Past Paper Questions

Do you agree with the view that the break with Rome was brought about primarily by Henry’s desire for a male heir? (June 2012)

Do you agree with the view that the Reformation of the 1530s was caused mainly by Henry’s desire for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon? (January 2011)

Do you agree with the view that the decisive reason for Henry’s failure to obtain the annulment of his marriage in the years 1525–29 was the determined opposition of Katherine of Aragon? (June 2009)

What were the causes?

Henry’s Situation: forced him to seek a way out of his marriage but it was only the failure to get a divorce that meant he looked to the Reformation as the answer.

- **Catherine of Aragon**: was six years older than Henry and although she had six pregnancies in 15 years, only one child had survived. Henry could have sons e.g. Henry Fitzroy and the death of two male children.
- **Anne Boleyn**: Henry became infatuated with Anne Boleyn and Henry Fitzroy and the death of two male children.
- **The Pope’s position**: Pope Julius had already ruled in favour of his marriage. For the Pope to go back on this would undermine papal infallibility. Henry’s Levitical argument was also quite weak.
- **Cardinal Campeggio**: arrived in England in October 1528. Rome was under the control of Charles V (and therefore Catherine) and so Campeggio was under strict orders not to rule on the matter. The bad outcome was seen to reflect badly on Cardinal Wolsey.

Conclusion:

1. Henry needed a divorce
2. He was unable to get one
3. He sought an alternative method: breaking from the church
4. This was attractive as it increased his own power
5. This was possible as there was some general support for the ideas

Religious Ideas: these created the basis of support for the Reformation and enabled Henry to use these theological ideas to his own advantage.

- **Lollardy**: made people more likely to support Protestantism and the Reformation as they had a shared dislike of pilgrimage, saints cult, veneration of images. Areas where Lollardy had been strong had a higher level of Protestantism e.g. Bristol, London, East Anglia and Gloucestershire
- **Anti-clericalism**: Cromwell’s ‘Supplication of the Ordinaries’ played upon genuine concerns about the power of clergymen especially among Boleyn and nobles faction. The anti-clerical message of the Reformation gained it some support.
- **Evangelicalism**: Anne Boleyn introduced the work of Tyndale and Simon Fish to Henry, which supported his own anti-clerical stance. These ideas were important at legitimising a politically driven Reformation.

Political Gain: the legislation of the Reformation Parliament shows the motives for breaking from the church: mainly that it would give Henry and England more authority.

- **Economic power**: The Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates (1532) and Act of Dispensations (1534) meant that between 1485 and 1534, the Clergy paid £4 800 to Rome but £135, they paid £46 052 to Henry
- **Political power**: The Supplication of the Ordinaries (1532) meant Henry took the church’s legal power and the Act of Supremacy and Treason Law (1534) declared Henry the Supreme Head – ultimate religious and royal authority.
- **National power**: the Sufficiently Abundant Collections was collected by Thomas Cranmer and were used to prove that the monarchy had more power than the Pope in England.

Henry VIII’s Reformation

What was the Reformation?

The English Reformation saw the Church of England break away from the Catholic Church. This was partly related to the wider European Protestant Reformation. The English Reformation was largely driven by changes in government policy rather than popular opinion - it was a more political affair than a religious. The break with Rome was implemented by Acts of Parliament passed between 1532 and 1534, especially the 1534 Act of Supremacy which declared that Henry was the “Supreme Head of the English Church and State” – this meant the highest religious and legal authority was now the monarch.

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