

## 9. THE ENGLISH REFORMATION: FROM HENRY VIII TO ELIZABETH I

*“And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result...” (Genesis 50:20)*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Our church history survey slows down...

*Where?* Calvin and the Reformed faith... English Reformation... Puritans

*Why?* (1) This explains “us”. (2) It’s encouraging. (3) Wisdom for “what next?”

### **1. HENRY VIII (B1491 - R1509 - D1547)**

#### **(a) The “problem” of Henry VIII’s “Reformation”**

- **A historical problem: “top-down” ... or “bottom-up”**
- **A moral problem**

#### **(b) The break with Rome (1533-34)**

- **English Catholicism... but without the pope**

1519 Henry marries Catherine of Aragon (the widow of his brother, Arthur)

Pope Clement VII won’t annul marriage, for fear of Emperor Charles V

1533 Universities, parliament and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer → annul marriage and rid England of Roman authority... Henry marries (the pregnant) Anne Boleyn

“this realm of England is an Empire”

1534 Act of Supremacy: *Our said sovereign Lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall have full power and authority from time to time to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner spiritual authority or jurisdiction ought or may lawfully be reformed, repressed, ordered, redressed, corrected, restrained, or amended, most to the pleasure of Almighty God, the increase of virtue in Christ’s religion, and for the conservation of the peace, unity, and tranquility of this realm.*

- **The Dissolution of the Monasteries, 1536-1539**

Total annual income of the monasteries = 3x income of Crown estates!

- **Towards an English Bible**

William Tyndale's Bible, 1525. Murdered in Antwerp October 1536.

Growth in Bible reading: "Make not yourselves the laughingstock of the world; light has sprung up, and is scattering all the clouds. The lay people know the Scriptures better than many of us." (Bishop Edward Fox, 1537)

Miles Coverdale's "Great Bible" of 1539. Placed in every church.

**(c) Where did early pressure for change come from?**

- **Popular-anti-clericalism?**
- **Thomas Cromwell?**
- **Thomas Cranmer**
- **John Wycliffe's followers, the "Lollards"**
- **Lutheran doctrine at Oxford & Cambridge in 1520s: the White Horse Inn**

## **2. EDWARD VI (B1537 - R1547 - D1553)**

**(a) Who is Edward VI**

- 9-year old son Edward becomes King... son of Henry's 3<sup>rd</sup> wife, Jane Seymour... clearly Protestant: the new Josiah... Protestant "protectors"

**(b) What did he do?**

- Influx of Reformed/Calvinist preachers from the continent, esp Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr Vermigli
- Henry VIII's pro-Catholic heresy laws repealed... New bishops appointed... images removed from churches... priests allowed to marry... chantries dissolved
- Book of Common Prayer 1549/1552... Articles of Religion (42, then 39)

### 3. MARY TUDOR, "BLOODY MARY" (B1516 - R1553 - D1558)

#### (a) What happened?

- Edward: "O Lord God, defend this realm from papistry, and maintain Thy true religion" → Failed attempt to install Lady Jane Grey, the Queen for Nine Days
- Mary = daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon: obsessive Roman Catholic
- Papal authority returns... Edwardian laws repealed... Book of Common Prayer banned... saints days restored... married clergy to dismiss wives... 1554 Pole new Archbishop of Canterbury and papal representative.
- Protestants: flee... conform... persecuted
- John Bradford: *The hurt of hearing mass*

#### (b) Learning from the martyrs

- Latimer to Ridley, October 1555

*There is no remedy...but patience. Better it is to suffer what cruelty they will put upon us, than to incur God's high indignation. Wherefore... be of good cheer in the Lord, with due consideration what he requireth of you, and what he doth promise you. Our common enemy shall do no more than God will permit him. God is faithful, which will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength...*

*Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day, by God's grace, light such a candle in England as I trust shall never be put out.*

- Cranmer recants... then repents his recantation... martyred March 1556

*[My words] were written contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, to save my life if it might be...And forasmuch as I have written many things contrary to what I believe in my heart, my hand shall first be punished; for if I may come to the fire it shall first be burned. As for the Pope, I refuse him, for Christ's enemy and antichrist, with all his false doctrine.*

- J.C. Ryle on Cranmer: "nothing, in short, in all his life became him so well as the manner of his leaving it. Greatly he had sinned, but greatly he had repented."

## **4. ELIZABETH (B1533 - R1558 - D1603)**

### **(a) The “Elizabethan Settlement”**

- Elizabeth = daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn
- Act of Supremacy was re-enacted... the Pope repudiated... Act of Uniformity... Cranmer’s Second Prayer Book reinstalled... Protestant exiles return.  
BUT...
- The church and her bishops are “Coxians,” not “Knoxians”
- Elizabeth’s priority = national unity: *“There is only one Christ, Jesus, one faith all else is a dispute over trifles... I have no desire to make windows into men’s souls.”*
- Elizabethan Settlement... a *Via Media*?... Halfly reformed... then... and now

### **(b) Opposition to the Elizabeth settlement: from Catholics**

- Some persecution of Catholics... plots focused on Mary Queen of Scots (d.1587)... some covert popular Catholicism
- 1570 Pope excommunicated Elizabeth (*Regnans in excelsis*): from now on Catholic = traitor in the popular English imagination
- July 1588 failed attack by the Spanish Armada

### **(c) Opposition to the Elizabeth settlement: from the Puritans**

- the “hotter sort of Protestants,” frustrated by a church “half-Reformed”
- E.g. 1560s controversy over vestments.
  - Presenting issue: Elizabeth enforces Roman vestments... many clergy refuse and are sacked
  - Principle: Elizabeth says such matters are *adiaphora* or secondary. Puritans retort, “How then can you make them the subject of binding laws?”
- E.g. 1570s demands for 2-fold church government/no bishops/Presbyterianism
  - Note: both Puritans and non-Puritans were ALL Calvinists at this stage. No Arminianism, no Laudianism yet.