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Eugene Deveria (1805-1865) created this oil-on-canvas, imagining how the scene may have appeared when Cardinal Wolsey discusses Henry VIII's desire for a divorce with Catherine of Aragon. Click on the image for a better view.

To further the King's objectives in making himself head of the church in England, Thomas Cromwell (in 1534) drafts a Bill for Parliament to consider. He calls it "[The Act of Supremacy](#)."

If it passes, the Bill will strengthen an earlier action—taken by a religious Convocation on February 11, 1531—which recognized Henry VIII as the "Supreme Head" of the newly Protestant Church of England.

Cromwell actually has something to work with since, four years earlier, [Thomas Cranmer](#) and Edward Foxe greatly help the King's cause by collecting scholarly works, from centuries past, to prove:

- Henry's request for a marriage annulment was justified; and
- The matter ought to be decided in England, not in Rome.

Cranmer calls his [compilation of authoritative articles](#) the *Collectanea satis copiosa* ("The Sufficiently Abundant Collections"). As the [British Library](#) tells us:

The Collectanea argued that the Church of England was an autonomous province of the Catholic Church and that Henry had both secular imperium and spiritual supremacy in England. In other words, it was the King, not the Pope, who exercised supreme jurisdiction within his realm.

The collected evidence means that Henry can get his divorce, provided that the Archbishop of Canterbury agrees. [William Warham](#), who has the job, disagrees.

But ... such disagreements can be fixed.

When the King charges the clergy with *Praemunire*—a Latin term meaning, in short, the unlawful exercise of spiritual jurisdiction—many clerics come round to the King's new way of thinking.

But ... not Warham ... the sitting Archbishop of Canterbury.

Warham's opposition ends, however, with his death in 1533. From Henry VIII's vantage, it is a timely death. The King replaces Warham with Cranmer, the compiler of the "Sufficiently Abundant Collections."

When the decision about Henry's annulment comes before Cranmer, he grants the request.

When Cromwell's Act of Supremacy is put to a vote, in 1534, it passes Parliament.

Meanwhile ... the King has a new Queen ... Anne Boleyn. And now political-mixed-with-religious matters in England really take a nasty turn.

Will high-level leaders, like [Sir Thomas More](#)—who became Lord Chancellor, in 1529, after Wolsey's fall—agree

to repudiate the Pope (in favor of the King)? What is Eustace Chapuys, the Imperial Ambassador, reporting to Charles V about the situation (and the treatment of his Aunt, Catherine of Aragon)?

Stay tuned!

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