

E. DOCTRINE UNDER HENRY VIII

III. Henry VIII and theology. Described by Cranmer

(J. E. Cox (ed.), *Works of Thomas Cranmer*, P.S. 1846, II. 340)

An interesting sidelight on Henry VIII's methods of dealing with doctrinal questions. The letter is printed without place or date, but is assigned to 1537.

Archbishop Cranmer to Wolfgang Capito

The treatise,¹ my friend Capito, which you had dedicated to the king's majesty, I presented to him with my own hand. He received it, as I thought, with pleasure and satisfaction. I also hinted to him that he should reward your labours, and he promised to see to it. Not long afterwards, when the Bishop of Hereford² and I were together in the company of Lord Cromwell (the Keeper of the privy seal, who is one of the king's most intimate counsellors, and who has himself done more than all others together in whatever has hitherto been done respecting the reformation of religion and of the clergy) we joined in asking him to put his majesty again in mind of you. He has done so, and one hundred crowns are assigned to you as a gift which he has ordered the bearer of this letter to take with him.

Do you still want to know whether your offering was acceptable? Well, I will state, not what I myself know to be the truth, but what I have heard from others who have been at court more recently than myself. The king, (who is most acute and vigilant in everything) is in the habit of handing over books of this kind, which have been presented to him, and especially those which he has not the patience to read himself, to one of his courtiers for perusal, from whom he may afterwards learn their contents. He then takes them back, and presently gives them to be examined by someone else, of an entirely opposite way of thinking from the former party. And when he has thus found out everything from them, and has ascertained both what they praise and what they condemn, then at length he openly gives his own opinion on the same points. And this, I understand, he has done with respect to your book. And while he was much pleased with many things in it, there were also some things which he could by no means stomach or approve. I suspect they were the statements you made about the mass. You now have everything about that book which I have been able either to hear and see in person, or to gather and collect, when absent, from the reports of others.

As to myself, rest assured of this, that I love and reverence you from my heart, and look upon you as one who, by reason of your remarkable learning joined to a like integrity of manners, merits the friendly offices of all good men. Would that my ability equalled my will to serve you: for you should then perceive, my dear Capito, how much I esteem you. Meanwhile, I ask you to take in good part this trifling present from me; small, indeed, if regard be had to your deserts, but yet not

¹ *Responsum de Missa, Matrimonio, et jure magistratus in religione. II Martii, 1537, Henrico VIII inscriptum.* 1540.

² Edward Fox, Bishop of Hereford, 1535, d. 1538.

to be spurned if you take into account either the feelings of the giver, or the necessary and numerous expenses by which I am burdened beyond my strength. In conclusion I beg you to favour and assist for my sake, as far as you can, this my friend Thomas Tybald, the bearer of this letter. Farewell.

T. Cantuar.

III. The Ten Articles 1536

First printed by Berthelet (1536) with the title *Articles devised by the Kynges highnes maiestie, to stablyshe christen quietnes and unities amonge us, and to avoide contentious opinions, which articles be also approved by the consent and determination of the hole clergie of this realme. Anno MDXXXVI.*

Other edns: C. Lloyd, *Formularies of Faith* (Oxf. 1825); C. Hardwick, *A History of the Articles of Religion* (1895); 239-255.

Henry the VIII, by the grace of God King of England and of France, defender of the faith, lord of Ireland, and in earth supreme head of the Church of England, to all and singular our most loving, faithful and obedient subjects, greetings.

Among other cares appertaining unto this our princely office, wherunto it hath pleased Almighty God of His infinite mercy and goodness to call us, we have always esteemed and thought, like as we also yet esteem and think, that it most chiefly belongeth unto our said charge diligently to foresee and cause, that not only the most holy word and commandments of God should most sincerely be believed, and most reverently be observed and kept of our subjects, but also that unity and concord in opinion, namely in such things as doth concern our religion, may increase and go forthward, and all occasion of dissent and discord touching the same be repressed and utterly extinguished.

For the which cause, we being of late, to our great regret, credibly advertised of such diversity in opinions, as have grown and sprung in this our realm, as well concerning certain articles necessary to our salvation, as also touching certain other honest and commendable ceremonies, rites, and usages now of long time used and accustomed in our churches, for conservation of an honest policy and decent and seemly order to be had therein, minding to have that unity and agreement established through our said Church concerning the premises, and being very desirous to eschew not only the dangers of souls, but also the outward unquietness which by occasion of the said diversity in opinions (if remedy were not provided) might perchance have ensued, have not only in our own person at many times taken great pains, study, labours, and travails, but also have caused our bishops, and other the most discreet and best learned men of our clergy of this our whole realm, to be assembled in our convocation, for the full debatement and quiet determination of the same. Where, after long and mature deliberation, and disputations had of and upon the premises, finally they have concluded and agreed upon the most special points and articles, as well such as be commanded of God, and are necessary to our salvation, as also divers other matters touching the honest ceremonies and good and politic orders, as is afore-said; which their determination, debatement, and agreement, for so much as we think to have proceeded of a good, right, and true judgment, and to be agreeable to the laws and ordinances of God, and much profitable for the establishment of that charitable concord, and unity in our Church of England, which we most desire, we