

The background of the entire page is a reproduction of the painting 'The Disgrace of Cardinal Wolsey' by Henry Monro, 1813. The painting depicts Cardinal Wolsey, once the powerful Lord of High Hampton, in a state of utter ruin. He is dressed in a once-luxurious but now tattered red and white robe, with a red cap. He is being led away from a grand, dark interior, likely a palace or church, by a young boy in a white and pink robe. Wolsey is looking back over his shoulder with a despairing expression. Other figures in the background, including a man in a blue robe and another in a red robe, look on with various expressions of concern and indifference. The scene is set in a grand, dark interior with a large window in the background showing a cross and a landscape. The overall mood is one of tragedy and the fall of a great man.

THE

English Reformation

"A right understanding of what happened to Christianity
when England made its breach with Rome."

The Disgrace of Cardinal Wolsey by Henry Monro, 1813

Introduction by Joseph Pearce
Edited & Compiled by Mike Church

Saint Margaret of Clitherow-English stained glass, circa 1972 .

The English Reformation is quite possibly the most misunderstood and thus misconstrued religious era in human history. The urban legend holds that English Catholics were sick of “papal tyranny” and threw in with heroic, protestant “reformers” to save Christianity from the evil, illegitimate, Catholic Church. This little book, with no reference or debate over theology, entirely and completely refutes this false narrative. The English Reformation was a top-down, government sponsored assault on both the Catholic clergy and laity of 16th century England. Father Culkin takes the reader on a 13 chapter crash-course in what really happened during *The English Reformation* using the historical record and over 400 years of scholarship on the subject. Christian readers will discover that the Faith of their English, Catholic, brethren, was well placed and well loved, in the Roman Catholic Church.

“The publication of this wonderful little book, first published more than sixty years ago, is as timely as it is welcome. Presenting a panoramic overview of the entire period, it serves as a wonderful entry point into learning the true history of the English Reformation.” - Joseph Pearce, Editor, *The St. Austin Review*

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*“For the fog to be lifted the Light must shine; children, learn
well, learn Truth, but I repeat myself.”*

- Mike Church

THE
ENGLISH
REFORMATION

by
GERARD CULKIN

(PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY)

USHAW COLLEGE, DURHAM

WITH FOREWORD

by
RT. REV. JOHN C. HEENAN, D.D.

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ENGLISH
REFORMATION

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Edited by

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Foreword to Original Edition

ALL Catholic scholars are much indebted to Father Phillip Hughes for his magnificent volumes on the Reformation in England. Even Protestant writers recognise that he has given us an unbiased version of English life and religion in the sixteenth century. It is significant that about the same time a non-Catholic historian at Oxford—Miss H. F. M. Prescott—produced an account of the period which, in all essentials, is in harmony with Father Hughes's.

It is not too much to say that readers hitherto familiar with the accepted view of Reformation history have been staggered to discover its distortions. But who besides scholars have leisure to read large volumes? That is why I so eagerly welcome Father Culkin's little book. I call it a little book only because it is small enough to be read in a few hours. In no other sense is it little. Let no one be deceived by its simple style and economy of words. I believe that the ordinary reader will find here all that is necessary to a right understanding of what happened to Christianity when England made its breach with Rome.

A short book of this kind is long overdue. Unqualified as I am

to write history, I was so determined that a simple version of the truth about the Reformation should appear that I threatened to write one myself had Father Culkin been unwilling to do so. The reader, therefore, should be doubly thankful—that I did not write this book and that Father Culkin did!

Much of what appears in these pages was written originally for the Catholic Gazette. The exciting story was devoured by readers of the Gazette but they found it tantalising to have to wait a whole month for each new installment. It is very satisfying to have the whole fresh and vivid narrative in one slim volume.

The author has given us a sort of key to events which altered the whole course of English history. In addition to the general picture we have here abundant references to guide our fuller reading. Recent research has established for all time facts about which controversy raged even in the recent past. It is now possible to take a more detached view of the whole Reformation story.

Many questions—the validity of Anglican Orders for example—which vexed the last generation seem to have lost much of their urgency. Christians are now less disposed to argue heatedly about the significance of Papal pronouncements and royal decrees. They are more concerned with the whole basis of Authority.

Does there remain in the world any voice able to speak with the authority of God? Did the Church in England become the Church of England? Where today is the Church of Fisher and More? Where, indeed, is the Church of St. Augustine? Both Catholics and non-Catholics will be better able to answer these questions after they have studied the eminently readable pages which follow.

(Signed) JOHN C. HEENAN.

Easter, 1954.

The Cathedral,

Leeds,

Yorkshire.

Preface to Second Edition

The first large edition of this small book was exhausted within a few months of publication thanks very largely to the many favourable notices which the book received. Non-Catholic reviewers especially were, with one minor exception, particularly favourable, a welcome indication that, after centuries of controversy, it is now becoming possible to take a more dispassionate view of events which have too often been exploited in the interests of propaganda at the expense of sober history.

In this new edition a number of minor errors of fact and a few misprints have been corrected. One short passage which a friendly critic suggested might be misunderstood has been completely re-written and somewhat expanded. I am indebted to my colleague, the Rev J. McDonald, Ph.D., DD., for his suggestions and advice in making this revision.

In spite of many suggestions, no addition has been made to the list of books for further reading which appeared in the first edition. Such a list might obviously be extended indefinitely, but it has been deliberately restricted to well known works which most students of the sixteenth century would regard as essential reading on the religious history of the period. Mention should, however, be made of two recent works, each of which provides an adequate introduction to the political history of the Tudors. The first is S. T. Bindoff's *Tudor England*, first published in the *Pelican History of England* in 1950, a brilliant and most readable summary, with an excellent chapter on social and economic changes. The second work is G.R. Elton's *England under the Tudors*, 1955. The author's

unrivalled knowledge of the primary sources gives a particular authority to his account of the religious changes, an account which will be found to be substantially in agreement with that which follows.

Finally, an index, with full reference to subjects, has been included in the present edition. I am obliged to the publishers for allowing me to make this addition in spite of the increased costs of book production.

GERARD CULKIN.

Ushaw College.

Durham.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following pages first appeared in the *Catholic Gazette*, and the author is obliged to the editor, the Rev. T. Holland, D.S.C., D.D., Ph.D., for permission to reprint them. He also gratefully acknowledges the help of his colleague, the Rev. R. P. Redmond, DD., Ph.D., in revising the text for republication.

Introduction To This Edition

One of the biggest mistakes that a student of history can make is to confuse the so-called English “Reformation” with its namesake on the continent. Whereas the Protestant Reformation in Europe was animated by the genuine theological differences that separated those who followed Luther or Calvin from those who accepted the apostolic and ecclesial authority of Catholicism, the so-called “Reformation” in England was animated solely by the political ambitions and lustful appetites of the king.

Henry VIII was not a protestant but a tyrant. In declaring himself the head of the church in England he was making religion a servile subject of the secular power. He was demanding that the things of God be rendered unto Caesar. Parallels with the secularism of our own time and its war on religious liberty are palpable.

Those who defied the secular powers in England by refusing to kowtow before the state-imposed religion were known as recusants. These noble souls paid huge fines and often suffered imprisonment or exile for refusing to conform to the state religion.

There were many others who suffered martyrdom, laying down their lives for their friends and forgiving their enemies from the scaffold, preferring the hangman's noose or the executioner's axe to the slavery of secularism.

The heroic London Carthusians were among the first victims of the Tudor Terror. Some were starved to death on Henry VIII's orders, others were hanged, disemboweled while still alive, and then quartered, suffering the grueling and gruesome fate that would befall many other martyrs throughout the remainder of the bloody reign of the Tudors. Other early martyrs of Henry's cynical and sacrilegious "Reformation" were Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, both of whom were beheaded on the orders of the king.

If things were bad under Henry, they would arguably be worse during the reign of Bloody Bess, the daughter of Henry's adulterous relationship with the ill-fated Anne Boleyn. It was during Elizabeth's blood-stained reign that the Jesuit Mission to England demonstrated the courage, zeal and evangelizing spirit of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Perhaps the two most famous Jesuit Martyrs were Edmund Campion and Robert Southwell, martyred in 1581 and 1595 respectively, both of whom have an intriguing connection with William Shakespeare which is beyond the scope of our present discussion.

Although it is not possible to pay due tribute and homage to the hundreds of martyrs who laid down their lives for God and neighbor during the Tudor Terror, it would surely be a sin of omission to fail to mention St. Margaret Clitherow and St. Anne Line, two holy women who were martyred for their faith during Elizabeth's

reign.

St. Margaret Clitherow, known as the Pearl of York, was martyred in 1586 for the “crime” of hiding priests from the authorities. The method of execution was being crushed to death, a barbarous sentence that was carried out in spite of the fact that she was believed to be pregnant. With providential symbolism, the date of her death was March 25, the historical date of Our Lord’s Incarnation (the Annunciation) and also that of His Crucifixion.

St. Anne Line, a convert to the Faith who, like Campion and Southwell, was probably an acquaintance of Shakespeare, was martyred on February 26, 1601, in the last years of Elizabeth’s reign. She had been arrested when priest-hunters raided her apartments during the celebration of a clandestine Mass. Although the Jesuit priest who had been celebrating the Mass had managed to remove his vestments in the nick of time and escape arrest by mingling into the congregation, St. Anne Line was arrested for hiding priests and went to the gallows to suffer the martyrdom for which she had prayed.

These martyred saints are but a handful of the many holy souls who chose death and the glory of martyrdom over submission to a secularist tyranny which had sought to destroy religious liberty. Their story is all too little known in our age of ignorance and arrogance. This being so, the publication of this wonderful little book, first published more than sixty years ago, is as timely as it is welcome. Presenting a panoramic overview of the entire period, it serves as a wonderful entry point into learning the true history of the English Reformation. With precise scholarship and accessible prose, Father Culkin brings the Tudor period to life in thirteen

concise episodes, easily digestible in just a few hours reading. This new edition will bring Father Culkin's work to a new generation of readers, with additional scholarship provided by Mike Church, for whom we are to thank for the resurrection of this priceless little gem of historical truth-telling.

-Joseph Pearce, 05 August, 2016

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Note From The Editor

I first heard of this magnificent little book on an interview Judith Sharpe conducted with theologian Gerry Matatics for *Catholic Conference Five*. After searching for hours the only copy of the book I could find was from a used book store in New Zealand. I ordered the book for a mere \$7.99 U.S. and it arrived via airmail about a week later. I devoured the book in an afternoon and then read it again a few days later. I have never read such a complete yet succinct history of any century long epoch, ever. Father Culkin puts the entire tyrannical affair of the House of Tudor's diabolical, century long effort to rob their formerly devout, Catholic subjects, of the Catholic Faith, into an honest, Catholic inspired yet never domineering story. The book reads like a modern, political, spy thriller that happens to be true.

After confirming that the book was indeed out of print, I resolved to correct that injustice and preserve Father Culkin's historical masterpiece for generations to come. The first step in restoration of The English Reformation was to scan the book using OCR technology (optical character recognition), capture the text and then compare the captured text to the source. This process produced a near flawless manuscript. Then, the real work of modernizing and lovingly massaging the text began. I won't bore you with the details of the remaining process but I will inform you of the additions made to the original work which was only available in paperback.

I confirmed all of Father's footnotes, obtained copies of each

source and then altered the references, if needed, to editions and volumes currently available. In a few instances, I added some narrative to the footnotes to assist the avid reader in continuing their learning and enlightenment. I then read the book again and made notes of the featured characters and controversies in each chapter. For some of these items I searched for and added new references with a focus on providing more in-depth coverage of the item. This is especially relevant in the cases where modern scholarship has added to what was known at Father's time. For example, the question of whether the excommunication of Queen Elizabeth by Pope Pius V forced the lethal Supremacy laws of her reign.

I also wanted to add some visual aids to the reader's experience and this required a three week long search and cataloguing of contemporary artworks, composed as close to the time of events, as are available. Of special merit in this regard is the painting of Henry VIII seen in Chapter I which was not discovered until 2012, yet is the oldest known image of Henry! Here is a part of that story.

“One of the earliest paintings of Henry VIII has been discovered at the National Library of Wales contained in an old manuscript that was donated in 1921. The manuscript is beautifully bound in wooden boards and is covered in crimson velvet and it is believed that it was presented to Henry VII after the death of his wife, Elizabeth of York. Even though this manuscript has been in the possession of the Aberystwyth Library since 1921, it was rediscovered in 2012 when the library began to digitize their documents for viewing on

the internet.”

The black and white engravings are all culled from 18th and 19th century books that can be found in online libraries with the notable exception being the engraving that shows the gruesome method of execution of St. Edmund Campion. That fragment (it is torn at the bottom and right side of the document) is probably a 17th century work that was preserved and passed down by Douai Jesuits who would have a special interest in the work. The image was found in a catalogue of art at the Jesuit Institute’s website. The translation for this was provided by my dear friend Ryan Grant.

Finally, the index was generated with the original as my guide and has been significantly expanded. This was done during the chapter by chapter review of the important characters and controversies in each, all of which were added and then cross referenced in the newly generated index. The digital edition of this work will contain many interactive features that readers can use to continue their learning and enlightenment and the new index is a fine example of them.

Father Gerard Culkin will remain close to my heart for the rest of my life. His passion and devotion to this subject is so clearly evidenced on every page, only a reader with prejudice could resist being charmed and awed by it. Father’s love and determination that the Truth finally be told to the people of England, of what actually happened during this epoch, will, I pray, be rewarded by placing this edition into the hands of many who never knew the story or of Father Culkin. Thank you Father. I am indebted to you as is all of England, and all members of the one, True, Church’s militants are. The 500 year old pox on souls that this “reforma-

tion” generated, may now, finally, be seen for what it was. And, if it be God’s will, give way to a return of the Catholic Faith, the House of Tudor and her conspirators, robbed multitudes of their countrymen of during and since, The English Reformation.

-Mike Church, 19 August, 2016, Mandeville, Louisiana

The English Reformation



I

England Before the Reformation



he history of the Reformation in England is long and complicated. The stages by which Catholic England became—officially—a Protestant country occupy a full thirty years, from 1529 to 1559. The story begins in the year 1529 when Henry VIII, anxious to be rid of his wife, Catherine of Aragon, so that he might marry Anne Boleyn, realised that Pope Clement VII would not be bullied into pronouncing his marriage invalid. In the following years Henry, who was determined to have his own way, abolished the power of the Pope in England and declared himself to be head of the Church. Under the rule of Henry's son and successor, Edward VI, a child of nine when he became king in 1547, the religious revolution was carried a stage further. The government of the day—a band of unscrupulous adventurers who ruled in the name of the boy king—completely transformed the Church's belief and worship.

In less than six years—from 1547 to 1553—the Mass was abolished, the altars destroyed, the sacraments reduced to two, and a new liturgy, a new profession of faith and a new form of worship were imposed on the country; while the Church itself was robbed and pillaged to fill the pockets of these so-called reformers. Henry had fought the Pope and persecuted both Catholics and Protes-

tants. Under his son foreign Protestants swarmed into the country. They were given the chief teaching posts in the universities, and it was by their advice that the religious revolution was accomplished. All this was done by a party. The English people, and the English Church, were never consulted. Those who opposed this "reform" ended up in the Tower or on the scaffold.

This "Protestant Revolution" was barely completed when Edward died. The short reign of his half-sister Mary, the daughter of Henry and Catherine of Aragon, is little more than an interlude between the second and third acts of this tragedy. Mary, in spite of persecution, had always been true to her mother's faith. She was a devout and convinced Catholic, and for the five short years of her reign from 1553 to 1558 she tried to restore the Catholic faith in England. But Mary was badly served by her advisers, and she proved to be a poor ruler. England returned solemnly and officially to the Catholic Church. By her marriage to Philip of Spain the queen involved the country in a ruinous foreign war. She alarmed the nobles and the gentry who had grown rich on the spoils of the Church by her attempt to make good some of the Church's losses. When she died she was succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry and Anne Boleyn. It does not seem that Elizabeth had any real religious convictions; but she saw clearly that, illegitimate as she was in the eyes of the Catholics, her advantage lay with the Protestant party. In the first year of her reign passed a series of laws by which the Protestant religion, as defined under Edward, was finally established as the official religion of the country. This was not the end of the Reformation in England, and for forty years and more there was to be much discussion as to what sort of Protestants Englishmen were to be, and what was to be

done with those Catholics who would not submit. Nevertheless, as we can now see, the events of this year 1559 marked the decisive turning point in the religious revolution of the sixteenth century.

The history of these thirty years from 1529 to 1559 will tell us what happened in England at the Reformation. But it is first necessary to try and understand why it happened, and how it came about that a people which, for almost a thousand years, had been Catholic, could be persuaded, or compelled, to change their religion.

The first thing to remember about the Reformation in England is that it was an act of State.¹ The change of religion was brought about, not because the Church or the people wished it, but because the government imposed it. Government in the sixteenth century meant in the first place the king, who not only ruled the country but actually governed it himself. Henry VII, the father of Henry VIII, came to the throne in 1485 after he had defeated and killed his rival at the battle of Bosworth, the last battle of the Wars of the Roses. For many years before this time the country had been falling into a state of anarchy. It needed strong government, and Henry VII saw that it got it, and that no one should have the power to disturb his throne. His rule was harsh, but it was accepted by the people because it was effective in maintaining peace and order. As a result, the power and prestige of the monarchy was increased enormously. Parliament rarely met, and then did little more than register the royal will. The king ruled through his council, and the councillors, who were appointed by the king himself,

1. M. Powicke, *The Reformation in England*, London, 1941, p. 1.

were no longer rich and powerful nobles, but new men, lesser men, raised up by the king to do his will, utterly dependent on him and



The oldest known portrait of Henry VIII.

Many of these royal servants were bishops and ecclesiastics. The Church provided the king and country with an efficient and unpaid civil service. Bishops were still elected, and could not exercise their functions until they had been approved by the Pope and taken an oath of fidelity to him, but these elections were little more than a formality, and it was the king's choice which mattered. Once elected, the average bishop had little time to spare for his diocese. As judges, ambassadors, or otherwise engaged in the government and administration of the country, they had positions of great influence and power; but they were dependent on the favour of the king for the maintenance of that power, and, his favour once lost, their fall was inevitable.

In the reign of Henry VIII the greatest bishop in the country was Thomas Wolsey. The son of a butcher of Ipswich, he rose to be bishop of Durham and archbishop of York, and held several other bishoprics and abbeys at the same time. After the king he was the wealthiest man in England. He was also Lord Chancellor and papal legate, the head of the English legal system and all but Pope in England. For fifteen years he virtually ruled the country in the king's name, a cause of envy to the nobles and of scandal to all by his pomp and pride; a lesson also to the king, who saw how supreme power in both Church and State might be held in the hands of one man. Wolsey lived with a woman called Lark, by whom he had several children, but in this he was exceptional, for the bishops of the day were not men of evil lives but, like him, they were all the king's servants. The bishops who failed to resist the "reforms" of Henry VIII were, it has been truly said, a

party converted by fear.¹ It is significant that the only bishop who dared openly to resist him was John Fisher of Rochester. He had been appointed by Henry VII because he was known to be a man of holy life. This appointment was, the king said, an act of reparation for all the unworthy men whom he had appointed previously.² The administration of the dioceses was carried on efficiently enough by the bishops' clerks and officers. The letter, if not the spirit, of the Church's law was generally observed, and there is evidence enough that the general standard of conduct among the clergy was at least as high as in other countries—in fact Sir Thomas More said it was higher. But there were as yet no colleges—seminaries—for the formation of priests; many were in consequence insufficiently instructed themselves and incapable of instructing their people. There were also too many of them, so that a large number were very badly paid.

Apart from the priests who served the eight thousand parishes and the numerous colleges and chantries, there were in England in the late fifteenth century about eight thousand religious men and women in some eight hundred monasteries and convents. When Henry VIII began his attack on the religious houses in 1535 he claimed that he did this because of the "vicious and carnal living" in many of the smaller houses. The evidence, so far as it has been examined, does not bear out this charge, and no serious historian today believes that the monasteries of the sixteenth century

1. T.M. Parker, *The English Reformation to 1558*, London, 1950, P. 58.

2. T. E. Bridgen, *Life of Blessed John Fisher*, London, 1922, p. 24

were centres of corruption. Scandals there were, but they were not common or widespread. What is true is that there were too many monasteries at this time, and that many of them were too small, sometimes with only two or three religious, so that often the observance of the rule was impossible. It also seems that there was not then much fervour for the religious life.

Exceptions were the nine houses of the Carthusians and the six of the Observant Friars. It is significant that these were the first religious houses to be attacked by Henry VIII, for it was in these two orders that he met the most determined resistance to his plan to make himself head of the Church. Nor should it be forgotten that many of the monasteries were wealthy, and almost all possessed land. It was the wealth of the monasteries, and not the welfare of the monks, that led Henry to destroy them. The loot of the monasteries was the bribe with which he stifled the consciences of many who might otherwise have opposed him.

The English were reckoned to be a devout people. Foreigners remarked that daily Mass was always well attended, and that the people were much attached to such devotions as the rosary and the Little Office of Our Lady. Most of the books published in England in the early days of printing were devotional works. There were innumerable religious guilds and confraternities, and all the evidence indicates that the faith was a living reality in the daily lives of the English people. Against all this must be set the almost total neglect of the sacraments. These people rarely went to Communion. They were devout and sincere, but the faith of the masses seems to have been traditional, something accepted without much reflection as a normal part of everyday life, accepted

but not clearly apprehended. Long before there were in England any signs of the “Reformation”—of the revolt, that is, against the doctrines of the Catholic Church—there were signs in plenty, at least among the upper classes of society and the merchants, that envy of the Church’s influence and privilege, and of the clergy’s wealth and power, was growing.

The hundred years before Henry VIII came to the throne in 1509 had been a restless time of civil and foreign war and of civil disturbances. The ancient nobility had in the course of these years lost much of their influence and privilege, and they were now being supplanted by the rising middle classes: the merchants and traders who were growing richer as the wool and cloth trades boomed. These new men were impatient of the old ways. Complaints were now constantly being heard against the exactions of the Church. There was thus being developed a state of mind, above all in those classes which alone were represented in Parliament and so had a share in the making of laws, which would not be sorry to see the privileges of the Church curtailed.

But it is important to distinguish this anti-clerical spirit, which was real enough, but in no way concerned with questions of doctrine, from heresy. England in the Middle Ages had been singularly free from false teaching. The only notable English heretic in all these centuries was Wyclif,³ a priest who, in the late four-

3. Wyclif was known as “the morning star of the Reformation” and his writings were condemned by the *Council Constance*: “Session 15—6 July 1415. Sentence condemning 260 articles Wyclif. The books and pamphlets of John Wyclif, of cursed memory, were carefully examined by the doctors and masters of Oxford university. They collected 260 unacceptable articles from these books and pamphlets and condemned them in

teenth century, denied the doctrines of the Mass and the sacraments, and began to translate the Bible into English in order, as he said, to give every man the opportunity of learning the teaching of Christ for himself without the interference of priests. Wyclif was used for a time as a political tool by a party of the nobles, but it is significant that as soon as he openly attacked the Mass they turned against him, and in the year 1401 Parliament made the statute *De heretico comburendo* which threatened heretics with death at the stake. Wyclif had indeed some followers, afterwards known as the Lollards, poor and ignorant people for the most part, and never very numerous, who met in secret to read the Bible. But this movement was never a threat to the Catholic Church in England.

Too often the beginnings of the Reformation under Henry VIII have been presented as the climax of a movement against the teaching of the Catholic Church and of the authority of the Pope which had long been growing in the country. Nothing could be further from the truth. Luther's movement of revolt in Germany

scholastic form. This most holy general synod of Constance, representing the catholic church, legitimately assembled in the holy Spirit for the purpose of extirpating schism, errors and heresies, has had all these articles examined many times by many most reverend fathers, cardinals of the Roman church, bishops, abbots, masters of theology, doctors of both laws, and very many other notable persons from various universities. It was found that some, indeed many, of the articles thus examined were and are notoriously heretical and have already been condemned by holy fathers, some are offensive to the ears of the devout and some are rash and seditious. This holy synod, therefore, in the name of our lord Jesus Christ, repudiates and condemns, by this perpetual decree, the aforesaid articles and each one of them in particular; and it forbids each and every Catholic henceforth, under pain of anathema, to preach, teach, or hold the said articles or any one of them."

began about the same time as the troubles in England, but there was no connection between the two series of events, and the causes at work in the two countries were totally dissimilar. It was not the people or the clergy who led the revolt in England: it was the king who drove them. When Luther began his attack on the Pope in Germany, so far was King Henry from favouring that attack that he was the first to enter the lists in defence of the Pope. It was a Catholic king who had only recently earned the papal title of "Defender of the Faith"⁴, who cut the English people off from the unity of the Catholic Church, of which, as those same people had always professed, the Pope was the head.

4. See also: Catholic Online: Henry VIII: "Pope Leo X was highly pleased with it and conferred upon the king the title of Fidei Defensor (Defender of the Faith), which is maintained to this day as part of the royal style of the English Crown."

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Of recent short histories of the Reformation the two best are T. M. Parker, *The English Reformation to 1558*, published in the Home University Library, Oxford, 1950, and F. M. Powicke, *The Reformation in England*, London, 1941. Of older standard works the best single volume history is still J. Gairdner, *The English Church in the sixteenth century, from the accession of Henry VIII to the death of Mary* (vol. iv of *A History of the English Church*, ed. W. Hunt and W. R. W. Stephens), London, 1902.

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Father Gerard Culkin

RIP

FR. GERARD CULKIN, L.S.H.



friend writes: Fr. Gerard Culkin¹⁶ was a native of Hull, and was educated first at St. Mary's College, Middlesbrough, before proceeding to Ushaw to study for the priesthood. Ordained in 1934, while still under twenty-four years of age, he was appointed to the parish of St. Wilfrid's, York ; but after four years of busy pastoral work he was sent to the University of Louvain to study ecclesiastical history, with a view to his returning to Ushaw to teach in the higher studies. One year later, however, war broke out and Fr. Culkin immediately felt his duty to lie elsewhere. He enlisted as a chaplain in the army and remained so for the whole course of the war, during which he served in the Western Desert (including El Alamein) and in Syria and Ceylon. In 1945 he returned to his studies at Louvain and finally, in 1947, gained his licentiate with grande distinction.

Then, after a further year of research in Rome, he took up his post at Ushaw to lecture in Church history to the Divines and Philosophers. This he regarded as his most important task : to devote whatever talent or knowledge he possessed to help in the

16. *The Tablet*, 06 March, 1965, p. 22

training of secular priests for the parishes of England, so that the tradition of zeal and learning, first begun in the hard days of the Reformation, might flourish anew in the time of opportunity for the Church in England and might keep the loyalty and respect of an educated laity. This work he continued for seventeen years, until his sad and unexpected death on February 12th.

Since Fr. Culkin was approaching forty when he finally completed his studies in Louvain and Rome, and since he died at the far from ripe age of fifty-four, it will be seen that his career as an historian was cruelly short. But such was his natural ability, his keenness and thoroughness, that in these seventeen years he profoundly affected both the approach to study and the standard of it in his own subject, and indeed in the general course of Philosophy and Divinity, while at the same time he became known and respected in a much wider academic field. He was a perfectionist, a severe critic of his own work, as he was occasionally of others'. His book reviews, more than one of which he contributed to *THE TABLET*, were always the result of careful reading and judgment. His little book, *The English Reformation*, published in 1954, is by now well known and has been reprinted more than once. Recently he contributed to a symposium, *The Popes*, edited by Eric John, and was responsible for the article on the *Renaissance Popes in The Papacy : An Illustrated History*, edited by Christopher Hollis. It is known that he had gathered much material for original work, but unfortunately he has not lived to publish it in book form.

For Gerard Culkin, however, it was his priesthood and his care of souls which mattered most. May he rest in peace.

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