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**“A History of the Anglican Church—Part XVII:
An Essay on the Role of Christian Lawyers and Judges within the Secular
State”©**

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The ideas expressed in this Apostolate Paper are wholly those of the author, and subject to modification as a result of on-going research into this subject matter. This paper is currently being revised and edited, but this version is submitted for the purpose of sharing Christian scholarship with clergy, the legal profession, and the general public.

PREFACE

The organized Christian church of the Twenty-First Century is in crisis and at a crossroad. Christianity as a whole is in flux. And I believe that Christian lawyers and judges are on the frontlines of the conflict and changes which are today challenging both the Christian church and the Christian religion. Christian lawyers and judges have the power to influence and shape the social, economic, political, and legal landscape in a way that will allow Christianity and other faith-based institutions to evangelize the world for the betterment of all human beings. I write this essay, and a series of future essays, in an effort to persuade the American legal profession to rethink and reconsider one of its most critical and important jurisprudential foundations: the Christian religion. To this end, I hereby present the twenty-eighth essay in this series: “A History of the Anglican Church—Part XVII.”

INTRODUCTION¹

In law school, at the University of Illinois, when first I sat to write my thesis paper *The American Jurist: A Natural Law Interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, 1787-1910*, the idea of England’s “unwritten constitution” was to my mind an indispensable component to deciphering key legal principles within American constitutional jurisprudence—principles such as fundamental rights, ordered liberty, and substantive due process of law. Within England’s “unwritten constitution” was its Common Law, which, as we have seen in previous essays, had incorporated the fundamental “Law of Christ,” to wit: to “love ye one another” (John 15:12); to do justice and judgement (Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 21: 1-3); to

¹ This paper is dedicated to Dr. Susan Chapelle (A.B. Harvard; Ph.D. Johns Hopkins) of the History Department at Morgan State University. Dr. Chapelle taught me how to think about and to interpret race, ethnicity, and gender within the social currents and movements of American history for two semesters during the Fall of 1988 and Spring 1989. Dr. Chapelle supervised my history research project, “The Philosophy and Times of William Edward Burghardt DuBois, 1868- 1963.”

judge not according to appearance but to judge righteous judgments (John 7:24); and to do justice, judgment, and equity (Proverbs 1:2-3). Every case law and textbook reference that I have ever read on this subject affirmed that the common law of the United States had been extracted from Great Britain. Thus, my fundamental understanding in law school was that in England, the “Law of Christ” had been woven into its “Common Law” and that it was part and parcel of its unwritten constitution. I thus concluded that in the new United States of America, this same “Law of Christ” must have been codified within the new U.S. Constitution, through the Bill of Rights and other sources. My academic research thesis in law school delved further into this subject matter in order to quench my intellectual and spiritual thirsts. Today, after more than twenty years later, I still hold the same fundamental ideas about American constitutional law.

The academic foundations of my constitutional research in law school were laid firmly in my undergraduate political science, history, and economics courses in college. Perhaps the most important of those foundations was the field of economics; so that my constitutional analysis in *The American Jurist* was fundamentally a study in both law and political economy. Through England’s rich history, which I learned in undergraduate college, I saw with clarity the social classes and class distinctions within British society. England’s unwritten constitution, its Common Law of England, and its powerful Church of England continuously mediated and arbitrated these varied class distinctions and relationships. When in law school, I began to study the United States Supreme Court, I viewed it as fulfilling a similar function as mediator and arbitrator of conflict, disputes, and the fundamental claims to inalienable rights among men and women of various class distinctions. The fundamental idea of the “Law of Christ” supplemented the secular legal theories—such as legal positivism, legal realism, critical race theory--- and secular jurisprudence which I readily absorbed and it at all times remained predominant. Thus borrowing heavily from English history and jurisprudence, I never let go of the “Golden Rule” as the highest of ethical, legal, and constitutional mandates.

At some point between my undergraduate and law school years, I began to view economic relations as most sacred, and it became to my mind sacrilegious for the Church to ignore these relations, or to place them on the back-burner. Time and time again, whether in my own life’s experience, the experiences of my friends

and relatives, or in my review of ancient Hebrew, modern Jewish, African, African American and American history, “human prayer” always followed closely behind “human oppression,” such as slavery and economic oppression. Human prayers seemed an innate and natural response to human unfairness, oppression, and lawlessness. For this reason, I rejected many of the unchristian ideals of communists, socialists, and Marxists who insisted that Christianity was an opiate of the poor. As an intellectual, I understood this argument; but as a Christian, I knew too that it missed the mark and was fundamentally unsound. What follows in this essay helps to trace the intellectual roots of my defense of the Christian faith as being not only an indispensable ingredient in American constitutional law but also as the friend of the disenfranchised and oppressed peoples everywhere.

During the mid-sixteenth century, the Church of England grappled with England’s varied economic and social challenges. Economic analysis and social criticism had always remained at the core of the Judea-Christian faith traditions. Indeed, since ancient times, the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ had led men naturally to critical analyses of their fundamental economic and social relations. Key provision within the Ten Commandments naturally mandated that they do this: “I am the Lord thy God... Thou shalt not kill... Thou shalt not steal... Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor... and Thou shalt not covet (neighbor’s house)(neighbor’s wife) (neighbor’s servants, animals, or anything else).” And within the prophetic books of the Law of Moses, several of the Hebrew prophets had condemned unjust gains from economic oppression and exploitation of the poor: *Book of Habakkuk* (economic exploitation; bloodthirsty economic gain; and theft)²; *Book of Micah* (failure to establish justice; love of evil; economic oppression; and, social disintegration and corruption)³; *Book of Obadiah* (God will punish evil)⁴; *Book of Amos* (economic crimes (i.e., oppression of the poor and the needy); indifference of the wealthy toward the economic oppression of the poor and the needy; lack of justice; perversion of judgment and justice; and, religious indifference toward the economic oppression of the poor and the needy)⁵; *Book of Hosea* (economic crime; oppression and deceit)⁶; *Book of Ezekiel*

² Habakkuk 1:4, 2:6, 9-12; 3:8-14; 1:14; 1:13-17; 2:18-20; 1:5 and 2:4.

³ Micah 3:11; 2:11; 3:4; 1:7; 5:12-13; 2:6; 7:3; 3:2; 3:9; 6:12; 2:1-3; 3:2-3.

⁴ Obadiah 1:12; 1:15; and 1:1-12.

⁵ Amos 1:3-15; 2:1-3; 3:1-2; 3:9; 4:1; 5:12; 5:11; 6:1-6; 6:8; 5:7; 6:12; 5:10; 5:21-24; and 5:4,14.

⁶ Hosea 1:2; 8:1; 8:12; 3:20; 1:2; 3:13; 3:17; 6:9; 6:6; 4:1; 4:6; 7:7; 4:2; 12:6; 4:7-8; 4:11-12; 12:6-7; 14: 1-5 and 14:9.

(oppression of the poor, needy, strangers; unjust economic gain)⁷; *Book of Jeremiah* (genuine disinterest in justice; genuine love of covetousness, deceitfulness, unrighteousness and injustice; exploitation and unjust riches)⁸; and the *Book of Isaiah* (shedding innocent blood; speaking lies and perverseness; refusing or failing to establish justice; disregarding truth; unjust gains from oppression; bribery; and oppression of the poor, needy, and innocent)⁹.

The new Protestant Church of England thus struggled to apply this “Law of Christ” to England’s social, political, and economic crises during the sixteenth century. The Church of England, of course, could not exist inside of a vacuum; nor could it exist as a completely exclusive entity that was separate and apart from the social and economic structures in its enviroing world. In fact, the Church of England’s special mission was to preach to and to save Christians and non-Christians alike, and to distribute charity to the poor and needy. Here in this essay, in a very meaningful way, we find the new Protestant Church of England trying to fulfill its special mission to aid the poor and oppressed during the short reign of Edward VI (1547-1553). But we also find that its efforts were seriously challenged, if not altogether thwarted, by England’s new aristocracy, which Henry VII and Henry VIII had cultivated. Commercial greed and selfish economic gain from oppression soon dominated the mind-set of England’s new aristocracy (i.e., the merchants, the absentee landlords, and the gentry, squires, and yeomen). Hence, at this point in the history of the Anglican Church, we may speculate that commercial interests played a very powerful role in circumscribing the Church, even if these interests did not directly influence Church dogma or doctrine. Did the Church of England become a prisoner of the new aristocracy during the reign of Edward VI? This is a very hard question to answer, but it does seem that England certainly was trying hard to serve two masters—the mammon-ism of the wool trade and land enclosures on the one hand, and “Law of Christ,” on the other. Many church leaders supported the plight of the English peasantry and working classes, but the church also came under attack by the same powerful economic forces that were suppressing the rights of the peasantry and working classes. In Protestant England, the new national Church of England, together with the peasantry and working classes, were severely circumscribed by powerful economic forces.

⁷ Ezekiel 37:1-28; 20:24; 2:3; 20:19; 5:9; 6:11; 16:1-2; 6:9; 14:3-4; 16:15-16; 16:27-43; 23:1-49; 23:3; 23:7; 23:11; 23:19; 23:37; 23:43-45; 7:11; 7:23; 8:17; 9:9; 11:6; 12:19; 22:1-6; 24:6; 24:8; 22:13; 18:12; 22:7; 22:12; 22:29; 22:27; 22:25-26; 20:24; 27:13; 34:23; 37:24-28; 18:18-23; and 19:30-32.

⁸ Jeremiah 1:5; 4:1-2; 1:10-11; 2:1-3; 5:23-24; 9:13-14; 17:9-10; 4:4; 6:10; 7:23; 11:8; 13:10; 14:14; 16:12; 18:12; 22:17; 2:19; 31:33; 5:23-24; 8:8-9; 5:1; 5:28; 22:3-4; 7:5-7; 5:4; 8:6; 5:4; 5:12-14; 44:9-10; 4:22; 2:32; 3:20; 4:22; 6:13; 9:4-6; 5:28; 17:11; 22:13-14; 5:8; 5:7; 23:10; 23:14; 13:27; 2:8; 23:26-27; 10:21; 5:31; 23:11; 23:30-32; 14:14; 18:15; 18:7-9; 10:10-12; 25:13-14; 4:1-2; 10:7; 16:19-21; 23:2; 33:15; and 9:25-26.

⁹ Isaiah 54:5; 2:2-4; 24:5-6; 14:24-27; 45:18-19; 14:1; 14:5-6; 14:12-14; 58:3-10; 1:11-15; 18:18-19; 5:7-9; 1:21-23; 10:1-2; 5:20-23; 59:3; 59:7; 59:3; 59:13; 59:4; 59:14; 59:13; 33:15; 32:7; 10:1-2; 59:15; 33:15; 9:6-7; 11:1-10; 9:6-7; 42:1-4; 1:26-27; 37:5; 37:2; 37:6; 37:17-20; and 37:35-36.

Hence, the character of the new Protestant Church of England became anti-Catholic, cold, trite, and commercially-oriented, with its new *Book of Common Prayer* reflecting a religious compromise in order to appease both Puritan and Catholic alike, and to promote social stability through uniformity and Anglican conformism. The concern for holiness, the holy life, conversion of the lost sinner, and the plight of the poor were of little concern to many priests and bishops within the new Protestant Church of England. The Peasant's Rebellion of 1549, as discussed below, certainly reflected grievances over of deterioration of the Church of England's religious, moral, and cultural life following the Act of Supremacy of 1534. Indeed, the new Protestant Anglican Church seemed to be purely political, commercially-oriented, elitist, cold-hearted, and somewhat disorganized. For these reasons, there were to appear throughout England within the next several decades after the mid-1500s various splinter Christian groups, such as the Puritans, Anabaptists, Presbyterians, and Separatists. These groups reflected not only a desire for change in church government, doctrine, and leadership, but also the need for social and economic uplift of the poor and disenfranchised.

In this essay, we continue our analysis of St. Augustine's fundamental theses in *The City of God*. This "City of God" is, of course, a mystery¹⁰ but its outward manifestation may be seen within institutional churches (e.g., the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, etc.) inside of the "earthly city" or city of man.

¹⁰ St. Augustine of Hippo defines the condition of humankind as divided into two broad camps: the city of man and the city of God. "This race we have distributed into two parts," St. Augustine explains, "the one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God. And these we also mystically call the two cities, or the two communities of men, of which the one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil.... Of these two first parents of the human race, then, Cain was the first-born, and he belonged to the city of men; after him was born Abel, who belonged to the city of God.... When these two cities began to run their course by a series of deaths and births, the citizen of this world was the first-born, and after him the stranger in this world, the citizen of the city of God, predestined by grace, elected by grace, by race a stranger below, and by grace a citizen above.... Accordingly, it is recorded of Cain that he built a city, but Abel, being a sojourner, built none. For the city of the saints is above, although here below it begets citizens, in whom it sojourns till the time of its reign arrives, when it shall gather together all in the day of the resurrection; and then shall the promised kingdom be given to them, in which they shall reign with their Prince, the King of the ages, time without end." [*The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 478-479.]

According to Saint Augustine, these two cities share a common desire to attain enjoy peace, safety, and security; but otherwise, these two cities have two distinct lifestyles which are leading to two different ends. "Of these," Saint Augustine explained, "the earthly one has made to herself of whom she would, either from any other quarter, or even from among men, false gods whom she might serve by sacrifice; but she which is heavenly, and is a pilgrim on the earth, does not make false gods, but is herself made by the true God, of whom she herself must be the true sacrifice. Yet both alike either enjoy temporal good things, or are afflicted with temporal evils, but with diverse faith, diverse hope, and diverse love, until they must be separated by the last judgment, and each must receive her own end, of which there is no end." [*The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 668.]

This essay presents a problematic chapter in the relationship between these two cities. The city of man has a motive to influence, circumscribe and control the City of God. Meanwhile, the City of God has an interest in ensuring that the city of man metes out even-handed justice and to allow the Church to discharge its duties and functions of administering the sacraments and preaching the gospel. Lines of demarcation can become blurry; and too often both the earthly and ecclesiastical powers have bred corruption. When ecclesiastical power is linked to political force, men become persecuted (and even murdered) because of their religious convictions. One of the most tragic state executions in history was Queen Mary I's execution of the Lady Jane Grey for no other reason than she had been a Protestant whom Edward VI had named as his successor to the English throne. Another tragic development was the execution of men and women simply because they wished to help the poor and the needy, in fulfillment of their religious convictions. The state execution of Lord Somerset in 1552 is a tragic example of the persecution of righteous government officials who fought merely to establish social and economic justice and fairness on behalf of the disenfranchised and poor.

In other words, as this essay reflects, the "City of God" is multifaceted and can be traced to the lives of the men and women throughout every social stratum of human societies—they are the leadership of institutional churches, high-ranking government officials, lawyers, judges, engineers, physicians, farmers, field workers and common laborers. This paper, however, takes a look at how two members of the English nobility—Lord Somerset (i.e. the City of God) and Lord Northumberland (i.e., the City of Man)—governed the church and state during the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553). Lord Somerset sought to establish justice for both rich and poor alike, and for that he was falsely accused of treason and executed in 1552. Supporters of Lord Somerset's programmes included Bishop Hugh Latimer, Sir Thomas More, and Archbishop Cranmer. Lord Northumberland, on the other hand, was a manipulative power-broker who pillaged both the poor and the church. This history thus presents us with a unique lesson on the complex nature of religious faith, government, governance, and justice.

SUMMARY

The secular history of England cannot be rightly placed into context without Christian theology and the spiritual history of the Church of England-- more specifically, the individual Christians within the Church of England. These individuals, their thoughts, struggles, reactions to current events, and sacrifices constitute the spiritual history of the "City of God" ever since the fratricide

between Cain and Abel. This does not imply that the “City of God” has always remained within a non-cooperative and hostile relationship with the “City of Man.” Quite the contrary, the spiritual history of the “City of God” is also one of triumph, victory, and success within the “City of Man” as well. This essay highlights the lives of Lord Somerset and Lord Northumberland, two non-clergymen who were members of the English nobility and who were charged with serving as the supreme regents and lord protectors of England during the infancy, tutelage and brief reign of King Edward VI from 1547 to 1553.

PART XVII: King Edward VI: Economic Revolution and the Church (1547-1553)

A. Henry VIII’s Last Will and Testament- 1547

Much of Henry VIII’s tumultuous reign had been dominated by his desire to secure the future of the House of Tudor through a male line of succession. There had never been a female successor to the throne of England. Henry VIII’s first wife, Catherine of Aragon, bore him one daughter, Mary, who was born in 1516. Henry VIII also fathered an illegitimate son, Henry FitzRoy, born in 1519, with his mistress Elizabeth Blount. FitzRoy would later become the First Duke of Richmond and Somerset. Due to Catholic doctrine, however, FitzRoy could not inherit the English throne. For this and other reasons, Henry VIII had sought to have his marriage with Catherine of Aragon annulled, in hopes that he would marry Anne Boleyn who might bare him a son. However, as fate would have it, Ann Boleyn’s first and only child with Henry VIII would be a daughter, Elizabeth, who was born in 1533. Although the Catholic Church considered Elizabeth to be “illegitimate” and ineligible for the English throne, Henry VIII’s “Act of Supremacy of 1534 effectively nullified this rule, making Elizabeth an eligible heir to the English throne. Henry VIII made Elizabeth third in line to the English throne.

Henry VIII died in 1547 and his will left the English crown, first, to his only son Edward (1537-1552) (King Edward VI); then to his daughter Mary (1516-1558)(the future Queen Mary I); and, last, to his daughter Elizabeth (1533-1603) (the future Queen Elizabeth I).

B. Lord Edward Seymour, Regent and Lord Protector of England (1547-1552)

In 1547, when Henry VIII died, his son Edward VI was only ten years old. This meant that a “lord protector and regent” had to be appointed to govern England. Henry VIII had also made provisions for this contingency and he appointed his brother-in-law, Sir Edward Seymour (earl of Hertford), the older brother of Jane Seymour (Henry VIII’s third wife) and the uncle to Edward VI, as “Regent and Lord Protector” of England. Henry VIII also appointed to a “regency council” to govern with Sir Edward Seymour. Soon after Edward VI was coronated king of England, he elevated Sir Edward Seymour to Duke of Somerset (“Somerset”). At that time the number one problem facing England was economic in nature. Henry VIII had left a depleted royal treasury, and the first priority was to stabilize England’s fiscal and monetary policies. This challenge proved to be difficult and daunting. The second major problem was managing the Protestant Reformation that was sweeping over England. Now that Henry VIII was gone, there was no one personality who could effectively dictate the Church of England’s doctrine, programme, and policy. For the reasons stated below, these two challenges—the economic challenges and the Protestant Reformation—eventually led to Somerset’s downfall.

C. England’s Economic and Social Crisis- 1547-1553

As Spain and Portugal began to bring back gold from the New World, England’s coinage began to be debased, resulting in inflation and a lowering of wages. World markets were thus beginning to squeeze England’s local, provincial economy. In order to combat these pressures, the English mercantile and capitalist classes sought trade and competitive markets for English commodities. The one commodity that England owned a competitive advantage over was the wool trade. This led to widespread speculation in land. Common land areas were now highly prized possessions and became monopolized by large trading enterprises. Small tenant farmers were often heard off of their lands by large land speculators, who were eager to convert these huge tracts of lands into sheep farms in order to produce wool for trade. Hence, land enclosures and land monopoly by the great lords became quite common; poor people were being squeezed off of the land and out of the new economy. This “growth of investment in land was hastened because the new commercial classes were heaping up larger and larger profits in trade.”¹¹

¹¹ Goldwin Smith, *A History of England* (New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1957), p. 232

This resulted in a steady decrease in subsistence farming and widespread tenant evictions. When this happened, the tenant farmers were without homes, lands, or employment. Social misery was “appalling and widespread.”¹²

D. Church of England and the Economic and Social Crisis, 1547-1553

Lord Somerset’s Protestant inclinations led him to support the tenant farmers, the disposed, and the poor. He was joined by many other renowned Protestant leaders within the Church of England, including Sir Thomas More, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, and Bishop Hugh Latimer:

In his *Utopia* Sir Thomas More had earlier remarked upon ‘a certain conspiracy of rich men procuring their own commodities under the name and title of the commonwealth.’ Sir Thomas Elyot’s *Book of the Governor* contained several allusions to the evils of enclosure. Further contemporary comments occur in such works as that of the Lord mercer Henry Brinkelow who published his *Complaynt of Roderyck Mors* in 1548. Another popular volume was *The Book of Husbandry*, probably written by Sir Anthony Fitzherbert and first printed in 1523; it went through ten editions before 1600. John Hales’ *A Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England* was written in manuscript in 1549 and printed in 1581.

The English people were also influenced by voices from the pulpit and platform. Archbishop Cranmer’s sympathy for the suffering poor is evident in his ‘Prayer on Behalf of Landlords’: ‘We heartily pray Thee to send Thy holy spirit into the hearts of men that possess the grounds, pastures, and dwelling places on the earth; that they, remembering themselves to be thy tenants, may not rack or stretch out the rents of their houses and lands; nor yet take unreasonable fines after the manner of covetous worldlings.’ In 1549 Hugh Latimer, bishop of Worcester, referred to the rural distress in a sermon before Edward VI. ‘But let the preacher preach till his tongue be worn to the stump.’ Latimer complained, ‘nothing is amended.’¹³

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p. 233.

It should also be noted that, in general, all of the Tudor monarchs (1509-1603) supported alleviating the burdens of the enclosure system in order to help the common Englishmen. However, as the English merchant classes grew larger and more powerful, not even the influential Tudor monarchy could put an end to the system.

At the same time that the new English merchant and agricultural barons were forcing Parliament to enact new legislation to promote and support the enclosure system, they were also pillaging the Church and confiscating more and more Church lands for the purpose of speculation and redistribution wealth barons. This radical economic movement joined forces with radical Protestantism to further cleanse the Church of England of its last vestiges of Catholicism.

The Church had not yet been relieved of all its superfluous wealth; the Monasteries had gone, but chantries, religious guilds and collegiate churches remained. Much of the biggest of the Cornish collegiate foundations was Glasney. It was not difficult to find witnesses who were ready to swear that the buildings had been neglected, and that the provost and his priests were more given to drinking and the chase than to religion. In spite of the attempt of the local gentry to retain the place as a fortress, the church was stripped of its lead, bells and plate, the buildings were sold, and soon there was little trace of were the three centuries old college had stood. Crantock and the other collegiate houses were dissolved and their lands seized by the crown, though most of their churches were spared, and St Buryan remained a deanery for another three centuries.¹⁴

The wealthy merchants, barons, yeomen, and gentry thus pillaged the Church of England. They found a leader in John Dudley, earl of Warwick, and one of the members of the regency council. Dudley had been opposed to Lord Somerset's appeasement of the peasantry classes. After Dudley was successful in ousting Lord Somerset from power, "[Dudley] was determined to pursue his own selfish purposes by every means at his command. He increased the resources of the government by plundering the church in the name of Protestantism. He took away the sees of bishops who objected and seized the revenues of the vacant bishoprics;

¹⁴ http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/Documents/prayer_book_rebellion.htm

he sold church plate, crosses, candlesticks, chalices, and rich vestments. The spoils he distributed to the cliques about him. The pace of desecration quickened. Pictures on the walls of churches were painted out and texts took their places. Images and rood screens were wantonly smashed.”¹⁵

As previously mentioned, John Dudley, earl of Warick, led a movement to bring down Lord Somerset, who had supported the English peasantry and working classes against the enclosure system.

Lord Somerset had appointed a commission to study the problem involving the enclosures and to find solutions, but Dudley and others (including the nobles, gentry, and squires) vehemently opposed him. Lord Somerset could not only get new legislation on the “enclosure system” passed through Parliament, but he also could not enforce the few laws already in existence. “Most of his colleagues in the council were enclosing lands themselves; they looked upon the protector as a betrayer of his own class interests.”¹⁶ In fact, “[a]ll the Tudors and early Stuarts persistently opposed enclosures; their landed nobles did not.”¹⁷

E. Peasant’s Rebellion of 1549

The charitable influence of the monasteries of the Roman Catholic Church throughout England was still being felt and sorely missed. In 1534-35, many of the English peasants protested and revolted against Henry VIII’s widespread confiscation, looting and closures of the benevolent monasteries. In 1549, English peasants, led by a man named Robert Kett, again revolted all over England: Somerset, Gloucester, Dorset, Norfolk, Norwich, etc. They tore down enclosing hedges and plundered the country-sides and rich landholders. They did not murder anyone, but they were vociferous and rowdy, and they were adamant in being heard.

Sequence of events:

When the council heard that there was trouble in the West country, they at first treated it as they had done the other minor rebellions, and left it in the hands of the local lieutenants to deal with. They had no

¹⁵ P. 234.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 233.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 234.

idea that it would escalate to such proportions, culminating in a battle with government forces.

- The first signs of trouble were at Bodmin on the 6th June 1549.
- Arundell, a local gentleman is persuaded to lead the rebellion by the local priests.
- By the 10th peasants were demonstrating in the area. A local gentleman Sir Hugh Pollard attempted to send the demonstrators home.
- 12th June, another gentleman, Hellyons, tries to send the dissidents home, but is beaten to death.
- The Cornishmen move on to Devon.
- 20th June the Privy Council hears word of a 'commotion'. The rebels have assembled at Crediton. Lord Russell and Sir Peter Carew are given the task of dealing with the problem.
- Sir Peter Carew arrives in Exeter to meet with the rebels. He finds them arrogant and refuses further negotiations with them. The commons' mistrust of the gentry is given fuel!
- The rebels send a set of articles to the Privy Council.
- 25th June the rebels set out for Exeter. Important as it has a port and an armoury.
- Exeter does not give in to the rebels. They try to mine the city walls but their plan fails.
- The second set of articles is drawn up.
- 8th July Battle of Fenny Bridge - more of a skirmish than a battle.
- 9th July Russell considers withdrawing as he hears that Wiltshire and Hampshire had also risen (they hadn't).
- 10th July the Privy Council gives Russell a free hand to crush the rebellion. Russell decrees that any gentleman found to be inactive in helping to crush the rebellion will be treated as a traitor.
- Battle at Clyst St. Mary.
- 5th August another battle on Clyst Heath. Lord Grey is moved to comment that he witnessed at this battle, the most ferocious fighting he had ever seen. The rebels are defeated and head back to Cornwall. Ringleaders are rounded up and hanged. Those clerical leaders that are found are hanged in their 'popish vestements', including Robert Welch.
- 15th August the remaining rebels and Arundell are taken out at Stamford Courtenay.

- 17th August the rebellion ends with a massive defeat at Stamford Courtenay, 4 000 rebel casualties.

Demands:

There were two sets of demands made by the rebels. Different things are mentioned in the two. The first sets of demands are more concerned with social and economic concerns than the second set.

The first set of articles demands changes, which will repeal the tax on sheep and cloth, countering dearth.

However, by the time that the second set of articles is written, the grievances are mainly of a religious nature. There is not a complete copy of the first set of articles for historians to analyse, and there are various versions of the second set of articles. Therefore, we can not be 100% sure of the full extent of the grievances.

The second set of Articles:

- Holy laws of the past should be observed. Those who use the new service shall be treated as heretics.
- The Six Articles to be used again so that religion is restored to the time of 'our Soverayne Lord Kynge Henry the VIII'.
- We will have the mass in Latin. The priest will communicate on our behalf.
- We will have the sacrament hung over the high alter. Those who do not consent will be treated as heretics 'against the holy Catholyque fayth.'
- Baptism can be administered in the week as well as on Sundays.
- Images and ceremonies to be restored.
- "We will not receyve the newe servyce because it is but lyke a Christmas game." Matins and masses to be said as before. Services will not be in English, since many of the Cornish cannot understand English.
- Prayers for souls in purgatory to be said.
- In order to stop heretical thinking all of the Bibles in English to be called in.

- Cardinal Pole should be pardoned and sent for to serve in the King's council.
- Gentlemen should not have more than one servant. Any more servants he has should be appropriate to the amount of land that he has.
- Reinstatement of two abbeys in every county. In order to do this they demanded the names of commissioners.
- Rewards for Arundell and Henry Braye. They ask to have arms.¹⁸

Lord Somerset and the Church's leadership—men such as Archbishop Cranmer and Bishop Latimer—had been sympathetic with the cause of these peasants. But following the rebellion, Lord Somerset's support was treated as "treason," and Somerset himself was viewed as a traitor to his own class interests. "The majority of the governing classes within and without Parliament sympathized with men of their own economic, political, and social level, not with the common people... they looked upon [Lord Somerset] the protector as a betrayer of his own class interests."¹⁹ As a result, Somerset was sent to the Tower of London in 1549; and in 1552 twenty Articles of Accusation were brought against him, and he was accused of inciting the rebellion and found guilty of treason. That same year, Lord Somerset was executed.

John Dudley, earl of Warwick, had himself appointed the new Duke of Northumberland and he replaced Lord Somerset as the new regent and protector. Under Northumberland, "[h]arsh treason laws were passed by a subservient Parliament. New enclosure legislation permitted landowners to enclose their commons provided they left enough land for their tenants. Of course, the landowners were left free to decide how much land their tenants needed, or whether there should be any tenants at all. The wool trade boomed; the sheepmen prospered; the poor grew poorer. Meanwhile the local gentry were ordered to raise troops of cavalry to keep down revolts among the lower classes."²⁰

F. The Church of England and Reformation (1547-1600)

¹⁸ <http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/history/the-mid-tudor-period-part-1/revise-it/the-rebellions-of-1549-the-western-rising>

¹⁹ Goldwin Smith, *A History of England* (New York, N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 233.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

With the rebellion crushed and Somerset defeated, the new English mercantile classes moved swiftly re-make the Church of England in its own image. Henceforth, the Church would be Protestant but also deeply anti-Catholic, highly commercially-oriented, and elitists. Protestantism would now work hand-in-glove with the new capitalism. This system would be briefly interrupted during the brief reign of Mary I (1553-1558), but Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) would later pick up this same Protestant mantle and carry it into the seventeenth century.

It should be noted, here, too, that Englishmen were moving away from religious piety, devotion and superstition toward material prosperity, commercial enterprise, and secular humanism. Many were beginning to care little about whether the Protestant or the Catholic faiths could get them into the kingdom of heaven. What they now aimed for was religious compromise, something to satisfy the Catholic-leaning Christian, and a little something to satisfy the extreme Puritans. For this reason, in 1552, a new Book of Common Prayer was issued and authorized by the Act of Uniformity. Priests who refused to adhere to it were imprisoned. "In 1553 the Forty-Two Articles, drawn up by Cranmer, summarized the doctrines of the new English Protestant church. Five of the seven medieval sacraments were abandoned. The Protestant doctrine of justification by faith was asserted; transubstantiation was denied."²¹

G. The Downfall of Lord Northumberland, 1553

The young twenty-five year old King Edward VI became obviously terminally ill in 1553. Without Edward VI, Lord Northumberland could not survive politically. He knew that Edward VI's heir was the Catholic Mary, daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. Therefore, he scrambled to convince Mary to convert to Protestantism, but she refused. His next move was to have Edward VI draft a will bequeathing the English throne to his first cousin Lady Jane Grey, who was a Protestant.

When Edward VI died of tuberculosis in 1553, Mary contested his will bequeathing the English crown to Lady Jane Grey as being illegal. Mary held that Henry VIII had the lawful right to set the terms of succession and that the English throne was hers as of right. Even though Mary was a Roman Catholic, the majority

²¹ Ibid., p. 235.

of Englishmen supported her right to the English throne. “Northumberland’s clever schemes were over. A sordid chapter of greed and corruption had ended. Mary entered London and was crowned queen.”²² Tragically, Lady Jane Grey, though young and innocent, was executed together with Lord Northumberland for the crime of treason.

CONCLUSION

During the brief reign of Edward VI (1547-1553), the Church of England became more Protestant, but Protestantism did not necessarily make men and women more holy—outward conformity and uniformity was what the Church of England stressed most in those days. At the same time, the Church of England became beholden to, and circumscribed by, England’s “new aristocracy”—the merchants, the absentee landlords, the country gentry, the yeomen, and the squires. The English peasantry and the working classes were more and more squeezed out of the ecclesiastical and economic power structures of English society. The Protestant Reformers were not then willing to tackle economic and social issues involving uplift of the poor. Influential men within the Church of England-- men such as Bishop Hugh Latimer, Sir Thomas More, and Archbishop Cranmer-- had tried to ameliorate the plight to the poor, but the economic motives from domestic and international trade proved to be too great of an obstacle for them to overcome. In 1549, the Peasant’s Rebellion was crushed. The execution of Lord Somerset in 1552 was a final exclamation point: England was not then ready for meaningful economic reform that would help the poor. The Protestant Reformation that took seriously the plight of the poor would not occur until nearly a century later under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell. For the time being, England’s first priority was to stabilize its national, independent and Protestant church, and to begin to compete commercially in international trade with other foreign nations. English commoners, however, were also beginning to examine and interpret both the Holy Scriptures and economic conditions for themselves. They were beginning to see that God had something important to say about unfair economic conditions, and they would rely on their Christian faith to demand more rights and more accountability from both their churches and their monarchs.

²² Ibid., p. 236.

THE END

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