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CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN DIOCESE AND PROVINCE: THE ROLE OF A TUDOR BISHOP*

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ABSTRACT. *Thomas Cranmer's register is important in shedding valuable shafts of light on the nature of the episcopal office in Tudor England. Despite the government's break with Rome in the 1530s, much of the archbishop's routine administration continued unaltered. Nonetheless, there were profound changes in Cranmer's role. Royal commissions, proclamations, injunctions, letters missive and acts of parliament all served to modify Cranmer's position as principal minister of the king's spiritual estate. When the crown issued a commission to the archbishop for the exercise of his jurisdiction, the prelate's position as a royal official was clear for all to see. It is sure, however, that the impact of Christian humanism and reformed theology also did much to shape Cranmer's work. The enforcement of the English Litany and, most notably, of the 42 Articles reveal the changing nature of the episcopal office at this time. In contrast to received orthodoxy, it is now clear that the bishops mounted a widespread campaign at the end of Edward VI's brief reign to secure use of this reformed formulary. There can be little doubt that Thomas Cranmer's years at Canterbury were of great significance in reshaping the role of the episcopate in early modern England.*

Thomas Cranmer's *register* forms a massive codex in the archiepiscopal library at Lambeth Palace. Medieval bishops and archbishops recorded their *acta* in *registers*, which formed a legal witness to their administrative acts in diocese and province. Despite the political and religious changes of the reformation, episcopal registries and church courts continued to compile enormous quantities of records. This is true of Thomas Cranmer's *register*, the form of which is, in some ways, similar to that of its medieval forbears. Thomas Cranmer's *register* can be divided into eleven sections: papal bulls, convocation *acta*, commissions and letters, visitation *acta*, heresy trials, *sede vacante* administration, *acta* in the metropolitanical visitation of Norwich diocese, the 'divorce' of Henry VIII from Anne of Cleves, the appointment of bishops, institutions and collations in Canterbury diocese and in the deaneries of immediate jurisdiction, and the purgation of convict clerks.¹ From this document, it is possible to examine the role of Thomas Cranmer as archbishop, primate and metropolitan in Tudor England. It is the purpose of this essay to examine the text of Thomas Cranmer's *register* in the light of this theme.

* I am grateful to the Rev. David Selwyn, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, St David's University College, Lampeter, for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

¹ Lambeth Palace Library (L.P.L.), Thomas Cranmer's *register* (TCR), fos. 1–433[A].

I

The abolition of papal jurisdiction, and the establishment of the king's supremacy over the English church, are hallmarks of the government's ecclesiastical policy in the 1530s. Thomas Cranmer fully supported such developments, denouncing 'the erroneous doctrine of the bishop of Rome his power'. As a matter of firm principle, the new archbishop believed that the king 'of very right and by God's law, is the supreme head of this church of England, next immediately under God'.² There can be little doubt that the reality of political reformation caused real traumas within the English church, but the implication of such developments for the archbishop's rule have not hitherto been investigated. Thomas Cranmer held sway as diocesan bishop in Kent and, as metropolitan of the province of Canterbury, possessed rights over the dioceses of southern England. His metropolitanical powers were concerned with visitation, the spiritual care of vacant dioceses and the appointment of new bishops. After the break with Rome, much of the detailed administration performed by the archbishop in diocese and province continued as before. In many areas of the archbishop's jurisdiction, the political reformation of the 1530s had little effect on the exercise of his powers.

In legal terms, Thomas Cranmer was a bishop of the old dispensation, receiving his appointment to the see of Canterbury at the hands of the pope.³ Although fully committed to political reformation, the government of Henry VIII was concerned to obtain an archbishop, outwardly in communion with Rome, who would determine the king's divorce case against Catherine of Aragon in England. Cranmer was known to have 'correct' views on this matter, having been involved in translating in 1531 *The determinations of the universities*, a book of judgements from European academies which had pronounced in Henry's favour in the divorce issue.⁴ The legal form of Thomas Cranmer's promotion can be compared to that of John Morton, who became archbishop at the close of the fifteenth century. When Morton was translated to the see of Canterbury in 1486, his archiepiscopal *register* recorded the documents which effected that removal. There is a bull of Pope Innocent VIII directed to Morton translating him to the see of Canterbury and another absolving him from the bonds which bound him to the church of Ely. There are also bulls directed to the suffragans and to the vassals of the church of Canterbury, to the clergy and the people of the diocese.⁵ Thomas Cranmer himself received appointment to the see of Canterbury at the hands of Pope Clement VII. The opening section of his *register* records a series of papal bulls,

² *Miscellaneous writings and letters of Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, martyr, 1556*, ed. by J. E. Cox (Parker Society, 1844) (PS II), pp. 326-7.

³ For the political background to Cranmer's appointment, cf. P. Ayris, 'God's vicegerent and Christ's vicar: the relationship between the crown and the archbishopric of Canterbury 1533-53', in P. Ayris and D. G. Selwyn (eds.), *Thomas Cranmer: churchman and scholar* (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 116-21.

⁴ Ayris and Selwyn, p. 283.

⁵ *The register of John Morton, archbishop of Canterbury 1486-1500*, ed. by C. Harper-Bill (2 vols. to date, Canterbury and York Society, 75, 78, 1987-91), 75 nos. 1-6.

most notably a papal bull of provision, by which Cranmer progressed from the archdeaconry of Taunton to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury.⁶ The bulls speak of Thomas Cranmer as a man graced by many virtues, on whose behalf Henry VIII had made supplication. Asserting that Cranmer was a labourer worthy of his hire, Clement VII obligingly issued papal bulls of provision for his canonical appointment.

On his promotion to Canterbury in 1533, Thomas Cranmer exercised his patronage to appoint his brother Edmund to a key position as archdeacon of Canterbury.⁷ Edmund also became provost of the collegiate church of Wingham. In both posts, Edmund succeeded William Warham, nephew to the former archbishop of Canterbury.⁸ Thomas Cranmer also cared for other members of his family by securing for his sister Alice the post as prioress of Sheppey.⁹ Viewed in this light, such actions are simply part of a traditional display of nepotism by a newly-appointed ecclesiastic in high office.

Like his predecessors, Thomas Cranmer as archbishop appointed subordinates under his immediate supervision to exercise powers of jurisdiction in his name. Commissions to some, but not to all, of his deputies have been recorded in the *register*. The most important officer in the archbishop's employ was the vicar general, whose job it was to perform Cranmer's administrative work under his personal direction. For most of Cranmer's archiepiscopate, this role was taken by Dr John Cokes. In 1546 his successor, Dr William Cooke, exercised the same powers as official principal.¹⁰ Four years later, Dr Griffin Leyson was commissioned to perform the work. Leyson was not called vicar general, but chancellor.¹¹

Those commissions issued by Cranmer to his subordinates seem to be closely based on medieval precedents. As early as the end of the fourteenth century, there is evidence that vicars general were no longer appointed simply to cover absences of the bishop from his diocese. As for the historical evolution of the offices of vicar general, official principal and chancellor, this process seems to have been underway from at least as early as the fifteenth century.¹² Cranmer, moreover, continued to use officials formerly in the employ of his predecessor, William Warham. In the latter's *register*, for example, a commission of 1523 describes John Cokes as chancellor, vicar general in spirituals, and official principal.¹³ This is the same John Cokes who continued in office under Thomas Cranmer.

⁶ TCR, fos. 1-5v.

⁷ *Ibid.* fos. 343v-344, 347-8 and 348v-350.

⁸ It is possible that William Warham, junior, was the archbishop's illegitimate son. Cf. R. A. W. Rex, *Henry VIII and the English reformation* (Basingstoke, 1993), p. 179 n. 5.

⁹ TCR, fos. 351-3. Cf. G. Baskerville, 'A sister of Archbishop Cranmer', in *English Historical Review* (*EHR*), LI (1936), 287-9.

¹⁰ TCR, fos. 25-6v.

¹¹ *Ibid.* fos. 57-8.

¹² Cf. A. H. Thompson, *The English clergy and their organization in the later middle ages* (Oxford, 1947), pp. 46-56; I. J. Churchill, *Canterbury administration: the administrative machinery of the archbishopric of Canterbury illustrated from original records* (2 vols., London, 1933), I, 594-6; R. E. Rodes, *Ecclesiastical administration in medieval England: the Anglo-Saxons to the reformation* (Notre Dame, 1977), pp. 103-4.

¹³ L.P.L., William Warham's *register*, 2 vols., I, fo. 24; Churchill, I, 594.

The main base for the archbishop's work was Lambeth Palace. This was where his registry was housed. Both in and away from Lambeth, however, Cranmer attempted to maintain close supervision over his staff. A large number of his personal letters have survived in a copy book, probably composed by his personal secretary Ralph Morice. This evidence reveals how close Cranmer's control actually was. When a vacancy occurred in the collegiate church of South Malling in 1533, Cranmer ordered his registrar William Pottkyns to 'send unto me a collation thereof; and that your said collation have a window expedient to set what name I will therein'.¹⁴ When Thomas Cromwell was concerned to investigate matters in Calais in 1539, the archbishop told him that all the papers were in the hands of his registrar Anthony Huse 'unto whom I have direct my letters, that he shall with all expedition repair unto your lordship with all such writings'.¹⁵ As a university-trained theologian, however, Cranmer felt at a loss when dealing with strictly legal and financial concerns. Such business he referred to his subordinates, confessing, 'I am neither skilled herein, nor that it is convenient for me to meddle in such causes'.¹⁶

If such close supervision is to the archbishop's credit, it is illuminating to study the work of his fellow bishops in England. John Morton, archbishop of Canterbury 1486–1500, took a similar interest in the supervision of his administrative officers. In the late fifteenth century, when the laity were increasingly critical of the church, Morton attempted to centralize authority in his own hands in order to achieve a measure of reform.¹⁷ Robert Hallum, bishop of Salisbury 1404–17, was resident in his diocese and cared greatly for efficient administration. Indeed, Dietrich of Niem described him as 'virum valde industrium et etiam virtuosum'.¹⁸ At Chichester, Robert Sherborne (1508–36) was resident in his diocese. By his personal presence, he was able to bring reform to his courts.¹⁹ Indeed, in a recent survey of English bishops, Dr Stephen Thompson has compiled statistics for episcopal residence for the period c. 1486–1535. Of the ten bishops studied, the majority were personally resident in their dioceses for at least 75 per cent of their episcopates.²⁰

In his supervision of patterns of administration within his registry, Thomas Cranmer appears to have continued a custom within the southern province of conscientious administration. The late medieval church was by no means as corrupt as its protestant critics would have contemporaries believe. There was no innovation in the mid-sixteenth century and Thomas Cranmer's attempt to oversee the work of colleagues stands in a long tradition of pastoral care in late medieval England.

¹⁴ PS II, p. 249; cf. TCR, fo. 34ov.

¹⁵ PS II, p. 395.

¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 263–4.

¹⁷ *Register of John Morton*, 75, x.

¹⁸ *The register of Robert Hallum, bishop of Salisbury 1407–17*, ed. J. M. Horn (Canterbury and York Society, 72, 1977–79), xiv, 235–9.

¹⁹ S. J. Lander, *The diocese of Chichester, 1508–1558: episcopal reform under Robert Sherburne and its aftermath* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1976), pp. 24–93, 375–8.

²⁰ *Humanism, reform and the reformation: the career of Bishop John Fisher*, ed. B. Bradshaw and E. Duffy (Cambridge, 1989), Appendix III.

II

While much continued unaltered in the English church, there were profound movements at work for change. The abolition of papal jurisdiction in the 1530s, and the establishment of a royal ecclesiastical supremacy, could not fail to make an impression upon the government and administration of the body spiritual. In 1535, Henry VIII abolished the teaching of Roman canon law at the two universities. At a stroke, the study of the law code, which was the basis of the law administered in the church's hierarchy of courts, was forbidden. Parliamentary statutes, royal proclamations and injunctions in increasing number attempted to regulate first the practice, and later the faith, of the English church. The reception into England of Christian humanism, and of the reformed religion, also had a part to play in reshaping the face of the English church. Thomas Cranmer presided over that body in the early years of the reformation as archbishop, primate and metropolitan. How were the powers, which he inherited from his medieval predecessors, affected by the turbulent movements of the 1530s and beyond? What was the role of a Tudor bishop in a church governed by Henry VIII, and later by his son Edward VI? It is to these questions that we must now turn.

The reformation settlement of the 1530s resulted in the issue of a remarkable commission to the archbishop for the exercise of his jurisdiction.²¹ This commission emanated from Thomas Cromwell's court as vicegerent, a position which he seems to have held from 21 January 1535.²² Cromwell's commission to the archbishop covers powers formerly exercised by medieval archbishops in both diocese and province. Under the terms of the commission, Cranmer was able to ordain men to livings, to institute men to benefices in the diocese of Canterbury, to collate clerics to livings in his gift, to prove the wills of men having *bona, iura sive credita* in more than one diocese according to the custom of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, to proceed in causes in his courts and to do all else necessary.

The objective in issuing such commissions can be seen in a telling phrase from two of Cromwell's agents. Thomas Legh and John ap Rice argued that the only way to establish the king's supremacy in the church was 'yf he toke to his handes ones all iurisdiction and power and for a season or at his pleasure exercise the same'.²³ Here, in a nutshell, is the motive behind the issue of commissions to the bishops. The bishops' powers were henceforth made to rest explicitly on the king's position as supreme head. The commissions were issued at the king's pleasure and could, theoretically, have been revoked at will.

²¹ British Library (B.L.), Additional MS 48022, fo. 98-v.

²² F. D. Logan, 'Thomas Cromwell and the vicegerency in spirituals: a re-visitation', *EHR*, ciii (1988), 658-67; S. E. Lehmborg, 'Supremacy and vicegerency: a re-examination', *EHR*, lxxxii (1966), 225-35.

²³ B.L., Cotton MS Cleopatra E VI, fo. 262. *Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII [a calendar]* (L.P.), ed. J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R. H. Brodie (21 vols., London, 1862-1910); vol. 1 (rev. edn, 1920); *Addenda* (1 vol., 1929-32), ix, 424.

Cromwell's actions effectively stripped the archbishop of the traditional powers of jurisdiction enjoyed by his medieval predecessors. The restoration of that prelate's powers, now grounded explicitly in the king's supremacy, heralds a new stage in the development of the role of the episcopate in early modern England.

The terms of Thomas Cranmer's commission omit all references to powers of visitation. The omission is significant, as the clauses of Thomas Cromwell's own commission as vicegerent reveal. Although Cromwell's commission is not enrolled on the patent roll, its purpose was to enable him to undertake a royal visitation of the whole church. Accordingly, an inhibition was addressed to Cranmer, and through him to the diocesan bishops, in September 1535. By the terms of this inhibition, all ecclesiastical officials were forbidden to exercise powers of visitation during the royal visitation. Records of its receipt survive for the dioceses of Exeter, Lincoln, London, Ely and Rochester.²⁴ Traces of the activity of the royal visitors are rather thin on the ground.²⁵ Evidence from the see of Bath and Wells clearly shows that Cromwell took his self-appointed responsibilities very seriously.²⁶ Records in a fragmentary act book show that both office and instance cases were heard by the royal visitors in the diocese. The end of the king's visitation in 1537 heralded the return of such powers to the bishops. Edward Fox at Hereford seems to have been the first prelate to receive such a licence.²⁷ Cranmer's licence has not survived, but it is clear from his letters that he did receive one.²⁸ John Longland at Lincoln also received such a commission.²⁹

As part of the king's visitation, two sets of royal injunctions were issued, which helped to shape the duties of those who sat on the episcopal bench. The first set of injunctions, issued in 1536, stipulated that all clerics were to enforce parliamentary statutes which abolished the 'pretensed and usurped power and jurisdiction' of the bishop of Rome and confirmed the king's powers as supreme head of the church. Clerics were to preach on this theme every Sunday for the following quarter and at least twice every quarter thereafter.³⁰ These stipulations were reinforced by the injunctions of 1538, which were

²⁴ Devon Record Office (D.R.O.), Chanter catalogue 14 [part of John Veysey's *register*], fos. 66v-67; Exeter Dean and Chapter Library, miscellaneous charter, 2426; Lincoln Archive Office (L.A.O.), *register* 26 [part of John Longland's *register*], fo. 261-v; L.A.O., dean and chapter wills, II, fo. 32v; Guildhall Library, London (G.L.), MS 9531/11 [John Stokesley's *register*], fos. 67-v; University Library of Cambridge (U.L.C.), EDR, G/1/7 [part of Thomas Goodrich's *register*], fo. 125; Kent County Archive Office, DRb/Ar 1/14 [John Hilsey's *register*], fos. 1-2.

²⁵ For a recent study of the visitation of the universities, cf. F. D. Logan, 'The first royal visitation of the English universities, 1535', *EHR*, CVI (1991), 861-88.

²⁶ Somerset Record Office (S.R.O.), D/D/Ca 10.

²⁷ B.L., Additional MS 48022, fos. 92-3; printed in D. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae* (4 vols., London, 1737), III, 810. For a discussion of this part of the MS, cf. Ayris and Selwyn, pp. 126-7.

²⁸ PS II, p. 338.

²⁹ M. Bowker, 'The supremacy and the episcopate: the struggle for control, 1534-40', *The Historical Journal*, XVIII (1975), 242.

³⁰ TCR, fo. 97v; all the injunctions are printed in H. Gee and W. J. Hardy, *Documents illustrative of English church history* (London, 1896), pp. 269-74.

accompanied by a letter enjoining their use from Thomas Cromwell.³¹ Cranmer's first set of surviving injunctions date from his own metropolitanical visitation of the diocese of Worcester in 1535.³² Thirteen in number, the injunctions give no directions as to the enforcement of the royal supremacy within the English church. By 1538, however, Cranmer was following the lead of the royal injunctions. In May, he began his administration of the vacant see of Hereford through his deputy, Hugh Coren. Quite properly, the archbishop's commissary held a visitation during the vacancy and schedules for this exist for the archdeaconries of Hereford and Shropshire.³³ Both sets of royal injunctions were directed to be administered to the clergy deanery by deanery.³⁴ The two sets of royal injunctions were supported by a set from Cranmer himself. His first injunction demanded that 'ye and every one of you shall... observe, and cause to be observed, all and singular the king's highness' injunctions'.³⁵ Cranmer followed up his visitation in the west with a mandate to his own archdeacon in Canterbury in October. Transmitting the royal injunctions and Cromwell's letter, the archdeacon was ordered to assemble before him the clergy and people of the diocese and to recite to them the contents of the enclosures. Similar mandates were sent to the archbishop's officials in dependent deaneries of immediate jurisdiction, South Malling and Bocking, and to the commissary general of Calais.³⁶ By 1538, the government was successful in capturing the archbishop's powers to support the cause of political reform. The primate's new role in church and state was clear for all to see.

The promotion of a preaching ministry is seen as a hallmark of protestant reform. This, of course, is true, but the importance of sermons to support *political* reform was not lost on Thomas Cromwell who, from 1535, began to issue an important series of circular letters on the subject to the bishops. One such letter is dated 3 June 1535.³⁷ This directed the bishops to preach on the royal supremacy each Sunday and to ensure that their subordinates did likewise. Schoolmasters were to teach the same point. The word *papa* was to be erased from all service books. Cranmer received the letter on 4 June. Unfortunately, he sent his doubts concerning some points by word of mouth. Nevertheless, he promised to 'satisfy the king's grace's express commandment in every point to the most of my power... as speedily as I may'.³⁸ Professor Elton has shown that the bishops reacted to the government campaign in various ways. Cromwell enclosed articles for unlearned priests.³⁹ Clerk of Bath and Wells and Lee of York drew up their own articles.⁴⁰ The problem presented by such clerics was certainly pressing. Edward Lee of York told

³¹ TCR, fos. 215-16v; printed in Gee and Hardy, pp. 275-81. Cromwell's letter is printed in R. B. Merriman, *Life and letters of Thomas Cromwell* (2 vols., Oxford, 1902), II, 156-7.

³² The injunctions are printed in *EHR*, xLI (1926), 420-3. ³³ TCR, fos. 90v-92.

³⁴ *Ibid.* fo. 101. ³⁵ PS II, p. 81. ³⁶ TCR, 215-v and Wilkins, *Concilia*, III, 837.

³⁷ The circular has not survived, but Professor Elton has reconstructed its contents. Cf. G. R. Elton, *Policy and police: the enforcement of the reformation in the age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 232, n. 1. ³⁸ PS II, pp. 306-7. ³⁹ Elton, pp. 233-4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 234-5.

Cromwell that only twelve secular priests in his diocese could preach. Some benefices were so poorly endowed that men would not take them. Those who held the best benefices were non-resident.⁴¹ Cranmer, participating willingly in Cromwell's plans, strove to overcome such obstacles by a personal preaching tour of his diocese. Since Otford and Knole were sufficiently instructed, the archbishop went to eastern Kent and to Canterbury 'only by preaching to persuade the people'. In his sermons, he stressed three points. He emphasised that 'the bishop of Rome was not God's vicar in earth'. He showed that the title *sanctissimus papa* was inappropriate. He also denied that the Roman canon law was equal to God's law. He met resistance from the prior of the Black Friars at Canterbury and sent a full report to Cromwell.⁴² To support this case, the primate used his commonplace collections from the Roman canon law. In their present form, 'Bishop Cranmar's collections of lawe' date from the mid 1530s, but they probably embody the results of earlier work whilst he was at Cambridge in the 1520s.⁴³ The collection forms an exacting critique of canon law and is especially valuable for the shafts of light it throws on topics under current debate. There is no doubt that Cranmer drew extensively on this collection when striving to obey Cromwell's instructions.⁴⁴ It was an impressive display of obedience from the archbishop, who was convinced on theological grounds of the new order in church and state. To think otherwise was 'a clear subversion of the whole state and laws of this realm... and to make our most undoubted and natural king [the pope's] vile subject and slave'.⁴⁵

Following the break with Rome, the appointment of new bishops to diocesan sees was grounded in parliamentary statute. It was the Act in Restraint of Annates of 1534⁴⁶ which abolished the practice of appointing bishops to English sees by means of papal provision. From this date, sixty episcopal appointments fell beneath the archbishop's purview. Two were to archiepiscopal sees, twenty-nine to diocesan sees of the old foundation, five to sees of the new foundation, eleven to new suffragan sees, and thirteen to sees following further changes in the appointment of bishops in the reign of Edward VI.⁴⁷

Under Henry VIII, the *acta* for appointment to diocesan sees of the old foundation fall into three distinct phases. The first was concerned with capitular election of the royal nominee. It then fell to the archbishop to

⁴¹ *L.P.*, VIII, 963.

⁴² *PS II*, pp. 326–8.

⁴³ *L.P.L.*, MS 1107, fos. 1–76. For a discussion of this collection, cf. Ayris and Selwyn, pp. 316–18.

⁴⁴ J. Strype, *Memorials of... Thomas Cranmer*, ed. for the Ecclesiastical History Society (4 vols., Oxford, 1848–54), III, appendix and addenda, 820, 751, 752–3.

⁴⁵ *PS II*, p. 167. These words come from Cranmer's *Answer* to the Devonshire rebels of 1547, but they are clearly based on his legal *Commonplaces*, which date ultimately from the late 1520s.

⁴⁶ *Statutes of the realm*, compiled by A. Luders, T. E. Tomlins, J. Raithby et al. (11 vols., London, 1810–28), III, 462–4.

⁴⁷ P. Ayris, *Thomas Cranmer's register: a record of archiepiscopal administration in diocese and province* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1984), pp. 247–58.

confirm the election. The final stage consisted in the consecration of the bishop *confirmatus*. The procedure adopted after 1534 was consciously modelled on the earlier practice of capitular election which ended in 1344. John Trillek, elected to the see of Hereford, was the last pre-reformation bishop to be appointed in this way. Following the disturbances in the wake of the council of Constance, some bishops were elected to their sees but Pope Martin V seems to have treated their appointment as improper.⁴⁸

After the break with Rome, cathedral chapters 'elected' the royal nominee named in letters missive. The royal letters missive were, in effect, papal bulls of provision in another guise. In 1534, Eustace Chapuys, the imperial ambassador, told his master Charles V that the archbishop had given proof of his opposition to the pope in making the bulls for, and consecrating, three bishops on his own authority. He contrasted such actions with the king's own authority over the English church.⁴⁹ Chapuys was mistaken, for the archbishop had not usurped the powers of the pope in this respect. Following the statute of 1534, the central document in the process of episcopal appointments comprised letters missive despatched to the cathedral chapter, which contained the name of the king's nominee. Significantly, such a document is nowhere recorded in the archbishop's *register*. When the archbishop issued the definitive sentence confirming capitular elections, he did not claim to bestow jurisdiction upon the new bishop. Jurisdiction could be granted solely by the king as supreme head of the English church. In the oath which Rowland Lee offered to the king as bishop of Coventry and Lichfield elect, Lee acknowledged that he held his bishopric 'wholly and only of your gift: and to have and to hold the profits temporal and spiritual of the same only of your majesty'.⁵⁰ He acknowledged the king to be the supreme head of the English church and renounced the authority of the bishop of Rome.

Although the king claimed to bestow powers of jurisdiction on newly-appointed bishops, he never sought powers of orders, a *potestas ordinis*, over the church. It was therefore the archbishop's role to consecrate all new prelates. Nonetheless, statute law laid down strict rules for Cranmer in the performance of his duties. He was to confirm the election of, or to consecrate, the bishop elect within twenty days of receiving the royal assent to the election. Concerning the appointment of suffragan bishops, consecration was to take place within three months of the receipt of the letters patent. Table 1 shows that the archbishop duly acted in accordance with the demands of statute law.

In 1547, the archbishop's role in the appointment of diocesan bishops was severely curtailed by statute.⁵¹ It was alleged that elections were no elections, serving no purpose 'and seminge also derogatorie and prejudicyall to the Kinges prerogative Royall'. This statute laid down that the appointment of bishops was to be made by the simple issue of royal letters patent, which

⁴⁸ Rodes, *Ecclesiastical administration in medieval England*, p. 175.

⁴⁹ *L.P.*, vii, 530.

⁵⁰ G. Burnet, *History of the reformation of the church of England*, ed. by N. Pocock (7 vols., Oxford, 1865), iv, 291.

⁵¹ *Statutes of the realm*, iv, 3-4.

Table 1. *Dates of the issue of the letters patent for, and the dates of the consecration of, suffragan bishops in Thomas Cranmer's register 1533-53*

Bishop	Date of letters patent*	Consecration†	Interval (days)
Thomas Manning (<i>Ipswich</i>)	7 Mar. 1536	19 Mar. 1536	12
John Salisbury (<i>Thetford</i>)	6 Mar. 1536	19 Mar. 1536	13
William Moor (<i>Colchester</i>)	26 Sept. 1536	20 Oct. 1536	24
John Bird (<i>Penrith</i>)	15 June 1537	24 June 1537	9
Lewis Thomas (<i>Shrewsbury</i>)	13 June 1537	24 June 1537	11
Thomas Morley (<i>Marlborough</i>)	23 Oct. 1537	4 Nov. 1537	12
Richard Yngworth (<i>Dover</i>)	8 Dec. 1537	9 Dec. 1537	1
John Hodgkin (<i>Bedford</i>)	3 Dec. 1537	9 Dec. 1537	6
William Finch (<i>Taunton</i>)	25 Mar. 1538	7 Apr. 1538	13
Henry Holbeach (<i>Bristol</i>)	22 Mar. 1538	24 Mar. 1538	2
John Bradley (<i>Shaftesbury</i>)	19 Feb. 1539	23 Mar. 1539	32

* Cf. *L.P.*, x, 597 (7); 597 (5); xi, 519 (19); xii, ii, 191 (19); 191 (14); 1008 (34); 1311 (13); 1311 (5); xiii, i, 646 (65); 646 (2) [where the date is given as 2 March, whereas the episcopal *register* of Thomas Cranmer gives the date as 22 March; cf. *TCR*, fo. 214v]; xiv, i, 403 (55).

† *Handbook of British chronology*, pp. 287-8 and *TCR*, fo. 215. Maxwell-Lyte has shown that from 1439, the date of letters patent was to be that of their issue. Cf. H. C. Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical notes on the use of the great seal of England* (London, 1926), p. 258.

named the crown's nominee. The archbishop's task was that of consecration and the despatch of a mandate for enthronement to the archdeacon of Canterbury. Seven such consecrations were performed, the first being that of Robert Ferrar to the see of St David's.⁵² Six appointments were made by way of translation between diocesan sees under the terms of the act.⁵³ In such cases, the archbishop's sole duty was to despatch a mandate to the archdeacon of Canterbury for the enthronement of the new bishop.⁵⁴ Following the implementation of the statute of 1547, the character of the episcopate as servants of the crown was laid bare for all to see. It seems clear that the archbishop of Canterbury co-operated fully in such procedures.

At its most cynical, the archbishop of Canterbury's role in the new order can be seen in Henry VIII's use of Cranmer's powers in the complex series of marriages into which the king entered during his reign. The desire to split Emperor Charles V and Francis of France led to the decision by Henry VIII and his ministers that Anne of Cleves should become queen.⁵⁵ She arrived in England on 27 December 1539. On 6 January 1540, she and Henry were

⁵² *Handbook of British chronology*, ed. E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenway, S. Porter and I. Roy (3rd edn, London, 1986), pp. 225-84, 289-99. ⁵³ *Ibid.* ⁵⁴ *TCR*, fos. 329v, 330-v.

⁵⁵ J. J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London, 1968), p. 368.

married. By July, the clergy of both provinces were commissioned to decide whether the marriage should be declared null and void.⁵⁶

The form of the procedure was relatively simple.⁵⁷ On 7 July a large group of clerics assembled in the chapter house of Westminster Abbey. The archbishop of Canterbury explained the reason for the synod and Richard Gwent presented the king's commission. Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, outlined the reasons for the invalidity of the pretended marriage. A small group went to the king's palace at Westminster to examine the depositions of thirteen witnesses. The following day, the commissioners began their deliberations. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the whole synod reassembled in the chapter house and the decision was announced.

The depositions of the witnesses contained three main points. Perhaps the most technical deals with an alleged pre-contract between Anne of Cleves and the son of the duke of Lorraine. It is important to note that the rule against which such a claim was measured was the rule of medieval canon law. A number of witnesses asserted that when Anne first arrived in England, the king delayed the proclamation of the espousals for two days in order that he might ascertain whether the matter of a pre-contract had been settled.⁵⁸ Such statements were clearly made with the benefit of hindsight and it was Thomas Cromwell who was blamed for allowing the matter to be passed over.⁵⁹

The ambassadors from Cleves swore that the pre-contract was null and void. When the necessary documents arrived from the continent, it was clear that the pre-contract had been considered null by Paland, marshal of Cleves, as early as 1535.⁶⁰ However, the king's agents claimed that the new evidence created fresh problems. It was maintained that the espousals 'may be taken for espousals not only *de futuro*, but also *de praesenti*; which intriketh the mattier moch more, and doth not clere it'.⁶¹ Under Roman canon law, an espousal *de futuro* was a pre-contract which might be broken by renunciation whilst an espousal *de praesenti* constituted in effect a binding contract. The English church continued to uphold the medieval canon law on this point throughout the reformation period. The Roman church itself, however, discarded this aspect of medieval marriage law at the council of Trent.⁶² It is, therefore, a remarkable sign of continuity in canon law practice in England – a practice Henry himself had discouraged – which helped the king to escape from the hook of an unsatisfactory marriage. The result of this can be seen in the *acta* in the archbishop's register when it is stated that the position of Anne's pre-contract cast grave doubts on the marriage between her and the king.

As a result of their deliberations, the synod announced that the marriage between the king and Anne of Cleves was invalid. 159 men set their signatures

⁵⁶ *L.P.*, xv, 14, 823.

⁵⁷ TCR, fo. 141-v.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* fo. 142v; J. Strype, *Ecclesiastical memorials* (3 vols. in 6, Oxford, 1822), I, ii, 452-3; *L.P.*, xv, 850 (3).

⁵⁹ TCR, fos. 142v-143; Strype, *Memorials*, I, ii, 453-5; *L.P.*, xv, 850 (4) and (5).

⁶⁰ TCR, fo. 145-6; *L.P.*, xv, 861 (2.i, iii).

⁶¹ TCR, fo. 142v; Strype, *Memorials*, I, ii, 452-3; *L.P.*, xv, 850 (3).

⁶² R. M. Helmholz, *Roman canon law in reformation England* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 69-71.

to the resulting declaration⁶³ and the sentence was confirmed by act of parliament.⁶⁴ As far as Cranmer was concerned, the final act in this murky affair occurred on 19 January 1541 when both archbishops were ordered by the privy council to retain the *acta* amongst the archives of their registries.⁶⁵

III

Thomas Cranmer was a university-trained theologian from Jesus College, Cambridge. In years of quiet study, he was able to spend his time investigating the burning theological questions of the day. Such studies stood him in good stead when he was plucked from relative obscurity in Cambridge into the heady world of Tudor politics and government. If the political reformation of the 1530s helped to forge a new role for the Tudor primate, it is equally clear that Thomas Cranmer himself held firm theological views on the relationship between church and state and on the role of the Tudor episcopate. On theological grounds, the archbishop was convinced that the jurisdiction of the papacy had rightly been abolished in England. In 1555, he penned for Queen Mary what amounts to an *apologia pro vita sua*. In this remarkable letter, Cranmer claimed that the papacy 'subverteth not only the laws of this realm, but also the laws of God'. If a man or woman showed obedience to the pope, he or she could not 'be under Christ's religion purely as Christ did command'.⁶⁶ In place of papal supremacy, Cranmer sought to restore the position of the king as head of the church. In a dramatic moment at the coronation of Edward VI, the primate announced that the young monarch was 'God's vice-gerent and Christ's vicar'. He was to be 'a second Josiah, who reformed the church of God in his days'.⁶⁷ The depth of Cranmer's convictions is truly remarkable. 'All christian princes have committed unto them immediatly of God the whole cure of all their subjects, as well concerning the administration of God's word for the cure of souls, as concerning the ministratation of things political and civil governance'.⁶⁸

Convinced of the king's right to hold full ecclesiastical power, the primate also believed that the clerical estate comprised no separate *ordo* in the church. In the apostles' time, there were no Christian princes by whose authority ministers might be appointed. Sometimes, the apostles sent or appointed ministers of God's word; sometimes the people themselves chose such as they thought meet. At the beginning of Christian history, bishops and priests were not separate offices, but were one and the same thing. Bishops might make a priest by the Scriptures, and so might princes and governors by the authority

⁶³ TCR, fos. 141v-142v. The text in the *register* omits the lists of signatories: cf. Burnet, iv, 436-9. A separate notification of the synod's decision, bearing the signatures and seals of the archbishops of Canterbury and York alone, was despatched to the crown. B.L., Cotton charter X, 13.

⁶⁴ *Statutes of the realm*, III, 781-3.

⁶⁵ For the record in Edward Lee's *register* at York, cf. Borthwick Institute, York, *register* 28, fos. 142-50. *Proceedings and ordinances of the privy council of England*, 10 Richard II, 1386, - 33 Henry VIII, 1542, ed. H. Nicholas (7 vols., London, 1834-7), VII, 118.

⁶⁶ PS II, p. 449.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 127.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 116.

of God committed to them. The people might also do the same by means of election. 'In the new Testament, he that is appointed to be a bishop or a priest, needeth no consecration by the scripture; for election or appointing thereto is sufficient.' Should all the bishops and priests of a region be dead, therefore, it would not be forbidden by God's law for the king to make bishops and priests to take their place.⁶⁹ The sincerity of these views, which Cranmer offered to the king in 1540, need not be doubted. On theological grounds, Thomas Cranmer held a concept of the role of Tudor bishops clean contrary to that of his medieval predecessors. His reformed view of the role of a bishop, based soundly in Holy Scripture and the patristics, led him to suggest that the work of a bishop was grounded in primitive pastoral concern:

But I would that I, and all my brethren the bishops, would leave all our styles, and write the style of our offices, calling ourselves *apostolos Jesu Christi*... so that we might order our diocese in such sort, that... the very christian conversation of the people might be the letters and seals of our offices, as the Corinthians were unto Paul.⁷⁰

If such a penetrating insight truly represents the archbishop's convictions, how were his beliefs manifested in the opening years of the reformation? Once again, it is to the archbishop's *register* that we must turn to provide the answers.

Of prime importance for the future of the English church was the provision of parish ministers, preferably graduates from the two universities. Evidence for such appointments can be found in Thomas Cranmer's *register*, where 594 records exist for institutions and collations in the diocese of Canterbury and in deaneries of immediate jurisdiction. Almost at once, Cranmer's high ideals come unstuck. From these records it is possible to trace the educational attainments of men presented to livings. The figures for Cranmer's predecessors paint a revealing picture of the medieval church in the diocese of Canterbury. During the pontificate of Henry Chichele (1414-43), only 9 per cent of the total number of clerks instituted to benefices were graduates.⁷¹ Of the clergy who were instituted or already beneficed during the archiepiscopate of Thomas Bourghier (1454-86), about 21 per cent were graduates.⁷² For the episcopate of John Morton (1486-1500), the equivalent total is 34 per cent.⁷³ For the pontificate of William Warham (1503-32), the figure has been calculated as 39 per cent.⁷⁴

The records within Thomas Cranmer's *register* show that, for his archiepiscopate, the figures are worse than for those of his predecessor, for between 1533 and 1553 at least 30.5 per cent of all clerks promoted were graduates. How do these figures compare with those for Cranmer's immediate contemporaries in the dioceses of the southern province? In the diocese of

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 117.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 305.

⁷¹ M. J. Kelly, *Canterbury jurisdiction and influence during the episcopate of William Warham, 1503-32* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation submitted for the Ph.D. degree, University of Cambridge, 1963), pp. 15-17.

⁷² *Registrum Thome Bourghier, Cantuariensis archiepiscopi, a.d. 1454-1486*, ed. by F. R. H. Du Boulay (Canterbury and York Society, 54, 1957), xxxix.

⁷³ *Register of John Morton*, 75, xiii.

⁷⁴ Kelly, pp. 15-17.

Chichester, the number of graduates promoted to benefices during Sherborne's episcopate (1508–36) was 36 per cent. In the county of Essex, 29 per cent of all men instituted to livings during the period 1520–9 were graduates. The figure at Chichester for the pontificates of Sampson, Day and Scory (1536–56) is 17 per cent, whilst at Essex for the years 1550–9, the equivalent total is only 7 per cent.⁷⁵

The statistics from Thomas Cranmer's *register* confirm the findings of a number of other local studies in painting a dismal picture of clerical attainment in the first half of the sixteenth century. There are three main reasons for this. First, it is clear that the uncertainty surrounding the religious settlements of Henry VIII and Edward VI must have discouraged men from seeing the church as a secure career. Second, financial considerations also have a part to play. The average value of a benefice in Canterbury diocese was £12 per year, although 46 per cent were worth more than £10.⁷⁶ As late as Elizabeth's reign, Archbishop Whitgift complained that less than 600 livings in the whole country could sustain educated priests.⁷⁷ Third, the reformers' insistence on an *educated* clergy, and the consequent inability of educational establishments to produce such ministers in the 1540s and 1550s, probably served to discourage men from entering the clerical profession.⁷⁸

Following his resumption of visitations in 1537, the archbishop was able to use his powers to regulate discipline within the diocese and province of Canterbury. Not simply pastoral in intent, medieval visitations consisted basically of a set of inquiries put to a local population by the Ordinary, or by his commissaries, for the dual purposes of enforcing the law and punishing those who had broken it. All Souls College, Oxford, was founded by Archbishop Henry Chichele in the fifteenth century.⁷⁹ The college had secured immunity from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Lincoln by papal bulls of Eugenius IV. As part of the reformation settlement, the Dispensations Act of 1534 confirmed that all licences obtained before 12 March 1533 were to be of full effect.⁸⁰ The archbishop of Canterbury still claimed a right to visit the college, but the privilege was now made to rest explicitly on the king's supremacy over the English church. As Visitor, the archbishop was to act 'by the authority of our most illustrious prince in Christ and sovereign lord Henry VIII'.⁸¹ The college itself formally renounced papal supremacy on 28 September 1534.⁸²

In 1541, the archbishop used his rights of visitation to correct abuses which

⁷⁵ For the Chichester figures, cf. Lander, p. 204; the figures for Essex are taken from J. E. Oxley, *The reformation in Essex to the death of Mary* (Manchester, 1965), p. 265.

⁷⁶ M. L. Zell, 'The personnel of the clergy of Kent, in the reformation period', *EHR*, LXXXIX (1974), 529 n. 1.

⁷⁷ J. Strype, *The life and acts of John Whitgift, D.D.* (3 vols., London, 1822), I, 536.

⁷⁸ R. O'Day, *The English clergy: the emergence and consolidation of a profession 1558–1642* (Leicester, 1979), pp. 29–30.

⁷⁹ *The register of Henry Chichele*, ed. E. F. Jacob and H. C. Johnson (Canterbury and York Society, 42, 45–7, 1937–47), I, liii–lvii.

⁸⁰ *Statutes of the realm*, III, 464–7.

⁸¹ The archbishop's formal style can be seen in his commission to John Cokes to undertake a visitation of the college in May 1541; TCR, fo. 40–v.

⁸² *L.P.*, VII, 1216 (32).

he and his commissaries found at Oxford. A complete set of the archbishop's *acta* does not survive, but an important set of injunctions was issued at the close of the visitation. These injunctions speak of vile abuses which were present in the college.⁸³ Having received the twenty-six injunctions, the warden was to summon all the fellows and scholars into the hall. There, he was to take an oath on the Gospels that he would observe and enforce the text of the archbishop's decrees.

The pastoral emphasis behind Thomas Cranmer's designs is clear. The original statutes of the college laid down that whenever there was a residue of the commons, it was to be retained for the common good of the college. In his injunctions, however, the archbishop instructed that the fragments of food from the fellows, scholars and the servants should be taken out of the college after each meal and distributed equally among the poor. Should this duty not be performed, one of the bursars was to levy a fine of 4d.⁸⁴ The majority of the injunctions concern matters of discipline and administration. The warden, deputy warden, fellows and scholars were directed to wear gowns of ankle-length, and plain shirts which were neither gathered at the neck and arms, nor decorated with silk. Scholars were to wear suitable clothes and to have tonsures according to the custom of the university under pain of exclusion from college commons. Whenever possible, Cranmer sought to enforce the original statutes of the college. Where the punishment was too lax, he provided harsher penalties. In administrative reforms, the extension of the archbishop's own powers appears very strikingly. Concerning matters of discord, Archbishop Chichele had laid down that all such suits were to be settled within the college. Cranmer, however, drew up rules whereby those causing dissension were to appear in person before him directly under pain of perpetual exclusion from the college.⁸⁵

The visitation of All Souls College forms a striking testament to the archbishop's aims and methods. The *Reformatio legum ecclesiasticarum* of 1553 maintained that visitors were to pay special attention to the state of discipline in each church. It talked of 'disciplina qualis ecclesiarum sit, et quantum habeat roboris'.⁸⁶ As early as the 1540s, the archbishop already appears to have taken such ideas to heart.

Liturgical reform began to take root in England in the latter years of Henry VIII's reign and Thomas Cranmer, as archbishop of Canterbury, was at the forefront of the campaign. The Sarum liturgies form one of the great glories of medieval English spirituality and the work of recent scholars has suggested that there was little widespread discontent with the system of worship

⁸³ TCR, fos. 42v-45v; printed in *Visitation articles and injunctions of the period of the reformation*, ed. by W. P. M. Kennedy and W. H. Frere (3 vols., Alcuin Club, 1910), II, 70-81. In the nineteenth century, a copy of the injunctions was printed from a manuscript at All Souls College; *Statutes of the colleges of Oxford: statutes of All Souls College* (3 vols., London, 1853), I [3] and 77-85.

⁸⁴ *Statutes*, p. 34; Kennedy and Frere, p. 75.

⁸⁵ *Statutes*, p. 46; Kennedy and Frere, pp. 78-9.

⁸⁶ *The reformation of the ecclesiastical laws as attempted in the reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth*, ed. E. Cardwell (Oxford, 1850), p. 132.

enshrined in these devotions.⁸⁷ Criticism of the offices, nonetheless, had been made since Innocent III reformed them in 1215. It was to be Thomas Cranmer who effectively replaced the medieval devotions with reformed *Books of Common Prayer*.

The crown's request for special prayers to be held in the parish churches of the southern province has firm medieval precedents.⁸⁸ Following a decision in council of 27 June 1542, letters were despatched to the archbishops of Canterbury and York, ordering them to hold prayers for victory over the Turks.⁸⁹ Three days later, Thomas Cranmer sent a mandate to the bishop of London, as dean of the province, commanding him to transmit the king's directive to the bishops.⁹⁰ In 1543, the Turkish wars prompted the government to demand special contributions from each parish; receipt of the order is recorded in the dioceses of London and Westminster along with a model sermon.⁹¹ This unlikely appeal for freewill offerings did eventually produce a result, £1,903 8s. 3d., but this was less than a fifth of the £10,000 actually envisaged. To Emperor Charles V, for whom the money was intended, it must have been a 'drop in the ocean'.⁹²

Again in 1543, a mandate for processions was transmitted to the bishops. On 20 August 1543, the crown sent Edmund Bonner, as bishop of London, a mandate ordering that prayers be said within the diocese to avert poor weather.⁹³ Three days later, Bonner received instructions from the archbishop to order the provincial bishops to do likewise. As was customary, the prayers were to be in Latin. Episcopal *registers* at both Ely and for the see of Bath and Wells show that these instructions were duly received by the diocesan bishops.⁹⁴

From 1544, the machinery of provincial administration was harnessed by Cranmer to promote liturgical reform in the parishes. Thomas Cranmer's *register* is sadly incomplete in this area of study, but it does contain information of value. In his most recent work, Dr Christopher Haigh has urged us to distinguish between *the* reformation on the continent and a series of English reformations under the Tudors, which were 'not *the* Reformation, declared by the reformers...'.⁹⁵ This is a bold, and retrogressive, statement since it flies in

⁸⁷ E. Duffy, *The stripping of the altars: traditional religion in England c. 1400-c. 1580* (New Haven, 1992).

⁸⁸ Churchill, *Administration*, I, 358-9 and 359 n. 2.

⁸⁹ *Acts of the privy council of England, a.d. 1542-1631*, new series (46 vols., London, 1890-1964), I, 15.

⁹⁰ S.R.O., D/D/B, *register 13* [William Knight's *register*], fos. 11v-12; cf. also U.L.C., EDR, G/1/7, fos. 148-v; cf. G.L., MS 9531/12 part 1 [part of Edmund Bonner's *register*], fos. 41v-42.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* fos. 45v, 47-v, 255-6 [fos. 242-75 comprise Thomas Thirlby's Westminster *register*]. I am currently preparing for publication an annotated text of the model sermon with an introduction.

⁹² C. J. Kitching, 'Broken angels: the response of English parishes to the Turkish threat to Christendom, 1543-4', in W. J. Sheils and D. Wood (eds.), *The church and wealth. Papers read at the 1986 summer meeting and the 1987 winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 209-17.

⁹³ G.L., MS 9531/12, part 1, fo. 46.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* fo. 46v; TCR, fo. 22-v; cf. S.R.O., D/D/B, *register 13*, fo. 17-v; cf. also U.L.C., EDR, G/1/7, fos. 155v-156.

⁹⁵ C. Haigh, *English reformations: religion, politics and society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), p. 13.

the face of much theological research on the English reformation. Dr Haigh also confesses that he has omitted from his latest study of English reformations a consideration of the career of Thomas Cranmer.⁹⁶ Concerning liturgical reform, Dr Haigh has urged that the English *Litany* of 1544 was 'supportive rather than subversive of traditional religion'. Is this really the case?

There is a conclusive body of evidence that informed theological insight infuses the archbishop's published work.⁹⁷ Given that Thomas Cranmer himself trained as a theologian at Cambridge, it seems not unlikely that he would have looked to continental theology with interest. His *Litany* is restrained in its theological appeal, but it is a careful, measured, composition. Luther was certainly one of the influences on Cranmer's work, the clergy being described as 'Byshoppes, pastours and ministers of the Church'. The medieval Latin *Processionale* made conscious reference to the church's *magisterium* at this point.⁹⁸ Viewed in this light, the *Litany* of 1544 emerges as a courageous document. It can be seen as an attempt to harness insights from reformed theology to the framework of liturgical revision.⁹⁹

On 11 June 1544, the crown instructed the archbishop to organize prayers due to the ferocity of wars in Christendom. In this way, the use of the English *Litany* was first enforced in the parishes of England. On 19 June, the London episcopal registry issued mandates to the bishops of the province and to diocesan officials for the due execution of this policy. Surviving records for the dioceses of London, Westminster, Ely, and Bath and Wells testify to the success of these actions. Thomas Cranmer's *register* records the prelate's work in the diocese of Canterbury and the deaneries of immediate jurisdiction. Cranmer instructed the archdeacon of Canterbury to enforce the use of the *Litany* in the cathedral and then in the collegiate and parish churches of the diocese. His registrar noted that similar mandates were despatched to the deaneries of immediate jurisdiction, Shoreham, Croydon, Bocking, Pagham, Tarring, Risborough and South Malling, and to the commissary of the town and marches of Calais.¹⁰⁰

During the remainder of Henry VIII's reign, the English *Litany* continued to be used throughout the province. As the country waged war in France, Scotland and Boulogne, letters missive were despatched to the archbishop on

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. viii–ix.

⁹⁷ On his eucharistic doctrine, for example, see P. N. Brooks, *Thomas Cranmer's doctrine of the eucharist: an essay in historical development* ([1965] 2nd edn, Basingstoke, 1992); P. Forster, 'Some reflections on the theology of Thomas Cranmer', in M. Johnson (ed.), *Thomas Cranmer: a living influence for 500 years* (Durham, 1990), pp. 266–9; B. Hall, 'Cranmer's relations with Erasmianism and Lutheranism', in Ayriss and Selwyn, pp. 3–37; D. G. Selwyn, 'Cranmer's library: its potential for reformation studies', in Ayriss and Selwyn, esp. pp. 61–72; B. Hall, 'Cranmer, the eucharist and the foreign divines in the reign of Edward VI', in Ayriss and Selwyn, pp. 217–58.

⁹⁸ *Processionale ad usum insignis ac praeclarae ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. W. G. Henderson (Leeds, 1882), p. 110.

⁹⁹ Haigh, p. 164; F. E. Brightman, *The English rite: being a synopsis of the sources and revisions of the Book of Common Prayer* (2 vols., London, 1915), I, 178; *Processionale*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. G.L., MS 9531/12, part 1, fos. 60v–61 and also 259v–260; TCR, fos. 48v–50; U.L.C., EDR, G/1/7, fos. 164–165v; S.R.O., D/D/B, *register* 13, fos. 21v–22.

10 August 1545 announcing the launch of a powerful navy and commanding prayers for peace.¹⁰¹ On 15 October, the archbishop commanded Bonner on the king's authority that, for the sake of uniformity, the English *Litany* should be used not only on the accustomed weekdays, but also from henceforth on Sundays and festivals. Evidence, showing that the diocesan bishops duly received these instructions, again survives for the dioceses of London, Westminster, Bath and Wells, and Ely.¹⁰² On 18 October, being a Sunday and St Luke's day, the choir at St Paul's, London, sang the procession in English according to the king's injunction. As Brightman rightly claimed, this was a 'revolutionary measure'.¹⁰³ From henceforth, the English *Litany* was to be regarded as the sole procession, and the medieval *Processionale* was abolished.

Change gathered pace in the reign of Edward VI as doctrinal reform followed in the wake of liturgical revision. As early as 1536, Thomas Cranmer had been concerned with the compilation of a series of articles expressing the norms of Christian belief. In 1553, a set of 42 *Articles* was finally issued.¹⁰⁴ On the doctrinal issues of the reformation, the *Articles* clearly reject much of the received orthodoxy of the western church. They betray the influence of continental formularies and show a marked tendency to denounce anabaptist tenets.

Edward VI died on 6 July 1553. It has commonly been thought that the *Articles* were not enforced at parish level at this time. The evidence of Thomas Cranmer's *register*, however, along with supporting documents shows that they were. On 19 June, the archbishop instructed the dean of the Arches in London to assemble all the clergy of the deanery before him in the hall at Lambeth Palace on 23 June. The clergy received verbal instructions when they arrived at Lambeth. Unhappily, no trace of these instructions now survives.

The archbishop of Canterbury was far from alone in enforcing the use of the *Articles* at this eleventh hour. In Cambridge University Library, important material survives concerning the implementation of this policy. On 1 June 1553, Thomas Goodrich, the lord chancellor, and three others ordered the university vice-chancellor, Edwin Sandys, to impose a Latin oath on those

¹⁰¹ TGR, fos. 26v-27; cf. S.R.O., D/D/B, *register 13*, fos. 26-7 and G.L., MS 9531/12 part 1, fos. 72-v and 262v.

¹⁰² Cf. G.L., MS 9531/12 part 1, fos. 82v-83 and 263; cf. also S.R.O., D/D/B, *register 13*, fos. 27v-28 and U.L.C., EDR, G/1/7, fos. 176-v. This is the injunction for which Brightman, in his study of the *Litany*, could find no manuscript source. Cf. F. E. Brightman, 'The Litany under Henry VIII', *EHR*, xxiv (1909), 101-4.

¹⁰³ C. Wriothesley, *A chronicle of England during the reigns of the Tudors from 1485 to 1559*, ed. by W. D. Hamilton (Camden Society, new series, xi, xx, 1875-7), xi, 161; Brightman, *English rite*, I, lxii.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. C. Hardwick, *A history of the Articles of Religion* (3rd edn, rev. by F. Proctor, London, 1876), pp. 31-113; B. Hall, 'Cranmer's relations with Erasmianism and Lutheranism' in Ayris and Selwyn, pp. 21-4; J. C. de Satgé, J. I. Packer, H. G. G. Herklots, G. W. H. Lampe, *The Articles of the church of England* (London, 1964); *The two liturgies, a.d. 1549, and a.d. 1552: with other documents set forth by authority in the reign of Edward VI*, ed. by J. Ketley (Parker Society, 1844), pp. 526-37. I am grateful to the Rev. David Selwyn, St David's University College, Lampeter, for the opportunity to discuss with him some of the finer points of the history of the *Articles*.

receiving the degrees of master of arts and all higher degrees in theology. Goodrich was empowered to do this by virtue of his authority as the king's commissary in the royal visitation of the university. The final clauses of the Latin oath ran:

Finally, I promise that I will accept as true and sure the articles, established by the bishops and other learned men at the synod in London in the year of Our Lord 1553 to abolish diversity of belief and to secure acceptance of true religion, which have been set forth by royal authority; and that in all places I will defend them as agreeable to the Word of God, and that I will attack opposing articles in the Schools and in pulpits, whether by disputation or in sermons. I bind myself to do all these things, and as God is my witness I pledge and promise that I will perform them with all zeal.¹⁰⁵

In the late 1520s and early 1530s, Longland of Lincoln and West of Ely asked priests suspected of Lutheranism to swear an oath not to spread Luther's views before being admitted to a benefice.¹⁰⁶ Also in the 1530s, Thomas Cromwell made significant use of oaths to enforce obedience to the new political settlement in church and state.¹⁰⁷ The use of oaths as a religious test for men accepting academic degrees, however, was without precedent. At Cambridge, the collection *liber rerum memorabilium* contains a copy of the new oath, which is dated 4 July 1553. Following the oath is a list of twenty-five holograph signatures, three for men becoming bachelors of theology and twenty-two for men incepting as masters of arts.¹⁰⁸ A comparison of the list of signatures with the relevant entries in the university *Grace Book Δ* shows that all new masters of arts and bachelors of theology took the oath this year bar two. One master of arts obtained his degree by incorporation, which means that Cambridge recognized as equivalent a degree granted by another university. This probably explains why John Redman did not subscribe to the oath. The grace for Thomas Fowle and Peter Foster shows that the latter did not incept as a master of arts because 'he openly refused to take the oath with the rest'. Two days after the twenty-five Cambridge men subscribed to the *42 Articles*, King Edward VI was dead and the policy concerning the enforcement of the *Articles* effectively abandoned. In 1554, a grace allowed Peter Foster to be an actual, not an incepting, master and to take his seniority from the previous year.¹⁰⁹

Nicholas Ridley's *register* for the diocese of London shows how quickly that reform-minded bishop moved to secure conformity to the new doctrinal statement. A circular letter in the name of Edward VI, sealed with the signet and dated 9 June 1553, enforces the use of the *Articles of Religion* and the

¹⁰⁵ J. Lamb, *A collection of letters, statutes and other documents from the MS library of Corpus Christi College illustrative of the history of the University of Cambridge during the period of the reformation from a.d. MD to a.d. MDLXXII* (London, 1838), pp. 161–4; Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 106, no. 80; U.L.C., University Archives Collect. Admin. 5 (*liber rerum memorabilium*), fo. 189–v. I am grateful to Dr Elizabeth Leedham-Green for her help in uncovering the exciting history of the implementation of the *Articles* in the University of Cambridge.

¹⁰⁶ M. Bowker, *The Henrician reformation: the diocese of Lincoln under John Longland 1521–1547* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 65.

¹⁰⁷ Elton, *Policy and police*, pp. 222–30.

¹⁰⁸ *Liber rerum memorabilium*, fo. 190.

¹⁰⁹ U.L.C., *Grace Book Δ*, fos. 34v–35, 37v.

Catechism.¹¹⁰ On 26 June, Ridley informed his apparitor general to gather together the dean, chapter and all diocesan clerics at his palace on 28 June. After the meeting, Ridley followed up his drive for subscription with a mandate to the dean and chapter. Dated 1 July, the document orders the recipients to observe the instructions in the king's letter. To help them, Ridley sent 'one book', presumably to gather lists of subscribers, and one copy of the *Articles*. Immediately following this in the *register* is a transcription of the Latin text of the *Articles* themselves.¹¹¹

At Exeter, 'the good & godly man Myles Coverdale' held the reins of episcopal power. For his preaching of the Word, he was hated by the adversaries of the Gospel.¹¹² Coverdale certainly attempted to launch a campaign for subscription to the *Articles* in his diocese. His *register* includes a fair copy of the *Articles* in Latin, followed by a space for signatures. The signatures are introduced by the phrase 'Sequuntur nomina eorum, qui praedictis Articulis subscripserunt 1553'. Miles Coverdale signed as 'Milo, Exon'episcopus', but no further names have been added. Clearly, Coverdale's attempt to enforce subscription failed in the south-west.¹¹³

At Norwich, further evidence survives concerning the fate of the *Articles*.¹¹⁴ This comes from a miscellaneous *register*, covering the second half of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. The king's circular letter of 9 June enjoins Thomas Thirlby, as bishop of Norwich, to administer the text of the *Articles* to all those holding ecclesiastical office within the diocese. In order to maintain a record of subscription, Thirlby's officials were to create a separate record of the names of all those who subscribed to the *Articles*. There was 'one ligier book to be formed for that purpose, which may remain as a register for a concord'. This seems to explain the reason behind the survival of the records at Norwich. Following the king's circular letter, there appears the Latin text of the *Articles* which ends on the verso of folio 13 in the manuscript. From this point to the verso of folio 16, there is a list of forty-nine subscriptions to the text of the *Articles*. There is also space for the insertion of further names. The list of forty-nine signatories comprises a record of holograph subscriptions to the text of the 42 *Articles* immediately preceding. The form of the subscription is simple. 'Per me Milonem Spenser' is the first name to appear and the remainder follow in the same vein. Miles Spenser was chancellor of the diocese, alone or with colleagues, from 1531 to 1570. While holding this post, Spenser was also archdeacon of Sudbury for over thirty

¹¹⁰ G.L., MS 9531/12, part 2 [containing Nicholas Ridley's *register*], fos. 297-300.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* fos. 297v-300.

¹¹² D.R.O., Book 51 [John Hooker's commonplace book], fo. 348v; cf. D.R.O., Z19/18/9 [John Hooker's 'Synopsis chorographical'], pp. 106-8.

¹¹³ D.R.O., Chanter catalogue 17 [part of Miles Coverdale's *register*], fos. 2-12. Clearly, fos. 1-14 of the *register* form a self-contained section originally intended for subscriptions to the *Articles*; fos. 12v-14v were later filled with Elizabethan *caveats* and other business.

¹¹⁴ Norfolk and Norwich Record Office, SUN/3, fos. 1v-16v; calendared in MC/16; cf. Burnet, vi, 298-302. The MS is described briefly in the *First report of the royal commission on historical manuscripts* (London, 1874), pp. 86-7.

years. His will reveals conservative leanings, for papists and future recusants were close friends.¹¹⁵ Despite his conservative frame of mind, Spenser felt able to bend far enough in the prevailing wind to head the list of subscribers to the text of the 42 *Articles*.

The surviving evidence at Lambeth, at Cambridge, and in diocesan registries such as Norwich, throws into sharp relief the contest to win the hearts and minds of those at parish level at the close of Edward's brief reign. The king died early in July 1553, but from June onwards diocesan bishops and the University of Cambridge strove to enforce subscription to a set of *Articles* which openly espoused the protestant cause.

IV

Like his medieval predecessors, Thomas Cranmer held sway in the diocese and province of Canterbury as archbishop, primate of all England and metropolitan. Through the pages of his *register*, it is possible to trace the changing role of a Tudor bishop in the early years of the reformation at a time when papal jurisdiction had been abolished in England in favour of Henry VIII as supreme head.

Following his immediate forbears, Cranmer was appointed to the see of Canterbury by the issue of papal bulls of provision. The government wished to have an archbishop, outwardly in communion with Rome, who would decide the king's marital cause against Catherine of Aragon. There are further signs of continuity in Thomas Cranmer's rule. The primate administered the diocese and province of Canterbury through deputies under his immediate supervision. The issue of commissions to such officials was based squarely on medieval precedent. The archbishop's copy book of letters, probably compiled by his personal secretary Ralph Morice, illustrates how closely Cranmer supervised his subordinates. In this, he continued a long tradition of pastoral care in the late medieval church.

While much continued unaltered after the break with Rome, there were profound changes in Cranmer's role. When the crown issued commissions to the bishops for the exercise of their jurisdiction, the character of the episcopate as royal officials was clear for all to see. Their powers of jurisdiction were securely grounded in the king's supremacy over the English church. Through Thomas Cromwell as vicegerent, the king conducted a visitation of the body spiritual. During this time, the diocesan bishops were forbidden to exercise powers of visitation, a right Cranmer himself did not recover until 1537. Royal injunctions issued by the crown clearly helped to shape the archbishop's use of the process of visitation. Henceforth, no injunctions could be drawn up by the bishops unless they were consonant with the royal injunctions of 1536 and 1538. Not content with powers of visitation, Thomas Cromwell issued a series of circular letters to the bishops which regulated the activities of the episcopal

¹¹⁵ R. A. Houlbrooke, *Church courts and the people during the English reformation 1520-1570* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 24-5.

bench in support of the new political settlement. It is clear that Thomas Cranmer participated willingly in such ventures, undertaking a personal preaching tour in the diocese of Canterbury.

After the break with Rome, parliamentary statute also played an important part in modifying the work of the archbishop in the province of Canterbury. Under Henry VIII, a statute of 1534 laid down precise regulations for the appointment of bishops to English sees. Jurisdiction was granted to new bishops, not by the archbishop of Canterbury, but by the king as supreme head of the church. Royal letters missive, naming the new bishop, were directed to the diocesan chapter of the vacant see. The letters, giving the name of the man to be appointed, were in effect papal bulls of provision under another guise. Cranmer's role was simply to confirm the election of, and to consecrate, the new bishop. Changes in the method of appointing bishops under Edward VI further underline the king's supremacy in the English church. Nonetheless, there seems little doubt that Cranmer co-operated fully in such policies.

At its most cynical, the archbishop's role in the new order can be seen in his handling of the divorce case between Henry VIII and Anne of Cleves. It is a remarkable sign of the continuity in canon law practice, a practice the government itself had discouraged, which enabled the king to escape from the hook of an injudicious marriage. The archbishops of Canterbury and York and 159 others solemnly informed the king that his marriage to Anne of Cleves was null and void.

The political reformation of the 1530s was important in formulating a new role for Thomas Cranmer in diocese and province. It is equally clear, however, that the impact of reformed theology did much to shape the work of the Tudor archbishop. As a matter of theological principle, Thomas Cranmer fully supported the abolition of the pope's jurisdiction in England in favour of King Henry VIII as supreme head. Soundly based on Holy Scripture and the patristics, Thomas Cranmer's doctrine of ministry emphasized the role of bishops as reformed pastors to Christian congregations throughout the land. His attempts, however, to secure a graduate clergy for the diocese of Canterbury were largely frustrated by the turbulent impact of reformation, political and theological, in the parishes. In his visitations, nonetheless, he showed a marked regard for the importance of discipline. His injunction to the fellows of All Souls, Oxford, to share their excess of commons with the poor underlines his full commitment to a pastoral ministry.

Liturgical reform took root in England in the later 1540s. In contrast to the assertions of a recent commentator, the *Litany* of 1544 is a considered attempt to harness the insights of reformed theology to the framework of liturgical revision. In under two years, the English *Litany* was used as the sole procession and the medieval *Processionale* was abolished, a 'revolutionary' measure. Doctrinal reform followed in the wake of liturgical revision. In contrast to received orthodoxy, it is now clear that the bishops mounted a widespread campaign at the end of Edward's brief reign to enforce the use of the 42 *Articles*.

Results for the diocese of Norwich, and for Cambridge, seem to indicate that the campaigns were most successful in the south-east of England.

In terms of continuity, the records of Thomas Cranmer's work as archbishop, primate and metropolitan paint a picture which, in many ways, is similar to the rule of his medieval forbears. The political settlement of the 1530s, nonetheless, profoundly modified the role of a bishop in both diocese and province. The primate's traditional powers were captured by the government to serve the cause of the king's supremacy; parliamentary statute, royal injunctions, circular letters and the like continued to shape his work. In the primate's promotion of spiritual reform in the parishes, however, Thomas Cranmer made real attempts to play the protestant pastor, turning the church into 'a register or treasury... of God's holy will'.¹¹⁶ The enforcement of the English *Litany* and the campaign to secure the use of the 42 *Articles* underline the changing nature of the episcopal office at this time. There can be little doubt that Thomas Cranmer's years at Canterbury were of great significance in reshaping the role of the episcopate in early modern England.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ *Writings and disputations of Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, martyr, 1556, relative to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, ed. J. E. Cox (Parker Society, 1844), p. 377.

¹¹⁷ I am currently engaged in a transcription and critical edition of the whole text of Thomas Cranmer's *register*, which documents much of the evidence discussed in this paper.