Reformers From Wittenberg, Strasbourg, Zurich, and Geneva in England: 1547-1549

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OF all the possibilities that presented themselves to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer on the accession of Edward VI the one that seemed perhaps most basic to his purpose of advancing English Protestantism was the convening at Lambeth Palace of a Protestant Council composed of leading continental reformers. Not only would such a Council contribute to the establishing of "one sound, pure, evangelical doctrine, agreeable to the discipline of the primitive church,"[1] but it would also provide Cranmer an opportunity for conferring directly with major continental reformers on theological questions about which he had not yet made a definite decision.

Although Cranmer had been at work for some time on the English Prayer Book, he had not yet solidified his opinions on principal problems such as the nature of the Eucharist, the ordination of priests, nor even the matter of ecclesiastical polity. During 1547 numerous continental Protestants gathered around Cranmer at Lambeth to aid him in making such decisions. Peter Alexander, who had been chaplain to Queen Mary of Hungary (sister to Charles V), Bernardino Ochino, who had been for a time the Italian minister at Geneva, and Peter Martyr Vermigli, who had been professor of theology at Strasbourg, all joined Cranmer at Lambeth in this first year of Edward's reign. These men, wise though they were, were not closely allied with major continental Protestant centers such as Wittenberg, Strasbourg, Zurich, and Geneva. Cranmer, therefore, was particularly anxious to obtain aid from these Protestant centers so that he could establish definite channels of communication with them. He wrote repeatedly to Philip Melanchthon, Luther's successor at Wittenberg, and to Martin Bucer, minister at Strasbourg, to encourage them to come to England.

Cranmer during these years did not extend the same eager invitation to Henry Bullinger, who had taken the leadership at Zurich on the death of Zwingli, partly perhaps because of the conflict between Bullinger and Melanchthon on the Eucharistic question. Nor did Calvin, at Geneva, receive an invitation from Cranmer, perhaps, it has been suggested, because of the strained Anglo-French situation at the beginning of Edward's reign.

Three of these men, however, in their letters to Cranmer displayed a deep concern for the advancement of the English Church. As early as March 26, 1539. Melanchthon had written Cranmer from Wittenberg that there was a need for a **"consensus piae doctrinae."** Bucer wrote Cranmer a long letter in which he repeatedly praised the idea if church councils and stated that there are "many commonwealths and princes, whom, if we were duly to call them together, we should be able without any difficulty to draw over into an alliance with

[1] Charles H. Smyth, *Cranmer and the Reformation Under Edward VI* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 36.

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Christ."[2] From Geneva Calvin wrote that "As far as I am concerned, if it appears that I can be of any service, I shall not shrink from crossing ten seas, if need be. . . ."[3]

But Bullinger, at Zurich, did not correspond directly with Cranmer. His English correspondence did not reach sizable proportions until John Hooper, who had been with Bullinger from 1547 to 1549, returned to England in March of 1549. By the end of that year, however, the English relationship with Zurich was growing more cordial. On October 20, Edward wrote the Senate of Zurich that "there is also a mutual agreement between us concerning the Christian religion and true godliness, which ought to render this friendship of ours, by God's blessing, yet more intimate."[4]

This protestation of friendship and the assurance of support from continental reformers do not always agree with these men's actual attitude toward England. A study of the men who came to England from these four centers indicates a great deal more about the continental leaders' relationships with England than do these formal statements.

Only one man of importance came to England from Geneva in the first years of Edward's reign. Anthony Rodolph Chevalier, who came to England in 1548, lived with Cranmer for a year before taking up residence with the Italian immigrant Emmanuel Tremellius, who was then Hebrew Professor at Cambridge. During his year with Cranmer he was frequently consulted on matters of Old Testament interpretation, and at Cambridge he gave free Hebrew lectures.[5] As a reward for his services at Lambeth and Cambridge he was promised in 1552 the next canonry or prebend to fall vacant in Canterbury Cathedral.[6]

In addition to his activities at Lambeth and Cambridge, he was also French tutor to the Princess Elizabeth.[7] His holding this position is in itself an indication of the respect which Cranmer and Protector Somerset must have had for Chevallier's religious opinions. A person whose orthodoxy was suspect would not have been allowed so close a contact with a possible future sovereign. Chevallier's activities in the English Church, University, and Court are visible evidence that one Genevan was trying to see "that the doctrine of God may be preached with strength, and vertue, for to bring forth fruit. . . .,"[8] as Calvin had suggested in a letter to Protector Somerset.

The representatives who arrived from Wittenberg during the first years of Edward's reign, on the other hand, were of an entirely different sort. Cranmer, knowing Melanchthon's interest in a united Protestant church, wrote, "I am aware that you have often desired that wise and godly men should take counsel together. . . . We therefore request you to communicate your counsel and opinions with us in person. . . ."[9] Instead of coming to England, however, Melanchthon sent over Justus Jonas, Jr., and Francis Dryander.

Jonas, whose father's Lutheran catechism Cranmer had just finished translating (STC 5993), had himself never made any contribution to the Reformation. In 1546, when Halle was captured by the Emperor and Maurice of Saxony, whom the elder Jonas had attacked, the family was forced to flee. Melanchthon, capitalizing on the family name, sent Jonas to England more for the boy's own safety than for any aid Jonas might

[2] *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, ed. Hastings Robinson, Parker Society (Cambridge, 1846), p. 524.

[3] Smyth, p. 254.

[4] *Original Letters*, p. 1.

[5] John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (Oxford, 1822), II, ii, 272.

[6] *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1550-1553, IV, 411.

[7] Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, II, i,323.

[8] John Calvin, *An Epistle both of Godly Consolacion and also of Advertisemente* . . . (London, 1550), B7 recto.

[9] Original Letters, pp. 21-22.

offer in advancing the reformation in England.

The second man to come from Melanchthon was only a few years older than Jonas, but a far more experienced Protestant. Francis Encinas (or Dryander), born about 1520 of a noble Spanish family, went to Wittenberg where he finished a translation of the New Testament, a work that Melanchthon had encouraged him to undertake.[11] This translation, intended for dedication to Charles V, so enraged Charles' confessor Pedro a Soto that Encinas was imprisoned for a time.[12] In March of 1545, however, he was back in Wittenberg again.[13] Although Encinas spent the year 1546 with Bucer in Strasbourg and corresponded frequently with Bullinger, he came to England in 1549 with letters of recommendation, not from Bucer and Bullinger, but from his old teacher Melanchthon.[14]

While he was in England, Encinas tried to persuade others to come over also,[15] but he seems to have regarded England as only a temporary place of refuge. In December of 1549 he took his manuscripts to the Continent for publication rather than have them published in England[16] as other learned refugees did. He never returned to England after 1549 and is last heard of when he wrote Melanchthon in 1552 that he hoped the new electoral prince would "have some plague."[17]

Encinas' refusal to participate more fully in English affairs seems to reflect Melanchthon's own attitude toward England. Although repeatedly professing an interest in England's spiritual welfare, Melanchthon consistently rejected Cranmer's offer for more active involvement in the English reformation. The two men whom he sent to Cranmer both viewed England more as a green thicket for hiding than as a white field for harvesting. At least John Hooper thought this was the case when he wrote Bullinger in 1550 concerning Encinas' return ot the Continent: "he consults his own interests and cares but little for ours when gain is out of the question."[18]

From Strasbourg came two men who were both to devote their full energies for a number of years to the cause of reformation in England. The first, John Utenhove, a native of Ghent, had studied at Louvain and Cologne before he came to Strasbourg in 1545.[19] For two and a half years he was a member of the French Church there, which was then under the leadership of Vallerand Poullain. In the summer of 1548 Utenhove came to England and was followed in the fall by Poullain. Utenhove was far more diplomatic than Encinas had been. Instead of antagonizing leaders of English factions he made an effort to please them. Shortly after John Hooper's return from Zurich Utenhove established a friendship with him that resulted in Utenhove's being sent to Zurich, "celebrated above the rest both for its reputation and pure doctrine."[20] Here he studied with Bullinger, who wrote in June of 1549 that "The nobelman, Utenhovius of Ghent, has far exceeded your commendation of him; and I thank you that through the instrumentality of yourself and Hooper I have contracted a friendship with a man every way so worthy."[21]

Between them Hooper and Bullinger managed to convert a promising man from Bucer's conservative Strasbourg

[11] Benjamine B. Wiffen, *Spanish Reformers of Two Centuries*, ed. Edward Boehmer (London, 1874), I, 135-137

[12] The account of the imprisionment and escape is related in *Memoires de Francisco de Encinas* (Brussels, 1862).

[13] The letter from Melanchthon is quoted in Wiffen, I, 141.

[14] *Original Letters*, p. 349.

[15] *Original Letters*, p. 352.

[16] *Original Letters*, p. 354.

[17] *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, 1547-1553*, p. 249.

[18] *Original Letters*, p. 77.

[19] Ferdinand D. G. de Schickler, *Les eglises du refuge en Angleterre* (Paris, 1892), I, 8.

[20] *Original Letters*, p. 654.

[21] *Original Letters*, p. 56.

training to their own more radical Zwinglian point of view. The success of their efforts is indicated in a letter which Utenhove wrote to Bullinger in July of 1549: "send me whatever you have of Bucer's on the Lord's supper, written by him before he began to dote."[22] This same letter announces that Utenhove is now ready to return to England. The indoctrination process has been completed. On his return to England he joined Hooper in his insistence on making no compromise with the more moderate reformers.

Before his departure for Zurich Utenhove had recommended another Strasbourg man for service in England. Late in 1548 Utenhove had recommended Vallerand Poullain, his former minister at Strasbourg, to Peter Martyr,[23] who had just left Lambeth to take a position at Oxford. Although Martyr did not obtain a position for him at the University, as he had anticipated, he almost immediately received the patronage of Somerset, which made it possible or him to acquire the politically significant position of "Superintendent of the strangers' church at Glastonbury."[24] He gave every indication that he was anxious to settle in England and contribute to the advancement of the Church there. Six years after his arrival he was granted a letter of denization and left England only at the death of Edward.

Bucer himself came to England in April, 1549, along with his friend Paul Fagius. Hooper and others who feared his influence with Cranmer were not happy to see him arrive. One English Zwinglian expressed the suspicion of many in England who desired further reform when he wrote Bullinger, "May the Lord Preserve our England from both of them."[25]

Cranmer found in Bucer a man who would encourage him in his own moderate postion. Bucer's temperate point of view in the Vestiarian Controversy and the Eucharist debate was agreeable to Cranmer,[26] but the Zurich group was too powerful a force to be subdued by moderation.

Although Bullinger himself was never invited to England, he sent one man, John ab Ulmis, who was neither a scholar nor a person significant enough to exert much direct influence. Far more useful for Bullinger's interests in England were the persistent efforts of native converts such as Hooper and John Burcher, an English merchant who spent the years from 1543 to 1547 in Zurich. Men such as these worked steadily to turn less fully committed men from Bucer's somewhat ambiguous central position to the simpler Zurich view of widespread reform.

More or less regularly in England during the first years of Edward's reign the Zwinglian influence of the Zurich reformers was penetrating the thinking of these who came originally from Strasbourg and other continental centers. The cause is not far to seek. Although Calvin and Melanchthon both protested their interest in English religion, they failed to send to England a sizable number of useful spokesmen for their position. Thus the two continental centers that exerted most pressure on English affairs in the first years of Edward's rule were Zurich and Strasbourg. The Strasbourg position was a more moderate position. Consequently, what continental reformers who came to England discovered upon arrival was a group of rather able Zwinglians, some of whom were Englishmen with all the advantageous connections of natives. Under the influence of his majority opinion, the foreigner who wished to receive preferment in England had little

[22] *Original Letters*, p. 583.
[23] Schickler, I, 63.
[24] John Strype, *Memorials of Archbishop Cranmer* (Oxford, 1848), II, 286.
[25] *Original Letters*, p. 651.
[26] These problems are discussed in detail in Constantin Hopf, *Martin Bucer and the English Reformation* (Oxford, 1946).

choice but to move toward what seemed to be the dominant position.

Cranmer himself, in the years from 1547 to 1549, gives the impression that he was open to the suggestions of immigrants from any of the continental centers. Wittenberg lost its opportunity for influence in England by sending over unseasoned, uninterested men. Bucer, who had perhaps trained his men too much in moderation, sent serious conscientious reformers, but their moderation worked against them in the strongly Zwinglian atmosphere of the Hooperities. Consequently, positions of power in the English Church came to be controlled, in the later part of Edward's reign, by men who came originally from Strasbourg, men like Poullain and Utenhove, who were willing to adjust to the Zurich position after their arrival in England.