

FOR POPE, READ KING. One of the greatest steps in the development of royal power was Henry VIII's seizure of spiritual authority from the papacy and the assumption of the title 'Head of the Church'. In this woodcut, Henry, assisted by Cranmer and Cromwell on his right, rests his feet on the prostrate body of Pope Clement VII, to whom Bishop John Fisher gives comfort.



The following year, an Act against Annates struck against the pope's financial position, insisting that 'great and intolerable' sums of money had been drained from the kingdom. The statute was suspended during the king's pleasure, that is, it was intended *in terrorem*. Progress towards a complete breach with Rome was slow. In August 1532 the death of Warham, who had crowned Henry and Catherine, enabled Henry to promote Cranmer to the archbishopric of Canterbury. With papal confirmation received in the spring of 1533, things speeded up. In May of that year, one of the first actions of the new archbishop was to declare Henry's marriage invalid, and a week later Anne Boleyn, pregnant with the future Elizabeth, was crowned queen. The pope's response of excommunication was met by a salvo of parliamentary legislation. An Act in restraint of appeals to Rome declared that the king possessed 'whole and entire' authority within the realm, and that no judgements, interdicts, or excommunications from Rome were valid. It was followed by an Act of Submission of the clergy and an Act of Succession, while an Act of Supremacy repeated Henry's claim to be Supreme Head of the Church of England. The most famous victim of the new legislation was Sir Thomas More, executed in the summer of 1535, trapped under the provisions of a new Treasons Act.

The repudiation of papal authority and the insistence upon imperial status, though of great symbolic importance, did not in themselves materially alter the