, yet Henry, at the time of his break with Rome, had almost no army or navy.

At home there was no united opposition. A nun of Kent, Elizabeth Barton, raved hysterically and prophesied that Henry would not live a year. She, with two Friars Observants, two monks and a secular priest that sided with her, were accused of treason and sent to the block. Bishop Fisher, who had spoken against the divorce, was made a cardinal by the pope. He would not recognize the king as the head of the church of England. He called on the French to invade England. Fisher was arrested, sent to the Tower and charged with treason—the first cardinal to lose his head in England.

Sir Thomas More resigned as Chancellor. He kept quiet on the divorce. He would not give the king a title not recognized by other nations. He was a good Catholic. He too was charged with treason and sent to the Tower. He died for the right of private conscience after a very able defense.

In May, 1535, the Charterhous (Carthusian) monks were suppressed with great barbarity for denying the king's supremacy. The Order of Observants, in whose church at Greenwich Henry had been baptized and later married to Catherine, was suppressed altogether.

THE DEATH OF CATHERINE:

It was a great relief to Henry when Catherine died in January, 1536. To the end she had insisted on the validity of her marriage. She refused the title of princess dowager. She had the sympathy and respect of many of the people. She was deeply troubled by what she considered terrible heresies and enormities in the Church of England.

THE DEATH OF ANNE BOLEYN:

Within six months of her marriage to Henry, Anne jealously complained of Henry's roving fancy. He brutally told her that she would have to put up with his ways as her betters had before her. She was
bitter to Catherine's daughter, Mary, insisting that she serve as a maid to her own Elizabeth. After Elizabeth, Anne had a number of miscarriages. On January 29, 1536, the day of Catherine's funeral, Anne was prematurely delivered of a dead child. Henry's conscience was troubling him again. On May 2, 1536, Anne was arrested and sent to the Tower, accused of incest with her brother, Lord Rochford, and of intercourse with Sir Francis Weston, Henry Norris, William Brereton, and Mark Smeaton. All were condemned to death for high treason. Anne to the end denied the charges. Only Smeaton confessed guilt. Two days before Anne's death, a court of ecclesiastical lawyers declared her marriage with Henry invalid. On May 19, 1536, Anne was beheaded.

HENRY'S MARRIAGE TO LADY JANE SEYMOUR:

On the day Anne was beheaded Archbishop Cranmer granted the king special license to marry a third wife. The king's choice was Jane, daughter of Sir John Seymour of Wolf Hall in Wiltshire, descended on her mother's side from Edward III. Cranmer dispensed with a canonical bar to the marriage arising from consanguinity. Jane's brother, Edward, had been rising in Henry's favor. The King had visited Wolf Hall in October, 1535, and had paid marked attention to Jane. She had been a lady-in-waiting to the two previous queens. At first she refused Henry's gifts and returned his letters unopened. They were betrothed the day after Henry received the special dispensation to marry. They were married privately on May 30, only eleven days after Anne's execution. Jane was probably the happiest of Henry's queens. She was gentle and king; she did her best to reconcile Henry to Princess Mary.

The Long Parliament had been dissolved on April 14. Another Parliament was called on June 8 to pass a new act of succession. Elizabeth was made a bastard without making Mary legitimate. The crown would go to a prospective issue by Henry and Jane. Failing to produce offspring, the king was empowered to dispose of the crown at will. The Duke of Richmond, the king's illegitimate son, died four days after this parliament was dissolved.

On October 12, 1537, Queen Jane gave birth to a son. Since he was born on the feast of St. Edward, he was named Edward after his grandfather, Edward IV. Twelve days later the queen died. She alone of Henry's wives was buried as a queen and for her alone he mourned. For two years he remained without a wife.

THE CLOSING OF THE MONASTRIES:

Henry VIII spent lavishly and was always in need of money. Thomas Cromwell saw in the monasteries a way of relieving the royal treasury. He ordered a visitation of the monasteries that turned up many scandalous things. In 1536, Parliament issued the Act for the Dissolution of the Lesser Monasteries. All monasteries with an annual income of less than two hundred pounds were disbanded and their property turned over to the king. Displaced monks and nuns were sent to larger houses or given pensions. The king, to get money, sold the land cheaply to courtiers, greatly increasing the numbers and powers of the landed gentry.

In 1538, the remaining monasteries were closed and their property confiscated. A visitation had reported gross immorality, ignorance and neglect of duties. A notorious collection of relics was exposed: more than three cart loads of pieces of the true cross; part of St. Peter's hair and beard; stones with which St. Stephen was stoned; a hair shirt and bones of St. Thomas; a bottle of Mary's milk; locks of Jesus' hair; pieces of Mary's veil; the principal relic of England, an
angel with one wing who had brought to England the head of the spear that pierced the side of the Savior on the cross; the ear of Malchus that Peter cut off; a foot of Philip, buckets full of thumbs and toes of apostles; and several heads of John the Baptist. All sorts of miraculous images showed up like the bearded crucifix that turned its head, rolled its eyes, foamed at the mouth, and shed tears while the Bishop of Rochester preached. Preachers thundered against superstition and gleefully exposed the trickery and mechanisms of the miraculous images.

The closing of the monasteries changed the character of the House of Lords. Secular lords replaced abbots. Also the population of Oxford and Cambridge changed from monks to the sons of secular nobles.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE:
The confiscation of the monasteries was very unpopular in the northern part of England which was still strongly Catholic. There were uprisings and riots in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire known as "The Pilgrimage of Grace" that demanded the restoration of papal authority in spiritual matters and the restoration of the monasteries. The riots were put down with excessive brutality. The leaders were executed and a strong Council of the North was established to silence all opposition.

HENRY VIII AND THE GERMANS:
Between 1533 and 1539 England slowly moved toward Reformation in spite of the burnings of Protestants as well as Catholics. The Ten Articles, the Injunctions, the closing of the monasteries, and the English Bible in the churches all represented a kind of high watermark of Protestant leanings. Cranmer was mild and cautious but had a definite interest in Lutheran reform. He and the bishops could claim apostolic succession even if the pope maintained it was invalidated by schism from Rome. Hugh Latimer was as fearless as Luther and as uncompromising in pushing for reform. Other bishops like Nicholas Ridley and John Hooper had definite Reformation leanings that found various outward expressions. There was a minority in the English church that wanted a reformation as thorough going as anything on the continent. Fully three fourths of Henry's people had little understanding of the Lutheran Reform and little interest in it. They were content to follow their king. Those who favored a more thorough reformation wanted a political and religious treaty with German Protestants. The prospects of an alliance of the French and Spanish with the pope against the Germans and against England made an alliance of England and Germany attractive. Henry VIII and John Frederick of Saxony had reservations. Henry was willing to send envoys to the Schmalkald League hoping to get the German divines to approve his divorce. Luther and the Germans held that the marriage should never have taken place but once it had happened it could not be broken. Henry and Cromwell wanted the support and sympathies of Melanchthon as more moderate. Bishop Foxe was sent as theological ambassador with presents for Melanchthon. Cromwell ordered Melanchthon's books to be studied at Cambridge. Henry and Melanchthon exchanged complimentary letters. Melanchthon graciously dedicated his De Locis Communibus to King Henry and Henry graciously accepted the dedication. Foxe, bishop elect of Hereford, Heath, Archdeacon of Canterbury, and Dr. Barnes, as Englishman with strong Lutheran convictions, were sent to carry on discussions with the German princes of the Schmalkald League. The Germans and English agreed on many points such as the repudiation of the primacy of the pope and of the authority of any council that he might call. The Germans insisted the English must accept the Augsburg Confession and adopt the ceremonies of the Lutheran Church. The Germans were rather scornful of Henry's divorce, of his ordering the death penalty for those who differed with him, of his claims to be head of the church, and of continuing Romish practices such as the mass, indulgences and intercessions for the dead. Henry was not
about to accept a foreign creed and held that worship ceremonies might differ from country to country. The discussions came to nothing. The death of Catherine seemed to take the pressure off Henry and to remove the threat of was with Spain.

The new alliance of Spain and France in 1539 again posed a threat to England. Cromwell renewed negotiations with the Germans and proposed Henry's marriage with Anne of Cleves, daughter of the Duke of Cleves. The old Duke of Cleves had suggested a marriage alliance with the English royal family as early as 1530. His family was closely allied with the Elector of Saxony who had married the Duke's daughter. The young Duke of Cleves who would soon succeed his father had claims to the Duchy of Guelders. Guelders was to the Netherlands what Scotland was to England and a thorn in the side of the Emperor. Anne had been promised to the Duke of Lorraine but this was waved on the grounds that she had never given her consent. Henry agreed to forego a dowry and the marriage treaty was signed on October 6, 1539. Cromwell had told the king that everyone praised Anne's beauty. A portrait by Holbein was very flattering. When Henry saw her upon her arrival in England, he was quite disappointed and declared she was no better than a Flanders mare. He went ahead with the marriage because he did not want to take a chance that the Duke of Cleves would turn to an alliance with France and the Emperor.

The marriage was a disaster from the beginning. Anne spoke no English. She knew no music and had little education. She spent her time knitting. Henry found her personally repugnant.

THE SIX ARTICLES:

Henry's marriage to Anne of Cleves was doomed to end as soon as the alliance between France and the Emperor fell apart, taking the pressure off Henry. The marriage was a marriage of political expediency. Henry was still much too Catholic for an alliance with German protestants to last. The burning of Protestant heretics in England had continued. Henry was constantly on the look out for heretical books and no man dare speak against Catholic practices that Henry allowed to continue in his church. In 1539 a man was hanged in London for eating flesh on Friday. Irreligious as Henry might seem at times he seldom neglected the services of Good Friday, received holy bread and holy water every Sunday, and kept up other ceremonies of the old order.

As the alliance between France and the Emperor began to break up Henry began moving in a more Catholic direction. In the Parliament of 1539 there was lively discussion of old questions: On the altar is there a transubstantiation of bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord? Does the law of God permit priests to marry? Is the vow of chastity binding? Is auricular confession necessary? Do private masses stand with the word of God? According to the Word of God should the sacraments be administered in both kinds? Parliament followed the wishes of the king in replacing the Ten Articles with the Six Articles Act, a statute that came to be called "the bloody whip of six strings." Lutherans were made liable to capital punishment. Anyone who denied transubstantiation was to be burned and his property confiscated. Anyone who asserted that Communon in both kinds was necessary was to be punished with death. The death penalty was decreed for anyone who declared that monks, nuns or priests could marry. Clerical marriages were to be dissolved. Incontinence was punishable by loss of property and benefices. Five hundred people were indicted within two weeks but were pardoned when submitted. Special commissions were appointed to enforce the Six Articles, the official title of which was "An Act Abolishing Diversity of Opinion."
THE END OF THE MARRIAGE WITH ANNE OF CLEVES

Cromwell was impeached and condemned without trial and executed on July 28, 1540 for recommending the marriage with Anne of Cleves. Henry had the church declare the marriage with Anne null and void. Anne was willing to submit to the decision and was given a handsome endowment and regular income, including two country residences. She lived in peace and amicable terms with Henry and his family and when she died she was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Shortly after the execution of Cromwell three clergymen of Lutheran views, Barnes, Garret, and Jerome, were burnt at Smithfield; three Romanists were beheaded for denying the king's spiritual supremacy.

HENRY'S MARRIAGE WITH CATHERINE HOWARD:

Henry was anxious to appear a true Catholic who upheld the ancient truth. There was no ground for the pope or other continental powers to agitate for an inquisition or crusade against England. With encouragement from Parliament Henry took a Catholic wife. Catherine Howard was the niece of Cromwell's enemy, the Duke of Norfolk. Her morals had been lax but her orthodoxy was beyond dispute. She was a person of considerable charm even though her education had been neglected. A private marriage was celebrated on July 28, 1540 and Catherine was publicly recognized as Queen on August 8. Henry expected his remaining days to be filled with peace and happiness.

On All Saints' Day, 1541, Henry had his confessor, the Bishop of Lincoln, to give thanks to God for his good life. Twenty-four hours later Cranmer put in his hands proof that Catherine had committed adultery. Mannock and Dereham both confessed guilt; the Queen acknowledged her own guilt. Later misconduct with Culppepper came to light. In January, 1542, Parliament ruled such conduct was high treason and also passed an Act of Attainer that declared it treason for any woman to marry the King if her previous life had been unchaste. On February 10 Catherine was removed to the Tower. Three days later she was beheaded.

HENRY'S SIXTH AND LAST WIFE, CATHERINE PARR:

On July 12, 1543 Henry took his sixth and last wife. Catherine Parr was thirty-one and had twice been a widow. Her first husband was Edward Borough; her second was Latimer who had died in 1542. Sir Thomas Seymour, Henry's brother-in-law, sought her hand and won her heart, but he was to be her fourth instead of her third husband. The King had chosen her. Her character was beyond reproach and she exercised a wholesome influence. She saved many victims from the Six Articles. She reconciled Elizabeth and her father. Both of Henry's daughters loved her. There was a plot against her in which she was accused of unorthodoxy and of disputing with the King. Henry made a cutting remark about women becoming clerks and having to put up with being taught by his wife in his old age. Catherine replied that she only spoke to "minister talk!" and that it would be unbecoming for her to assert opinion contrary to those of her lord. Henry replied, "Is it so, sweetheart?" When Lord Chancellor Wriothesley came to arrest her Henry berated him as a knave, a beast and a fool. Catherine Parr had the good sense to outlive Henry.

HENRY'S LAST DAYS:

The winter of 1543-1544 was spent in preparing for war on two fronts, against the Scotch and against the French. Henry at great expense had built an navy, a series of coastal forts, and an army. The English were able to claim victory in both wars which did much for English morale and raised English prestige on the continent.

On May 19, 1543, the king issued a new manual to replace the Bishop's Book. It was entitled A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man; set forth by the King's Majesty of England. It was known as "The King's Book. The king declared it to be "a true and perfect doctrine for
all people." It contained an exposition of the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and select passages of Scripture. It taught transubstantiation, the invocation of saints, and the celibacy of the clergy. It voiced the theology of the king and the majority of his people who detested the pope but were medieval in theology.

Henry's health failed rapidly. He died on January 28, 1547 at the age of fifty-five. He had reigned thirty-seven years.

THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION AT THE DEATH OF HENRY VIII:

At Henry's death England was made up of three groups. There was a very determined Catholic minority who wanted to get England back into the Roman fold. There was a Protestant minority who wanted to move England more rapidly in the direction of the Continental Reformation. The great majority of Englishmen were loyal to the memory of their king.