The King’s Marriage to Jane Seymour, the Sessions of Parliament, the Disturbances That Arose in the Realm, and the Birth of Edward

On the day after Anne’s death, the king married Jane Seymour, for he was already so much a captive to his love that he could not wait a single day more—and it was known that he had put the one to death so as to wed the other. He convened a parliament, as well as a synod of the bishops, in which he proposed two things. The first, that all he had done against the Princess Doña Mary in favor of Anne’s daughter Elizabeth should be undone and declared null and void. The other, that a form be provided for religious observance in England, because there had been so much confusion and disorder while Anne was alive that many knew not what to believe, do, or affirm. And, lest it seem that he feared the pope or intended to return to his obedience, before everything else he ordered that no one in the synod should dare speak a word concerning his primacy or call it into question.

To carry all this out more efficiently, he declared Thomas Cromwell his vicegerent for all ecclesiastical and spiritual matters, giving him a private seal for dispatching such affairs and instructing him to preside over the synod of bishops and prelates. This he did many times, though a layman and unlettered, and by his authority as vicegerent he enacted certain canons and decrees, sealed with his seal, and ordered the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and all the clergy of England to obey them. Among them, there was one good

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1 Sander, De origine ac progressu, 169–76.
2 “As soon as Henry heard that Anne’s execution was accomplished, he entered his barge and visited Jane. Next day [May 20] he was betrothed to her. On 30 May he was married quietly at York Place, in the Queen’s Closet.” Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, 350.
3 “An Acte for the establisshment of the succession of the Imperyall Crowne of this Realme” (28 Hen. 8. c. 7), actually removed both Mary and Elizabeth from the order of succession. See Sr, 3:655–62.
4 “In January 1535 Cromwell had been granted the new office of Vicegerent in Spirituals to enable him in effect to exercise the Supremacy on the king’s behalf instead of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who would have been the natural choice for such a position. Henry seems to have been determined to appoint a layman, and since it also carried the right to preside at the convocations, to emphasize the secular superiority to which the Church was now subjected.” Loades, Thomas Cromwell, 108.
injunction, by which every curate was mandated, under the direst penalties, to
start teaching their congregations the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo,
the commandments of the law of God, and all the other elements of Christian
doctrine, in English.⁵

Thereafter, with the public imprimatur of the parliament and the synod,
the king created a book mandating what was to be believed and observed, of
which there were six catholic [catolicos] points. The first, the truth of the holy
sacrament of the Eucharist. The second, that it was sufficient for salvation to
receive in one kind. The third, that clerical celibacy was to be maintained.
The fourth, that vows of chastity and continence made to God were be ob-
erved. The fifth, that Masses were to be celebrated, being things ordained by
God and necessary for our salvation. The sixth, that the confession of sins to a
priest was to be retained in the Church. And he who contravened these points
would be severely punished as a heretic.⁶ I decided to include these statutes

⁵ The first Henrician Injunctions, promulgated by Cromwell in 1536, provided that “the par-
sons, vicars, and other curates aforesaid shall diligently admonish the fathers and mothers,
masters and governors of youth, being under their care, to teach, or cause to be taught, their
children and servants, even from their infancy, their Pater Noster, the Articles of our Faith,
and the Ten Commandments, in their mother tongue: and the same so taught, shall cause the
said youth oft to repeat and understand. And to the intent this may be more easily done, the
said curates shall, in their sermons, deliberately and plainly recite oft the said Pater Noster,
the Articles of our Faith, and the Ten Commandments.” See Walter Howard Frere and Wil-
liam McClure Kennedy, eds., Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reforma-
tion, 3 vols., Alcuin Club Collections 14–16 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910), 23–11,
here 6–7.

⁶ Henry’s religious settlement veered toward conservatism with the 1539 passage of “An Acte
abolishing diver[sity in Opynions” (31 Hen. 8. c. 14), better known as the Six Articles, en-
shrined in the so-called “King’s Book.” Far from Cromwell’s brainchild, however, the act rep-
resented a significant defeat for the evangelically inclined vicegerent. The articles were as
follows: “First, that in the most blessed sacrament of the Aulter, by the strengthe and efficacy
of Christ’s myghtie worde, it beinge spoken by the priest, is present really, under the forme
of bread and wyne, the naturall bodye and bloode of our Saviour Jesu Criste, conceived of
the Virgin Marie, and that after the consecrac[i]on there remaineth noe substance of bread
or wyne, nor any other substance but the substance of Criste, God and man; Secondly, that
Comunion in both kinds is not necessary ad salutem by the lawe of God to all p[er]sons; And
that it is to be beleved, and not doubted of, but that in the fleshe under the forme of bread
is the verie blode, and withe the blode under the forme of wyne is the verie fleshe, aswell
aparte as thoughe they were bothe together; Thirdly, that Preests after the order of Presthode
receyved as afore may not marye by the lawe of God; Fourthly, that vowes of Chastitye or
Wydowhood, by Man or Woman made to God advisedly ought to be observed by the lawe of
God, and that it exempteth them from other lib[er]ties of Cristen people, w[th] without that
they myght enjoye; Fyftly, that it is mete and necessarie that private masses be contynued