Bishop Bonner and the English Schism

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Bishop Bonner and the English Schism

By

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of Arts in Loyola University
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CHAPTER I

EDMUND BONNER AND THE DIVORCE OF HENRY VIII

Edmund Bonner, (1500-1569) is said to have been the natural son of George Savage, rector of Davenham, Cheshire, by
Elizabeth Frodsham, who afterward married one Edmund Bonner, a sawyer at Hanley in Worcestershire. The Puritan historians of
England go into much more detail in this matter; for example, Strype writes:

Bonner, bishop of London, was a bastard all over; he a bastard, his father a bastard,
his grandfather a notorious whoremaster,
For his pedigree is this, as I find it set
down in a collection of old manuscripts.
'Sir John Savage...had lawful issue...:
base issue, Sir John Savage, priest, parson
of Danham in Leicestershire, who had bastards,
four sons and three daughters by three sundry
women'.

Burnet partially confirms this story, saying that "Bonner was believed to be the bastard of one John Savage, a priest in
Leicestershire; which priest, by one Elizabeth, wife of one
Edmund Bonner, had this Edmund Bonner, now bishop of London."

Bonner studied at Pembroke College, Oxford, then called Broadgate House. In 1519, he took the degrees of Bachelor of Canon Law and Bachelor of Civil Law; he was ordained at about the same time. July 12, 1525, he became a Doctor of Civil Law; he already had the reputation of being one of the most learned lawyers of England.

In 1529, Bonner was chosen by Wolsey as his chaplain, and was frequently entrusted with important messages for the King. After the fall of Wolsey, Bonner did not desert him, but stayed on in his service; he was employed with Cromwell. When Wolsey retired to his see of York, Bonner accompanied him, and in 1530 was with the Cardinal when he was arrested at Cawood. In another two years, we find Bonner gaining the confidence of King Henry VIII, and being employed in his service on various diplomatic missions. In time, he rose to be one of the chief Henricians, who played so important a role in the English schism; it is in that capacity that we intend to study him here.

No complete understanding of what happened in England in the sixteenth century can be had unless one makes a detailed study of the role of the Moderate Party in the Anglican schism. Without a knowledge of the part played by the Henricians, one

5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
must be completely bewildered by the maintenance of Catholic doctrine and discipline during the reign of King Henry VIII. The term Henricians denotes today the English prelates who held ideas contrary to Cranmer's views of doctrine. In doctrine, the Henricians were Catholics; yet in word and act they defended the schismatic acts of Henry VIII. The Henricians had three main characteristics: 1) They favored Henry's divorce; 2) They aided in the establishment of royal supremacy in England; 3) They energetically maintained Catholic dogmas against all the attacks of the Advanced Party in the schism. Thus, at one and the same time, the Henricians were abettors of the schism and guardians of orthodoxy.

Because the divorce of Henry VIII has been so adequately treated by so many capable historians, there is no need here to give any detailed account of the entire matter. The salient facts will be simply noted up to the point where Edmund Bonner entered the proceedings in 1532.

The matter of Henry's divorce was first raised publicly in 1527. It is true that previous to this date, Henry had been unfaithful to his marriage vows; first with Elizabeth Blount who bore him a son, the Duke of Richmond; then with Mary Boleyn, the sister of the more famous Anne Boleyn. But despite these errancies, there had been no talk of separation of

9. Constant, _op. cit._, I, 341
10. _Ibid._, I, 43
11. _Ibid._
the royal pair, Henry and Katharine; divorce had never been publicly mentioned before 1527.

Now there seems little doubt that the idea of succession played a large part in Henry's desire for a divorce. It was a question of the welfare of the kingdom; all Englishmen ardently desired a male heir to His Majesty for the consolation, joy, peace, and security of England. In this connection, Katharine had been a source of grave disappointment, and now she was forty years old with no prospect of giving Henry a healthy male child. On the other hand, Anne Boleyn by 1527 had already gained the king's eye and heart.

On May 17, 1527, Wolsey, a legate of the Holy See and also Chancellor of the Crown, summoned Henry to appear before himself and Archbishop Warham, requiring Henry to prove that his marriage with Katharine was valid. This arraignment actually was Henry's idea; the king wished Wolsey and Warham to declare that he was living in adultery with Katharine, because the dispensation for the marriage had been null and void. The Pope would then confirm the decision of his legate Wolsey, after Henry had married whom he pleased. Wolsey had some misgiving about the success of the scheme; he naturally feared that Katharine might deny his jurisdiction and appeal the matter to the Pope himself. Therefore, he advised direct recourse to the

13. Constant, op. cit., I, 46n
15. Constant, op. cit., I, 53 and note
Pope immediately, saying that sooner or later that must come. At the time, Wolsey thought that Henry wanted to marry Renee, Louis XII's daughter, afterward Duchess of Ferrara; in fact the Cardinal had gone to the French court in order to sound out Francis I with regard to such a marriage. Taking advantage of Wolsey's absence in France, Henry himself brought the matter of the divorce directly before the Roman court in his own way.

William Knight, Henry's secretary, had been despatched to Rome to obtain either a license for bigamy or a declaration of nullity for the marriage of Henry and Katharine. Wolsey in France heard of this request for a license for bigamy, and had little difficulty in getting Henry to withdraw this request. All that this mission accomplished, however, was that Wolsey was given a Bull authorizing him to judge the case, but reserving the right to the Holy See to alter the decision. In Wolsey's mind this Bull was as good as none at all. Knight's failure caused Henry then to turn the entire matter over to Wolsey, who sent Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and Edward Foxe to the Pope. After a month of violent argument a new Bull was obtained; Cardinals Campeggio and Wolsey were commissioned to pass

16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Gairdner, op. cit., 88; also, Constant, 56
sentence; none could appeal from their verdict, and each of the
delegates could act alone if the other wished to withdraw from
the matter.

On May 31, 1529, the legatine court was opened; a definite
judgment was expected on July 23rd. But on that date, Campeg-
gio ruined all Henry's hopes, and Wolsey's with them, by declar-
ing a vacation of the court until October 1, after the manner of
the Roman Rota. Seven days previous to this Clement VII had
signed the citation of the cause before the Roman Court; the
legate court was therefore dissolved.

In June, 1530, Henry called his noblemen together and got
them to sign a petition to Clement VII in his favor. This peti-
tion begged the Pope to decide in favor of a cause which the
most famous universities considered to be just. All that this
petition brought from Rome, though, was a series of admonitions.
The first of these admonitions forbade Henry to contract a new
marriage before the cause of the first had been concluded in the
Roman Court; the second admonition forbade Parliament, the un-
iversities, the archbishop of Canterbury to interfere in this
question in any manner at all. Henry was now convinced that
his case would be lost in Rome, and constantly tried to have the
trial of the matter brought back to England for final decision.
While Katharine maintained that England was not an impartial
venue, Henry just as stoutly argued the same with regard to Rome

21. Dodd, Charles, Church History of England, ed. by M.A. Tier-
ney, 5 vols., Brussels, 1737-1742, I, 3, art 3
22. Letters and Papers, IV, 5789
23. Constant, I, 80-81
as far as he was concerned. At this time, January, 1532, Edmund Bonner was sent to Rome to take charge of the King's business there.

Burnet says that Bonner had expressed much zeal in the King's cause, though "this great zeal was for preferment which by the most servile ways he always courted". Furthermore, he says that Bonner was especially fitted for this office for "he was a forward, bold man, and since many threatenings were to be used to the Pope and the cardinals, he was thought fittest for the employment, though he was neither learned nor discreet". As early as 1531, Burnet says, Bonner surpassed even Bishop Gardiner in his compliance to the wishes of the King.

Bonner was sent to Rome with full instructions from the King personally on every point concerning Henry's affairs there; he was to communicate these instructions to the rest of the King's ambassadors at Rome on his own arrival there. Orders were also given to these ambassadors, Carne and Benet, to give Bonner full information of all that had transpired at Rome so that he might know the exact state of affairs. In his letter to Ghinucci and Casale, Henry ordered the same consideration for Dr. Bonner "whom he esteems for his virtue, faith, diligence, and acuteness".

24. Burnet, _op. cit._, I, 202
25. Ibid., I; 203
26. Ibid., III, 170
27. _Letters and Papers_, V, 732
28. Ibid., V, 733
On the other hand, Chapuys, imperial ambassador to England, had quite a low opinion of Bonner at this time. "Bonner", he wrote to the Emperor, "formerly was on the side of the queen, but he has been suborned". Apart from this statement by Chapuys, however, there is nothing to indicate that Bonner had ever been in favor of Katharine's cause.

Henry had instructed Bonner to argue in the first place the injustice of the citation of the cause to Rome; Bonner was to demonstrate the fact that a great amount of harm would occur in England if the King must go to Rome. Moreover, Henry wrote in his instructions, that "a judge ought not to be obeyed outside his proper jurisdiction"; therefore, argued Bonner, Henry might lawfully disobey the citation to Rome, for it is a place most suspect and unsure. Furthermore, Bonner was instructed to point out the absurdity of the Pope's pretensions to have power to summon kings out of their kingdoms, and how in that case he might summon them all at once to Rome.

If these first arguments should fail to sway the Pope, Bonner was to argue next that Henry had not been summoned personally but only "per edicta". Henry wished Bonner to convey the impression to Clement that he should be quite willing to appear personally, on sufficient warning, if in the opinion of indifferent persons, the universities, he were lawfully cited to

29. Ibid., V, 762
31. Letters and Papers, V, 836
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
Rome. In the meantime, Bonner was to gain sympathy for Henry by spreading the rumor that he had never refused to go to Rome. Finally, if all these arguments availed nothing, and Clement did not relent, he was to be threatened that no good would come from hearing the case in Rome; further, Bonner was to deliver a solemn warning that Henry would appeal his case to a general council. No definite appeal to a council was to be made officially at this time; Henry reasoned that the threat would be sufficient to force the hand of the Pope.

Bonner remained in Rome in contact with Clement VII until the end of July when the consistory was prorogued until October. In a letter of June 15, 1532, Bonner reported to Henry the progress that he had made up to that time. "Much to the hatred of the judges of the Rota, I have been busy informing the Pope and the Cardinals of the matters excusatory. I have also set out in print a justification of your cause".

However, Bonner was unable to accomplish anything that previous ambassadors had failed to do. The consistory, with vacation fast approaching, announced simply that it neither allowed nor rejected Henry's excusatory plea, but that the King should send a proxy to Rome to be present at the trial of the cause during the winter session. In addition, the consistory declared that since the debate was to be on the question of the Pope's power to dispense, the trial could not be conducted by legates,

34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
but must be judged by the Pope and the consistory. Having failed in his endeavors, Bonner nevertheless remained in Italy until almost the close of the year. The Pope and Charles V were to meet in December, and the Imperialists fondly hoped that this meeting would put an end to the whole of Henry's affair. Bonner, unable to prevent this meeting which Henry feared greatly, returned to England.

Now, in the meantime, Anne Boleyn had at last yielded to the king's adulterous desires, probably in order to secure a more rapid solution of what had been delayed for six years. In January, 1533, she was pregnant; in great secrecy Henry was married to her, for at all costs the child must be legitimized. But, on the other hand, nothing could be expected from Clement VII, for on November 15, 1532, he had sent Henry a third admonition ordering him to take back Katharine, and put away Anne Boleyn. Henry was not daunted, though, for he felt that he could rely on Cranmer, newly consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, to declare his marriage with Katharine null and void. And Cranmer complied perfectly. On May 23, 1533, the Archbishop of Canterbury declared solemnly that the marriage of Henry and Katharine had been null and void from the beginning because the Pope did not possess the dispensing powers that he claimed.

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37. Burnet, I, 205
38. Letters and Papers, V, 1658
40. Dodd, op. cit., I, 288
However, Mary, the daughter of Henry and Katharine, was not be held illegitimate, for the parents had always been acting in good faith.

Bonner, back in England, had written at the end of January to Benet, still in Rome, urging him to use all efforts to get the king's matter committed to England. If not committed to England, wrote Bonner, "the Pope is in great danger in England"; in fact, the case had to be returned to England at once, "for things are now taken in hand beyond your estimation and mine". At this time, Bonner had evidently been shown the document purporting to prove that Katharine had been cognita of Arthur for he says as much, and draws the conclusion that the matter ought to be returned to England for the cause stands "simply on cognita or incognita".

Remaining in England for only a very brief period, Bonner was already on his way to Rome once more in February, 1533. Chapuys believed that Bonner was sent on an especially suspicious errand at this time, "for the Duke of Norfolk and the bishop of Winchester had nothing to do with the preparation of his despatches, but only Cromwell and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

While Bonner was travelling towards a meeting with the Pope Henry was completing the breach with the authority of Rome. On March 12, 1533, Henry laid before Parliament a law forbidding

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42. Letters and Papers, VI, 101
43. Ibid.
44. Chapuys to Charles V, Letters and Papers, VI, 160
all appeals to the Roman court. The King found easy justification for this law by maintaining that the General Councils had ordered that all suits be tried in the place of their origin. At almost precisely the same time, Bonner was attempting to delay a final sentence by Clement VII. From Bologna, on March 11, 1533, Bonner reported to Henry the progress that he had made. In the first place, he attempted to show Clement that the trial ought to be conducted in England for he contended that England was an indifferent place. Clement, however, objected to the truth of this statement, declaring that Katharine had termed England a place suspect on her part.

Further, Bonner had pleaded that Henry had shown great impartiality in the matter so far by treating the Queen's counsel with great gentleness, and had even given the bishop of Durham a great promotion; none of the counsel had been handled rigorously. Bonner's efforts, though, to get a promise from the Pope not to try the case in Rome were totally unavailing. Clement excused himself from giving a definitive answer on the plea that his counsellors had left him, and he must follow them to Rome. Then, on May 5, 1533, Bonner wrote to inform Henry that at Rome he had learned that, at the suit of the Imperialists, Clement had proposed a monitory brief to be issued to Henry. Bonner

45. Letters and Papers, VI, 1489
46. Constant, I, 86
47. Bonner to Henry, Letters and Papers, VI, 226
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., Bonner to Henry, VI, 445
had, however, personally caused the Pope to abandon this plan, for he had found errors in the brief and had pointed them out to Clement. As a result, the Pope had deferred its proclamation.

Cranmer's court, meanwhile, had found on May 23, 1533, that Henry's first marriage was null and void, because the Pope had no power to dispense in Katharine's case. Five days later, Cranmer delivered the verdict that Henry and Anne Boleyn were legally married.

In the following month, Bonner felt that Clement would not give any decision in the matter of the divorce before the summer vacation. On the other hand, though, he expressed grave concern lest, following the vacation, Clement might, out of a desire to please the Emperor, pronounce the dispensation to allow Henry and Katharine to wed valid on the plea that Katharine had not been cognita of Arthur. Bonner expressed the opinion to Cromwell that Clement was delaying the verdict in order to please Henry. Clement had actually told Bonner that "though the difficulty of doing anything for Henry is so much greater now that the case has gone so far, he will see the Duke of Norfolk and do the best for Henry that he can devise".

Despite his assurances to Bonner, however, Clement could not but reply to what had happened in England; namely, the

51. Ibid.
53. Letters and Papers, VI, 281
54. Letters and Papers, VI, 445
repudiation of Katharine and the marriage of Henry to Anne, and the contempt that those acts showed for the authority of the Holy See. Consequently, on July 11, 1533, the Pope pronounced Henry excommunicated and his divorce and remarriage null and void. This sentence, however, was not to become effective until the end of September; up to that time, Henry could make his peace with Rome by putting away Anne and taking back Katharine. Nevertheless, this sentence did not pass on the validity of Henry and Katharine; this matter was still under consideration before the tribunal of the Roman Rota. Henry was simply excommunicated for having contracted a second marriage while the trial of the validity of the first was still pending in Rome.

Early in July, Henry had had now some intimation that Clement was going to take more stringent measures when he dared. Consequently, Henry had sent new instructions to Bonner; the tone of these new messages was very hostile.

Throw aside all timorousness and despair, of which you have been showing signs in your recent letters; keep before your eyes the justice of the king's cause. Continually exclaim against the Pope, demanding the admission of the excusator.

Francis I, King of France, was very anxious at this time to avoid and English schism, for this might complicate matters for

55. Gairdner, James, op. cit., 142
56. Ibid.
57. Constant, op. cit., I, 89n
58. Letters and Papers, VI, 806
59. Ibid.
for his nation by causing war between the Emperor and France's ally, England. Francis and Clement, therefore, had been busy arranging a meeting at which every effort would be made to bring Henry back into submission. Henry, for his part, did all that he could to prevent this meeting, but to no avail. He naturally feared that Clement would endeavor to wean Francis away from his friendship with Henry; such a course of action would have left England isolated in European politics. The Pope had landed near Marseilles, October 11, 1533, and the next day he made a solemn entry into the town. Friendship between Francis and Clement was cemented by the arrangement of a marriage between the Duke of Orleans and Catherine de Medici, niece to the Pope. But the main business of the meeting had to do with Henry VIII. Burnet says that there was a secret agreement between the Pope and the King of France that "if Henry in all other things would return to his wonted obedience to the Holy See, and submit the divorce matter to the judgment of the consistory, the decision should be made to his heart's content". But where the divorce was concerned, Henry would no longer make any concessions; he simply wanted the Pope and the King of France to acknowledge that the divorce was legitimate. On the other hand, Clement would not reverse his decision of July 11, and told Francis so as soon as they met. As a result of these opposite views, there was no

60. Constant, I, 105n
61. Burnet, History of the Reformation, I, 224
62. Ibid.
longer any hope of a reconciliation.

As soon as Henry had felt certain that Francis and Clement would actually meet, he had begun to lay his plans. On August 18, he ordered Bonner to announce to Clement that Henry appealed from his July sentence to a General Council. Henry was making this appeal to a council, so he wrote to Bonner, because, contrary to his promises, Clement had revoked the matter to Rome. In order to make this appeal, Bonner was ordered to the French court, and on October 16, he left Avignon for Marseilles where the Pope and Francis I were already in conference.

Before Bonner contrived to see the Pope to deliver this appeal, a proposal had been made to have the entire cause heard anew at Avignon by two legates, a Frenchman and one other chosen by the Pope on condition that Henry accepted the Holy See's authority and agreed to abide by the decision. However, Henry utterly rejected this proposal on the grounds that Avignon was not a safe place for him, and certainly not so secure as the previously proposed town of Cambrai. All that was left for Bonner to do, then, was to intimate Henry's appeal to a General Council.

On November 7, after some resistance, Bonner got access to the Pope's chambers. He spoke to Clement and hinted of the appeal; but as the Pope was at the time on the point of leaving

63. Letters and Papers, VI, p.526
64. Ibid., VI, 998
65. Ibid., VI, 1299
66. Constant, I, 106
for a conference with his consistory, Bonner had little time to do official business at this first meeting. However, the same afternoon, in the presence of Cardinals Simonetta and Capisucca, Bonner again saw Clement. He protested to him for having retained Henry's cause so long at Rome without having given a definite judgment. To this Clement asserted that the fault was Henry's for this long delay, for he had failed to send a proxy to Rome for the hearing of his cause. Furthermore, Clement declared that he had legally revoked the cause to Rome because of Katharine's plea that she had no hope of justice in England.

Burnet says of the manner of delivering the appeal:

Bonner delivered the threatenings that he was ordered to makewith so much vehemence and fury that the Pope talked of throwing him into a cauldron of lead or of burning him alive.

Bonner himself wrote to Henry that as the Pope's Datary, Simonetta, read the appeal to him, Clement interrupted the reading often and became quite angry several times. Bonner was witness to the evidences of Clement's anger and reported them:

He was continually folding up and unwinding of his handkerchief which he never doth but when he is tickled to the very heart with great choler. Scarcely a single clause pleased him.

67. Bonner to Henry, Letters and Papers, VI, 1425
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Burnet, I, 225
71. Letters and Papers, VI, 1425
72. Ibid.
Writing of the manner in which Bonner made Clement acquainted with the appeal, the historian Gairdner writes:

It was a gross violation of diplomatic courtesy to thrust such an appeal upon the Pope when he was the guest of a friendly sovereign, and Francis resented it even more than Clement, especially as it was a breach of good faith towards him on Henry's part, and an absolute reversal from the policy agreed upon between them, which was to win the Pope by offering him the means of escape from the General Council demanded by the Emperor. 73

Francis severely rebuked Bonner and the other English ambassadors for their conduct. "Ye have clearly marred all", he complained to them; "as fast as I study to win the Pope, you study to lose him". "Your king", he had previously said, thinks himself a wise man, but he is simply a fool. He is working in the interest of the queen, for by this appeal he admits that he knows of the sentence of July 11, and nevertheless disregards it. 75 Francis was really vexed with the silly action of Henry; he informed him that if because of his behavior, the ban of excommunication actually went into effect he would not turn a hand to assist him against the Pope.

Quite naturally, Clement told Bonner that he could not give a definite answer to the appeal until he had consulted the cardinals in the consistory. On November 10, Bonner relates, he had to wait two hours "while the Pope was blessing beads and giving

73. Gairdner, English Church in the Sixteenth Century, 143
74. Letters and Papers, VI, 1427
his foot to be kissed. When, after this delay, Clement did not admit Bonner, he told him that Henry's appeal had been rejected. Clement insisted that the King of England or any other king had no authority to summon a General Council but only the Pope. In writing his account of what had transpired, Bonner expressed to Henry a grave fear that when the Pope did return to Rome, he would do much harm to Henry's cause. "There is", he wrote in effect, "no use in my going to Rome, for I can do nothing there any longer. I will disregard your advice to follow him everywhere and return instead to England." In the spring of 1534, he was back in England, where he received as reward the living of East Dereham in Norfolk.

Francis made one more effort to save England from schism. Du Bellay, Archbishop of Paris, was sent to London in December, 1533. All that Henry would promise was that he would not complete the destruction of papal authority in England if the Pope would declare his marriage with Katharine invalid and the marriage with Anne valid. Du Bellay went to Rome, and consulted with the consistory. But Clement had finally made up his mind, to end the matter finally for all time. On March 23, 1534, the final decision pronouncing the marriage of Henry and Katharine valid was solemnly given with the unanimous consent of the

75. Constant, I, 107
76. Letters and Papers, VI, 1425
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
cardinals in the consistory. This decision settled everything; negotiations and conferences were no longer of any use; Henry must now submit or separate.

But Henry had already taken several important steps to complete the separation of the kingdom of England from the authority of the Roman Catholic religion. In January, 1534, the second Act of Appeals was passed; in February, payment of annates to Rome was definitely abolished for all time; a third law forbade the payment of Peter's Pence and other dues of the Roman Curia. This series of acts definitely abolished the papacy from England. From now on the Pope was to be known only as the Bishop of Rome and was to have no more authority in England than any other foreign bishop. In November, 1534, the title "only supreme head in earth of the Church of England" was conferred on Henry VIII by both Houses of Parliament, and became law. Henry VIII was now pope in England.

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80. Constant, I, 109-110
81. Ibid., 111
82. Ibid., 112
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid., 113
85. Ibid., 122
CHAPTER II

BONNER'S EMBASSIES IN THE SERVICE OF HENRY VIII

The House of Lords, in 1532, had rejected a bill declaring Henry to be the supreme head of the Church in England. But in November, 1534, both houses of Parliament conferred upon the king the title "the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England". As supreme head, Henry was given

full power and authority from time to time to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, enormities, whatsoever they may be which by any manner of spiritual authority of jurisdiction ought to be or may lawfully be reformed, repressed, ordered, redressed, corrected, restrained, or amended most to the pleasure of Almighty God, the increase of virtue in Christ's religion, or for the conservation of the peace, unity, and tranquillity of this realm, any usage, custom, foreign laws, foreign authority, prescription, or any other thing or things to the contrary hereof notwithstanding.

1. Constant, I, 122; Gairdner, op. cit., 153; Letters and Papers, VIII, 52
Dr. Edmund Bonner, we have seen, faithfully had served his royal master as ambassador to the Pope in the matter of Henry's divorce. We shall see, in this chapter, how he subscribed to, maintained, and defended the spiritual supremacy of Henry VIII. Much of this Bonner accomplished through his work as ambassador in the service of the king.

In 1534, there had appeared the famous book, De Vera differentia regiae Potestates et Ecclesiasticae, written by Edmund Foxe. This book was published by the advice and consent of "that memorable convocation which assured the king that the authority and government in all matters and causes ecclesiastical belonged unto his estate, both by the word of God and the ancient laws of the Church". This clergy, says Strype, consisted of the "wisest and most expert and best learned" in the various laws, civil and canonical; Dr. Edmund Bonner was a member of the lower House of this Convocation, and hence was in on the very beginning of the approval by the clergy of the royal spiritual supremacy, as were also the other important Henricians, Tunstall, Stokesley, and Gardiner.

In the meantime, the Pope had written to several European rulers that because of Henry's gross and daring impieties, he was going to deprive him of his kingdom; nearly every monarch agreed with this purpose, mainly for personal reasons of

3. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, I, 1, 263
4. Ibid., I, 1, 263
policy. But for political reasons, too most rulers hesitated to aid the Pope in his endeavor. Francis I believed Henry to be in the wrong; but hesitated to lose a useful ally against the Emperor. The Emperor, for his part, feared to show himself openly hostile to Henry for fear of driving him into the open arms of Francis. Henry was altogether aware of the danger of concerted action against him, especially if Charles V should turn openly against him. For this reason, he had for years been looking for continental friends who could give the Emperor trouble.

For years, Henry had been intriguing in the affairs of Lubeck. He had even, in 1533, hoped to get himself elected to the throne of Denmark, but had failed miserably in this scheme. Now, in July, 1535, Henry sent three envoys to Hamburg; these three had full power to treat with the King of Sweden, the Duke of Holstein and Mecklenburg, the Count of Aldenburg, and the city of Lubeck for alliances and peace with England and among themselves. Of course, the purpose was to get unity among the northern countries against the Emperor. On this commission was Edmund Bonner, along with Richard Cavendish and Edmund Pace; they failed completely to come to any understanding with Sweden of the Germans.

The most important early contribution of Bonner in support

5. Gairdner, 161
6. Ibid.
7. Letters and Papers, VIII, 1065
of the royal supremacy, however, is the preface that he purportedly wrote for the second edition of *De Vera Obedientia*. In 1535, Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, had published this treatise. In it he vindicated both the king's divorce and his title of supreme head of the Church of England; he rejected completely the theory of a primacy for the bishop of Rome that made him supreme head of the universal church. Bishop Gardiner argued that the idea of papal supremacy was merely a human tradition and must yield to a divine precept that forbade that power to any man. Further, he held that every prince possessed supremacy over the church in his own realm, and was bound to make religion his first care. When, in 1536, the princes of northern Germany who greatly favored the doctrines expressed in this treatise, had *De Vera Obedientia* printed, Bonner who happened to be in Germany on an embassy, added a preface to the work.

S.R. Maitland has raised serious objections to the authenticity of the preface attributed to Bonner. Yet this Hamburg edition appeared in 1536 in London with Bonner's name and he made no protest. And when, in 1556, Bonner was criticized for this preface by a heretic whom he was examining he even then did

9. Constant, I, 356
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., I, 358; also in Burnet, who says Bonner was hot on the scent of preferment; I, 355
not deny having written it. This heretic, one William Tyms, had railed at Bonner for now burning men who would not acknowledge the authority of the Pope, after he himself had spoken and written very earnestly against that same power. Bonner was apparently astounded at this statement by Tyms, and asked when he had written anything against the Church of Rome. Tyms then cited Gardiner's De Vera Obedientia "unto which book you made a preface, inveighing against the bishop of Rome, reproving his tyranny and falsehood, calling his power false and pretensed. The book is extant, and you cannot deny it". And it is true that Bonner made no denial of the charge, but he did make reply:

My lord of Winchester, being a great learned man did write a book against the supremacy of the Pope's Holiness, and I also did write a preface before the same book tending to the same effect. And thus did we because of the perilous world that then was; for then it was made treason by the laws of this realm to maintain the Pope's authority, and great danger it was to be suspected of being a favorer of the see of Rome; and therefore, fear compelled us to bear with the time, for otherwise there would have been no way but one. You know when any uttered his conscience in maintaining the Pope's authority, he suffered death for it.

Maitland, in one manner or another, attempts to use this answer

14. Ibid.
15. Maitland, op. cit., 394
16. Foxe, op. cit., VIII, 110
as a partial proof that Bonner had not written the preface. However, other historians who refer to the matter all seem to have no doubts as to the genuineness of the preface which is attributed to Bonner.

In this preface, Bonner speaks of the marriage that Henry had contracted with the "most cleare and most noble ladie Anne" which he says was approved by the "ripe judgment, authority, and privilege of the most and principal universities of the world" and the consent of the whole Church of England. The supremacy of the Pope he calls the "false pretensed supremacy of the bishop of Rome", whom he labels a "very raving wolf who is dressed in sheep's clothing, calling himself the servant of servants". Elsewhere in the same preface, Bonner advises the reader, if he favor the truth, "to hate the tyranny of the bishop of Rome and his devilish fraudulent falsehoods"; he exhorts to love "this most valiant King of England and France who undoubtedly was, by the providence of God, born to defend the Gospel; honor him and with all thy heart serve him most obediently".

Thus, by 1536, we can see that Bonner had gone all the way in his subservience to the wishes of his royal master. He had served him well and faithfully during the divorce proceedings;

17. Bonner's preface to De Vera Obedientia; Maitland, 387-390
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
now he not only has personally accepted his spiritual supremacy, but has lent his considerable talents to the task of persuading all Englishmen to do the same.

Bonner, as a member of the lower House of Convocation, was one of the signers of the articles of faith of 1536, the famous Ten Articles. These Ten Articles of 1536 made no definite distinct breach with the traditional theology. They upheld transubstantiation; set forth three sacraments, baptism, penance, and the eucharist, without denying that there were others; declared that sinners should honor the saints; favored the continuance of old rites and ceremonies; recommended prayers for the departed souls. Pollard sees in the Ten Articles a victory for the Lutherans in England, in so far as these were a compromise, and that previously the Catholic party had been resolutely opposed to any compromises. On the other hand, while admitting that the Ten Articles were the least explicitly Catholic of all confessions of faith under Henry VIII, and deliberately so on account of the desire to promote an understanding with the German Protestants, Constant points out that in most matters they are explicitly anti-Lutheran. In the rule of faith, the doctrine of the Eucharist, of Penance with auricular confession of the veneration of images, and the doctrine of purgatory, the Ten

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22. Fuller, Thomas, The Church History of Britain from the birth of Jesus Christ until the year 1648, 6 vols, edited by J.S. Brewer, Oxford, 1845, III, 169
23. Gairdner, 175-176; Fuller, V, sec. 3; Collier, IV, 343
24. Pollard, S.F., Thomas Cranmer, 102
25. Constant, I, 407
Articles were quite definitely anti-Lutheran. Thus far, then, Bonner has been a true Henrician, for he is consistently on the side of those who struggle to maintain Catholic dogma.

In 1537, Bonner was one of twenty-five doctors, who, along with two archbishops and all the bishops drew up the second confession of faith of the Church of England in the reign of Henry VIII, the famous Bishops' Book. In this assembly there were two widely divergent groups; an advanced party headed by Cranmer, Barlow, and Rugg, and a moderate group headed by Stokesley and Tunstall. Bonner was to be found always with the moderate group. The Confession resulted in a victory for orthodoxy, mainly because Henry had been ever on the side of the Catholic moderate party. Constant says that "in the main it was merely a reshuffling of, and a complement to the Ten Articles of 1536". A few quotations from the Bishops' Book, however, will throw light on the extent to which the leading clergy accepted Henry's spiritual supremacy.

We be in no wise subject to the bishop of Rome and his statutes, but merely subject to the king's laws.

The canons and rules of the church are allowable in the realm because the assent of the king accepted them.

In April, 1538, Bonner was once more in the service of Henry VIII

26. Ibid., I, 405-407
27. Ibid., I, 410
28. Strype, John, Memorials of the most reverend Father in God, Thomas Cranmer, Oxford, 1812, 3 vols, II, 76
as an ambassador, this time to the Emperor Charles V. On October 12, 1536, Pope Paul III had formally summoned a General Council to convene at Mantua on May 23, 1537. But obstacles had arisen to prevent the accomplishment of the plan; the Duke of Mantua would not permit the council unless he were allowed pay for a military force to protect the city; Henry and several of the German princes wrote and spoke violently against the proposed council, which they said was called only to defend papal authority. Because of these difficulties, the Pope changed the place of meeting to Vicenza and of course postponed the convening time till November.

Bonner's mission to Charles V really had but one purpose; namely, to persuade the Emperor not to agree to a General Council. Henry instructed Bonner to tell the Emperor that he came to him only because of Henry's great desire for the advance of the word of God, and because of his great love for the Emperor which love led him to offer advice. Bonner was to show the Emperor that "the bishops of Rome have usurped the authority of the princes and wrested Scripture to the maintenance of their own lusts, affections, and glory". Further, Bonner was to remind Charles that it was a traditional privilege of the Emperor to call a General Council; hence, Charles should pay no attention to the summons issued by Pope Paul III, for a Christian free

29. Gairdner, op. cit., 194
30. Ibid., 195
31. Henry to Bonner, Letters and Papers, XIII, 1, 695
32. Ibid.
council can be called only by the consent of the princes to an indifferent place, whereunto no prince would be more glad to give his assent than Henry VIII". All this, though, cannot conceal the truth; Henry feared the unity that might result from a General Council. Chapuys says that Bonner went to protest against the Council's meeting at Vicenza, because "this is the matter that Henry dreads most". Bonner's mission was an utter failure, for Charles absolutely refused to even see him.

The failure of Bonner's mission to Charles apparently did not lower him in the esteem of Henry, however, for in July, 1538, Bonner was ordered to take up residence as ambassador with the French King, replacing Gardiner, Thirlby, and Brian. Bonner's particular mission was to attempt to prevent the proposed meeting of the Emperor and Francis I, which meeting could easily be disastrous to the plan that Henry had of keeping them from uniting against him. In recalling Gardiner, Henry ordered him to give to Bonner all the plate in his custody, and to furnish him with "all such other stuff as shall be necessary for him".

Now evidently Gardiner was displeased at his recall and besides disliked Bonner personally, for at the meeting of the two, Gardiner gave many evidences of great vexation. Bonner reported to Henry that while Thirlby had graciously turned over all the

53. Ibid.
54. Chapuys to the Queen of Hungary, Letters and Papers, XIII, 1, 756
55. Constant, I, 360
56. Henry VIII to Montmorency, Letters and Papers, XIII, 1, 1440
57. Henry VIII to Gardiner, XIII, 1, 1441
plate to him, he had found "no kindness in Gardiner and nothing from him". The bishop of Winchester refused to give up his mules and harness despite Henry's request, stating that he needed the mules and could not replace them, and alleging that it would be wrong to give Bonner the harness which bore the episcopal arms. During the interview Gardiner became so excited that his cheeks "began to swell and tremble, and he looked on me as he would run me through".

Bonner made much more serious complaints against Gardiner within a short time of his replacing the bishop:

He dissuades and discourages a person earnestly to set forth his message, rather than emboldens him as is his duty. The experience whereof I have had myself with him, as well at Rouen the first time I was sent to Rome, and at Marseilles the time of the King's intimation of his appeal; as also lately going to Nice, touching the General Council and the authority of the bishop of Rome; and now last of all, at my return from Spain, when neither my diligence in coming to him, nor the King's letters written to him in my favor, nor yet any other thing could mitigate the hardness of his heart, nor mollify his cankered malicious stomach.

In particular, Bonner complained that Gardiner would not allow any who were joined with him in a commission to keep house separately, but he must be with him at table, "in order that they

38. Bonner to Henry VIII, Letters and Papers, XIII, 2, 131
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
shall say and do as liketh him alone". Further, Gardiner kept too many servants in velvet and silk, and maintained a costly table with excessive fare; he was given more to his own affections that pleased him than to Henry's affairs. In addition to these grievances, Bonner expressed concern over the many papistical friends of Gardiner, and suspected him of leaning to the side of the Imperialists. In this connection, Bonner informed Cromwell that Bishop Gardiner showed more favor to the ambassadors from the Emperor, Portugal, Ferrara, and Venice than he did to any Frenchman.

Bonner's task in France was important and difficult. A treaty of perpetual amity and defense was pending, final agreements having not been made formally. According to the terms of this proposed treaty, Henry and Francis would mutually pledge themselves to deliver up each other's rebels; neither would contract a marriage or conclude a league to the other's prejudice; Francis would include Henry in any peace treaty as a principal contraherent; nor would Francis agree to any General Council without Henry's consent.

The year previous to Bonner's coming to France, 1537, Francis had made two marriages without consulting Henry at all. He had married the Dauphin to the Pope's niece, and his daughter to

41. Foxe, V, 154
42. Ibid., 159
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 160
45. Bonner to Cromwell, Letters and Papers, XIII, 2, 144
46. Ibid., Gardiner's Instructions to Bonner
the King of Scotland. Francis, however, justified his action in these matrimonial ventures, by saying that neither marriage was prejudicial to any English interests. Now Henry was interested in promoting an alliance through the marriage of his daughter to the Duke of Orleans. Francis had objected to this proposal that it was impossible unless Mary were declared legitimate; but by 1538 he was willing to waive this minor objection. However, he had laid one condition down; that is, that Mary must be endowed by her relative, the Emperor, with the Duchy of Milan which would then pass to the French crown. At the same time, Henry was interested in arranging a marriage for himself with some attractive French noble lady; but Francis had objected to sending French ladies to Calais to be inspected by the English king.

Bonner made no success of his mission to France; he failed to accomplish anything in the most important matters, and so vexed the French with minor matters that he had not a friend among them. When two Cordeliers at Rouen defamed Henry VIII in their sermons, Bonner was instructed to insist on their punishment. Bonner did so, and was informed that Francis had ordered the two preachers to prison. Informed of this punishment, Henry thought it a good example to aid Thomas Wyatt in silencing "barking dogs in Spain". Accordingly, he wrote to Wyatt a distorted version to relate to the Emperor; namely, that a Grey

47. Ibid., 143
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., XIV, 1, Introduction, xvii
Friar at Rouen had been compelled to apologize in public and had then been sent to prison. But Chapuys had already learned from the French ambassadors that Francis had done nothing more than make a show of being displeased in order to please Henry. Now in order to make Henry's story stick, Bonner attempted to secure further punishment and demanded from Montmorency that the whole convent of Cordeliers be punished. However, he accomplished nothing by this demand, for Montmorency told him that punishing the whole convent would only create a public scandal, and consequently do great harm to the English King. Highly offended at this rebuff, Bonner let the matter drop.

However, this is one diplomatic failure that cannot be blamed on the ambassador alone; for it was Henry's action that caused all the unpleasantness.

In one matter Bonner was able to report favorably to his royal master; however, his success here was not due to any skill in negotiating, but rather due to Francis's hesitancy about acting against Henry without the cooperation of Charles V. Cardinal Pole, legate of the Pope, had been sent out on his second mission from Rome, the purpose on this occasion being to persuade Charles and Francis to cut off all commerce with England. In the middle of February, he reached the Imperial court at Toledo. Thomas Wyatt had been instructed to secure his arrest as

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50. Ibid., xviii
51. Ibid., XIV, 1, 37, 92
52. Ibid., 371
53. Ibid., Introduction, xxv
an English rebel; but Wyatt's demands were of course rejected by Charles V on the grounds that, traitor or not, Pole was a papal legate, and hence could not be arrested. However, the Cardinal left the Imperial court disappointed, for Charles refused the Pope's request, pointing out that he had enough to worry about with Turks and Lutherans without risking a war with Henry. Pole now became Bonner's problem, for he left Spain to go to France on the same mission to Francis I.

At once Bonner went to work on Castillon, recently returned ambassador to England. He told Bonner at first that he was positive that Francis would do nothing in the matter of censures against Henry; however, he later expressed the belief that had the Emperor agreed with Pole, Francis undoubtedly would do the same. In a dilemma, since he as yet had no knowledge of Pole's dealings with Charles V and his ill success there, Bonner attempted to prevent Francis from allowing the Cardinal even to deal with him. Here he had the solid backing of Henry who had lately written to Francis:

Our ungrateful rebel, Renaud Pole, has lately declared his traitorous intention of going to the Emperor and you and other Christian princes to provoke them against us and to publish certain iniquitous censures against us from the bishop of Rome. The Emperor, having declared, like a good brother and ally, that he certainly would not

54. Gairdner, The English Church, 206
55. Wyatt to Bonner, Letters and Papers, XIV, 1, 356
56. Ibid., 451
not violate his treaties with
us because of the said censures,
Pole had left Spain and is go-
ing to you for like causes.
We wish to intimate that Pole
is our rebel and traitor; also
to request you not only to re-
fuse him admission to audience
but also to arrest the said Pole
and send him hither as the
treaties between us require.
We have great hopes that as the
Emperor has observed the treat-
ies you will do the same. 57

Francis was quite unwilling to move against Henry without
the Emperor, and consequently, Pole's mission to Francis was
likewise a failure. On March 28, 1539, Bonner was able to write:

I have plain answer given unto
me by the French King that
this Cardinal shall not come
hither, but is at Avignon,
and have been told that he
shall not come into this
realm nearer than Avignon,
nor be heard in his suits. 58

This menace having been removed, Bonner's next task was to pre-
vent a meeting between Francis and Charles, rumors of which had
come to Bonner as early as March, 1539. Henry still feared
greatly collaboration between the French and Spanish against him
and at the same time his alliance with Francis I was not yet defi-
nitely concluded and the Emperor might be able to dissuade Fran-
cis from concluding it. Accordingly, Thomas Wyatt was ordered
from Spain to join Bonner, and the two of them to follow Charles
and Francis wherever they went. The two English envoys were to

57. Wyatt to Bonner, Letters and Papers, XIV, 1, 462
58. Bonner to Henry VIII, Ibid., 620
59. Ibid., 451
declare how grateful Henry was to see them working for peace, for discord cannot produce anything but innumerable inconveniences and even ruin, victory being not in the multitude or potency of armies, but in the hand of God.

Despite Bonner's efforts, Francis and Charles met. After several interviews, it became apparent that they had reached the following conclusions: 1) A marriage was arranged between the Duke of Orleans and the daughter of the King of the Romans; 2) Both Francis and Charles were going to ask for a General Council; 3) Both were going to try to suppress the Lutherans and to bring them back into obedience to the Pope; 4) They were going to bring in Henry one way or the other. Bonner saw, however, an opportunity to create trouble between Charles and Francis. There was in the train of the Emperor one Robert Brancetor, an Englishman who had been attached to Cardinal Pole and who had been attainted for his connections with the Cardinal. Bonner demanded of Francis the arrest of this Brancetor, and Francis complied at once. But Brancetor protested against the arrest, declaring that he was a subject only of the Emperor, and called on him for protection; when Charles intervened in his behalf, Francis released him. Now Bonner and Wyatt became very active, exclaiming against both the Emperor and Francis; both made enemies among the French and the Spaniards.

60. Henry VIII to Wyatt, Letters and Papers, XIV, 2, 762
61. Bonner to Cromwell, Ibid., 524
62. Ibid., XV, Introduction, iv, v, vi
Naturally Bonner was much upset at the release of Brancetor. On January 23, 1540, he had an interview with Francis in which he went far beyond the bounds of diplomatic courtesy and ordinary decency and respect. He complained bitterly of the freedom granted to Brancetor, and exclaimed vehemently that in this matter Francis "had acted against God, reason, and duty, and had done a thing infamous, unjust, and contrary to the treaties between France and England". Francis was not only shocked at this outburst; he was exceedingly angry. Immediately he wrote to Marillac, his ambassador with Henry, asking Henry to recall Bonner at once and "replace him with a more prudent and a wiser man".

When, on February 2, Marillac told Henry of Bonner's conduct and words, the King seemed astonished that his minister should have so misunderstood his duty. Henry declared that if Francis was ill-pleased at hearing such words so unseemly for the ears of a prince, he himself had still more reason to be displeased lest it be presumed they came from him "who am not so uncivil or barbarous to such to any prince in Christendom". Henry at once promised to recall Bonner and send another ambassador more agreeable and modest. However, Francis had to request once more, on February 6, that Bonner be revoked.

In the meantime, the Duke of Norfolk had been sent to carry

63. Ibid., XV, 121
64. Francis I to Marillac, Ibid., XV, 122
65. Marillac to Francis I, Ibid., XV, 154
66. Francis to Marillac, Ibid., XV, 168
on negotiations, and had been instructed to take Bonner with him to the audiences. However, Norfolk thought that he had better go alone, as Bonner was not acceptable and "Francis wishes that he had never come to France". In fact, Norfolk relates that Castillon had remarked that Bonner had done more good to the Emperor's cause in France than all the agents of the Emperor and the Emperor himself. A few days later, Norfolk requested Henry to recall Bonner:

For God's sake and your own, revoke the Bishop hence as soon as you may, for he is marvellously hated here, and will never do you good service, though I think that he has good will. Bishops are bad ambassadors in France.

At last, Bonner was recalled. But Henry in announcing his recall to Francis, asked him to show himself willing to forget the affront and not speak to him roughly as his faults deserved so as to avoid giving the impression that he was being sent away ignominiously. Henry, mindful of the services a willing man had given in the past, and services he could still perform wished to save his faithful minister from too evident disgrace.

For Bonner was faithful; his fault was not lack of loyalty; for as the historian Gairdner says, his great incivility to the rulers came when he was trying to serve the interests of his own king, and he was sustained no doubt by a secret feeling that

67. Norfolk to Henry VIII, Ibid., XV, 222
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., 223
70. Ibid., 208
though Henry must repudiate his conduct, yet it was none the less
acceptable to him at the same time. Nevertheless, he had failed
and this incivility was the sole reason for his failure. Mont-
morency said of him:

Bonner had failed not only
in this negotiation, but in all
others he has conducted here, ei-
ther with the King, the Council,
or the ministers; he has made
many similar or scarcely less
errors, having no respect to the
things required in a good ambas-
sador, who should above all make
himself agreeable to the prince he
has to do with, and conduct his
negotiations with modesty, strict-
ly according to his master's in-
tentions; such faults as his are
inexcusable. 72

71. Ibid., XV, Introduction, vii
72. Montmorency to Marillac, Ibid., XV, 177
CHAPTER III

BONNER'S EPISCOPACY UNDER KING HENRY VIII

At the beginning of his embassy in France, Bonner had been appointed bishop of Hereford, in November, 1538. He had obtained a license to forego consecration, but to take the income of his diocese into his own hands. This appointment was not universally popular, and met opposition even among the hierarchy. On hearing of this appointment, far from congratulating Bonner, Bishop Gardiner had shown great displeasure, "lifting up his hands and eyes as though cursing the day it happened". Then without ever having been consecrated bishop of Hereford, in September, 1539, on the death of Stokesley, Bonner was transferred to the see of London. Foxe says that Bonner's advancement was entirely due to the patronage of Cromwell:

Bonner was advanced only by Lord Cromwell, whose promotions are here rehearsed; first, he was archdeacon of Leicester, parson of Blaydon, Derham, Chiswick, and Cheryburyton; then he was made bishop of Hereford, and at the last, bishop of London; the chief of which preferments and dignities were conferred unto him only by the means of the

1. Letters and Papers, XIII, 967, g. 44
2. Ibid., XIII, 2, 261
3. Ibid., XIV, 2, 270
Lord Cromwell who was then his chief and only patron and setter-up; as the said Bonner in all his letters doth manifestly set forth and declare.

In fact, Bonner had written to Cromwell on his appointment to the see of Hereford:

But where, of your infinite and inestimable goodness, it hath further liked you of late to advance me unto the office of legation to such as my sovereign lord is, unto the Emperor and the French King; and next after to procure mine advancement to so honorable a promotion as the bishopric of Hereford, I must here acknowledge the exceeding greatness of your benefits.

Bonner had taken his oath of office in Paris upon his transfer to the see of London. He finally called upon Richard Grafton, one of the printers of the Bible in English, to be his witness, and had him read the oath to which he swore, "acknowledging the king's supremacy which I take with all my heart". Bonner laid his hand on the book and took the following oath read to him:

Ye shall never consent nor agree that the bishop of Rome shall practice, exercise, or have any manner of authority within this realm of England, but that you shall resist the same at all times to the uttermost of your power; and that henceforth ye shall accept, repute, and take the

4. Foxe, V, 1, 149
5. Ibid., 150
6. Ibid., 412
King's majesty to be the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England; and that to your cunning, wit, and the uttermost of your powers without fraud, guile, or other undue means, ye shall observe, keep, maintain, and defend the whole effects and contents of all acts and statutes made within this realm in derogation, extirpation, and extinguishment of the bishop of Rome and his authority; and all other acts made and to be made in reformation and corroborations of the King's power of supreme head in earth of the Church of England.... and in case any oath hath been made by you to any person or persons in favor of the bishop of Rome, or his authority, ye repute the same as vain and annihiliated.

Returning from France to England, Bonner was consecrated bishop of London in Saint Paul's, April 3, 1540. At once, he took up the task of the episcopate. He instructed all London rectors and vicars to inquire and report whether there be continued any superstition or abuse contrary to ordinances; likewise they were to remove from their churches any shrines, images, and bones resorted and offered unto which have "deluded the people, or any offering or setting up of lights contrary to the King's injunctions". From July on, he had been insisting on the King's injunctions against "childish superstitions still used in many places" on the feasts of St. Michael, St. Catherine, and the Holy Innocents, at which times children, dressed like the

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7. Ibid., V, 1, 162
8. Burnet, op. cit., I, 409
9. Letters and Papers, XVI, 1258
10. Ibid., XVI, 1022
Apostles and like priests, led a parade from house to house, blessing the people and gathering money; in some churches, these masked boys said Mass and preached. In October, 1540, he issued orders to all vicars and rectors to stop all unqualified men from preaching without his own special license; in case this injunction were violated, offenders must be cited before him within three days. He issued his own instructions for reading the Bible in English, which was done in every church since the King had ordered the rectors to provide every one with an English translation of the New Testament. His admonitions for reading the Bible follow:

Whoever cometh there to read should prepare himself to be edified and made better thereby. He should join thereunto his readiness to obey the king's injunctions and orders in this matter. He should bring with him discretion, honest intent, charity, reverence, and quiet behavior. There should be no such meeting of a large number as to make a multitude. There should be no exposition made thereon, but what is clearly declared in the book itself.

So far there is certainly no evidence of the bloodiness usually ascribed to Bonner by the Puritan historians; this is the work of a man dedicated to reverence for his holy calling and to decent respect for the ceremonies of the Church.

11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., XVI, 2, 186
13. Strype, Thomas Cranmer, 121
In May, 1539, Parliament had passed the famous Act of the Six Articles, under the title "An Act Abolishing Diversity in Opinions". James Gairdner says that the aim of this act was to check that growth of heterodoxy which the king himself in former years had surreptitiously encouraged for private reasons of his own. The preamble to the act stated, however, that the aim was to destroy heresy which was harmful to souls, and destructive of the peace of the realm.

In attempting to draw up a new Confession of Faith, the divines had definitely split into two camps; the Henricians, or Moderates, maintained Catholic dogma, whereas the Advanced party went out all the way for Lutheran ideas. But Henry, appearing personally at the debates, upheld the orthodox teaching and demanded furthermore that the doctrinal declaration be sanctioned by severe corporal punishments. As a result of this work, the following declaration was adopted and came to be known as the Act of the Six Articles, or to the Lutherans in England "the whip with six bloody strings":

First, that in the most blessed sacrament of the altar by the strength and efficacy of Christ's almighty word, (it being spoken by the priest) is present really under the form of bread and wine, the natural body and blood of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary; and that after the consecration there

14. Gairdner, 207
15. Ibid.
16. Constnat, I, 417
17. Ibid., 418-419
remaineth no substance of bread or wine, nor any other substance, but the substance of Christ, God and man.
Secondly, that the Communion in both kinds is not necessary to salvation by the law of God to all persons.
Thirdly, that priests after the order of priesthood is received, may not marry by the law of God.
Fourthly, that vows of chastity, by men or women, made to God advisedly, ought to be observed.
Fifthly, that it is meet and necessary that private masses be continued and admitted in the King's English Church...and it is agreeable also to the law of God.
Sixthly, that auricular confession is required to be retained and continued, used and frequented in the Church of God.

Henry's demands for sanctions in the form of severe corporal punishments found expression in the following:

If any person, by word, writing, imprinting, ciphering, or in any other wise do publish, preach, teach, affirm, say declare, dispute, argue, or hold any opinion that here are listed contrary opinions ... then every such person, their advisers, aiders, comforters, counsellors, consentors, abettors, shall be deemed and adjudged heretics. And that every such offender shall have and suffer judgment, execution, pain, and the pains of death by way of burning, without any abjuration, clergy, or sanctuary to be permitted or suffered.

In actual practice, anyone denying the article on transubstantiation would be burnt and his property confiscated; even abjuration

18. Dodd, I, Appendix, 444
19. Ibid.
could not save him from these extreme penalties. For the other articles, the first offense merited confiscation of property, and imprisonment at the pleasure of the King; a second offense was to be punished with the death penalty.

This "whip with the six strings" as the Protestants called the Act led to but little severity in practice. The first Quest for heretics under it in London led to the indictment of over two hundred persons in a fortnight; every one of these prisoners received pardon upon submission.

For the prosecution of the Six Articles, Bonner was of course made the chief in London. He was empowered to receive the oaths of the London commissioners; William Roche, lord mayor of London; John Allen, Ralph Warren Richard Gresham, and Roger Cholmley, Knights; Michael Dormer, archdeacon of London. Their oath reads as follows:

Ye shall swear that ye, to your cunning, wit, and power, shall truly and indifferently execute the authority to you given by the King's commission made for the correction of heretics and the other offenders, without any favor, affection, corruption, dread, or malice to be borne to any person, as God help you and all the saints.

In administering the oath, says Strype, Bonner admonished the commissioners to spare none. He then began, says Fuller, to

20. Constant, I, 421
21. Gairdner, 208
22. Foxe, V, 2, 440
23. Ibid., V, 1, 264
24. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, I, 1, 566
display the true colors of his cruelty; he remarks that Bonner, alias Savage, was more fit to be called by his alias.

On the other hand, it is the general opinion of the historians of the Reformation that the Six Articles were actually not strenuously enforced. They were the cause of intermittent persecution, and did keep the advanced party in a continual state of fear. Except, however, for a few instances in 1540, 1543, and 1546, the Six Articles were rarely applied. One reason for the laxity in application was, undoubtedly, the presence of Cromwell, and his own laxity was at least partially the cause of his eventual downfall.

Among Bonner's prisoners under the "bloody whip" were: Grafton and Whitchurch, printers of the Bible in English; Thomas Cappes, for saying that the blessed sacrament was a memory of the Lord's death; Hardiman, a priest, for preaching that confession was confusion, and the butcherly ceremonies of the Church were to be abhorred, and that faith in Christ is sufficient to justify without any sacraments; Richard Bostock, for saying that auricular confession had killed more souls than all clubs and halters had done since Henry had become King of England; Ward, a friar, for marrying a wife. However, none of these was martyred.

There was, it is true, a victim in 1541, whose case is very

25. Fuller, op. cit., III, 179-180
26. Letters and Papers, XVIII, Introduction, xlix
27. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, I, 1, 566-567
pitiful, indeed. A young man of eighteen, Richard Mekins, had given utterance to Lutheran views about the Eucharist. On this one point, transubstantiation, no abjuration was permitted to prevent punishment once the case was proved. It was, therefore, impossible to save Mekins. But in prison he received what consolation the condemned might have from the visits of the bishop of London, "whom Puritan writers have unjustly pictured as a monster of killing inhumanity". The young man made a sincere abjuration before he died, acknowledging Bonner's kindness, which Puritan writers will not do, and he professed sincere regret that he had ever met the man who had taught him Lutheran doctrines, 28 Dr. Barnes. The chronicler Hall has tried to make Mekins a child of fifteen, but he was probably exaggerating what was a cruel case by making the victim a mere boy; Foxe and Burnet have perpetuated the story. But Richard Hilles, writing at the time from London to Henry Bullinger in Switzerland, calls Mekins a young man of eighteen. Had Mekins been fifteen, Hilles would certainly have said so, for he was no friend to the bishop of London, "the most bitter enemy of the Gospel". 29

Burnet and Foxe both tell the story in such a way as to make one believe no evidence was found against Mekins. Burnet says: "Bonner cursed the jury, and was in a great rage; he caused

28. Letters and Papers, XVIII, Introduction, xxv-xxvi
29. Ibid.
30. Richard Hilles to Henry Bullinger, in Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation, chiefly from the Archives of Zurich, Parker Society, I, 221
31. Ibid., I, 69
them to go aside again, and they being overawed, found the indictment". Foxe's story is substantially the same. But if the Six Articles were laxly applied, why would Bonner risk the odium of burning a fifteen year old boy against whom there was no evidence, and then allow other serious offenders of mature age escape his toils?

All three, Foxe, Burnet, and Hall also attempt to give the impression that the boy was bought to say kind things of Bonner when he was led out to die. Foxe, redubing it to a matter of fear, says "the poor lad would have gladly said that the Twelve Apostles had taught him the heresy, such was his childish fear". On the other hand, James Gairdner asks whether knowing his life could not be saved by any kind words regarding Bonner and not by anything else he might do or say, if Bonner had not been kind to him, is it likely that Mekins would have said so of the man who would execute him?

Only one other, Anne Askew, is definitely recorded, even by Foxe, as having suffered under Bonner's enforcement of the Six Articles. She was accused of teaching heretical doctrines; namely, that one who received the sacrament from a bad priest received not the Lord but the devil; that the sacrament remaining in the pix is only bread; that the mass was superstitious and idolatrous. When presented a confession of the Catholic faith for her signature, she refused to sign. Bonner then sent

32. Burnet, I, 475
33. Foxe, V, 2, 441-442
34. Ibid., 442
her cousin, Brittayne, to her in order to find out the whole truth of the matter. Bale sees in this an effort to ensnare the woman, and bursts into one of his milder tirades:

O vengeable tyrant and devil! How subtilly thouseekest the blood of this innocent woman under a color of friendly handling. Thou labor­est to have this woman in a snare with certain of her friends. But God put her in mind to reckon thee a dog and a swine.

As usual, the Puritan historians make a great effort to show that there was no case against the woman. But, of course, there must have been. The Six Articles had been modified in 1544; no one could be arraigned except on a presentment found by the oaths of twelve men before the commissioners; the offenses had to have taken place within the preceding twelve months; no one should be arrested for heresy before indictment except by warrant of two of the members of the Privy Council. It ought to be pretty difficult to get collusion with all these safeguards; and why, if there must be a scapegoat from time to time, pick on a woman who would naturally excite sympathy, and whose case would be used by the Protestant party to the discredit of the commission?

Maitland tells us that it ought to be observed that the aim of the Six Articles was to suppress the filthiness and foolish talking of those who had no reverence for truth, and who had no

37. Gairdner, 229
principle to prevent them from abjuring or perjuring anything

38 that might come in their way. Then, too, he says, that if Bon-
ner had been a favorite of the Puritan historians, they would
probably have told us that he was faithful and conscientious in

warning the jury not to be overzealous against the defenseless

39 poor and let the wealthy escape. But Bonner is no favorite of
the Puritan historians; hence Bonner is accused of hypocrisy and
smug conceit and of hard-hearted ridicule and burlesque when he

makes such charges to a jury. While the Puritans speak of
"daily suffering" under the Six Articles, Maitland can find only
twenty-eight who were put to death from 1539 to 1547; and not in
many cases, either, does even Foxe clearly state that these were

40 punished under the Six Articles.

Bonner's injunctions to the clergy of London in 1542 give
evidence of his desire for reform of morals among both clergy

and laity. The injunctions are far from radical in tone; in

fact, they are so very temperate that Burnet must say of them

that "they have a strain in them so far different from the rest

of Bonner's life that it is probable that they were drawn up by

41 another's pen, and imposed on Bonner by an order from the King".

Priests were ordered to provide themselves with the copies
of the King's ordinances regarding religious worship, and must
have a copy of the Bishops' Book. They must study each week a

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38. Maitland, 256
39. Ibid., 273-274
40. Ibid. 259-264
41. Burnet, I, 499
chapter from the New Testament so as to be able to rehearse it at the command of the bishop. Parsons absent from their parishes must substitute only a priest authorized by the bishop; those now absent must return at once. To protect the institution of marriage, Bonner issued two injunctions; curates were continually to warn the members of their parishes against contracting secret marriages; moreover, they were not to perform a marriage ceremony unless, in the case of one who had been previously married, he should produce a certificate of the death of his former partner.

For the better instruction of their charges, priests were ordered to declare openly in the pulpit twice every quarter the seven deadly sins and the Ten Commandments. Children who came to them for instruction were to be taught to read English; and the priests were allowed to take a modest pay only from those well able to pay. Confession at Easter time was ordered and must be made to one's own curates for many "were trying to hide their naughty living" by confessing to strangers.

It is interesting to read the following injunction:

By a detestable custom universally reigning, young people on Sundays and holydays in time of divine service and preaching, resort to alehouses and there exercise unlawful games with swearing, blasphemy, drunkenness, and other enormities. Keepers of alehouses

42. Bonner's injunctions to his clergy in the year 1542, in Letters and Papers, XVII, 282: Burnet, IV, 510
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
and taverns are to be warned not to suffer such ungodly assemblies, or to receive persons to bowling and drinking at such times.  

Bonner issued three injunctions with the purpose of reforming his clergy. In the first, priests were warned to "wear more seemly apparel" so as to be known at all times from lay persons. Second, no priest was to be allowed to say Mass or hold any service until he had first been presented to the bishop's officers. Finally, no priest was to "use unlawful games or to use frequently ale-houses, taverns, suspect places, at unlawful times, or in light company".

Lay morals were also insisted on. Priests were to exhort their parishioners to abstain from swearing, blasphemy, cursing, scolding, talking and jangling in church, from adultery, fornication, gluttony, and drunkenness. At the same time, 1542, to prevent the spread of heresy, through reading matter, the following books were proscribed by Bonner:

- The English Text of Tyndale's Bible
- A Book of Doctor Barnes
- The Supplication of Beggars
- The Practice of Prelates
- The Revelation of Anti-Christ
- Disputation of the Father and the Son
- The King's Primer

Later, in 1546, Bonner added to this list all the writings of Miles Coverdale; the books of one Frith, burned in 1534 for heresy, especially one false teaching regarding the doctrine of

45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Strype, Thomas Cranmer, 138
Purgatory; Wyclif's writings; and the books of George Joye.

Certainly, this Bonner is most orthodox; in fact, so orthodox that many have wondered how he secured preferment under Cromwell and Cranmer, chiefs of the heretical party in England. Foxe would have us believe that the bishop had advanced "because he was a good man, a true friend of the Gospel, and a fast friend of the Protestant party; he tells us further that Bonner was reckoned a Lutheran in France and Spain while on embassies there. Collier tells us that Bonner was, until after the fall of Cromwell a zealous promoter of the Reformation. He says further that Cromwell and Cranmer took him for an enemy of the old superstition, and on this lent him their interest to promote him to the bishopric of London; but that when Bonner perceived the King's inclination to orthodoxy, Bonner went over to that side. Burnet says that Bonner thinking that Cranmer had advanced by being compliant "resolved to outdo him on that point; but there was this difference, that Cranmer followed his opinion out of conscience, but Bonner against his conscience complied".

But is this all true? How then would Foxe, Collier, and Burnet explain that Bonner was not compliant during the days of Edward and Elizabeth? If he were compliant for the sake of

50. Foxe, V, 1, 151
51. Ibid.
52. Collier, V, 43
53. Ibid., 40-41
54. Burnet, I, 428
advance, what advance was it to be jailed under Edward and de-
prived from 1549 to 1553? Or how was he advanced by living in
prison under Elizabeth till his death in 1569? Or if he accepted
doctrines against his conscience under Henry, would it not have
been easier to accept under Edward and Elizabeth doctrines that
he believed to be the truth? Why should he have suffered for
adhering to something he did not believe, when he would have
been relieved from this suffering by professing faith in what he
actually did believe?

On the other hand, we can readily see that Bonner was very
orthodox in his doctrine at least as early as 1540. Bonner, as
bishop of London was on the commission in Convocation to draw up
a declaration of Christian doctrine to replace the Bishops' Book
of 1537 which had been meant to be only temporary. Cranmer had
set questions to be answered in writing; we shall consider Bon-
ner's answers to most of them, with a view to discovering his
orthodoxy.

Question: Whether this word sac-
rament ought to be attributed to
the seven only?

Bonner's answer: That this word
sacrament in our language hath been
attributed to the seven customably
called sacrament; not for that the
word sacrament cannot be applied to
any more, or for that he holds
there can be no more, but for that
the seven have been specially of
very long and ancient season re-
ceived and continued and taken for
things of that sort.

55. Burnet, I, 2, 455
Question: Whether the determinate number of sacraments be a doctrine, whether of the Scriptures or of the fathers?

Bonner's answer: I think it be a doctrine set forth by the ancient fathers, one from another, taking their matter and ground out of Scripture as they understood it; though Scripture, for all that, do not give unto all the seven the special names by which now they are called, nor yet openly call them by the name sacrament.

Question: What is found in Scripture of the matter, nature, effect, and virtue of such as we call the seven sacraments?

Bonner's answer: I find that Saint Austin is of this sentence that where the sacraments of the old law did promise grace and comfort, the sacraments of the new law are more easier, more fewer, more wholesome, and more happeneth to be happier.

Question: Whether confirmation cum chrismate of them that be baptized, be found in Scripture?

Bonner's answer: I find in Scripture in many places de manu impositum which I think to be confirmation and that with chrism to supply the visible appearance of the Holy Ghost, which Holy Ghost was so visible in the primitive church.

Question: Whether the Apostles lacking a higher power, as in not having a Christian king among them, made bishops by that necessity or by authority given them by God?

Bonner's answer: I think that the
Apostles made bishops by the law of God, because it is said, *In quo vos spiritus sanctus posuit; nevertheless I think if Christian princes had been then they should have named by right, and appointed the bishops to their rooms and places.*

Question: Whether a bishop hath authority to make a priest by the Scripture, or no?

Bonner's answer: I think a bishop duly appointed hath authority by Scripture to make a bishop and also a priest; because Christ being a bishop did so make himself and because the Apostles did the like.

Question: Whether a man be bound by the authority of the Scripture to confess his deadly secret sins to a priest?

Bonner's answer: I think that as the sinner is bounden by this authority to confess his open sins, so also is he bounden to confess his secret sins, because the special end is to wit, absolution a pecato *cujus* *decit se servum*; and that all sins as touching God are open and in no wise secret or hid.

Question: Whether the sacrament of the altar was instituted to be received of one man for another?

Bonner's answer: I think that the sacrament was not instituted to be received of one man for another, but of every man for himself.

Question: Whether the receiving of the sacrament of one man do avail and profit any other?

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59. Ibid., 469
60. Ibid., 475
61. Ibid., 488
62. Ibid., II, 2, 197
Bonner's answer: I think that the receiving of the sacrament doth not avail or profit any other but only as all other good works done of any member of Christ's church be available to the whole mystical body of Christ, and to every lively member of the same, by reason of a mutual participation of, and spiritual communion between them.

Question: What is the oblation and sacrifice of Christ in the Mass?

Bonner's answer: I think it is the presentation of the very body and blood of Christ being really present in the sacrament; which presentation the priest maketh at the Mass in the name of Christ unto God the Father, in memory of Christ's passion and death on the cross; with thanksgiving and devout prayer that all Christians, and namely they which join specially in the sacrifice and oblation, and of whom he maketh special remembrance may attain the benefit of the said passion.

Question: Whether it be convenient that the custom whereby the priest alone receiveth the sacrament at the Mass be continued in the realm?

Bonner's answer: I would wish that at every Mass there would be some to receive the sacrament with the priest; nevertheless, if none will come to receive it, I think it lawful and convenient that the priests of this realm of England may say Mass and receive the sacrament alone.

53. Ibid., 199
54. Ibid., 211
55. Ibid., 208
CHAPTER IV
BONNER AND THE PROTECTORATE

Henry VIII died on January 28, 1547. He had created a new church, a schismatic, the Church of England. But when he died, that church was only schismatic; it was not yet heretical. For in its doctrine, its liturgy, its discipline—in all save acknowledging the authority of the Holy See—the Church of England conformed to the Roman Catholic Church. The English Church had remained orthodox largely because of the efforts the Henricians made to keep it so; they had always championed Roman Catholic doctrines in opposition to the Lutheran and Zwinglian views of the advanced party in the schism. All the arguments of the Henricians were in conformity with orthodox teaching; to Cranmer's questions they ever returned orthodox answers. Above all, the Henricians had always successfully opposed a doctrinal agreement with the German Protestants, an agreement which recurred frequently in the form of proposals to strengthen England by a political move.

The progress of the Reformation in England had been checked in the period following the fall of Cromwell, because Bishop Gardiner and the Duke of Norfolk had become the most important members of the Royal Council; both of these men were very orthodox, and they held absolute control in the Royal Council. So
successful was the opposition of the Henricians during the last years of Henry VIII that we find a Protestant of the time writing:

You can now cross England from one end to the other, north to south, or east to west, without meeting a single preacher who with pure heart and sincere faith seeks the glory of God. The King has banished them all. 1

However, in the six years following the death of Henry, England passed from orthodoxy to heresy; under Edward VI, England yielded at last to the Protestant Reformation. For after all, the opposition of the Henrician bishops had been effective only because Henry himself had willed that it should be so; he himself was orthodox. But now with Henry gone, the Henricians were to discover that a schismatic church can hardly, for a long time, remain just that. Under the Duke of Somerset, 1547-1549, the transformation was fairly slow and moderate; but under Warwick, 1549-1553, it was rapid and violent.

Constant says that there is good evidence that already in Henry's reign the Duke of Somerset cherished prudently an attachment to Protestant doctrines. He was delighted at Henry's marriage to Anne of Cleves which promised happier days for English Protestants; of course, he was disappointed when the marriage was quickly dissolved. Now, in 1547, when he assumed power in

1. Richard Hilles to Henry Bullinger, in Original Letters, I, 204
2. Constant, G., The English Reformation, Edward VI, II, 15
3. Ibid., II, 37
the Royal Council, English Protestants greatly rejoiced. Richard Hilles wrote that he "is well-disposed towards pious doctrine, holds in abomination the stupid inventions of the Papists, and is a great enemy of the bishop of Rome". It is certain that as long as he retained power he headed the advanced party in the Regency and did much to promote the Reformation in England.

On the other hand it must be noted that the first steps towards reform were made slowly and with moderation under Protector Somerset; for he was determined to restrain the excessive zeal of some of the reformers which might discredit the entire Reformation. For, as Constant points out, in every revolution a vocal and active few outweigh the peaceable and indifferent masses and draw them after them. Accordingly, the first Injunctions of Somerset aimed at restraining, rather than encouraging, the zeal of the reformers.

On February 10, 1547, the Royal Council listened to a complaint from Bonner against the vicar and church-wardens of St. Martin's, Ironmonger Lane. These men, without any authority to do so, had taken away the images in their church and had set up the royal arms in place of the crucifix, painted the walls with some texts of Scripture of which some were perversely translated. The accused had attempted to excuse themselves on the grounds that in making repairs to the roof they had removed the crucifix

4. Original Letters, I, 256
5. Constant, II, 44
6. Ibid., II, 45
7. Gairdner, The English Church, 242
and images all of which had simply, from old age, fallen apart from decay; they had not replaced the images because some of the parishioners considered them objects of idolatry. But Somerset and the Council were not yet ready to condone such proceedings; the rector was ordered to replace the images and the crucifix, and the wardens were fined twenty pounds each.

On July 31, 1547, there came from the press of Richard Grafton two important publications, the Injunctions and the First Book of Homilies. The general tendency of the Injunctions was to maintain preaching against the usurped authority of the bishop of Rome, to destroy images, shrines, and pictures. They ordered the Gospels and Epistles read in English; no longer was the litany to be said or sung in procession but kneeling. The laity were reminded that the priestly office was appointed of God, and consequently, priests were to be treated with great respect; regulations such as this were calculated to keep the more violent reformers, and there were many such, quiet. The Book of Homilies was a collection of twelve discourses, the object of which seems to have been to check the extravagance of ignorant preachers. However, under cover of explaining certain articles of faith, they introduced novel doctrines into the Anglican Church. Justification and faith and good works were given a Lutheran explanation; several rites and ceremonies were denied

8. Ibid., 243
9. Constant, II, 45
10. The Injunctions are summarized in Gairdner, 246-247
11. Gairdner, 247; Constant, II, 50
as popish superstitions. Hence, we see that under cover of curbing extreme change, the Protector was nevertheless allowing the Church of England to take the road towards Protestantism.

Bonner was the first bishop to come into conflict with the Council on the matter of these Injunctions and Homilies. On September 1, 1547, Sir Anthony Cook and Sir John Godsalve and others appointed to make the royal visitation of the diocese of London came to the bishop; they required of him to take an oath denouncing the bishop of Rome and his usurped authority, and to swear obedience to the King. He was likewise ordered to redress the abuses within his diocese. Bonner demanded to see their commission for making the visitation; when they refused to show the commission he received all their orders with the following protest which he insisted must be written into the records of the visitation: "I do receive these Injunctions and Homilies with this protestation that I will observe them if they be not contrary to God's law and the statutes and ordinances of the Church".

On September 12, Bonner was called before the Council to answer for his opposition to the royal visitors. He was reprimanded for having made a protestation "to the evil example of all such as should hear of it, and to the contempt of the authority which His Majesty has justly on earth of this Church of England.

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12. Constant, II, 50
13. Foxe, V, 2, 742
14. Ibid.
15.

When the Council demanded an unconditional retraction, Bonner, whether for fear or conscience, made it in the following terms:

Whereas I, Edmund Bonner, bishop of London, at such time as I received the King's Majesty's Injunctions and Homilies of my most dread sovereign lord did unadvisedly make such protestation as now, upon better consideration of my duty, and of the evil example that might ensue unto others thereof, appeareth to me neither reasonable nor such as might well stand with my diligent duty of an humble subject, forasmuch as was then the same protestation enacted and put in record, I have thought it my duty not only to declare before your lordships that I do now, upon better consideration of my duty, renounce and revoke my said protest but also most humbly beseech your lordships that this my revocation of the same may likewise be put in the same record for a perpetual memory of the truth; most humbly beseeching your lordships both to take order that it may take effect and also that my former unadvised doings may be pardoned by the King. 17

This humiliating revocation, however, did not save Bonner completely; it was thought necessary to place such a dangerous bishop in confinement. Accordingly, Bonner was imprisoned in the Fleet for a few weeks. Gairdner says that he was there till a general pardon freed him in January, 1548; but Constant points out that he sat in the Parliament that began its sessions on

15. Acts of the Privy Council, quoted in Constant, II, 225
16. Foxe, V, 2, 743
17. Ibid., 742-744
18. Gairdner, 248
November 4, 1547, and voted against several measures of religious reform. It is Constant, too, who predicates that the imprisonment was the work of Cranmer because he saw in Bonner one of the chief opponents of his own proposed religious innovations. This seems quite likely in view of the fact that Bonner was imprisoned during the time that Somerset was in Scotland, and he was set free immediately upon the return of the Protector.

If Cranmer had intended to intimidate Bonner, in order that he would not dare to oppose religious innovation, then the Archbishop's scheme was an utter failure. Bonner continued to oppose everything that did not agree with his view of what was orthodox; at least he continued to oppose while matters were still under debate. On the other hand, though, the Bishop of London had learned to be somewhat more cautious and had been quite careful not to leave the Council any opening to accuse him of failure to conform. Burnet, almost complainingly, says that Bonner complied so perfectly with the laws and orders of the Council, that it was not easy to find any matter against him; he executed every order sent to him so readily that there was no ground for a single complaint, and still it was known that in his heart he was against everything that they did.

For Bonner did express his opinions while matters were still in the debating stage. When, in December, 1547, a bill to repeal

19. Constant, II, 229n
20. Ibid., II, 229
21. Burnet says that Bonner's opposition was planned in order "to keep his interest with the papists"; II, 218
22. Burnet, II, 218
the Act of the Six Articles was in debate in Parliament, Bonner was one of the few to vote against the bill. In the same session of Parliament, Bonner opposed the bill suppressing the chantries and giving their endowments to the King. These chantries were endowments of priests to say or sing Mass for the soul of the endower, and in many cases to perform certain other offices; it is estimated that at the time there were about twenty-four hundred of them, and that their endowments amounted to as much as one hundred eighty thousand pounds. The professed object of this bill was a purely material one, to supply a deficit in the royal treasury and to found schools with the money. But this bill found stiff opposition; among those voting against, in addition to Bonner were Cranmer, and the bishops of Ely, Norwich, Hereford, Worcester, and Chichester, at least as late as on the fourth reading of the bill. Bonner also voted in opposition to Communion under both kinds, and on February 19, 1548, voted against the bill which would allow the clergy to marry. December 14 to December 18, the second Book of Common Prayer was debated in Parliament; Bonner was one of the chief opponents of its adoption and was one of the bishops to vote against adoption.

23. This act repealed all heresy acts from the days of Richard II; Pollard, Thomas Cranmer, 201
24. Burnet, II, 101
25. Catholic Encyclopedia, New York, 1908; article by Cornelius Holland on "Chantries".
26. Ibid.
27. Pollard, Thomas Cranmer, 202
28. Burnet, II, 94
29. Ibid., II, 168
in the Church of England.

This first Book of Common Prayer, which despite the opposition of the Henricians, was adopted in the Church of England in 1549, was almost completely the work of Cranmer. It is true that a committee of bishops had met in order to discuss the controversial points in the prayer-book, and that a draft of the book was presented to them. But none of these had any share in its composition. Cranmer composed the Book of Common Prayer, but had to make concessions to Catholic doctrine because of the presence of the moderate Henrician bishops in Parliament where the formula was debated and voted on. On the other hand, though, under pretext of restoring the Divine Office, the Mass, the sacraments, rites and ceremonies to their primitive purity, the Book of Common Prayer "superimposed on the old English liturgy that of the Lutherans whose spirit inspired the entire work".

But despite Bonner's opposition to these various measures, the Council could not find excuse to imprison and deprive him for some time. He had abolished forbidden ceremonies, and he finally accepted the new Anglican Prayer Book of 1549. But he was headed for ever more serious trouble; for, says Constant, "his opposition to the Reformation was well-known. It was sufficiently proved by his long absences from the pulpit, by his readiness yet to wink at breaches of the Act of Uniformity, by his reluctance to make changes, and by his purely passive

30. Constant, II, 88
31. Ibid., II, 68
32. Ibid., II, 84
obedience. His example in the capital of the kingdom was not without effect and hampered the Reformers in their purpose."

The Council had forbidden the Mass of the Apostles and the Mass of Our Lady which were still sung at Saint Paul's under the name of Communion of the Apostles and Communion of Our Lady. The Council, wishing to abolish all private Masses, sent the following letter to Bonner:

Having very creditable notice that within your cathedral church there be as yet the Apostles' Mass and Our Lady's Mass under the defense and nomination of the the Apostles' Communion and Our Lady's Communion, contrary to the King's Majesty's proceedings, the same being, for the misuse, displeasing to God; for the place, not tolerable; for the fondness of the name, a scorn to the reverence of the communion of the Lord's body and blood; we, for the augmentation of God's honor and glory and the consonance of His Majesty's laws, and the avoiding of murmur, have thought good to will and command you, that from henceforth no such masses in this manner to be in your church any longer used; but that according to the Act of Parliament, the holy blessed communion be ministered at the high altar of the church, and in no other place of the same. Herein, you shall not only satisfy our expectation of your conformity in all lawful things, but also avoid the murmur of sundry that be rather justly offended.

Bonner complied in his usual manner; he passed on the orders

33. Ibid., II, 235
34. Foxe, V, 2, 723
35. Ibid., V, 2, 724
36. Constant, II, 235
of the Council to his Dean and the Chapter of Saint Paul's practically without any comment or recommendations. "This Wednesday", he wrote to them, "I received certain letters from the Council and the same I do now send herewith to you to the intent you may peruse them well, and proceed accordingly; praying you, in case all be not present that you may call the company together of the church and make declaration hereof unto them".

But within a month Bonner was again at odds with the Council; he was accused this time of not enforcing the new Book of Common Prayer. Foxe says that the Council was now really angry because of the "cloaked contempt, wilful winking, and stubborn disobedience of all old popish curates" that caused the Book of Common Prayer to be irreverently used. On July 23, 1549, Bonner received the following communication from the Council:

If we shall hereafter eftsoons have complaint and find the like faults in your diocese, we shall have just cause to impute the fault thereof, and of all that ensueth thereof, unto you; and consequently, be occasioned thereby to see otherwise to the redress of these things, whereof we would be sorry. And we do eftsoons charge and command you upon your allegiance to look well upon your duty herein.

At least in outward show, Bonner once more accepted and showed himself most compliant to the wishes of the Council; at once he

37. Foxe, V, 2, 724
39. Foxe, V, 2, 725
40. Ibid., 726-727
ordered the Dean and Chapter of Saint Paul's to look to the accomplishment of the orders of the Council: "I am right well willing and desiring that the letters should be in all points duly executed and observed according to the tenor of the Council's command". He further required that they inform him of measures taken towards conformity and also to certify to him the names of persons who should be found negligent in the matters prescribed. So compliant had he been that the Council thought now to make use of the prestige he commanded as the bishop of London.

Domestic disturbances had arisen of late, "principally from social causes", says James Gairdner. But the uprising known as the Western Rebellion sprang directly from disobedience to the young king. A rising had occurred in Cornwall out of a controversy over the introduction of the newly prescribed services. Among other things, the insurgents demanded: that the decrees of all General Councils be observed; that the Act of the Six Articles be revived; that the entire Mass be celebrated in Latin; and that there be no necessity of anyone communicating along with the priest; that the sacrament be hung over the high altar as before; that they be permitted holy water, palms, and ashes, and that images be set up again; and that there be prayers for the souls in Purgatory.

Now the Council desired that Bonner should deliver at Saint Paul's a sermon against rebellion and all disobedience to the

41. Ibid., V, 2, 727
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
new order in religion. But seeing that previously Bonner had always been most compliant after some reproof, the Council all thought it best to call Bonner for a reprimand. Accordingly, he was ordered to appear on August 10, 1549. During this session certain private injunctions were given to him to be followed and observed in his diocese. 1) He was ordered to preach at Saint Paul's Cross three weeks hence declaring certain articles that were delivered to him; furthermore, he was required to preach once in every quarter throughout the year thereafter, exhorting the people to obedience, prayer, and good living; he must also be present at every sermon delivered at his cathedral church. 2) Bonner must himself sing the high Mass at Saint Paul's on all principal feasts, and keep the feasts with great solemnity, "for the better example of the others". 3) He must call before him all who do not communicate at least once a year; as also to reprimand all who use any rite except the one ordered, and to see to it that all such offenders be punished with severe and very straight punishment. 4) Adulterers are to be prosecuted more diligently and punished according to the ecclesiastical law. 5) Because there were more disorders in London than in any other English diocese and in order that Bonner might look "more diligently, better, and more earnestly to the reformation of them" the Council ordered him not to travel without permission.

44. Foxe, V, 2, 730
45. Ibid., 731
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
Bonner's sermon was practically dictated to him by the Council. He was commanded, in the first place, to declare that all such as rebel against their princes rebel against God, and bring down on themselves eternal damnation; further, he must declare that all those who die in rebellion are utterly damned, and that is especially true of the rebels in Norfolk, Devonshire, and Cornwall. Secondly, Bonner must, in order to command respect for the Book of Common Prayer, declare that obedience to lawful authority is much more important than any ceremonial or public worship; and that, as a result, anyone using old rites gets no benefit from his devotion because of its disobedient character. In the final point, Bonner was enjoined to preach that the authority of King Edward is of no less authority and force in this our young age than is or was that of any of our predecessors, though the same were much older; therefore, all our subjects be no less bound to the obedience to our precepts, laws, and statutes, than if we were thirty or forty years of age.

On September 1, 1549, Bonner delivered his sermon at Saint Paul's. Intentionally or not, he completely neglected to speak on the authority of the King in his nonage; he further aggravated his case by devoting most of his sermon to the orthodox doctrine of the Real Presence. Foxe lets himself go in reporting that

48. Ibid., 745-746; Collier, V, 335n; Constant, II, 235
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Constant, II, 235-236; Gairdner, 271
"that long-colored perverse obstinacy and the infestered hatred of this double-faced dissembler against the king's godly proceedings was most plainly manifested by his disobedient manner in this his sermon". Two priests of his diocese whom Bonner had previously forbidden to preach, Hooper and Latimer, at once denounced Bonner to the Council. In their long denunciation these two reported that:

Bonner of what zeal or mind we cannot tell, whether favoring the opinion of the said rebels, or contemning the commands of your lordships to him, not only left out to declare the said article, but in the rest of his sermon did not so fully and apertly declare the said articles, as to our judgment did appear they ought to be declared, willingly leaving out those things that should have made for quiet and obedience.

A week later a commission was appointed to examine Bishop Bonner; on this commission sat Cranmer, Bishop Ridley of Rochester, the Dean of Saint Paul's, Dr. May, and Secretary William Petre. Their commission reads as follows:

The said bishop, in contempt of us hath overslipped and not observed certain of the things by us enjoined and others so perversely and negligently done, that things minded to us of reformation be converted by the wilful negligence or perversity of him, to a great occasion of slander, tumult, and grudge.

52. Foxe, V, 2, 746
53. Ibid., V, 2, 747
54. Constant, II, 236; Sir Thomas Smith was added to the commission at the second session; Gairdner, 271
amongst our people. We have appointed you to call before you, as well the denouncers of the said faults, as also the bishop; and with due examinations and process, according to the law and justice, to hear the said bishop...with full power and authority to suspend, excommunicate, commit to prison, or deprive the bishop if the offence shall so appear to merit.

On Tuesday, September 10, Bonner made his first appearance before this commission. Well acquainted with the law he pointed out the flaw of having incompetent persons as his denouncers; namely, priests of his own diocese. Confronted by Latimer and Hooper, whose denunciation was read to him, Bonner did a little denouncing of his own, inveighing against them mightily as "evil, defamed, notorious, and criminoius persons" declaring them "manifest and notable heretics and seducers of the people". The historian Garidner feels that Bonner was quite justified in this line of attack, saying that it was certainly something new to appoint heretics to denounce bishops.

Given three days to prepare an answer to the denunciation Bonner once more presented himself to the commission, Friday, September 13. He now based his defense on three main points. In the first place, said Bonner, Latimer and Hooper are both excommunicated; hence, they ought to be utterly excluded and abhorred by all truly Christian people, and certainly not

55. Foxe, V, 2, 748-749
56. Ibid., 752
57. Gairdner, 271
alone allowed as witnesses against their bishops. Secondly, he claimed the report to be false, at least in spirit, in declaring that he had omitted the enjoined articles; for he did speak against the rebels, and he did declare that those who used false rites got no benefit therefrom because of their disobedience. Finally, he alleged that indifferent listeners would swear that he had earnestly spoken of the enjoined articles; here he expressed the wish that "Latimer and Hooper, with all the rest of these new preachers, did mean as faithfully as I towards the King's Majesty, his honor authority, and royal power".

Foxe, of course, enjoyed greatly Cranmer's 'privy nip' at Bonner's expense at this session. Bonner had quite naturally been citing laws in his favor; Cranmer quipped: "Well, my lord, ye be too full of your law. I would sincerely wish that you had less knowledge in that law, and more in God's law and your duty". But Bonner's reply was equally a good 'nip': "Well, since your grace falleth to wishing, I can also wish many things to be in your person". Bonner's sharp wit also cracked Smith who had accused Bonner of using his knowledge of law to confuse the issue before the commission: "I knew the law ere you could read it".

It was at this same session that the commission presented to Bonner the articles that he must answer in his defense soon.

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58. Foxe, V, 2, 755  
59. Ibid., 758  
60. Ibid., 759  
61. Ibid., 761  
62. Ibid., 762
1) The first accusation was that he had not truly, sincerely, and wholly declared all the articles as they had been put to him.

2) Bonner must declare who had helped him and advised him in the preparation of his sermon. 3) The next two articles mentioned specific failings against the articles: to wit, that he had not declared the worthlessness of old rites of devotion, and that he had not spoken of the King's authority during his minority.

4) He must answer whether or not he would defend the opinions of the rebels. 5) He was accused of having knowledge that people in his diocese attended Mass in Latin after the ancient rite, and he had not called such offenders before him to punish them; that he had not cited before him notable adulterers, fornicators, and incestuous persons. To answer these articles, Bonner was given three days in which to prepare.

Bonner made his replies before the commission on September 16. To the mainpoint objected against him, Bonner answered that his failure to declare the King's authority during his minority was merely an accident; for he had certainly intended so to declare. In fact, he had collected out of Scripture and various histories, the examples of kings who had received obedience during their minorities; however, his notes had been disturbed, and though he had appealed to his secretaries, Bourne and Harpsfield he had been unable during his sermon to recall the examples he had planned to cite. But, declared Bonner, he had persuaded the

63. Ibid., 763-764
64. Ibid., 766; also in Constant, II, 236
people to obedience to King Edward, and since every one knew of his minority, he was actually declaring the article in question.

To the other points, Bonner in general made answers that were received ungraciously by the commission; for example, that he could not tell whether or not he would defend the rebels' opinions, since he did not know what those opinions were. In general the commission was dissatisfied with the answers because they were noncommittal, and they still had no sufficient grounds for depriving him legally.

On September 18, Bonner was once again called before the commission, this time to receive new articles to answer the following day. Bonner, however, was in no mood to be handled so roughly and illegally by the commission, and roundly he flayed the whole group of examiners, insisting on the invalidity of the whole proceeding, calling the commissioners pretensed commissioners, the articles pretensed, and the whole proceedings pretensed. By this time, Cranmer was quite irritated, and delivered a stinging rebuke to Bonner:

My lord of London, if I had saten here only as archbishop of Canterbury, it had been your part to have used yourself more lowly, obediently, and reverently toward me than you have; but seeing that I with mycolleagues sit here as delegates from the king's majesty, I must tell you plain that you have used yourself too, too much inordinately. For every time that we have sitten

65. Ibid., 766
66. Ibid., 775
in commission, you have used such unseemly fashions, giving checks and taunts to us, as also to certain of the ancientest as be here, calling them fools and daws, as that you have given to the multitude an intolerable example of disobedience. And I assure you, my lord, there is you and one other bishop whom I could name that have used yourselves so contumuously and disobediently, as the like I think hath not before been heard or seen. 67

Bonner was prevented by illness from appearing the next day but on September 20 he was once more on the stand before the commission. At this session, he attacked the validity of the whole proceeding, because of the presence of Sir Thomas Smith on the commission; Smith had not been one of the original commission. At this, Smith, vexed no little, abused Bonner so violently as to call from the bishop a ringing rejoinder:

Because you sit here by virtue of the king's commission, and for that you be secretary to the King's majesty, and also one of his council I must and do honor you and reverence you; but as you be but Sir Thomas Smith and say as you have said, I say you lie, and in that case, I defy you; do what you can to me; I fear you not. 68

For this, Cranmer judged Bonner of such guilt as to be worthy of prison and so declared openly; to which statement Bonner, now thoroughly aroused, made reply:

Ye may send me whither ye will, and I must obey ye therein; and so will, except ye send me to the devil, for

67. Ibid., 776
68. Ibid., 783
At the end of this day's session, Bonner was not allowed to go to his own home, but was conducted to the Marshalsea; however, it was another ten days before a verdict was reached and sentence was passed against him.

On October 1, 1549, Cranmer read the decree depriving Bonner from his bishopric. Bonner had prepared his protest in view of the fact that he was convinced that he would be found guilty; he appealed against the verdict and sentence, declaring the sentence to be iniquitous and unjust. From the Marshalsea, a few days later, Bonner sent the following note to the Council:

> For redress of such notable and manifest injuries as have been contrary to all law, honesty, and good reason, inflicted on me by my lord of Canterbury, and the rest of the commission; yet, because Dr. Smith, being a minister of the Duke of Somerset, and they both my enemies, hath sundry ways studied and labored my ruin and destruction, I shall at this present renew my suit, and beseech your leave to make my suit for the redress of the great and manifest injuries done against me by the said persons.

This appeal, made on October 28, was directed to the Council, now under the leadership of Warwick, since Somerset had fallen from power earlier in the month and had himself been put in

69. Ibid., 784
70. Ibid., 797
prison as a traitor. On February 7, 1550, Bonner's appeal was heard in commission composed of four clerics and four laymen; the entire case was rehearsed in the Star Chamber at Westminster.

But Bonner was doomed; the Council confirmed the previous decision, and so Bonner was returned to the Marshalsea, "there to remain in perpetual prison at the king's pleasure, and to lose all his spiritual promotions and dignities forever".

It is Constant's opinion that Bonner was deprived and imprisoned because he was a firm believer in, and preacher of, transubstantiation. Bonner himself declared during the trial that the cause of all his trouble was not the matter they pretended against him, but the fact that he preached the true doctrine of the Real Presence in the blessed sacrament. Since the doctrine of the Eucharist was the crux of the struggle between Catholics and Protestants, Bonner had to be got rid of, as well as the other Henricians who believed as Bonner did. In this opinion, James Gairdner concurs, saying: "It would seem that the real object of this irregular and unjust prosecution was simply to deprive a bishop who was so strong an upholder of the still recognized doctrine of transubstantiation". Furthermore, Gairdner declares it his opinion that the entire case was prejudged:

If anyone, neglecting Foxe's irrelevant jibes, will take the trouble to go through the whole trial with

71. Wriothesley, Chronicle, II, 33-34
72. Constant, II, 237-238
73. Foxe, V, 2, 756
74. Gairdner, 272
care, he will find the following conclusions pretty well established. First, that Bonner was animated by no spirit of disobedience, but fairly intended to comply with all that was required of him. Second, that the article which he had omitted was not at first indicated in the paper delivered to him, but was a mere after-thought added to it by Sir Thomas Smith by the Protector's command. Third, that his omission was really accidental, for he had meant to speak about it; but having dropped his notes, and being asked further to declare from the pulpit the contents of a lengthy bill put into his hands, the point of the king's authority during his nonage slipped his memory.

Justly or unjustly, though, Bonner had been condemned. The deprived bishop spent the remainder of the reign of Edward VI in the Marshalsea prison.

75. Ibid., 271-272
CHAPTER V

BONNER RESTORED--MARY TUDOR

When Edward VI died in 1553, England was Protestant; or rather the Church of England was Protestant. The movement towards Protestantism, which had been so resolutely checked by Henry VIII and the Henricians had little opposition or none at all once the Henrician bishops, champions of orthodoxy, had been deprived and imprisoned, and their places taken by men chosen by Cranmer, Somerset, and Warwick, all leaders of the Protestant party in England. Constant points out that the English Reformation was the work of men who were disciples of the continental reformers, and that the changes that took place in England were not at all original, but are very similar to the changes that took place in Germany upon the overthrow of the old religion there. Cranmer was the disciple successively of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin; the other bishops of the advanced party, Ridley, Ponet, Bale, Hooper, and Coverdale, likewise derived their ideas from the continent. So great had been the influence of these men that there is no doctrinal resemblance between the Church of England in 1547 and the Church of England in 1553.

1. Constant, II, 269
2. Ibid., 282
On July 19, 1553, Mary was proclaimed Queen of England in London, with much enthusiasm, ringing of bells, and lighting of bonfires. On August 5, Bonner was released from the Marshalsea along with a large number of religious and state prisoners, among them Dr. Tunstall, the old bishop of Durham. Upon Mary’s accession, Bonner had once more presented an appeal calling all illegal, this deprivation, imprisonment, losses, expenses, troubles, everything that he had undergone at the hands of the Royal Council. Queen Mary had at once appointed several delegates to examine the entire case; namely, John Tregonwell, John Roper, David Pole, Archdeacon of Darby, Gilbert Bourne, Archdeacon of Bedford, the Marquis of Winchester, the Earl of Arundel, the Earl of Darby, and the Earl of Shrewsbury. After several hearings, this commission gave a decision in favor of Bonner; they declared that the deprivation had been amiss and to the prejudice of Bonner, and therefore, the sentence was null and void. The same commission pronounced him restored and "in the same state in all and by all as the reverend Father was ever before".

But the return of Mary and the reintroduction of orthodoxy could not be accomplished without some untoward happenings; the seeds of discord had not only been sown, but the harvest was ripe. Sunday, August 13, Dr. Gilbert Bourne, once Bonner's

3. Foxe, VI, 2, 537; Wriothesley, II, 96
4. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, 1, 35
5. Ibid., 35
6. Ibid., 37
7. Ibid., Strype who could praise the previous deprivation calls this an unjust, partial decision.
chaplain, now the Queen's, preached at Saint Paul's. It was just four years since Bonner had preached in the same place and from the same text, as it was the eleventh Sunday after Trinity in both cases; on that occasion Bonner had preached the sermon for which he had been imprisoned. Bourne alluded to this fact, and began to preach in favor of Bishop Bonner, showing the injustice of the proceedings against him. "Certain lewd and ill-disposed persons made a hollowings and such a crying" that serious disorder was created in the church. When Bourne bravely tried to quiet the crowd, someone threw a dagger at him, he was, however, conducted safely from the church, while another preacher, Bradford, tried to quiet the crowd. At this, the Royal Council became alarmed; they attempted to create peace by announcing that Queen Mary had no intention of using force in religious matters, but rather would peacefully attempt to persuade all to her way in religion. And, apparently, Mary meant to do just that; but she warned the trouble-makers they would be dealt with severely. To this end, she forbade unlicensed preaching and printing.

As proof that Mary had no desire to persecute, James Gairdner cites the Queen's license in allowing foreign Protestants to leave England without any obstacles being put in their way; among the more famous of these Protestants was Peter Martyr.

On the other hand, Strype says that

8. Gairdner, 318
9. Foxe, VI, 1, 391-392
10. Wriothesley, II, 97
11. Gairdner, 319
12. Ibid., 321
a dismal face of things appeared to the professors of the gospel upon Queen Mary's access to the throne, occasioned by the fierce resolutions of undoing all things that had been done many years before in the reigns of her father and brother, towards the reforming of religion, and for bringing back again into practice the old religion and superstitions. The chief managery of this work was left in the hands of two disobediged and bloody-minded bishops, Bonner and Gardiner.

Bonner presided in the absence of Cranmer who was in prison now, at the Convocation that began its sessions on October 17, 1553. This Convocation was moved by no spirit of revenge; out of it came no coercive acts of any sort. The sacramental teaching of Bishop Ponet's Catechism was discussed and its defenders were invited to declare their arguments; but in the end the arguments against transubstantiation were declared groundless, and that doctrine was formally approved. Theology was brought back to the old standard, for this Convocation was guided by orthodox thinkers. As a result of the work of this Convocation, the new service according to the Book of Common Prayer "was everywhere cast out" and the old ceremonies and services again set up.

Burnet says that

in this business none was so hot as Bonner, for the act that repealed King Edward's laws being agreed to by the Commons and sent to the Lords,

13. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, 1, Preface, v
14. Gairdner, 325
15. Burnet, III, 1, 444
he without waiting for royal assent, that night set up the old worship at Saint Paul's; the next day being Saint Andrew's day, he officiated himself and had a solemn procession. 16

And Strype reports:

The popish religion began to be exercised everywhere. On Saint Katharine's day, began the choir of Saint Paul's to go about the steeple, singing, with lights, after the old custom. And among other points of the popish reformation, the verses of Scripture that were wrote on the walls for suitable instruction to the people were appointed to be all washed out and defaced by the command of Gardiner and Bonner. 17

It was in December, 1553, that there appeared in London an English translation of Gardiner's famous De Vera Obedientia with Bonner's preface. The object of this publication at this time, bearing at the bottom of the title page the quotation "A double-minded man is inconstant in all his ways" was to make both Bonner and Gardiner uncomfortable by reminding them that they had both committed themselves to the view that the lady who was now queen was a bastard, and that the pope had no authority in England. The publication taunted Gardiner and Bonner mainly, but also other bishops as men who had upheld other news than they liked now to acknowledge. It so abounds in low, shameful epithets applied to the bishops, that James Gairdner believes the work came from the pen of that "foul-mouthed Bale" who had had

16. Ibid.
17. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, 1. 88
18. Gairdner, 326
several defamatory publications printed lately. Publications of this sort certainly did not serve to make England peaceful; attacks of this nature inflamed the passions of men. However, Queen Mary and her bishops were determined to effect the restoration of the old order in religion, no matter what disturbances might occur, though they would try to create none themselves.

On Sunday, January 14, 1554, the old procession before the high Mass was revived at Saint Paul's. On March 1, the married clergy of London were cited to appear at Saint Paul's before the "bishop of London's commissioners, and there deprived of their benefices". Those who were religious priests were deprived not only of their benefices, "but of their wives also". On March 18, Palm Sunday, palms were borne as before; "creeping to the altar" was renewed on Good Friday. On April 1, six new bishops were consecrated by Bishop Gardiner, assisted by Bishop Bonner. On April 2, the Apostles' Mass which once before had got Bonner into trouble was begun again at Saint Paul's.

But the violent among the Protestants were not idle, either. Let Wriothesley tell of one reaction:

Sunday, the 8th of April, was a villainous act done in Cheap. A dead cat, having a cloth like a vestment of a priest at Mass, with a cross on it afore and another behind, put on it; the crown of

19. Ibid., 327
20. Wriothesley, II, 113
21. Ibid.
22. Gardiner, 336
23. Ibid., 339
the cat shorn, a piece of paper like a wafer put between the fore-feet of the cat bound together; which cat was hanged on the post of the gallows in Cheap, and a bottle hanged by it; which cat was taken down and carried to the bishop of London, and he caused it to be showed openly at the sermon time at Saint Paul's Cross in the sight of all the audience present. 24

An incident such as this certainly made it more difficult to effect a peaceful restoration of orthodoxy; it helped stiffen the attitude of clergy and ruler towards the reformers. But, as yet, no violence resulted through the Catholic party, though the course of events was bringing violence closer. Queen Mary's marriage to Philip II of Spain intensified feelings, for it was well known that this was purely a political match; its purpose was to make the road easier for a reconciliation with Rome. Before many weeks had passed, Spaniards were hanged for killing Englishmen, and Englishmen hanged for fighting with Spaniards.

Bonner's visitation of his diocese in September, 1554, seems to have caused a good deal of exasperation, though Bonner wrote that in undertaking the visitation his only "intent and purpose is to do my duty charitably". The articles of inquiry for this visitation were numerous and exhaustive; they treated as null and void all that had been done by Parliament in the reign of Edward VI. Bonner inquired: 1) Whether the clergy, have in their living, teaching, and doing, so behaved themselves as to declare

24. Wriothesley, II, 115
25. Gairdner, 340
26. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, 2, 217
themselves to search principally the honor of God and His Church, the health of souls, and the wealth and honor of the King and Queen; 2) Whether any priest have been, or is, married; whether the woman being alive, they resort to one another openly or secretly; 3) Whether any person in any way upholds the marriage of priests; 4) Whether parsons, curates, or vicars have been of suspect doctrine; 5) Whether any of them resort to alehouses or taverns otherwise for his honest necessity or relief; 6) Whether any of them keep company with anyone of erroneous opinion or doctrine; 7) Whether any priest be a sower of discord, a hawker, a jealous man, a hunter, a fornicator, an adulterer, a drunkard, a common swearer, or hath come to his office by simony or any other illegal way; 8) Whether the parson has diligently instructed his parishioners; whether he has visited them in time of sickness and administered the sacraments; 9) Whether the priests go about in priestly apparel and habit; 10) Whether any priest engage in business or layeth out his money for filthy lucre, practicing usury.

Previous to issuing these articles of inquiry, Bonner had, in February, ordered curates to see that all parishioners confessed during Lent; those who did not confess were to be certified to Bonner when he came, so that he might take action against them. In the same letter, Bonner ordered all curates to

27. Gardiner estimates that one priest in four in the London diocese was married at this time.
28. These articles are found complete in Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, 2, 219ff.
29. Foxe, VI, 2, 426
be prepared to carry on divine services according to the old ritual of the Catholic Church; to have altars, mass-books, vestments and all other things necessary for mass and the administration of the sacraments and the sacramentals. Then, in March, 1554, Bonner and the other bishops received the following articles from the Queen and her Council: 1) To put in execution all such canons and ecclesiastical laws heretofore, in the time of King Henry VIII, "used within this realm of England, not being directly and expressly contrary to the laws and statutes of this realm"; 2) That no bishop any longer demand as a condition of admission to an ecclesiastical office any oath concerning the spiritual supremacy of the ruler, or succession to the crown; 3) That he be most careful not to admit to any church office any person infected with heresy; 4) That he proceed at once against those "who contrary to the laudable customs of the church, have married and used women as their wives; the bishops, though, must be clement to those whose wives are dead or who profess to abstain from their wives; 5) That he set forth for his priests a book of homilies for the good instruction and teaching of the people; and that he examine the teachers of children, and replace them if they are found suspect in any way.

With such a background and preparation, Bonner set out on his visitation. From Foxe's account of the first few days we can get an indication of the very unfair way in which the

30. Ibid.
31. Foxe gives these articles completely; VI, 2, 427-429
martyrologist narrates the entire visitation:

He stopped at Stratford in Hertfordshire, where he rested certain days, solacing himself after the painful peregrination with no small feasting and banqueting at the house of one Parsons, his nephew, whose wife he commonly called his fair niece (and fair she was indeed). He took there great pleasure to hear her play upon the virginals; insomuch that every dinner (sitting by his sweet side) she arose three several times and played at his request of his spiritual devotion to her. These days passed in this bishop-like fashion, he passed on. 32

The bishop met with certain vexations on his coming to the parish of Hadham. Bonner arrived here before the time appointed and so no bells were rung at his approach; he found some disorder, no sacrament reserved, and no crucifix in the rood-loft. 33 Now "he fell to swearing and raging with a hunting oath or two". When, Dr. Bricket, the parson of Hadham, apologized and said that he had not time to make the ordered changes, Bonner struck at him, but the blow landed on a spectator, according to Foxe. James Gairdner says though, "that he flew into a passion, swore, struck out with his arm, are statements which, though picturesque, ought to be received with great caution". 34

This visitation and the articles for it called from Bale a most virulent pamphlet, entitled "A Declaration of Bishop Bonner's Articles". The pamphlet abounds in phrases such as "most

32. Ibid., 562
33. Gairdner, 342
34. Foxe, VI, 2 563
wicked articles", "bloody Bonner", "limb of the devil", "butcherly bite-sheep", "common slaughter-man", and the like. This bitter abuse gives an indication of the spirit with which many received Bonner's visitation; it also indicates the spirit with which the violent among the Protestants were receiving the attempt to restore the old religion.

Cardinal Pole at last reached England on November 21, 1554. Both houses of Parliament agreed in a supplication to the King and Queen to procure through Pole, pardon from the Pope and reconciliation with Rome for all England. On November 30, the Queen begged Pole to absolve England for its aholism and disobedience. Pole pronounced the absolution. The joy of the nation was further increased by the announcement that Mary was with child; but this joy was short-lived, for it was found shortly that Mary was not pregnant at all.

The next month, December, 1554, the first steps were taken toward a revival of religious persecution. Parliament passed an act reviving three old statutes for the punishment of heretics, seeing that they had lately made themselves so dangerous. England, during the days of Edward VI, had been a prey to factions and intrigue, and things were growing steadily worse. Strong measures were now thought necessary for the public quiet; there was to be no more toleration for incurable perversity. Mary

35. Gairdner, 342
36. Select Works of John Bale, 37, 58, 65
37. Gairdner, 344-345
38. Ibid., 346
would try to persuade men to renounce heresy; but those who proved obstinate were to suffer the consequences under the heresy laws.

In February, 1555, Bishop Bonner sent out to his whole diocese a monition to every man and woman to prepare during Lent to receive the Pope’s absolution and reconciliation. He delegated to all pastors and curates the power to absolve from all heresy, schism, and the censures of the Church. Every archdeacon was given power to appoint in each deanery the best men to handle the more difficult cases; every man troubled in conscience was to have great latitude in the choice of his confessor. The form of the Absolution follows:

Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve you, and by the apostolic authority to me granted and committed, I absolve you from the sentences of excommunication, and from all other censures and pains into which you be fall by reason of heresy and schism; and I restore you unto the unity of our holy mother, the Church; and to the communion of all the sacraments, dispensing you for all manner of irregularity.

On February 4, 1555, occurred the first of the burnings of heretics under Queen Mary; John Rogers was burned at Smithfield. According to Foxe, Rogers “had been uncharitably treated and at length unjustly and most cruelly by wicked Winchester, condemned. He was degraded by Bonner who refused his final request to be

39. Foxe, VI, 2, 708
40. Ibid., 710
41. Ibid., 609
allowed to speak to his wife before burning. But this Rogers was looked upon not only as a heretic but also as a demagogue and a seditious person. Bonner had nothing more to do with the case of Rogers than to be deputed to degrade him from the priesthood; and whether he had any authority to grant his final request is uncertain. Bonner positively did not condemn Rogers, for this was done by the Commission sitting at Southwark under the presidency of Gardiner. But this is typical of Foxe to attribute the entire matter to Bonner in order to justify the character he has attributed to Bonner as a bloody cannibal who slew three hundred martyrs. The following day, Laurence Saunders was burnt at Coventry, also for heresy and seditious preaching, especially for a sermon on October 15, 1554, in which he had violently attacked the Mass and transubstantiation; Foxe makes capital of the fact that Bonner asked Saunders to write down his own doctrine of transubstantiation. But, on the other hand, is this not a natural legal procedure in order to obtain the truth of a matter? If Saunders's opinions were not heretical, he would not be punished. On February 4, Bonner degraded Saunders; but beyond that had nothing to do with his martyrdom, Saunders also being condemned by the Southwark Commission.

Bishop Hooper was also burned on February 5, at Gloucester. He had been called to London at Mary's accession, and shortly

42. Ibid.
43. Maitland, Essays on the Reformation, 446
44. Ibid., 447
45. Foxe, VI,2, 615
thereafter deprived of his see, March 19, 1554. Bonner and four other bishops were members of the commission before which Hooper upheld the marriage of priests, and denied the Real Presence. Several times while Hooper was in prison, Bonner went to him attempting to persuade him to submit and according to Foxe, "become a member of his anti-christian church"; but Hooper was immovable. Even Foxe admits that Bonner used all outward gentleness and signs of friendship; but, of course, he has to say this was all hypocrisy on Bonner's part. Bonner had nothing to do with his condemnation, but was appointed to degrade Hooper.

Bishop Taylor was the next to suffer martyrdom, on February 9, on Aldham Common; but again Bonner had no connection with the case other than again having to perform the rite of degradation of the bishop. Even during this ceremony, Bonner pleaded with Taylor and promised himself to sue from the courts a pardon if he should recant.

On February 8, six men accused of heresy were brought before Bishop Bonner; William Pygot, Stephen Knight, Thomas Tomkins, Thomas Hawkes, John Lawrence, and William Hunter. On the 9th, they were condemned which seems like extreme haste. But while Foxe makes it appear that they were received one day and condemned the next, the truth is quite different. All of them

46. Ibid., Appendix, 779
47. Ibid., 650
48. Ibid.
49. Maitland, 452-454
50. Foxe, VI,2, 691
51. Ibid., 704
had been in custody as heretics for a period ranging from one year to a year and a half, and had been examined often during that time; for three quarters of a year Bonner had pleaded with Thomas Hawkes to recant. On February 8, they simply confirmed their heretical opinions; the earliest martyr of the six had an interval of five weeks to change his mind before burning on the 26th of March. Foxe, indeed, reports Bonner's efforts to have them save themselves; in fact, much of his story of Hunter deals with Bonner's pleadings. Bonner begged this man only to confess and be absolved; he promised him, after condemnation even:

If you will yet recant, I will make thee a freeman in the city, and give thee forty pounds to set up thine own occupation; or I will make thee steward of my house, and set thee in office, for I like thee well.

From Foxe's account of the Tomkins' case, we can get a good idea of the martyrrologist's veracity. He tells us that Bonner beat Tomkins about the head, that he had him shaved against his will, and finally held his hand over a burning taper to try his constancy. But, on the other hand, Bonner during a half year during which Tomkins was "in prison" in Bonner's palace at Fulham working in the fields as a haymower, used all sorts of mild persuasion to save him from his terrible fate as a heretic; Bonner

52. Maitland, 460-461
53. Ibid., 462
54. Foxe, VI, 2, 721-726
55. Ibid., 728-729
sat in the fields with him and argued with him attempting to show him the error of his doctrines. And James Gairdner gives a different account of the burning of Tomkins's hand; "Bonner asked Tomkins if he thought he could endure the fire, and Tomkins for answer thrust his hand into the fire without flinching."

Thomas Causton and Thomas Higbed were the next to be condemned by Bonner. Bonner visited them at Colchester, and "with great labor and diligence" persuaded them to recant. Refusing, they were taken to London, where on examination both denied transubstantiation; once more Bonner failed in his efforts to persuade them from their fate, March 1. On March 8, he again made an attempt to win a recantation; failing now, he condemned them, and on March 26, they were burned, Higbed at Horndon on the Hill, and Causton at Raleigh.

Foxe next narrates the story of one William Flower, a priest, who had taken a wife, and who was brought before Bonner for an attack on a priest who was distributing Holy Communion; he had struck the priest, wounded him till the blood fell on the Sacrament he was administering. Immediately following his offense, he was committed to prison, from which place he insisted on denying the Real Presence, and relating that he had long meditated the extraordinary action he had taken. Here Bonner came begging him to recant his errors concerning the blessed

56. An original letter from the Spanish ambassador to the Emperor, quoted in Gairdner, 362
57. Foxe, VI, 2, 729
58. Ibid., 737
59. Maitland, 480
sacrament; here Bonner "went about with words (and words only) to persuade him to submit to the Catholic Church", sometimes alluring him with fair promises and at other times threatening him with dire punishments. Everything failing, Bonner finally degraded him and sentenced him. So seriously was his offense regarded in those days, that before he was burned, his right hand was struck off.

In May, 1666, Bonner and the other bishops of England received an important letter from the King and Queen:

Right reverend father in God, we greet you well. And where of late we addressed our letters to the justices of the peace in everyone of the counties of England, whereby among other instructions given them they are willed to have a special regard unto such disordered persons, as forgetting their duties to Almighty God and to us, do lean to any erroneous and heretical opinions, refusing to show themselves conformable to the religion of the Church of Christ; whom if they cannot by good admonition and fair means reform, they are willed to deliver them unto the ordinary to be by him charitably to be travailed withal, and removed from their naughty opinions; or else, if they continue obstinate, to be ordered according to the laws provided in that behalf; understanding now, to our no little marvel, that divers of the said disordered persons being brought to the ordinary to be used as aforesaid, are either refused to be received or, if they be received, are neither so travailed with as charity requireth, nor yet

60. Foxe, VII, 1, 74
61. Wriothesley, II, 129
proceeded withal according to justice, but are suffered to continue in their errors to the dishonor of God, and dangerous example to others. So we have thought convenient to signify this our knowledge and also to admonish you to have in this behalf henceforth such regard to the office of a good bishop as when any such offenders are brought to you, you do use your wisdom and discretion in procuring to remove them from their errors, or else in proceeding against them, according to the laws. 62

This letter would suggest that Bonner and the other bishops had not been very diligent in searching out and punishing heretics; at least not so diligent as the Queen and the Royal Council desired them to be.

Shortly after the reception of this letter, Bonner had up before him John Simson and John Ardeley, both of whom denied transubstantiation, called the mass abominable, and said that auricular confession was superfluous and vain. Both readily admitted their beliefs, and when Bonner urged them to recant, Ardeley answered him:

My lord, neither you nor any of your religion, is of the Catholic Church, for you be of a false faith; and I doubt not but you shall be deceived at length. Ye have shed innocent blood, and you have killed many, and go about to kill more. 64

Foxe, of course, thinks this a wise answer; but Maitland says that the patience that bore with response to a bishop from a

62. Burnet, II,2, 498
63. Foxe, VII,1, 88
64. Ibid., 89
poor farmer is more to be wondered at, than the good will of Bonner is to be blamed for still trying to effect a recantation.

One the most famous of Bonner's martyrs was John Philpot, burned at Smithfield on December 18, 1555. This heretic was sent by Bishop Gardiner to Bonner, who as soon as he had received him kindly, began to work for a recantation, telling Philpot: "If I can do any good for you, I will be glad to do it for you"; and later, "If there be any pleasure I may show you in my house, I pray you require it and you shall have it". All this after five examinations in which Philpot had refused to recant! Bonner found him guilty of heresy, called him to judgment and sentenced him. But before he suffered the penalty, Philpot made the following astonishing statement:

I cannot lay to my lord's charge my imprisonment; neither may I say that he hath used me cruelly; but rather for my part I might say that I have found more gentleness at his hands than I did at mine own ordinary's for the time that I have been within his prison.

Bartlett Green who suffered on January 27, 1556, reports the like treatment by Bishop Bonner:

I had my liberty within the bounds of my lordship's house. I found so much gentleness of my lord that I should easily have forgotten that I was in prison were it not that this great cheer was often powdered with unsavory sauces of examinations,

65. Maitland, 494
66. Foxe, VII, 2, 611
67. Ibid., 628
68. Ibid., 629
exhortations, and disputations.

The cases cited thus far are among the most typical cases of heretics in their dealings with Bishop Bonner. It would be too tedious to go roaming through the history of every heretic in the days of the Marian persecutions; but we shall let these duly suffice to give an indication how Bonner treated heretics.

The Puritan historians have always written of Bonner as the worst enemy of the gospel; they have made him "bloody Bonner" and a "common Slaughter-man". Burnet assures his readers that Bonner undertook the work of punishing heretics cheerfully, being naturally brutal and savage, and retaining deep resentment for what had befallen him in King Edward's time. Strype tells us that Gardiner and Bonner were brothers in cruelty, that Bonner was commonly called the "bloody butcher" and that he was most mortally hated by all honest men. Fuller goes a little farther, at least in declamation against Bonner of which declamation the following is a good sample:

We may say that Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, yea, a whole forest of wild animals met in Bonner, killing two hundred in the compass of three years. And as if his cruelty had made him Metropolitan of all England, he stood not on distinction of dioceses, but martyred all wheresoever he met them. No sex, quality, or age escaped him.

69. Ibid., 736-737
70. Burnet, II, 2, 487
71. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, III, 1, 467
72. Fuller, Church History, VIII, 18
Fuller's aim is to convince people that Bonner like a beast of prey was ever on the look-out, and prowled about, searching for his victims. But Maitland says that he believes that Bonner never either himself or through his agents, searched for heretics, or was the original cause of any man's being brought into trouble on the score of religion, except by the effect of official documents set forth by him in his character of bishop or ecclesiastical judge; he says: "I believe that he never dealt with any alleged heretic who was not brought before him in this official capacity as Bishop of London, in due course of law, by warrant of some magistrate, acting directly under a commission from the government". As to the charge that he made no distinction of dioceses, there is only one case in which any prisoner claimed Bonner had no jurisdiction. John Philpot asked why he should be called before Bonner since he did not belong to his diocese but to Gardiner's diocese of Winchester; and Bonner answered because "you have offended in my diocese". When Philpot claimed that Paul's Church in Convocation where he had preached heresy was not in Bonner's diocese, the bishop readily proved that it was of his diocese.

But it was writers of this nature, Strype, Foxe, Burnet, and Fuller that have given the world the impression of Bonner as a "bloody butcher". More recent historians have been very critical of these early Puritan historians; James Gairdner says

73. Maitland, 413
74. Ibid., 414
75. Foxe, VII, 2, 627
of Foxe that "he was, above all things, credulous, and accepted with little difficulty every idle tale to the discredit of the old religion". Stone alleges that Foxe, in his zeal to win sympathy for his martyrs, made it part of his method to cast as much odium as possible on their judges; "thus Bonner has been made to appear an extremely violent persecutor, although he was rather the reverse of zealous in enforcing the revived heresy laws". The same author points out that Bonner had no more chance than any other judge of not being present at trials in his own court; he simply had to hear cases and give judgment. But it is Maitland who most carefully and critically analyzed the Puritan historians. He points out, first of all, that what ought to be very valuable works of Strype are so much less valuable than they might be "because of two great defects—prejudice and carelessness". He strikes at the entire group of Puritan historians:

In not only believe that those contemporary writers, (Foxe, Heylin, Strype, etc.) have indulged in rhodomontade declamation, and in scurrility as odious for its falseness as for its coarseness; but I believe that their colored and exaggerated account of facts to have been still further colored and perverted—I will add, falsified—by more modern copyists. Stories have been handed from one careless writer to another, with

76. Gairdner, 131
78. Maitland, 39
monstrous falsehoods.

And to the charge that Bonner was bloody, Maitland answers that "we can scarcely read with attention anyone of the cases detailed by those who were no friends of Bonner without seeing in him a judge who (even if we grant that he was dispensing bad laws badly) was obviously desirous of saving the prisoner's life".

Of course this desire to save lives meant that Bonner pleaded for recantations; and naturally, Foxe holds this fact against Bonner speaking often of the "subtle snares of that bloody wolf". Now, Bonner certainly procured the abjuration of many of the heretics; Maitland says that this is the cause of the bitter hatred with which the Puritan historians regard him.

Furthermore, it ought to be remembered that this unhappy persecution, in which Bonner was connected with one hundred and twenty cases of heresy, was not the will of the Church but of the state; that it was the result not of religious bigotry but of state policy. Not only was it not instigated by the prelates, but it was actively discouraged by them, for Stone remarks: "The Cardinal legate opposed, the King's confessor preached against it, the prelates acted only upon compulsion, and there is reason to believe that the Queen desired the execution of the measures not only to be moderated, but to be directed against popular agitators, rather than against mere private holders of

79. Ibid., 406-407
80. Ibid., 423
81. Ibid., 424
Maitland affirms that the Protestant party brought on the Marian persecution, and by their provoking manners were one of the main reasons for its fierceness. He says:

There was undoubtedly one further cause, which, if it be too much to say that it has been studiously concealed or disguised, certainly never occupied that prominent place to which it is entitled. I mean the bitter and provoking spirit of some of those who were very active and forward in promoting the progress of the Reformation—the political opinions which they held, and the language in which they disseminated them—the fierce personal attacks which they made on those whom they considered as enemies—and to say the least, the little care which was taken by those who were really actuated by religious motives and seeking a true reform of the Church, to shake off a lewd, ungodly, profane rabble who joined the cause of Protestantism, thinking it, in their depraved imaginations, or hoping to make it by their wicked devices, the cause of liberty against law, of the poor against the rich, of the laity against the clergy, of the people against their rulers.

82. Stone, op. cit., 365
83. Maitland, 42-43
CHAPTER VI

ELIZABETH DEPRIVES AND IMPRISONS BONNER—HIS DEATH

With the reputation that he had with the reforming party, Bonner could not expect much peace following the death of Queen Mary, and the accession of Queen Elizabeth. And immediately upon Elizabeth's accession and her coming to London, he was made aware of her attitude towards him; for when the bishops met her at Highgate, she received them all civilly except Bonner, to whom she refused even to give her hand to be kissed, "for she looked on him as defiled with so much blood that she could not think it fit to bestow any mark of her favor on him". Nor did Bonner leave any doubts in any mind as to his position in religious issues that were debated in the months that followed her accession to the English throne. On March 21, 1559, he dissented against the bill that would declare Elizabeth the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England; he was the chief opponent of the bill that proposed giving to Elizabeth the power to make bishops; he was outspoken in his opposition to the revival of the second Book of Common Prayer, June 24, 1559; and finally

1. Burnet, II, 2, 594
2. Ibid., 610
3. Ibid., 611
4. Ibid., 623

107
he voted against the proposal to give her the lands of void bishoprics, of which there were ten at the time, and more created very soon.

Naturally, there must be a climax to such a series of acts in opposition to the desires of such a strong-willed sovereign as Elizabeth was. The climax came finally when the oath of supremacy was tendered to the bishops of the realm, May 30, 1559. Bonner was recalcitrant, for he refused to take this oath; his example was followed by Bishops Heath, Thirlby, Bourne, Bayne, White, Watson, Christopherson, Oglethorpe, Turberville, Pole, Scot, Pates, and Goldwell, who likewise refused to take the oath. It is Strype's opinion that by refusing the oath of supremacy, Bonner and his brother bishops thereby automatically deprived themselves of their sees; however, it seems that the Queen and her Council were not of this opinion, for under authority of an "Act restoring to the Crown the Ancient Jurisdiction" a commission finally deprived Bonner, June 29, 1560.

Bonner was committed to the Marshalsea on April 20, 1560. Strype sees in this imprisonment a great benefit to Bonner, for "being so hated by the people, it would not have been safe for him to have walked in public, lest he should have been stoned or ---

5. Ibid, 624
7. Burnet, II, I, 626
8. Strype, John, Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion, and other various occurrences in the Church of England in Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign, Oxford, 1824, I, 1, 205
9. Ibid., 210
knocked on the head by some of the enraged friends and acquaintances of those whom he had but a little before "so barbarously beaten or butchered". The same author likewise tells us that Bonner's prison life was not a harsh one, for "he lived daintily and had the use of the garden and orchards when minded to walk abroad, suffering nothing like imprisonment unless that he was circumscribed within certain limits".

In December, 1559, while they were prisoners of sorts at Westminster Abbey, preceding their incarceration at the Marshalsea, Bonner and our four other bishops, Heath, Bourne, Pole, and Turberville, had addressed a letter to the Queen begging her not to be entirely misled by evil counsellors who would draw her and England completely way from the old religion. For the members of Elizabeth's Council were Protestant. William Cecil, Secretary, had gone to mass, "but no Catholic doubted that he was a bad heretic"; the Great Seal had been given to Nicholas Bacon another notorious heretic. The Queen and the Council had already pushed through a subservient Parliament many reforming measures when Bonner and his friends sent her the following letter:

Most royal Queen, we entreat your gracious majesty to listen unto us of the Catholic clergy within your realm, lest you and your subjects be led astray through the inventions

10. Ibid., 214
11. Ibid.
12. Cambridge Modern History, II, 565
13. Ibid., 566
of those evil counsellors who are persuading your ladyship to embrace schisms and heretical opinions in lieu of the ancient Catholic faith... which your ancestors duly and reverently observed and confessed until by heretical and schismatic advisers your father was withdrawn; and after him, your brother, Prince Edward. After whose decease your virtuous sister, Queen Mary of happy memory, succeeded. Who... most piously restored the Catholic faith, by establishing the same again in this realm, and by extinguishing the heresies and schisms which began to flame over her territories. We further entreat your ladyship to consider the surrender and renouncing of your supremacy and to consider the supremacy of the Church of Rome...These ancient things we lay before your majesty, hoping that God will turn your heart; and in fine, make your majesty's evil advisers ashamed and to repent their heresies. God preserve your majesty.

But Elizabeth had no mind to listen to such a petition; it has sometimes said that her birth condemned her to be Protestant or bastard. Then, too, the bishops had weakened their position during Henry's days as Elizabeth reminded them in her response to their letter:

As for our father being withdrawn from the supremacy of Rome by heretical and schismatic advisers, who we pray, advised him more, or flattered him more, than you, good Mr. Heath, of than you, Mr. Bonner, when you were archdeacon of Leicester?

14. Strype, Annals, I, I, 217
15. Cambridge Modern History, II, 559
We give you this warning that for the future we hear no more of this kind, lest you provoke us to exact those penalties enacted for the punishing of our resisters, which out of our clemency we have foreborne.  

From 1561 to 1563, several of the reforming preachers clamored to have the death of the "caged wolves", the "bloody bishops in the Marshalsea"; and especially, they demanded the death of Edmund Bonner. But during all this time, Elizabeth was quite lenient, and all England was almost free from religious persecution. However, in 1563, the bloody bishops really fell into serious danger. When the Parliament of 1563 met, a new act was passed by which the first refusal to take the oath of supremacy was praemunire; the second refusal, high treason, with all the penalties attached to high treason, including the death penalty. Consequently, bishops who had once refused the oath were now in a very dangerous position; their next refusal of the oath might legally be followed by death. On April 29, 1564, Horne, bishop of Winchester, tendered the oath to Bonner; Catholics felt that "Boner would soon be done to death". Fuller states it as his opinion that Bonner was chosen to be subjected to this "in order to strike terror into the hearts of Romanists, for Bonner had by far the most courage of all of them". And Bonner proceeded to demonstrate this courage and

16. Strype, Annals, I, 1, 218-219
17. Catholic Encyclopedia, article on Bonner
18. Cambridge Modern History, II, 586
19. Fuller, IV, 335n
resourcefulness. The Marshalsea, in Southwark, lay within the diocese of Winchester, so that on the score of jurisdiction, Horne had the authority to administer the oath to Bonner. But Bonner denied the validity of the act on the score that Horne was no bishop at all; he made several exceptions to the entire process, and the certificate of the process. He objected first that he was styled "doctor of laws and in sacred orders", but was not accorded the title of bishop. Furthermore, said Bonner, the statutes in question had not the power to condemn for they did not have the necessary consent of the lords spiritual of England. The very oath, he contended, was unlawful, for he could not take it "except by the death and loss of my own soul, and the loss of other men's souls of whom I have care and charge". In addition to all this, Horne was not bishop of Winchester, but only a usurper, because according to ecclesiastical law and the statutes of England, he was not elected nor consecrated. He "unworthy and utterly unmeet" had simply taken upon himself the said office. Bonner cited the law of 1534, that commanded that at the consecration of a bishop, one archbishop and two bishops, or else four bishops be present; this had not been complied with in the case of Horne's consecration. Bonner likewise contended that the oath had been administered in an unlawful manner; the law provided that it be tendered in an open place, and that there

20. Strype, Annals, I, 2, 2
21. Ibid., 5
22. Ibid., 6
23. Ibid., also in Heylin, op. cit., II, 424ff.
be an assembly to witness the proceedings; this, too, had been neglected. Bonner went still further; "he not only defended himself, but demanded that Horne be duly punished, and be excluded from the dignity of the bishopric of Winchester, especially as he was a notorious lecher, adulterer, schismatic, and heretic, and in no wise a lawful bishop".

While Elizabeth and her Council might have disregarded most of Bonner's objections, there was one that caused much disquiet; namely, the validity of Anglican orders. Now Elizabeth wanted no trouble on this point; nor, of course, did her bishops; accordingly, the prelates petitioned the Parliament of 1566 for a declaration that they were lawful bishops. This Parliament did; the new statute declared that there was to be no more argument, for men in orders had actually received these orders. But so effective had been Bonner's defense otherwise that proceedings against him were stayed, his case being remanded from time to time simply to keep it alive.

But Bonner had to remain in the Marshalsea, of course. He died there, September 5, 1569. Even in death, Strype cannot leave him be, but reports:

In September, died that bloody man that had washed his hands in the blood of so many religious men and women in Queen Mary's days... He stood excommunicated for many years.

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 8; Strype's comment: "All this scandal, trouble, and disturbance had this good bishop Horne in venturing to be so hardy as to meddle with such a man as Bonner was".
26. Fuller, IV, 337-338
and took no care for his absolution. The man was commonly reported a heretic, that he denied God, the Scriptures, and any life after this; and that he used conjuring and witchcraft.

And, in place of eulogy, Foxe says:

Bonner died in his bed unrepentant; yet it was so provided by God that as he had been a persecutor of the light and a child of darkness, so his carcass was tumbled into the earth in obscure darkness, and as he had been a murderer, so he was laid among murderers and thieves, a place by God's judgment rightly appointed for him.

But our more recent historians have been kinder than their predecessors who were so blinded by prejudice. The Cambridge Modern History states:

It is now generally admitted that the part played by Bonner was not that attributed to him by Foxe, of a cruel bigot who exulted in sending his victims to the stake. The number of those put to death in his diocese of London was undoubtedly disproportionately large, but this would seem to have been more the result of the strength of the reforming element in the capital than to the employment of exceptional rigor; while the evidence also shows that he himself dealt patiently with many of the Protestants and did his best to induce them to renounce what he conscientiously believed to be their errors.

Lingard had been one of the first to express the belief that

27. Strype, Annals, II, 1, 28
28. Foxe, VIII, 2, 669
29. Cambridge Modern History, II, 533
Bonner had been badly painted by the Puritan historians; he expressed the belief that much more odium had been cast on Bonner than he deserved. He says:

It certainly fell to his lot, as bishop of London, to condemn a great number of the gospellers; but I can find no proof that he was a persecutor from choice or went in search of victims. They were sent to him by the Council, or by commissioners appointed by the Council. As the law stood, he could not refuse to proceed. He was, however, careful in the proceedings to exact from the prisoners, and to put on record, the names of the persons by whom, and a statement of the reasons for which they had been sent before him. Several of the letters from the Council show that he stood in need of a stimulus to goad him to the execution of this unwelcome office; and he complained much that he was compelled to try prisoners who were not of his own diocese.

The historian Gairdner was willing to go much farther in condemning those historians who had given Bonner such a bad name among the Marian bishops and persecutors. He writes;

There are other evidences that Bishop Bonner was by no means the heartless persecutor that history, on the faith of puritan writers, has taken him to be. He was a man who had his faults, but they were not of the kind represented. A man of high culture and great accomplishments, he could wink at vice in high places, and could outrage all conventionalism and law to do his

30. Lingard, John, The History of England from the first invasion by the Romans to the accession of William and Mary in 1689. 10 vols., London, 1883, V, 470-471 and note
King a service. He could insult another King to his face, or irritate extremely the Pope himself, in order to advance his sovereign's policy, but to prisoners in his hands he was really kind, gentle, and considerate. Over their ultimate fate, it must be remembered, he had no control, when once they were declared to be irreclaimable heretics, and handed over to the secular power; but he always strove by gentle suasion to reconcile them to the Church, as it was his duty to do. As bishop of London, he naturally had more heretics to deal with than any other bishop; but there is no appearance of his straining the law against them. 31

But this is gentle talk compared to the opinion that S.R. Maitland has expressed of the puritan historians, especially for their treatment of Bishop Bonner. He first attacks the puritan historians in general:

For senseless, scurrilous cavilling, railing, and ribaldry, for the most offensive personalities, for the reckless imputation of the worst motives and most odious vices; in short, for all that was calculated to render an opponent hateful in the eyes of those who were no judges of the matter in dispute, some of the puritan party went far beyond their adversaries. 32

And in another place:

For the history of the Reformation in England, we depend so much on the testimony of writers who may be considered as belonging, or more or less attached, to the puritan party...or who obtained their

31. Gairdner, 220
32. Maitland, 47-48
information from persons of that sect...that it is of the utmost importance to inquire whether there was anything in their notions respecting truth which ought to throw suspicion on any of their statements. The question is one which does not require much research or argument. There is something very frank in the avowals, direct or indirect, which various puritans have left on record, that it was considered not only allowable but even meritorious to tell lies for the sake of the good cause in which they were engaged and for the benefit of those who were fellowhelpers in it. The case is not merely that the charitable partisan looked with compassion on the weak brother who denied his faith under dread of cruel torments, or stood by with pitying and loving connivance while he told a lie to save his own life. It is, that they did not hesitate, without any such urgent temptation and with great deliberation and solemnity, to state what they knew to be false; and that the manner in which such falsehoods were avowed by those who told them and recorded by their friends and admirers is sufficient evidence that such a practice was not considered discreditable.

And finally in defense of Bonner, Maitland says:

Setting aside declamation, and looking at the details of facts left by those who may be called Bonner's victims and their friends, we find very consistently maintained the character of a man, straightforward and hearty, familiar and humorous, sometimes rough and perhaps coarse, naturally hot-tempered, but obviously, by the testimony of his enemies, placable and easily entreated,

33. Maitland, 1-2
capable of bearing most patiently much intemperate and insolent language, much reviling and low abuse directed against himself personally, against his order and against those peculiar doctrines and practices of his church for maintaining which, he himself had suffered the loss of all things, and borne long imprisonment.

34. Ibid., 423
The thesis submitted by Brother Edward Joseph Dunne, S.M. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Date: June 3, 1946

Signature of Adviser: [Signature]