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A Biography of John Stokesley, Bishop of London from 1530 to 1539

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A BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN STOKESLEY,
BISHOP OF LONDON FROM 1530 TO 1539

BY
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ARTS IN LOYOLA UNIVERSITY
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JOHN STOKESLEY

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CHAPTER I

STOKESLEY'S EARLY LIFE

A. Birth and Family

There is a dearth of records of births, deaths, and marriages in Tudor England and as a result it is difficult to be chronologically accurate about the occurrence of those events. This fact is borne out by the disagreement among scholars as to the exact time of those events in their descriptions of the lives of prominent Tudor characters. Many of the writers admit, particularly in relation to date and locations of births, that approximation is the best they can do.

Records of John Stokesley's birth are from the manuscripts of Otho C. Cotton, E. Cleopatra, and Arundel which are in the British Museum and have never been published. He was born at Collyweston in Northamptonshire (central England) approximately 1475. The available records of Northamptonshire yielded very little as to Stokesley's ancestry and childhood. About all we know is that he apparently was a first cousin to a Richard Stokesley from whom he inherited the parish of Luffenham,¹ and that his mother was Margaret, daughter of Edward

Spendlove. His father remains unknown and it is unlikely that Stokesley left a family of any kind. When he dies, what is left of his property (after Cromwell takes what he wants) goes to Edward Spendlove, the nephew of Stokesley's mother.

B. At Oxford

In 1495 Stokesley became a fellow of Magdalen College, in 1498 he is Prelector in Logic and Principal of Magdalen Hall; he was Bursar in 1502; in 1503 he became Dean of Divinity and Northern Proctor.

While Vice-President of Magdalen College (1506), Stokesley became involved in a quarrel which almost broke up the college. Mayhew, the man who was President of the College, had been consecrated Bishop of Hereford in 1506. According to the statutes of the College the legality of his holding both positions was somewhat in doubt and discussion becomes so involved and heated that the visitor of the college, the Bishop of Worcester, has to intervene and sends his commissary to make a visitation.

Stokesley and his adherents refused to recognize Mayhew as President of the College. Stokesley's rival Vice-President, a man named Gold, accused Stokesley of adultery, heresy, and the

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2Bridges, John, A Record of Northamptonshire, Oxford, 1791, page 60
3Ibid., page 65
receiving of stolen goods. Mr. Wilson in his history of Magdalen College describes the result of the visitation as follows:

So far as any clear impression may be drawn from the mass of Episcopal records at Worcester, it would seem that on the whole Stokesley and those who acted with him had been endeavoring to restore order and that the opposing party, headed by Gold, the Vice-President appointed in Stokesley's room, had been more concerned than Stokesley's adherents in the violation of the statutes, though in this matter neither party was free from blame.

Stokesley was tried on the more serious accusations which he denied on oath; no one appeared to give evidence in support of the charges and the commissary admitted him to compurgation.5

C. Early Clerical Activities

In 1505, Stokesley is ordained priest. Afterwards he is vicar of Willoughby in Warwickshire and rector of Slimbridge in Gloustershire (both by the gift of Magdalen College); prebendary of the King's Chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St. Stephen within the palace of Westminster; archdeacon of Dorset in place of Richard Paice; doctor of divinity and chaplain to Richard Fox; and archdeacon of Surrey.6

In 1515 he is chaplain to the Lord of Wynton,7 in 1519 he is chaplain to Fox,8 and in 1520, he is chaplain to Henry the

5 Wilson, H. A., Magdalen College, College Histories, Volume X, page 120, London, 1899


8 Ibid., page 120
Eighth at his famous meeting with Francis the First on the Cloth of Gold. In the same year (1520), he is also chaplain at the meeting between Henry the Eighth and Charles the Fifth.

D. Early Lay Activities

Sometime around 1515 Stokesley begins to be noticed by the Court of Henry the Eighth. By 1517 he was acting as the King's Almoner and in the early 1520's there is evidence of his activity as one of the king's councilors.


11 Letters and Papers, Volume III, 272, 941 and 1870
CHAPTER II

STOKESLEY AND THE DIVORCE QUESTION

A. Significance of the Divorce

In all Tudor history there is no other event which has remained as alive for scholarly discussion and argument as that of the divorce of Henry the Eighth from Catherine of Aragon. The research of historians has produced such a mass of evidence that there are very few aspects of the divorce upon which there is not dispute and the complexity of the proceedings is still being unfolded. Even the cause for the initiation of proceedings is still a matter of debate. Many Catholic writers are inclined to blame Cardinal Wolsey, many Anglicans feel Henry sought to ease his scruples of conscience, some modern historians are of the opinion that the matter was begun for reasons of statecraft, and still others that Henry's lust for Ann Boleyn was the cause for the beginning of the now famous divorce proceedings.¹

The interest in the affair is of course due to the indisputable fact that as a result of it the English church and monarchy break with the Papacy. The extent to which relations

¹Mattingly, Garrett, Catherine of Aragon, Boston 1941, page 243
were immediately severed and the importance of the divorce as a sole or contributory cause to the spread of the Reformation in England are matters for heated controversy today. There are so many factors of religious conscience, statecraft, and national pride involved in the divorce and its relation to the Reformation that perhaps there will never be an accounting of it which is purely impersonal and unbiased. Mr. Mattingly, in his recent splendid biography of Catherine of Aragon comments on this possibility:

Whether the great case itself (the Divorce) was the mine which wrecked the unity of Christendom, or only the spark which fired the train, its battle cries became the shibboleth of partisans, and its events marked the line of the watershed between the old way of life and the new, so that even today it is hard to find men to write or speak of it without prejudice or heat, and many of its features are still obscured as much by passion as by the erosion of time.  

The writer believes that most scholars will agree that if the divorce had not taken place the Reformation in England, if not halted completely, would have been considerably delayed and met with much greater resistance. The relation of the Divorce to the origin and spread of the Reformation in England merits further careful scrutiny by research historians.

B. Stokesley's Importance in the Divorce Proceedings

Beginning in 1529 Stokesley is an active and loyal servant of Henry's in furthering the divorce. He canvasses the

\[^{2}\text{Mattingly, page 242}\]
Universities of Bologna, Padua, and Venice to obtain the opinions of doctors in favor of Henry. From 1530-35 as Bishop of London he attempts to get Catherine to drop her defense, is present at the "nullification" of the marriage of Henry and Catherine, defends the divorce before Parliament and from his pulpit, assists in the coronation of Ann Boleyn, and christens Ann's daughter Elizabeth. (These activities will be considered later in detail.)

Eustace Chapuys, the ambassador of Charles the Fifth at the English court considered Stokesley to be the Queen's greatest enemy. Stokesley was evidently a man of considerable learning and no less a person than Erasmus mentions that he knew three languages, that his company was much sought by learned men, and that he was one of the most influential men at the court.

As early as September 21, 1529, Chapuys, in a letter to Charles V speaks of Stokesley as a formidable enemy of the Queen's cause:

He is the man who has most violently and obstinately supported the cause of the divorce and who is still doing the utmost he can to promote it, for, I am told, scarcely a day passes without his writing some paper or suggesting some new argument in support of what he calls his master's right. The Queen is very much afraid that he (Dr. Stokesley) is

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3Letters and Papers, Volume IV, page 257
4Ibid., Volume III, 394, Volume II, 4340
sent now to France for no other purpose than that of inducing the University of Paris to write in behalf of the King.\(^5\)

December 21, 1529 Chapuys pays tribute to Stokesley's ability when he writes the Emperor, "As regards the King, no man of learning has been found to write in his favor except one Dr. Stokesley.\(^6\)

Stokesley worked unceasingly and tirelessly for the divorce. His learning, wit, and oratorical ability made him an invaluable instrument of the fulfilling of Henry's will. Once the divorce was an actuality he became the most outspoken champion of Henry's justification for the casting out of Catherine.

C. The Universities and the Divorce

1. Why Their Opinions Are Sought

After Wolsey's failure in the divorce proceedings Cranmer advised Gardiner and Fox to suggest to Henry the Eighth that envoys be sent to the Universities. This move was to be made because the Universities were kind of scientific tribunals for important questions and they were to be the "scattered council" whose opinion was to contest that of the Pope.\(^7\)

Professor H. A. L. Fisher says that despite all his willfulness

\(^5\)Calendar of State Papers Spanish, by G. A. Bergenroth, and P. de Gayagos, London 1862-1910; Volume IV, part one, 238

\(^6\)Ibid., 386

\(^7\)Constant, Gustave, The Reformation in England, London 1932, pages 75-76
Henry still cared for the good word of Europe, and in his multifarious appeals to the tribunal of European opinion he made great parade of the support which he received from the Universities.8

The Greek scholar, Richard Croke, was sent to search the Italian libraries and to secure the opinions of the most famous doctors. Stokesley was dispatched especially to the University at Bologna, Reginald Pole was to secure a favorable opinion at the Sorbonne, and Francis the First was expected to give his support in France.9

2. Methods Used

Partisans of Henry and of Catherine rail against each other as to the methods used by their respective factions in gaining favorable opinions from the Universities and their doctors. The evidence seems to indicate there is some justification for both their claims. On the King's side Ghinucci, the Bishop of Worcester was given full power to buy over the Italians;10 there is evidence of use of bribery on the part of


9 Constant, page 76

Stokesley and Croke; \textsuperscript{11} and the obtaining of favorable opinions at Oxford and Cambridge was conducted in a scandalous manner. \textsuperscript{12}

The Queen's adherents were no less blameless. Chapuys arrived in England prepared to bribe influential persons and the Imperials (Charles V and other adherents of Catherine) match bribe with bribe. \textsuperscript{13} Both sides used bribery and threats but it would be unjust to say that all the opinions on either side were surreptitiously obtained. Professor Pollard comments on the opinions as follows:

These votes were not obtained without some manipulation, but to represent them all as due to bribery is to accuse the Pre-Reformation Universities of a degree of corruption which the most zealous Protestant would scarcely believe possible. The truth is that the powers of the Pope to dispense in such cases was, as Julius II admitted, really a matter of doubt; and while individuals may have been bribed by Henry's agents on the one hand and by Charles' on the other, there is no more reason to question the honesty of the mass of the opinions given in Henry's favor than those given against him. \textsuperscript{14}

3. Opinions of Various Universities

During the year 1530 the English envoys had secured the


\textsuperscript{12} "The Divorce of Catherine of Aragon," \textit{Edinburgh Review}, Volume 152, pages 258-80

\textsuperscript{13} Mattingly, page 243

\textsuperscript{14} Pollard, A.F., \textit{Cranmer and the English Reformation}, London, 1920, p. 43
opinion of seven foreign and two English Universities in Henry's favor.  

February 1530 Gardiner and Fox are dispatched to Cambridge to get an opinion favorable to the King. The University is split with Tyndale, Coverdale, Cranmer, Latimer, Bilney, Barnes, Cronie, and Lambert meeting in the White Horse Tavern and being called Germans. They are a minority but Gardiner and Fox manage to get the question referred to a committee of 29 who rule for the King. By much the same procedure a favorable ruling for the King is obtained at Oxford in April 1530. Professor Paul Friedmann says that, "in England intimidation was freely used, and nearly every divine or lawyer, fearing the royal anger, bullied and insulted by the royal commissioners subscribed. A few resisted but they were in so small a minority that Henry could boast in England that almost everybody was on his side."  

In France a favorable opinion from the University of Paris was thought to be of more importance than any other University and strenuous efforts were made to obtain it. The details from Paris are given by Dr. Garay who was sent by the

15Gardiner, James, "New Lights on the Divorce of Henry VIII, English Historical Review, Volume XI, pages 673-702

16Fisher, page 300

17Friedmann, Volume I, 114
Emperor to watch the proceedings. 18 At first the University of Paris refused to give an opinion and Henry was forced to urge Francis the First to use his influence with the doctors of Paris. To get Francis to render such a service the English court was obliged to make concessions of every kind, and to yield some very real advantages. 19 With the help of Francis I, an irregular opinion was obtained (July 2, 1530) at Paris. Forty-three doctors protested against the vote as having been surreptitiously obtained, but the registers were taken away, so that the opinion could not be cancelled. 20 Most of the other French Universities, Orleans, Toulouse, Angiers, etc. soon followed the example set by Paris.

In Germany the efforts of the English envoys in Henry's behalf were well-nigh useless. However, a study of the opinions of Luther and some of his contemporaries sheds light on both English and German history; it shows that Henry's government was far more persistent than is usually supposed in getting from the Protestants a favorable opinion which might serve

18 Edinburgh Review, Volume 152, 259
19 Friedmann, Volume I, 115
20 Ibid., page 119
as the basis for an alliance, and at the same time brings out the interesting ideas of the reformers on the questions of divorce and polygamy. 21

The policy of Erasmus, characteristically enough, seems to have been to please everyone and to keep as far as possible friends with all parties. At first he dedicates some works in honor of Ann Boleyn's father but after the death of More and Fisher in 1535 he wrote a poem which accused Henry of tyranny and lust and advised him to cast out his harlot and return to his legal wife. 22 It is highly characteristic of the Dutch Humanist that he approached the question almost entirely from the practical point of view. While in "Institutio Matrimonii" he carefully examines the theological arguments in general, when the specific case is put before him the considerations which move him are, first to avoid a civil war, and then to spare the feelings of all parties concerned, particularly those of the Queen. 23

The other German theologians to whom Henry applied were chiefly concerned in grounding their decisions on a careful study of the Bible and the Cannon Law. Henry's principal

21 Smith, Preserved, "German Opinions of the Divorce of Henry VIII," English Historical Review, Volume 27, page 671
22 Smith, page 673
23 Ibid., page 675
agent in Germany was Simon Grynaeus, a learned Greek scholar. Melancthon, professor at Wittenberg says divorce (except for adultery) is against the natural law of God. He suggests polygamy as a solution; all of the Wittenbergers are of the same opinion and say so to Bishop Fox in 1535. The group of reformers at Strassbourg, Wolfgang Capito, Martin Bucer, Kaspar Hedio, and Mathew Zell were of the same opinion as that of the Wittenbergers; that divorce was a worse evil than marriage with a brother's widow and the most practical solution was polygamy.

In Italy Henry's envoys Richard Croke and John Stokesley were eminently successful. Professor Friedmann seems to think that this success would have been impossible to achieve without the aid of a pro-French party in Italy. Be that as it may, in 1530 Ferrara, Bologna, and Padua determined in the King's favor.

The opinions of the Universities were put into book form; it was the work of Edward Fox, afterwards Bishop of Hereford and was written in collaboration with Stokesley and Nicholas de Bingo. A copy of the volume referred to is in

24Ibid., page 678
25Ibid., page 680
26Friedmann, Volume one, page 115
27Constant, page 77n
the Grenville library, No. 1521, in the British Museum dated April 1530. It consists of 72 leaves not paged or foliated. In 1531 the work was augmented and published by Cranmer under the title, "The Determinations of the Most Excellent and Most Famous Universities." The document is much too wordy and lengthy to be presented here in its entirety but in a later section of the paper the reader will find a translation of those sections referring to the determinations of the Universities of Bologna and Padua. (Both obtained by Stokesley).

D. Stokesley and the Universities

1. Evidence of his departure and presence

Letters from several sources indicate that Stokesley had left for France by October 8, 1529. He was accompanying George Boleyn and some other gentlemen as ambassadors to Francis I. Their instructions were as follows:

Instructions to George Boleyn, Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber and John Stokesley.

To confer on the repair of Albany to Scotland; interpret the alliance of Charles the Fifth and Scotland. Prevent a General Council because of the influence of the Emperor over the Pope.

Stokesley is to influence opinions of learned men to favor the divorce.

28Burnet, IV, page 136 square

29Letters and Papers, Volume IV, part 3, 5983, 5996, and page 2684

30Ibid., 6073
Stokesley was sent ostensibly as an ambassador to France but his real mission was to win over prominent Parisian and Italian doctors to Henry's side in the divorce question. On December 17, 1529 Richard Croke, in a letter to Henry the Eighth, mentions that he and the Bishop of Worcester are receiving advice from Stokesley as to how to handle the Jews and theologians with reference to Henry's divorce. (From Rome). 31 January 13, 1530, Chapuys, in a letter to Charles V mentions that Stokesley is being sent to Bologna. 32 On June 14, 1530, he arrives in Venice to obtain opinions from the Doctors of Padua concerning the divorce. 33

2. His reception

The Pope kept Stokesley waiting for an interview for several weeks and at first refused to see him. However, after Henry wrote to Clement VII and says that he cannot understand his refusal to see Bishop Stokesley unless it was to remain in ignorance of the merits of his case and to waste time, the Pope sends for Stokesley and seems to have received him with at least a show of cordiality. Constant describes his reception:

Stokesley seems to have been received well and Compeggio allowed him the two hundred Florins which were due to him-

31Ibid., Volume IV, 6103
32Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, Volume IV, 422
self as Cardinal Protector for the recent nomination of the Bishop in London. Stokesley was considered to be an influential person and one who ought to be treated carefully.34

3. Evidence of his activities

From October 1529 until May 1530 Stokesley is in Paris and Rome trying to win over doctors to the divorce. From May 1530 until September 1530 he travels to Venice, Bologna, and Vincenza speaking for the King's cause.35

In his activities Stokesley uses bribery or threats as the occasion demands. At Padua he gets 11 friars to declare for the King at 10 ducats apiece;36 receives a letter from Croke warning unless Stokesley sends more money instead of promises the doctors will swerve to the Emperor for the 600 crowns per man he is offering;37 and has at his disposal a letter of unlimited credit on a bank in Venice.38

Roderigo Nino complained to Charles the Fifth that what the English agents could not get by promises they obtained by threats.39 July 30, 1530 Stokesley threatens the Council of

34Constant, page 350
35Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, Volume IV, part one, 651
36Ibid., page 637
37Burnet, II, page 16
38Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, Volume IV, part 1, page 697
39Ibid., page 637
Ten at Venice when they refuse to grant the doctors of the Republic permission to speak on the marriage. The Venetian Papers describe his outburst:

Whereupon the Bishop of London used violent language, reviling the Signory, and adding that he would write the whole to his majesty, who, he doubted not would make the signory know how much he was displeased, and bursting forth into expressions which they are convinced were very remote from the King's good will towards them.40

While at Bologna Stokesley visited Ghiberti and Caraffa, afterwards Paul IV. In June 1530 Croke writes to Stokesley saying: "those with whom Stokesley spoke at Bologna he is as sure of as a flea in his purse."41 Stokesley had pled his cause so well that the doctors at Bologna would take no money for declaring in his favor42 (an unusual thing in these proceedings). Stokesley was dispatched especially to Padua and Bologna and by June 13, 1530 he writes to Henry saying that he has the determinations of the theologians from those Universities under their common seal.

September 11, 1530 Henry recalls Stokesley. Shortly after returning to England, Stokesley together with Fox, and De Bingo writes a summary of the opinions of the Universities and in 1531 they are published in book form by Cranmer by the previously mentioned title of "The Determinations of the Most

40Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, page 595
41Letters and Papers, Volume IV, part 3, 6445
42Ibid., Volume VII, 15
Excellent and Famous Universities." In the following paragraphs are presented the determinations of the Universities of Bologna and Padua (secured by Stokesley) as presented in Cranmer's book:

(Judgment of the faculty of sacred theology of the University of Bologna).

Since God the most good and the most high gave us with his own mouth the old law for the shaping and the establishment of moral life and then assuming human form as God the redeemer of mankind established the new testament for removing and clarifying the doubtful points which were appearing in many matters and the elucidation of which was of great benefit toward the perfecting of men, we have always felt it our duty to follow these most holy teachings of the Eternal Father and in difficult and questionable matters to form our judgment in the light that is shed from above, when the question has been made clear by much reasoning from both sides and mature consideration of the case and by the writings of the fathers. Since, then, we, being outstanding and famous men, were pressingly requested to investigate most carefully the matter which follows and to give our honest judgment on it, based on the truth all alone, all the professors of theology of this university met together, first having privately and singly examined the matter and studied it with undivided attention for many days. Then together we looked at the case, examined it, compared it, considered it studying each separate point in detail and exactly, weighing all possible objections, including that of the most reverend Cardinal Cajetan and the Deuteronomic injunction [dispensatio] on maintaining a brother's seed, and all the other opposed opinions which seemed to be concerned with this case. The question before us was:

Whether it be by the Church's ordinance alone or also by the divine law that it is prohibited to marry one's brother's childless widow. And if this is prohibited by both laws, whether it be possible for the most blessed Pontiff to give dispensation to anyone for the contraction of such a marriage.

Having diligently, (as we have said) and carefully examined this question singly and in open meeting and searched the question to the best of our ability,
We do conclude, judge, declare, most firmly testify and confidently affirm

that such matrimony, wedlock, or marriage is abominable, execrable, and detestable for a Christian man and even an infidel, and is prohibited by the divine law of nature and the human law with dire penalties. That the most holy Pope to whom we are entrusted by Christ the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven cannot (though his powers are almost universal), for any cause whatsoever grant a dispensation to anyone for such a marriage. We are prepared to defend the truth of this decision at any time in any place.

In witness thereof we have made this writing and secured it with the seal of our university and of the sacred company of venerable theologians, as is our custom signing below our general subscription, Bologna the Cathedral Church, in the Pontificate of Clement VII.

(Judgment of the faculty of sacred theology of the University of Padua).

Those who lay the foundation of the Catholic faith bear witness that God the most good and the most high gave with his own mouth to the children of Israel the precepts of the old law as a model of life and a foundation of our moral system and also, taking the garment of humanity and becoming the Redeemer of all, established the new testament not only for the purpose of dissolving certain doubts that were arising but as a gift to us in pity, for the illumination of matters which made clear bore us abundant and salutary fruit. It has always been and will always be through the ages our duty to follow (as befits worshipers of Christ) these ordinances of the high Creator and in doubtful matters and difficult questions to put forth our judgment in reliance on the supernatural light, after the affair itself has been thoroughly considered and clarified in time by many reasoning on both sides and by the authority of the fathers, judging voting, so far as is possible, in haste.

When, therefore, we, being famous orators, were most urgently requested to deign to investigate most diligently the following matter and then to set forth our judgment thereon with attention only to the truth, for this purpose we, all the professors of theology of this university met together, first having privately and separately examined the matter and searched to the heart of it with the greatest ingenuity,
then met together we considered the whole and pondered all
the details, bringing forward whatever arguments to the
contrary we could think of and sincerely refuting them, in-
cluding the Deuteronomistic injunction on maintaining a broth­
er's seed and all the other opposed opinions and judgments
which seemed to be concerned with this case.

The question before us was:

Whether it be by the Church's ordinance alone or also by
divine law that it is prohibited to marry one's brother's
childless widow.

And if this be prohibited by both laws, whether it be pos­
sible for the most blessed Pontiff to give dispensation to
anyone for the contraction of such a marriage.

Having investigated this question most exactly (as we have
said) privately and publicly, and having cast all possible
light upon it, we declare, judge, decide, attest and most
truthfully affirm

that such matrimony, marriage, wedlock is null, even detest­
able and execrable to any Christian whatsoever, profans,
abominable, criminal and clearly prohibited with the most
severe penalties by the law of nature both divine and
human; that the most blessed Pontiff, to whom are entrusted
by Christ the Son of God the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,
can for no reason lawfully give anyone dispensation for
the contraction of such a marriage, since those things
which are prohibited by the divine law are not under his
authority, nor is he the Vicar of God with regard to them,
but only concerning those things which are entrusted to the
jurisdiction of men.

We are unanimously prepared to defend at any time and place
the validity of this decision.

In witness whereof we have made these writings and secured
them with the accustomed seal of our university and of the
sacred college of reverend theologians.

Padua, the Church of St. Augustine the Hermit, July 1, 1530.

The above was translated from the Latin (Burnet's His­
tory of the Reformation, Pocock edition, Volume 4, p. 136) by
4. Results of his activities

That Stokesley's efforts at Bologna and Padua were successful is borne out by the fact that King Henry nominates him Bishop of London while he is still in Europe (July 1530). He was consecrated Bishop November 27, 1530 after his return to England and becomes the most outspoken defender of the divorce that Henry has.

E. Consummation and Justification of the Divorce

Before Parliament on April 2, 1531, Stokesley uses the statements of the Doctors of Padua and Bologna as justification for declaring Henry's marriage null and void. He does this to give fresh impetus to the divorce matter in the upper house. He espoused the question with such warmth that he brought protests from Standish and Clerk, Bishops of St. Asaph and of Bath who said that Parliament had no right to discuss the question. The Duke of Norfolk had to intervene and explain that the King had submitted the opinions of the Universities to the Lords, not for them to discuss the case, but so that they should know the motives which inspired him.43

Chapuys in a letter to Charles the Fifth of June 6, 1531, says that Stokesley was a member of a large party of nobles and clerics who visited the Queen in her bed-chamber and

43 Ibid., Volume V, 171
attempted to get her to consent to mutual judges and site to prevent Henry's humiliation of being summoned to Rome. Stokesley tells the Queen that the fact that she shared Prince Arthur's bed with him would bring the presumption of the law into the King's favor but she dares him to test his theories at Rome. It is interesting to note here that in contrast to the Spanish Calendar of State Papers the Letters and Papers in their version of this visit say nothing about any conversation between Stokesley and the Queen.

July 20, 1531, Henry, in a letter to Benet asks him to offer the Pope money to persuade him to let the Archbishop of Canterbury handle the divorce. Henry indicates his confidence in Stokesley by saying that if the Pope refuses to do this Benet is to ask him to put the matter into the hands of the Bishop of London. September 12, 1531 Stokesley acts as the King's proctor of a commission of the Faculty of Law of Paris who decide in the King's favor on the divorce question.

There is a lack of evidence on Stokesley's activity for the divorce from September 1531 to March 1533. Perhaps he was collecting and organizing the materials which he proposed to use in his defense of the King's actions. At a Convocation of the

44 Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, Volume IV, part II, page 171

45 Ibid., 171

46 Letters and Papers, Volume V, 327
Clergy on March 26, 1533 Stokesley presides. He brings up the validity of Henry's marriage—cites the brief of 1530 of Clement the Seventh as his authority to discuss the case. He does not mention the fact that the Pope has withdrawn permission and has said no clergymen or doctors may meddle in the case.\(^47\)

In April of 1533 Stokesley is sent as an ambassador to France with the Duke of Norfolk's embassy.\(^48\) On May 23, 1533, Stokesley, Cranmer, the Bishops of Winchester, Bath, Wells, Lincoln, and many divines and canonists gather at Dunstable. (The Queen is ill near there at Ampthill). After hearing the evidence of the marriage of Arthur, the opinions of the Universities, divines and canonists, the marriage of Catherine and Henry is declared null and void from the beginning.\(^49\) June 15, 1533 Stokesley is present at the Synod of York which had been assembled by order of the King to decide in favor of the divorce. Stokesley defends the divorce against the Bishop of Durham.\(^50\)

Stokesley not only defended the divorce in England but also protected the King's matter on the continent. August 2, 1533, a Mr. Vaughn, writing to Cromwell, mentions that an agent

\(^{47}\)Friedmann, Volume I, page 197

\(^{48}\)Letters and Papers, Volume IV, 647

\(^{49}\)Burnet, pages 219 and 220

\(^{50}\)Letters and Papers, Volume 6, 653
of Stokesley's is in Antwerp trying to find out who were the authors and publishers of a book in Latin against the King's cause. 51

At the Coronation of Ann Boleyn, Stokesley and Gardiner assist Cranmer (May 29, 1533) and at the Coronation ceremonies of June 1, 1533, Stokesley and Ghinucci carried her robe. It was Stokesley who performed the act which one might say marks the final consummation of the divorce; September 10, 1533 he christens Elizabeth, daughter of Ann Boleyn and Henry. 52

Early in January of 1534 Stokesley is working to obtain the subscription of the Abbess and Sisters of Lyon as to the validity of the first marriage (in favor of the King). Chapuys in a letter to the Emperor describes how he is summoned before the King's Council to hear the declaration of Henry's statute transferring the throne to the male heirs of his second marriage. Chapuys defended the first marriage and describes to Charles V Stokesley's reaction to his defense:

The Bishop of London attempted to impugn the first marriage and labored at great length to prove the authority of St. Basil, St. Gregory, and Pope Innocent the Third was on his side, but at last they were found to be against him. The Bishop said that even if the King his master was wrong in attempting to dissolve the first marriage, yet the Pope, whom they all called Bishop of Rome, had shown himself partial and unjust in proceeding to the second sentence and giving executorials upon the first not standing the appeal of the King to the future Council, which appeal he said

51Ibid., Volume VI, 394

52Ibid., 1111
bound his hands entirely; and it was no new thing to appeal from a Pope's sentence to a General Council, for it had been done in the time of the primitive Church; and this he labored to prove until I (Chapuys) told him that, although for the manifest abuses which were committed the said appeal was most jointly appointed there could be no appeal from the Pope's sentence to the Council. Then gives a number of reasons why the King could not appeal to the Council even if it were permissible—the Bishop is then silent.53

During the early part of 1534, Stokesley tries to persuade Thomas More to alter his views on the divorce to favor the King. There is an interesting statement by Professor Friedmann claiming that on January 16 of 1534 Stokesley refused to sign a paper saying that the marriage of Henry and Catherine was void from the beginning and the marriage of Ann and Henry was good and lawful. Mr. Friedmann claims that Stokesley stated that although the marriage of Henry and Catherine was condemned by the Convocation, that the Convocation had been prorogued before the marriage with Ann had been acknowledged and had never been asked to give an opinion on the subject.54 If Stokesley actually made such a statement it was in direct contrast with his previous statements and activities concerning the divorce and might have indicated that he was beginning to regret his stand in the affair.

On July 11, 1535 Stokesley preaches a sermon in St. Paul's Cathedral. The sermon was given upon the King's order and the whole of it was to invalidate the King's first marriage,

53 Ibid., Volume VII, 690
54 Friedmann, Volume I, 240
and to decry the authority of the Pope and those who favored it, --even those who suffered death in its defense. 55

There are two statements by Chapuys indicating that in 1536 Stokesley is beginning to regret his favoring Ann and Henry in the divorce matter. In the Staats Archives in Vienna there is a statement by Chapuys stating that in April of 1536 Stokesley is beginning to be sorry he had favored Anne Boleyn's marriage because she and her relatives were inclined to Lutheranism. 56 In the Letters and Papers of April 1536 there is another statement describing this change in attitude. Henry was beginning to be tired of Ann and Stokesley was asked if the King could abandon her; Chapuys described the Bishop's reaction to the query:

He would not give any opinion but to the King himself, and before doing so would like the King's own inclination, meaning to intimate the King might leave said concubine, but that, knowing his fickleness he would not put himself in danger. The said Bishop was the principal cause and instrument of the divorce, of which he heartily repents, and would still more gladly promote this, the said concubine and all her race are such abominable Lutherans. 57

Whether or not Stokesley did regret his activity in the divorce is open to question. Both statements revealing his regrets are made by Chapuys and might have been balm to soothe the ambassador's chagrin at having been unable to prevent Hen-

55Letters and Papers, Volume VIII, 1019
56Constant, page 565
57Letters and Papers, Volume X, 752
ry's divorcing the sister of his master, the Emperor. There is no statement that can be traced directly or indirectly to Stokesley himself which reveals any regrets on the matter. Be that as it may, Stokesley was active in the instigation, and consummation of the divorce and defends it publicly as long as Henry deems it necessary to do so.
CHAPTER III

STOKESLEY AS A HENRICIAN BISHOP

A. Definition of a Henrician

According to Constant, the term Henrician was first applied to Cranmer by Sander; today it is used to denote the prelate holding contrary ideas to Cranmer. In doctrine, they were Catholics, yet by word of mouth and in writing, they defended the schismatic acts of Henry the Eighth. Chief among them were Bishop Gardiner of Winchester, Bishop Stokesley of London, Bishop Bonner of Hereford (later Bishop of London) and Bishop Tunstall of Durham.¹

The Henricians had three characteristics:

1. They favored Henry's divorce.

2. They contributed to the establishment of the Royal Supremacy in England.

3. They energetically maintained the Catholic dogma against the Reformers. Thus they were at once abettors of the schism and guardians of orthodoxy.

B. Stokesley's Activities as a Henrician

The previous discussion of Stokesley's activity for the divorce has, I hope, made it plain that no further elucidation of the part he played in the "King's Matter" is necessary. Certainly there is no doubt that in that affair he was an abettor

¹Constant, page 341
of the schism!

1. Defender of the Law of Supremacy and the Break with Rome

Stokesley was an outspoken defender of the Law of Supremacy. As Bishop of London he kept a strict eye on sermons and gave no one a license to speak in his diocese. March 26, 1533 Chapuys informs Charles the Fifth that "only by license from the Bishop of London can preachers and others speak."2

In 1533, Stokesley and Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, wrote a long letter to Reginald Pole in defense of the King's break with Rome; on January 8 of that year Stokesley attempts to persuade Bishop Fisher of Rochester to accept the break with Rome.3 January 15, 1533 Parliament breaks definitely with Rome and Stokesley is one of those present,4 and he signs the document renouncing the jurisdiction of the See of Rome.

Stokesley's signature is to be found along with those of the Bishops of Bath, Wells, Bangor, Worcester, etc., on a document which is to justify the Princes in summoning a General Council in defiance of the Pope (July 20, 1536).5

It is interesting to note that while Stokesley was alive he was recognized as a staunch defender of the King and

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2 Letters and Papers, Volume VI, 541
3 Burnet, Volume IV, 239-69
4 Ibid., page 399
5 Letters and Papers, Volume IX, 124
of the Royal Supremacy, but that after his death he was called a traitor and accused of defending the Pope. This accusation was probably made by Cromwell to justify his action against the Bishop of London.

2. Defender of Catholic Dogma

Stokesley was rigidly opposed to any doctrinal changes. According to Constant, in the discussion upon the Ten Articles in 1536 Stokesley maintained that the Sacraments were seven in number against the attacks of the opposing party. He vigorously refuted Alexander Alane whom Cromwell had brought to uphold the new teaching. Sacraments said Alane, are seals ascertaining us of God's will; without the word there is no certainty of God's good will; therefore without the word there are no sacraments. Stokesley answers him:

It is false and not to be allowed that all sacraments ought either to have a manifest ground in Scripture or shew faith some signification of the Remission of sins. And is there none otherword of God but that which every suitor and cobbler read in their mother tongue? If ye think that nothing pertaineth to the Christian faith but only that which is written, ye err with the Lutherans.7

After the revolt of the "Pilgrims of Grace," the need for doctrinal unity causes a Second Confession of Faith. A gathering of Bishops sat from February until July, 1537, and they were chiefly concerned with the four Sacraments of Con-

6Ibid., Volume XIV

firmation, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. Questions were asked about the Sacraments such as:

1. Are they Sacraments of the new law?
2. What are the external signs and outward graces of each of the said documents?
3. What promises be made to the receivers of them by God?\(^8\)

The answers preserved in the British Museum show the opposing tendencies which divided the Episcopacy. The Henricians such as Stokesley, Tunstall, and Langland maintained the Catholic Dogma in its entirety and the reform party with Cranmer, Barlow, Hilsey, Rugg, and Goodrich were inclined towards the Lutheran doctrine.\(^9\)

Even in 1539, the year of his death, Stokesley is still defending the Sacraments. This time he opposes Melancthon the learned doctor from Wittenberg.

3. Action against monasteries

Stokesley was in favor of the dissolution of monasteries. He made the following comment on Statute 28 (dissolving large monasteries) when it was passing in Parliament in 1536:

> These lesser houses were, as thorns, "soon plucked up"; but the great Abbots were like putrified old oaks; yet they needs must follow, and so would others do in Christendom before many years passed.\(^10\)

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\(^8\) Constant, page 399

\(^9\) Burnet, Volume IV, 293

\(^10\) Ibid., page 311
There is no evidence however of Stokesley taking an active part in the dissolution of the monasteries,—a fact which may partly explain the enmity between him and Cromwell.

4. Action against heretics

Stokesley was active in the punishing of heresy. Dr. Laurence Humphrey, who lived in Elizabeth's time, says that Stokesley sacrificed over 300 heretics. Stokesley himself, as he lay dying, boasts of having burned 30 heretics.

December 15, 1531, James Barnham was before Stokesley at Chelsea. January 1532 Latimer is summoned to appear before Stokesley, he is questioned on his heretical speeches, and March 18, 1532 Stokesley excommunicates him for contumacious conduct. He absolved Latimer in April of 1532. In July 1533 Stokesley wrote a letter to Henry the Eighth telling him he has condemned John Frith and Andrew Hewet, heretics, and delivered them to Stephen Peacock, Mayor of London, and John Martin, Sheriff. They were burned July 22.

In December of 1534, Stokesley tried John Tewksbury, a shopkeeper in Lond, for heresy. The trial took place in More's house. Tewksbury was burned at Smithfield. In January 1535 we find evidence of his trying to convert a Mr. Copynger and in

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11 Fuller, Thomas, Church History of Britain, Oxford, 1845, Volume IV, 185
12 Wood, Volume I, 576
13 Letters and Papers, Volume V, 703, 860
14 Burnet, Volume IV, 270
May of the same year he and Dr. Barons examined twenty men and women of Calais and Flanders for heresy. In April 1535 a Mr. William Marshall complains to Cromwell that Stokesley is trying many poor people on small matters of pretended heresy while the proud and stubborn against the word of God go unpunished.  

The above accusation that Stokesley favored the rich and important and persecuted only the poor is supported by Hall's statement that Stokesley was "out of favor" with the common people.

15Letters and Papers, Volume XI, 325
CHAPTER IV

STOKESLEY'S DOWNFALL

Stokesley's downfall was due to his antagonizing Cromwell. The enmity between them becomes serious when Stokesley and Gardiner objected to the Metropolitan Cranmer visiting their dioceses. Stokesley disputed the title of Legatus Natus of the Apostolic See, which since it had not been abolished placed the archbishop above the other prelates.¹

Cromwell pestered Stokesley with all sorts of vexatious proceedings,² and a statement in the Letters and Papers says that Stokesley's death was due to his being worn out from grief at being persecuted by Cromwell and others on suspicion of not aiding the King in abolishing the Pope and destroying the monasteries.³

Cromwell's reasons for seeking the destruction of Stokesley are not so difficult to interpret because of what we know now of the character of Cromwell. He was not one to brook competition from anyone, cleric or layman, in influence at the Royal Court. Before Cromwell's rise to power we have a state-

¹Letters and Papers, Volume VIII, 850
²Ibid., 1054
³Ibid., Volume VII, 1218
ment from none other than Erasmus himself that Stokesley was one of the most influential men at the Royal Court.\(^4\) Cromwell's destruction of Stokesley was probably simply what he considered a necessary step in his securing complete control of the King's affairs; we know the man well enough to realize he would not have been particular about what means he used to secure Stokesley's downfall if that was the end he sought.

May 29, 1538 the Solicitor General accuses him of violating Statutes 16 of Richard II and 28 of Henry VIII, by executing a Bull of Martin V. Imprisoned and then released with a caution he was able to produce the King's pardon when the judges summoned him before them. There are records which indicate that a Prior of Friars at Calais, Cardinal Pole, and George Croftis, a clerk, were questioned about Stokesley. Stokesley was accused again but dies before he can be brought to trial (September 8, 1539).

Even before Stokesley dies Cromwell is hovering around like a vulture waiting to pounce on his property. He was evidently anxiously waiting for Stokesley to die and has his agent keeping an eye on his future possessions. Three days before the death of the Bishop, a Richard Layton, Priest, writes to Cromwell:

\(^4\)Ibid., Volume III, 394
It is judged the Bishop of London will depart life this Saturday night; he has made his executors Mr. Recorder of London, Mr. Baker, the King's attorney, Mr. Harewoode, and one Ewer his chaplain. He has declared he owes the King but 200 l., and has but 500 l. in ready money; men think he has more. His plate is good, his carpets also. 5

5Ibid., Volume XIV, part 2, 133
CHAPTER V

STOKESLEY THE MAN

A. His appearance

It is hard to draw a complete picture of Stokesley's appearance since the only likeness of him extant is a half-portrait by Holbein which is hanging in Windsor Palace. However, if we examine the portrait closely it becomes evident that physically Stokesley was probably a powerful man. He has a bull-neck set on wide, thick shoulders which expand into a heavy chest. He probably had a booming voice to match his powerful physique since we find several instances in which he quieted hundreds of unruly men simply by speaking to them. That he was a powerful man is also borne out by the fact that he lived to be sixty-four—a ripe old age for the Tudor Period.

B. His Personality

I think we have a clue to Stokesley's personality in that nowhere in any of the available information on his life and activities is there anyone who calls him friend. He incurs the enmity of Richard Croke, Cranmer, Cromwell, Reginald Pole, and almost anyone else with whom he was in contact for any length of time.
Stokesley seems to have been a man of violent temper. In July of 1530, while in Venice, Stokesley receives word from the Council of Ten and Junta that they have refused to allow the doctors of the Republic to speak on the marriage question. Stokesley was furious and used "violent language."

As Hall states, Stokesley seemed to have lacked tact and any liberal humanity towards man.¹

C. His Character

1. Politically

He is strictly an opportunist. He was a loyal servant of the King because he comes to realize that he is completely dependent upon him for maintaining his position and for any possible future advancement. This is illustrated by his attitude on the divorce question. When the matter first began Stokesley maintained publicly that the Queen was right. When he finds out the King's wishes he very quickly does an about-face and Henry explains Stokesley's first declaring for the Queen by stating that at the time the Bishop was temporarily insane!² The writer believes that if at any time during the divorce proceedings it had become apparent to Stokesley that he could strengthen his position by swerving to Catherine he would not have hesitated to have done so.

¹Hall, pages 783-84
²Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, Volume IV, part I, page 386
As Bishop of London, Stokesley was a powerful political influence at Henry's court since he could and often did openly oppose Cranmer and Cromwell. Stokesley seems to have had the peculiar ability to detach his political activity from his spiritual life—an ability which I believe is characteristic of the leading clerics of the Tudor Period and a paradox which explains to some extent why many of them were at one and the same time politically unscrupulous and spiritually orthodox.

2. Mentally

Stokesley had an avaricious and a sly nature. There are a number of references in the Letters and Papers which show him to have been land greedy. He would use almost any method to secure property which he desired; there are records to show that he was a hard landlord and that as a result several localities (Stupney, etc.) rose up in arms against him.

The sly side of Stokesley's nature is illustrated by the fact that Richard Croke, Gregory Casale, and a number of other people who dealt with him complain that he misrepresented them to the King and dealt with them behind their backs. There is an instance of his double-dealing after the attempt to attack him at the Convocation of Clergy August 30, 1531. Stokesley had quieted the men down, forgiven them for all the things done there, gives them his blessing, and prays them to depart in charity.

3Letters and Papers, Volume V, 1803 and Volume VI, 82.
4Ibid., Volume VII, 923 and Volume VI, 299
Shortly after forgiving them he has 30 of them arrested and sent to the Tower, Fleete, and other prisons.\(^5\)

Stokesley seems to have had a quick and penetrating mind. Henry the Eighth believed that Stokesley's equal in pleading and argumentation could not be found,\(^6\) and after he made a speech on the validity of the first marriage Cromwell told Chapuys he would have given 1000 lbs. sterling if Charles the Fifth could have heard it.\(^7\) In contrast to these views of Stokesley's ability as a speaker, Chapuys said he could hardly speak because of his stammering and stuttering.\(^8\)

3. Morally

Even though Stokesley had many bitter enemies there is only one accusation against him of moral laxity. June 30, 1534 the Abbess of Wherewell is questioned as to her relations with the Bishop of London. The questions put to the Abbess are of an interesting nature:

Commission to examine the charges against the Abbess of Wherewell who has already been several times before the Council and dispositions therein delivered to the ordinary, but as yet nothing is done.

Interrogatories to be demanded of the Abbess of Wherewell.

1) Whether or not she was too familiar with the Bishop of London when she was a Nun, "and that the Bishop of London was forbid the Monastery of Wherewell and her company by the late Bishop Fox, then being Bishop of Winchester, for the avoiding of said suspicion."

\(^6\)Letters and Papers, Volume IV, 422

\(^7\)Ibid., Volume VIII, 1105

\(^8\)Ibid., 1019
2) Whether or not she was lodged in the Bishop's own chamber for love, and whether the Bishop did not cause her to do on his kirtle, "to keep my lady warm while she sat at supper."

3) Whether or not the Abbess since she had a child came from her monastery to be merry with the Bishop.

4) Whether the Bishop and Abbess did not sit and talk together so long in the night that all the ladies were asleep, "so they might do what they list for them."

5) Whether or not the Bishop laid to her charge that she was with child again, "and the Abbess made him feel and know a privy token whereby he knew she was not with child and ask what that token was."\footnote{Ibid., Volume VII, 907}

The fact that this accusation is the only one of its kind indicates that it was probably an attempt to blacken Stokesley's name and may have been some form of blackmail.

4. Spiritually

The writer believes Stokesley was spiritually pious and sincere. His defense of Catholic dogma has already been described and his attitude on heresy has also been discussed. He lacked however the humanity of a true Christian. In a period in which the attitude towards heresy is especially rigid, Stokesley is noted for his severity.\footnote{Ibid., 906 and Volume IX, 1115} The mention of his name could cause heretics to blanch with fear and there is evidence that they even left the country to escape his clutches.\footnote{Ibid., Volume VI, 99}
CHAPTER VI

HIS EPITAPH

Just as it is impossible to judge a man or his life from his epitaph so is it also impossible to render a final judgment on John Stokesley from the materials which were available for this study. We can safely say that he was a man of learning and ability who was of prime importance in the divorce of Henry VIII and its immediate aftermath. To really know to what extent he was servile to Henry and just how far he listened to the dictates of his own conscience would require perusal of pertinent manuscripts available only in England. It is the writer's earnest hope that one day he might be able to study those ancient records to find out exactly why "the greatest enemy the Queen ever had" was her unyielding opponent, and why the life of this important contemporary of Wolsey's and Cranmer's has been so neglected by historians. However, for the present we must leave John Stokesley in his tomb and herewith is presented his epitaph:

The obscure recesses of this key-cold tomb
Do Stokesley's ashes and remains inhume
Whose general Name, Good Life, Dexterity
Of Pen, Tongue, Brain were known both far and nigh
Who studied still to serve God and King,
And benefit the public in each thing
What good did he in foreign parts retrieve,
He brought it home like Honey to his Hive
He knew the intrigues of Italy and Spain,
And of the Grecian Wyles did make much gain
To many kingdoms of the World being known
And honour'd more returning to his own
Who on our blessed lady's day being born,
Did on the self-same day to dust return.¹

¹Wood, Volume II, 674
CHAPTER VII

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Source Materials

1. Manuscripts and Documents (Public Collections).

   Especially valuable for the Imperial view (Charles V and other supporters of Catherine of Aragon) of Stokesley in the divorce question. Presents interesting contrasts to the English description of Stokesley's personality and character.


   Contains excellent accounts of Stokesley's activities at Padua on behalf of Henry VIII. Reveals use of bribery, flattery, and intimidation upon the part of the English agents.


   By far the most extensive source of information on Stokesley. In Volume IV alone there are over one hundred references on Stokesley's activities. There is information on his early lay activities, on his visit to Italian Universities, and on his secular and clerical life from 1520 until his death in 1539.
d) State Papers, published under authority of His Majesty's Commission, King Henry VIII. Eleven volumes, London 1830-52.

Contains evidence of Stokesley's activity as King Almoner and Councillor; also of his signature on Parliamentary steps to separate from Rome and establish the Royal Supremacy.

2. Chronicles.


The Chronicles are especially useful as sources of information as to Stokesley's personality and character, and also as to how he was regarded by his fellow clergymen and the common folk.

3. Records of Shires and Colleges.

a) Bridges, John, A Record of Northhamptonshire, Oxford, 1791.

Yielded some information as to Stokesley's ancestors.

b) Bloxam and Macray, Register of Magdalen College, 2 vols., London 1899.

Lists the offices Stokesley held while at Magdalen College, Oxford.


Describes some incidents in Stokesley's life while at Magdalen College.

Gives an account of Stokesley's clerical positions before coming to the court of Henry VIII. Also contains his epitaph and an account of the disposition of his property after his death.

B. Biographies.


Gives a full account of the divorce proceedings and establishment of Royal Supremacy.


Recognized as the finest biography of Anne Boleyn that has been written. Contains valuable information on the Universities in the divorce question. Gives evidence of a regret on Stokesley's part of having favored Anne Boleyn in the Divorce.


A very careful and detailed analysis of the character of Catherine of Aragon. Gives valuable information as to the causes for Henry's desire for a divorce, the importance of the divorce, and the character of Tudor clergy.


The finest description of the character and life of Henry VIII that has been produced by a modern historian.

C. Political Histories.


A picture of the political history of England under Henry VIII as told by a contemporary.

A very complete account of the political aspects of Henry's reign up to 1530. Based largely on the Letters and Papers.


Good for both political and personal character of the reigns of the Tudors.


Presents a scholarly overview of the Tudor Period.

D. Ecclesiastical Histories.


Anglican picture of the Church and the divorce.


Contains many valuable documents. Among them some letters of Stokesley's and a copy of a book he helped to write.


Anglican view of the Tudor Clergy presented here.


Invaluable as an unbiased picture of the ecclesiastical history under the Tudors. Presents much valuable information on Stokesley's persecution of heresy and defense of Catholic dogma.
5. Fuller, Thomas, Church History of Britain, edited by J. S. Brewer, Oxford, 1845.

Careful study of the attitude of the English clergy in the divorce question and of the impact of the divorce on religion in England.

E. Articles.


A summary of material on the divorce found in the Letters and Papers.

   By Preserved Smith.

A clear account of the theological interpretation of the divorce by the doctors of the German universities, and their suggestions for a solution to the problem.


A study of the divorce based largely on Ehses.