

## **Church History**

### **Lesson 32 - The English Reformation**

#### **Introduction**

- We have previously looked the Reformation on the European continent. This month we move to Great Britain and begin to look at the Reformation in the English speaking world.
- The story of the Reformation in the English speaking world is even more complex and tied in with the government than it was on the continent. Thus, of necessity our study will have to go into some detail on the governmental situation as well as the church.

#### **1. Understanding the Political and Religious Background in Great Britain**

- 1.1. Many Americans are unsure of the difference between Great Britain and England, often thinking they are interchangeable. However, the history, culture and ruling families of England, Scotland and Wales are distinct, and the interplay between England and Scotland especially had a profound impact on the development of the Reformation in the English speaking world.
- 1.2. In addition to this, there had been a long conflict known as the War of the Roses. This war was really a series of wars for the control of the English throne fought between the House of Lancaster (symbolized by a red rose) and the House of York (symbolized by a white rose). The war was actually fought from 1455 to 1487, but there were battles both before and after this time between the houses. This was finally concluded when Henry Tudor, the Earl of Richmond defeated Richard III and assumed the throne, taking the name Henry VII. After this he married Elizabeth of York, thus uniting the two families who had laid claim to the throne. This seemed to bring peace - but the worries of rival claimants to the throne was never far beneath the surface.
- 1.3. Additionally, until early in the seventeenth century, Great Britain was divided between the house of Tudor in England, and the Stuart kingdom of Scotland. (Gonzalez, p. 87).
- 1.4. Furthermore, Scotland was at this time an ally of France, while England was an ally of Spain. This only further complicated matters.
- 1.5. The Church in Great Britain was especially corrupt. Monks were widely viewed as lazy and greedy. And "In their striving for advancement, bishops were all too often absent from their dioceses, leaving poor uneducated curates to care for parish souls. English clergy were, on the whole, royal servants chosen for their usefulness to the crown. Wealth and power became strong intoxicants to higher clergy." (Woodbridge and James (Location 4389).
- 1.6. Additionally, the Church in England had been increasingly moving toward independence from Rome. This was exacerbated as the ruling bishops in the church were almost always more concerned with royal matters rather than ecclesial ones. This is exemplified by Thomas Wolsey (1474-1530). "Henry made him a privy counselor in 1509, archbishop of York in 1514, and lord chancellor in 1515— the same year he was made cardinal by Pope Leo X. In 1518 Wolsey also was made a papal legate or special representative of the pope in England. Popular resentment of Wolsey's wealth, power, and ambition exacerbated the anticlericalism toward all clergy." (Woodbridge and James, location 4392-4395).
- 1.7. Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (1474 –1530) is probably the best symbol of the independence England had achieved even prior to Henry's break with Rome.

Wolsey was the Archbishop of York, a Cardinal in the Church of Rome, and the chancellor of the English realm. So in his own person, he combined the Church in England, the Church of Rome, and the Kingdom of England. Yet in all of these offices he was the king's henchman, subject to honor or disgrace at the royal whim. (Shelley, p. 265).

- 1.8. Finally, the movement started by John Wycliffe, known as Lollardy, continued to thrive underground. It continued to speak out against clerical abuses and immorality, and encouraged the use of English Bibles.

## 2. Henry VIII and the Desire for A Male Heir

### 2.1. The initial causes of the split from Rome

- 2.1.1. The sixteenth century opened with Scotland an ally of France, England an ally of Spain. The hostility between the two great kingdoms on the Continent was reflected in the hostility between the two British kingdoms. In order to strengthen his ties with Spain, Henry VII of England arranged for the marriage of his son and heir, Arthur, to Catherine of Aragon, a daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain— and therefore an aunt of Charles V. (Gonzalez, p. 87).
- 2.1.2. But Arthur died four months later, and Spain then proposed a union between the young widow and her deceased husband's younger brother, Henry, who was now heir to the English throne. (Gonzalez, p. 87).
- 2.1.3. Since canon law prohibited a man's marriage to his brother's widow, the English representatives in Rome obtained a papal dispensation, and as soon as young Henry was old enough he was married to Catherine. (Gonzalez, p. 88).
- 2.1.4. Although Catherine was nearly seven years older than Henry, the marriage began well. Six children were born to the couple, but only their daughter Mary survived. However, by 1526, when Catherine was forty-one, it dawned on Henry that a male heir was probably no longer a realistic possibility. This was an important dynastic issue, (Woodbridge and James, location 4449-4452).
- 2.1.5. Henry, who did have interest in theology and ecclesial affairs, began to worry that his union to Catherine was under the wrath and curse of God for being illegitimate. Leviticus 20: 21 explicitly forbade marriage to a brother's widow with the promise that if such a marriage took place, they would be childless. Yes, Pope Julius II had granted a special dispensation to allow the marriage, but did he have the authority to do this?
- 2.1.6. Several solutions were proposed. Henry himself suggested that his bastard son, whom he had made duke of Richmond, be declared legitimate, and made his heir. But such an arrangement would require papal action, and the pope refused to take a step that would alienate Spain. The cardinal who was in charge of these negotiations then suggested that Henry arrange the marriage of Mary with his bastard son. But King Henry felt that marrying Mary to her own half-brother would only compound the original error of his marrying his brother's widow. His own solution was to request that Rome annul his own union with Catherine, thus leaving him free to marry a queen with the potential to bear him the necessary heir. It appears that at the time of his first petition of annulment, Henry was not yet enamored of Anne Boleyn, and that he was initially moved by reasons of state rather than of the heart. Such

annulments were not uncommon, for popes would grant them for various reasons. (Gonzalez, p. 88).

- 2.1.7.** Consequently, Henry sought to have the marriage annulled. In 1527 Henry asked the Holy Father, Clement VII, to revoke the special dispensation and declare the marriage of eighteen years invalid from the outset. Normally, such an annulment would be easily granted by the Pope. However, there were three extenuating circumstances. First, to declare the marriage invalid from the start would directly contradict another Pope, thus undermining the idea of Papal infallibility. Second, Catherine did not want the marriage annulled, and even claimed that her marriage to Arthur had never even been consummated, so actually there had not really been a marriage to Arthur in the first place. Most importantly, however, Charles V, the king of Spain and the Holy Roman Emperor was Catherine's nephew. Consequently, he did not want the Pope to grant the annulment. This put the Pope in a great predicament, for he could not afford to alienate the powerful Holy Roman Emperor.
  - 2.1.8.** Thomas Cranmer, the king's main advisor in religious matters, suggested that he consult the main Catholic universities. The most prestigious of these— Paris, Orleans, Toulouse, Oxford, Cambridge, and even those in Italy— declared that Henry's marriage to Catherine was not valid. (Gonzalez, p. 89). Others had disagreed, but this all gave Henry cover to continue his actions.
  - 2.1.9.** From that point on, Henry VIII followed a policy that would eventually lead to a break with Rome. Ancient laws forbidding appeals to Rome were reenacted, putting the clergy more directly under the king's authority. (Gonzalez, p. 89).
  - 2.1.10.** It is thus important to understand that the English Reformation was not being pushed by Henry for doctrinal reasons. In fact, Henry had written an early treatise against the ideas of Luther - for which he had been awarded the title "Defender of the Faith" by Pope Leo.
- 2.2.** The conflict grows: Anne Boleyn
- 2.2.1.** Furthermore, during this time Henry had become inflamed with desire for Anne Boleyn. Thus in addition to his religious scruple and his dynastic desires, lustful passion now pushed Henry to be rid of Catherine and to wed Anne. Henry would simply not be denied.
  - 2.2.2.** By the early 1530s Henry had concluded that he must break free of Rome if he was to secure a male heir. Outraged by papal refusal to grant an annulment, Henry initiated a series of defiant ecclesio-legal gestures in England that led inevitably to the break from Rome. (Woodbridge and James, location 4474-4476).
  - 2.2.3.** Henry's disappointment turned to wrath. He signaled his rejection of papal authority by vindictively charging Cardinal Wolsey — papal legate and one of the church's most powerful figures — with treason. (Woodbridge and James, location 4470-4471).
  - 2.2.4.** In January 1533, the king secretly married Anne. In May an English church court declared Henry's marriage to Catherine null and void. And in September the new queen gave birth to a child. Contrary to the forecasts of astrologers, it was a girl, Elizabeth. (Shelley, p. 266).
  - 2.2.5.** When the pope countered Henry's move by excommunicating him, Henry realized that papal authority in England had to be overthrown. The king knew

the antipapal sympathies in England were running high. At Cambridge, for example, certain instructors were so taken with Luther that the favorite gathering place, the Inn of the White Horse, was called “Little Germany.” (Shelley, p. 266).

- 2.2.6.** Henry had the Parliament pass the so-called Submission of the Clergy by which they accepted Henry as “Protector and Supreme Head of the English Church and Clergy.” (Woodbridge and James, location 4477-4478).
- 2.2.7.** The final break took place in 1534, when Parliament, following the dictates of the king, enacted a series of laws forbidding the payment of annates and other such contributions to Rome, ruling that Henry’s marriage to Catherine was not a true marriage, that therefore Mary was not the legitimate heir to the throne and, finally, that the king was the “supreme head of the Church of England.” In order to enforce this last decision, Parliament also declared that any who dared call the king a schismatic or a heretic would be considered guilty of treason. The most notable figure opposing these laws was Sir Thomas More, who had been chancellor of the kingdom and a personal friend of Henry VIII. He refused to swear loyalty to the king as head of the church, and for that reason was imprisoned. (Gonzalez, p. 90).
- 2.2.8.** The break between the church of England and Rome was complete - for the time being.
- 2.2.9.** From this political maelstrom Thomas Cromwell emerged as the most prominent of those who suggested to Henry VIII that the king should be the head of the English Church.... In 1535 Henry appointed Cromwell as his Vicegerent in Spirituals, giving him enormous power over all ecclesiastical affairs. As Henry VIII’s vicar-general, he presided over the dissolution of the monasteries. As reward, he was created Baron Cromwell in 1536 and Earl of Essex in 1540. (Woodbridge and James, location 4481-4485).
- 2.3.** A succession of wives and religious vacillation (see Gonzales p. 92)
  - 2.3.1.** Anne gave birth to three children, but only the daughter Elizabeth survived. She also had miscarriages. Thus, Henry began to turn against Anne. Even before she had recovered from her final miscarriage, Henry began to declare that he had been bewitched by a magical spell into marrying Anne. Her enemies seized upon this, and it led to her downfall. Eventually she was accused of adultery and Henry had the marriage annulled. Cranmer initially spoke in her defense but eventually realized her fate was sealed. He heard her last confession, and she was beheaded three days later.
  - 2.3.2.** Eleven days after the execution of Anne, Henry married his pregnant mistress Jane Seymour, who finally bore him a male heir— the future Edward VI. However, Jane died only twelve days later.
  - 2.3.3.** After Jane’s death, Henry tried to utilize his fourth marriage to establish an alliance with German Lutherans, for he felt threatened by both Charles V and Francis I of France who were now united against Henry and threatening an invasion of England. For that reason, he married Anne of Cleves, a sister-in-law of the leading Protestant prince, John Frederick of Saxony. Cromwell sent emissaries to Wittenberg for doctrinal discussions and to see if England could become part of the Luther defensive alliance known as the Schmalkald League. Cromwell also commissioned Hans Holbein to paint a portrait of Anne, but the portrait was overly flattering. When Henry actually saw her,

however, he was repulsed by her, and refused to consummate the marriage that night. When it became apparent that the Lutherans insisted on their doctrinal positions as defined in the Augsburg Confession even though Henry was opposed to them, and that Charles V and Francis I could not agree on a common policy against England, Henry divorced his fourth wife, and ordered that the man who had arranged it be beheaded. However, Henry and Anne actually became very good friends, and she was often referred to as “the King’s Beloved sister.”

**2.3.4.** The enemies of Reformation seized upon this misstep by Cromwell. One of them, Thomas Howard, put forward his niece Catherine Howard to capture Henry’s attention. Cromwell quickly fell from favor, and in June 1540 was condemned for treason without a trial and sentenced to death. He was beheaded on July 28, 1540, and Henry wed Catherine Howard the same day. Because of this, a period of difficulties for the advocates of reformation ensued. However, within a few months, Henry regretted all of this, saying that Cromwell was the most faithful servant he had ever had. (Amazingly, Cranmer stayed in the shadows and survived this period!) Henry reached an agreement with Charles V for a joint invasion of France. In England, he took steps to make the church conform as much as possible to Roman Catholicism, except in the matter of obedience to the pope. He also refused to restore monasteries. However, “Then there came another turn. Henry’s nineteen-year-old queen was repulsed by his obesity; he weighed about three hundred pounds and had a foul-smelling, festering ulcer on his thigh. Catherine Howard proved to be a reckless young lady, and soon after her marriage, she began a romance with one of Henry’s courtiers. Her indiscretions rapidly became known. She was charged with adultery and beheaded in February 1542. (Woodbridge and James, location 4602-4605).

**2.3.5.** After Catherine Howard fell into disgrace and was beheaded, Charles V, for his own reasons, broke off his alliance with England. By this time, Henry was too old for all of the intrigue, and had more practical concerns in looking for a wife. He settled on Catherine Parr, and married her on July 12, 1543. Catherine was an ardent supporter of reformation, even arguing assertively with the King. As a result at one point the Catholic faction around Henry persuaded the King to sign an arrest warrant for her. However, she got wind of this and went and fell before Henry, stating that she submitted to his religious authority. Henry relented, and when the Catholic leaders showed up to arrest Catherine found her strolling with Henry - and received a dressing down from the Queen. Over the next couple years the position of the Reformers strengthened, while that of the Catholics weakened. Then Henry died On January 28, 1548 while holding the hand of Cranmer. - without the usual Catholic rites of extreme unction, or last rites - only a whispered confession of faith in Christ.

### **3. The Beginnings of Religious Reformation During the Reign of Henry VIII**

**3.1.** As we have seen, although Henry wanted the church in England to be independent from the the Bishop of Rome, this was mainly for practical and political rather than doctrinal reasons.

- 3.2. For this reason the Reformation in England was very distinct from the ones we have looked at on the continent. Those parts of the Reformation were led theologically, and the civil leaders followed (for the most part). In England, however, the impetus for change was coming first from Henry, and he kept a tight rein on the changes he allowed.
- 3.3. For Henry's part, the only changes he really wanted was to break from the authority of Rome by having himself as the head of the church in England and to confiscate the monasteries. However, on theological matters Henry was very conservative. For example, he was a staunch defender of Transubstantiation, the Mass, and he initially strongly opposed having the Bible translated into English. It appears that if Henry had fully had his way, virtually nothing in the day to day life of a Christian in England would have changed.
- 3.4. However, during this time, English translations of the writings of Martin Luther were flooding into England. At the same time, the writings of William Tyndale, and especially his translation of the Scripture (the first English translation from the original Greek and Hebrew) were also being smuggled into England.
- 3.5. The White Horse Inn in Cambridge was the first meeting place of the first English Protestants: Robert Barnes, Thomas Bilney, Hugh Latimer (c. 1485–1555), John Frith, Miles Coverdale (1488–1568), Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556), Nicholas Ridley (c. 1500–1555), and Matthew Parker (1504–75). Some scholars believe William Tyndale (1495? – 1536) may have participated as well. Five of these early Protestant sympathizers became bishops, and all but Coverdale and Parker suffered martyrdom for their faith. (Woodbridge and James, location 4422-4423).
- 3.6. Thus, the changes Henry wanted to make attracted many who wanted to press for full fledged Reform within the church in England. This began first with Anne Boleyn herself. She was very sympathetic to the Reformation, and even introduced Henry to some of the writings of William Tyndale - who was banished from the kingdom for translating the Bible into English. It is well known that despite a royal prohibition, she kept an English translation of the Bible in her royal apartments — always open so that sympathetic servants could read. Anne was a force to help the Reformation, and provided some protection to those who wanted to press for Reformation. Obviously, however, she eventually fell from favor and was put to death.
- 3.7. Another key force for Reform was Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell had replaced Thomas More as the most powerful man next to the king. It is clear that he had real affinities for Luther theology and ideas, and he was also a supporter of having the Bible in the vernacular. He attempted to have Tyndale return to England, but Tyndale did not trust Henry (for good reason!) and refused to do so. It was Cromwell who strategized how to get laws passed through parliament which furthered the cause of Reformation.
- 3.8. The final key figure pushing for Reformation in Henry's circle was Thomas Cranmer. Cranmer was a Catholic priest, but he began to adopt the ideas of the Reformation. He eventually secretly married niece of Andreas Osiander, the Lutheran Reformer of Nuremberg, in 1532. Cranmer had first come to Henry's attention when he suggested that the king should solicit the opinions of the great European universities on the validity of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. He was also an ardent supporter of having the Scripture in English. Thus, even though Henry had pursued and eventually was involved in the execution of William Tyndale for translating the

Scripture into English, Cranmer convinced Henry that the Bible should be translated into English and placed in every church in the land. Consequently, the translation Tyndale had begun was completed by Myles Coverdale in 1535 with the king's authorization. This opened the floodgates. John Rogers, another colleague of Coverdale and Tyndale, completed the Matthews Bible, and then the Great Bible was produced in April of 1539 and was decreed to be placed in each Church. The Great Bible received a famous preface from Cranmer in 1540. Ironically, all of these authorized translations relied heavily on the work of William Tyndale, whom Henry had condemned as a heretic!

**3.9.** Suffice it to say that England was now flooded with copies of the Scripture in English - which furthered the cause of the Reformation in England as it did in every other country receiving Scripture in its mother tongue. We will cover this more in depth in a future session.

#### **4. The Reformation Under Edward VI**

- 4.1.** Prior to his death Henry had decreed and Parliament agreed, that Edward, the son of his third wife Jane Seymour and his only male heir. After Edward, the line of succession would fall to Mary (daughter of his first wife Catherine) and Elizabeth (daughter of his second wife Anne Boleyn) according to their order of birth.
- 4.2.** Edward, who was only 9 years old when he became king, had leanings to Protestantism, and so the cause of the Reformers flourished during his reign. The reason for this was that Henry had entrusted the education of his future heir to Cambridge dons, all of whom later became Protestant leaders.
- 4.3.** During his reign, Edward even wrote a tract in which he referred to the Pope as the "antiChrist" - showing his Reformation leanings were deep and sincere. This had an obvious impact upon the country.
- 4.4.** "The cup in communion was restored to the laity, members of the clergy were allowed to marry, and images were withdrawn from the churches. But the most important religious achievement of Somerset's regency was the publication of the Book of Common Prayer, whose main author was Cranmer and which, for the first time, gave the English people a liturgy in their own language." (Gonzalez, p. 93).
- 4.5.** During his regency a revised edition of the Book of Common Prayer was published. The Zwinglian tendency of this new edition is apparent when one compares the words the minister is to say in offering the bread to the communicants. The earlier version reads: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." The new edition reads: "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving." While the first edition could be understood either in a Catholic or in a Lutheran sense, the second clearly drew its inspiration from Zwingli and those who held similar positions. This difference between the two books was an indication of the direction in which things were moving in England. (Gonzalez, Justo L (pp. 93-94).
- 4.6.** The 1552 prayer book was distinctively Protestant. It removed all prayers for the dead, all praise for Mary and the saints, and moreover embraced a Reformed view of the Eucharist. (Woodbridge and James, location 4674-4675).
- 4.7.** Cranmer did not stop with the double revision of the prayer book. He reworked the (at the time) Forty-Two Articles. (Woodbridge and James, location 4676-4677).

- 4.8. Furthermore, Cranmer's plan would have been meaningless without trained clergy to implement the new forms. So he reinforced his reformation by securing leading Reformed theologians from the Continent to prepare clergy for the English Church. To this end, he appointed the Italian Reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli as the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford (1547– 53) and the Alsatian Reformer Martin Bucer as Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge (1549– 52). These two Reformers were charged with training up an army of Protestant priests to bring the Reformation to the people. (Woodbridge and James, location 4678-4682).
- 4.9. However, Edward was a sickly young man, and he only reigned for six years before he too died of pneumonia - and was succeeded by Mary, who was a staunch Catholic.

## 5. The Reign of Mary - the Return of Catholicism

- 5.1. Upon Edward's death John Dudley had Lady Jane Grey declared to be the Queen - though he failed to have Mary arrested. Within a few weeks the plan had failed and Mary rose to the throne - even with overwhelming support from Protestants, whose main concern was a bloodless succession.
- 5.2. Mary was a sincere and devout Roman Catholic. Thus, she was determined to return England to the Roman Catholic fold. This was exacerbated by her personal experience of the beginnings of Reformation in England - the rejection of her mother, and her being declared an illegitimate child. If she were to continue the direction of Reformation her own legitimacy as Queen would be called into question, since she would then be seen as an illegitimate child, unable to serve as Queen or the head of the church in England.
- 5.3. Parliament declared Henry's marriage to Catherine had been valid. To strengthen Catholic ties, Mary wed her cousin Philip of Spain, who was known as Philip II, and was the son of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. "This marriage on July 1554 failed on at least two counts. Not only was it against the advice of her closest Catholic advisers, who feared the foreign influence of the emperor, but Mary failed to realize it was a political marriage intended to recall England from the Protestants. Mary had fallen head over heels for Philip, but he was merely doing his dynastic duty. This marriage made Mary deeply unhappy, and it profoundly discouraged her advisers. Above all, it cast a dark shadow over the English people." (Woodbridge and James, location 4712-4713).
- 5.4. Mary then set about turning back the changes brought by the Reformation. She placed the church in England back under papal authority, restored feast days for saints, , forced married clergy to set aside their wives. She then began to persecute Protestants openly. Many of the leaders were forced to flee to the continent - over 800 left during this time. But all was not lost, for many of the leaders ended up in Geneva, where they learned from John Calvin and the Reformers there, and produced the Geneva Bible - one of the most important English Bibles ever produced.
- 5.5. At the same time, the persecution turned violent and over three hundred Protestant leaders were burned, and many others were imprisoned. It is for these actions that Mary received her moniker "Bloody Mary." Much of this suffering was recounted a few years later in Foxes Book of Martyrs.
- 5.6. The first victim of Mary's reign of terror against protestants was John Rogers, who had translated the Matthews Bible. He was burned at the stake in London on



- February 4, 1555. As he was led to the stake, however, the people cheered him - they were not supporting this bloody suppression of Protestantism.
- 5.7. On October 16, Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, and Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, bravely faced the fire when they were burned to death in Oxford. "Play the man, Master Ridley. For this day we shall light a candle which shall never fail in England." His words proved prophetic, for all of Mary's attempts failed to suppress the truths of the Reformation or to put out the faith that was spreading throughout her kingdom.
  - 5.8. The most famous martyr, however, was Thomas Cranmer. The Reformer, now an old man, had managed to survive the reign of Henry, and had been the main force for Reformation in the reign of Edward. However, it was Cranmer who had declared Henry's marriage to Catherine invalid (thus making Mary illegitimate), and who had validated the marriage of Henry and Anne Boleyn. He was now called to account by Mary. He refused to flee with other bishops, instead offering to debate Mary's theologians with Peter Martyr at his side - stating that the prayer book and the Reforms he had helped institute made the faith and worship in England "more pure than it had been in a thousand years." Mary responded by banishing Peter Martyr and placing Cranmer on trial.
  - 5.9. Cranmer was found guilty of heresy, stripped of his insignia of ecclesial office in a humiliating ceremony, and officially condemned to death. While in prison, he was forced to watch his friends Ridley and Latimer be burned. Furthermore, repeated attempts were made to get Cranmer to recant. A broken old man, he eventually did recant, signing six recantations, each more incriminating than the previous one. Normally such a recantation would have stayed the execution, but true to her moniker, Mary wanted blood. Thus, on March 21, 1556 Cranmer was placed on a platform where he was supposed to make a final recantation and then be burned. However, to everyone's surprise, with tears streaming down his face, Cranmer recanted of his earlier recantations. "He began by speaking of his sins and his weakness, and all expected him to conclude by declaring that he had sinned in leaving the Church of Rome. But he surprised his tormentors by withdrawing his words of recantation: They 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. . . . That last act of valor of the elderly man— who did in fact hold his hand in the fire until it was charred— caused his earlier wavering to be forgotten, and Protestants considered Cranmer the great hero of their cause." (Gonzalez, p. 96).
  - 5.10. Mary and Pole gravely miscalculated. Cranmer's death did more for the cause of Protestantism than if they had let him die in prison. Word spread of Cranmer's heroic death, and John Foxe immortalized his death in his Book of Martyrs, thus ensuring the ultimate victory of Protestantism in England. (Woodbridge and James, location 4739-4741).
  - 5.11. "The celebrations that greeted Mary on her ascension to the throne turned sour. Mary's restoration of Catholicism had a backward, almost medieval cast to it. Her marriage to the son of the Spanish king was a marriage with England's historic enemy... At nearly every point, whether politically or spiritually, Mary was deemed a failure by her people. When Mary Tudor — now known as "Bloody Mary"— died the

morning of November 17, 1558, the succession of the new young Queen Elizabeth was greeted with celebration throughout the realm.” (Woodbridge and James, location 4745-4747).

## **6. Elizabeth - The Resolution**

- 6.1.** When Mary died in 1558 she was succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry through Anne Boleyn. Obviously if Henry’s marriage to Catherine had still stood and never been annulled, as had been decreed under Mary, then Elizabeth was illegitimate and not in line for the throne. Pope Paul IV was prepared to declare her the legitimate ruler if she would just keep England within the Roman communion. However, Elizabeth had no intention of doing this, did not notify the Pope of her accession to the throne, and in fact recalled the English ambassador to Rome. Elizabeth apparently intended to return England to the Protestant fold.
- 6.2.** However, Elizabeth was not a Protestant extremist. In fact, what was most important to Elizabeth was uniformity of worship and practice so that the church would be a force for unity within the kingdom. In many ways this was similar to the desires of Constantine so many centuries before. However, she did also want to allow for a variety of opinions, since without doing this, unity was unlikely.
- 6.3.** “Elizabeth’s religious policy found expression and support in a new edition of the Book of Common Prayer. As an indication of her policy of theological inclusiveness, the new book combined the two different formulas that the earlier versions ordered ministers to use in the distribution of the bread. The new text read as follows: The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.... Naturally, the purpose of this double formula was to accommodate the divergent opinions of those who believed that communion was simply an act of remembrance, and those who insisted that in it one really partook of the body of Christ.” (Gonzalez, p. 97).
- 6.4.** “The same policy may be seen in the Thirty-nine Articles, promulgated in 1562 in order to serve as doctrinal foundation for the Church of England. In them several Catholic doctrines and practices are explicitly rejected, but there is no attempt to choose among the various Protestant views. On the contrary, the articles seek to achieve a *via media* in which all but Roman Catholics and the most doctrinaire Protestants could participate. Ever since that time, this has been one of the main characteristics of the Anglican Communion.” (Gonzalez, pp. 97-98).
- 6.5.** Elizabeth “understood that her virginity could be a political tool in support of English interests, so she coyly entertained marriage proposals from Catholic and Protestant princes alike.” (Woodbridge and James, location 4762-4763).
- 6.6.** The Elizabethan Religious Settlement was set forth in two acts of Parliament. The first was the Act of Supremacy of 1559, which reestablished independence from Rome and conferred on Elizabeth the title “Supreme Governor” of the Church of England. The second was the Act of Uniformity of 1559, which set out the form the English Church would now take, including a return to the 1552 Book of Common Prayer. As Elizabeth anticipated, virtually all the sitting Catholic bishops refused to abide by the Act of Supremacy, and they were thus removed. (Woodbridge and James, location 4766-4770).
- 6.7.** “It has become commonplace to characterize Elizabeth’s religious settlement as a *via media* (a middle way) between a Catholic liturgy and Protestant doctrine... But

- this should not obscure the Reformed theological influences that shaped this religious resolution. For all the talk of a *via media*, it must be remembered that the religious settlement was at its core a Protestant movement. Continental Reformed theologians such as Peter Martyr Vermigli and Heinrich Bullinger supported Elizabeth's efforts." (Woodbridge and James, location 4775-4780).
- 6.8. It is a historical fact that at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, Catholics were a majority of the population, but by the end, they were a small minority. (Woodbridge and James, location 4781-4782).
  - 6.9. "With the anger of a jilted lover, the papacy also became active in trying to bring Elizabeth down. After twelve years, Elizabeth's Protestantism was too obvious to ignore. Pope Pius V issued the papal bull of excommunication *Regnans in excelsis* ("ruling from on high") on February 25, 1570... Furthermore, Pius released all the queen's subjects from any loyalty to her and threatened excommunication to any who obeyed her orders... In 1580 a kind of papal fatwa was issued, stating that anyone who assassinated Elizabeth with the "pious intention of doing God service not only does not sin, but gains merit." (Woodbridge and James, location 4794-4800).
  - 6.10. "Elizabeth responded to her excommunication in two ways. First, she made a statesmanlike proclamation to her subjects that "as long as they shall openly continue in the observation of her laws" no one will be "molested" by any inquisition or examination of their consciences in causes of religion. Second, she made it clear that she would not tolerate dissent, and in 1571 the Treason Act was published, making it a capital offense to deny she was the lawful queen." (Woodbridge and James, location 4802-4805).
  - 6.11. Some Roman Catholics did actively work to unseat Elizabeth and replace her with Mary Stuart, the Queen of Scotland. There was abundant proof of conspiracies against the queen's life and most of these centered on the hope of crowning Mary Stuart. Whether or not Mary herself inspired such conspiracies is not clear. (Gonzalez, p. 98).
  - 6.12. During this time the Pope also sent a corps of militant missionaries to England to foster a renewal of Roman Catholicism. During this time the Douay-Rheims Bible was translated, the first English Bible of the Roman Church (translated from the Vulgate rather than the original Greek and Hebrew.) Eventually, however, Elizabeth began to fear the great number of missionary Jesuits in her realm and she banned them.
  - 6.13. However, some plots against the Queen continued. Eventually Mary Queen of Scots was implicated and Elizabeth reluctantly put her to death in 1587.
  - 6.14. In 1588 it appeared that Roman Catholic Spain was going to invade England. Many Roman Catholics in Europe thought the English Catholics would rise up and support such an invasion - but they did not. Then, their mighty Armada was defeated by the British fleet and then many more ships were lost on the return voyage due to storms. For many this was a sign of God's favor on the Virgin Queen. Furthermore, it showed that most Roman Catholics in England were in fact loyal to Elizabeth.
  - 6.15. The total number of those executed for religious reasons during Elizabeth's reign was approximately equal to those who died under her half-sister Mary Tudor— although it should be remembered that Elizabeth's reign was almost ten times as long as Mary's. In any case, toward the end of Elizabeth's life, Catholics were indicating that they were ready to distinguish between their religious obedience to

the pope and their political and civil loyalty to the queen. It was on the basis of this distinction that they would eventually be allowed to practice their religion openly. (Gonzalez, p. 98).

- 6.16. However, it is clear that by the time of her death in 1603, England was firmly in the Protestant camp. Although Roman Catholics remained in England, their numbers and influence were greatly reduced, a situation that continued far into the future.

## 7. The Puritans

- 7.1. The majority of English citizens were content with the mediating path of the Reformation in the Anglican Church. However, there were two main groups who were not satisfied. First, there were Roman Catholics who of course remained loyal to the Roman Catholic Church and denied the validity of any church outside communion with Rome. Second, and more important for the future of Anglicanism, was a group of Protestants who did not believe the reforms had gone far enough. This group became known as the Puritans because they wanted to further purify the church of remnants of Roman Catholicism.
- 7.2. While the majority of Puritans remained “nonseparating Puritans,” they nevertheless came to constitute a distinct social group within the Church of England by the turn of the seventeenth century. (Woodbridge and James, location 4860-4861).
- 7.3. Since the Church of England under Elizabeth was broadly Reformed, theology was not the primary difference between mainstream Anglicans and Puritan Anglicans. It was only well into the seventeenth century that doctrinal Calvinism came to be particularly associated with Puritanism. (Woodbridge and James, location 4861-4863).
- 7.4. At the first Convocation of the English Clergy of Elizabeth’s reign, held in 1563, some Puritan clergy set forth their desires for further reforms, including the elimination of vestments — which they associated with Catholicism (even though the Reformers Vermigli and Calvin did not feel that way). (Woodbridge and James, location 4866-4867).
- 7.5. Heinrich Bullinger, the Zürich theologian, accused the Puritans of “a contentious spirit under the name of conscience.” (Woodbridge and James, location 4869-4870).
- 7.6. Elizabeth became aware of Puritan conventicles, modeled on the Zürich Prophezei, where ministers met weekly to discuss “profitable questions.” The queen objected to these conventicles or “prophesyings,” fearing they could stir up opposition, and she ordered the archbishop to suppress the movement. He refused and consequently was disgraced, thus undermining the rest of his tenure. (Woodbridge and James, location 4874-4877).
- 7.7. Two London clergymen, Thomas Wilcox and John Field, followed in Cartwright’s footsteps by advocating that the English Church should be remodeled according to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Elizabeth moved decisively, and Wilcox and Field were imprisoned for a year, while Cartwright fled to exile on the Continent. (Woodbridge and James, location 4879-4881).
- 7.8. This uneasy situation between Puritans and the majority of the Anglican church would continue well into the future.

## **8. The Reformation in Scotland**

### **8.1. The royal family**

- 8.1.1.** As was mentioned above, Scotland had for years had an uneasy relationship with England. There were cultural, religious and political differences between the two areas, and this contributed to great difficulties during this period as well.
- 8.1.2.** James V rules Scotland from 1512 until his death in 1543. He was the nephew of King Henry VIII, and Henry tied to strengthen this bond by offering James his daughter Mary's hand in marriage. Eventually, however, James decided to marry the French woman Mary of Guise to strengthen the traditional alliance with France.
- 8.1.3.** Scotland had always had a strong affinity for reform movements such as the Lollards and Hussites. Thus, it is not surprising that the Reformation found fertile soil there, especially among the nobility. However, the crown, in alliance with France, was against such movements and the Scottish parliament thus outlawed Protestant writings, and beginning in 1528 even martyred those preaching the doctrines of Protestantism. However, rather than stopping the spread of Protestantism, this only seemed to fan the flames - especially among the nobility and students who could read the Protestant writings and Scriptures for themselves.
- 8.1.4.** When James died in 1542, his 6 day old daughter Mary was named the new Queen. The French King Henry II wanted to form an even closer bond between Scotland and France, and thus has arranged for the infant Mary to be pledged as future wife for his three year old son Francis. Thus, when she was five, Mary was sent to France where she spent the next 13 years living at the French court.
- 8.1.5.** On April 24, 1558 Mary was married to Francis at Notre Dame. When Mary, the Queen of England, died later that year, Henry II immediately proclaimed that the rightful heirs to the English throne were actually Francis and Mary. Of course, Elizabeth and the people of England did not recognize this, and Elizabeth became the Queen of England in 1558.
- 8.1.6.** However, in 1559 Henry II died, and Francis became King of France. However, Francis died in 1560 from an ear infection that led to an abscess in his brain. Thus, Mary returned to Scotland. This was bound to create difficulties because Mary was a devout Roman Catholic and believed she had a right to the throne of England.
- 8.1.7.** Mary was married to Henry Stuart, the Lord of Darnley, in 1565. Darnley was jealous of Mary's friendship with her private secretary and killed the man in front of the pregnant Mary on March 9, 1566. He then fled to Glasgow, and Mary gave birth to their young son, James.
- 8.1.8.** In 1567 there was an explosion at the abbey in Glasgow and Lord Darnley was found dead - but by strangulation. Suspicion fell on James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell. Suspicions grew when he was quickly acquitted and then divorced his wife and was wed to Mary - all within a month.
- 8.1.9.** This was all too much for the Protestant nobility, who forced Mary to abdicate in favor of her young son James. In 1568 she escaped and fled to England where she hoped Elizabeth would help her regain the throne. Instead Elizabeth had her imprisoned, and when she was released she remained

under Elizabeth's protective custody for 18 years - until she was put to death for suspicion of being involved in a plot to kill Elizabeth. She was put to death on February 8, 1587.

## **8.2. John Knox and the Rise of Protestantism**

- 8.2.1.** During this time John Knox arrived on the scene. Born around 1515, he was ordained a priest before 1540, and it is not certain when he became convinced of the truths of the Reformation. It appears that he learned it from George Wishart, a leading Reformer who had been forced to flee England. He eventually came to Scotland where he influenced Knox, but was eventually arrested and then martyred in 1546.
- 8.2.2.** In 1547, while Knox was in hiding and serving as a tutor for two young men, he was urged to go to St. Andrews Castle where a group had taken control and were pleading to England for help. Knox went there, and his skill as a teacher and preacher were immediately recognized. Against his will, Knox was elected to be the Pastor of the local congregation - news he received with a burst of tears as he fled the room. However, Knox eventually assented and thus became a leader among the Protestants.
- 8.2.3.** During this time, Mary of Guise (the wife of King James V) appealed to King Henry II of France, who sent a strong army to storm the castle. They did, and the Protestants sued for peace. In violation of the peace agreement, however, Knox and several others were sentenced to serve as galley slaves on the French ships. Knox remained a slave for 19 months, and his health deteriorated. However, suddenly in February 1549 Knox was released, possibly due to the intervention of King Edward VI of England.
- 8.2.4.** Knox then took refuge in England, where he was licensed to preach and work in the Church of England. His church grew as his fame spread. He eventually married, and was later appointed as one of six chaplains to serve King Edward VI. He then served in a variety of posts until Bloody Mary ascended the throne in 1553 and Knox was forced to flee to the continent in January 1554.
- 8.2.5.** Knox made his way to Geneva, and eventually became pastor of an English congregation there. However, he was soon asked to return to Scotland, which he did. He toured the land preaching and being well received - but not by Mary of Guise, the Queen.
- 8.2.6.** However, Knox returned to Geneva to stay from 1556-1559. He was very happy during this time in Geneva, which he declared to be "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the apostles. In other places I confess Christ to be truly preached; but manners and religion so sincerely reformed, I have not yet seen in any other place."
- 8.2.7.** While in Geneva, Knox preached three sermons a week, - each lasting over two hours! He had two sons born during these years (and Myles Coverdale was the godfather of one of them).
- 8.2.8.** In 1558 Knox wrote his famous pamphlet "The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women". The pamphlet was written to rail against Mary of Guise in Scotland and Bloody Mary in England. He stated that having women serve as rulers was unnatural. Unfortunately, shortly after the pamphlet was published Elizabeth became the Queen of England. This greatly complicated the relationship of the Reformation and Elizabeth - a fact

which Calvin (who had not been aware of the pamphlet until after it was published) greatly regretted.

- 8.2.9.** With a Protestant on the throne again in England, the refugees in Geneva set out to return home. Knox did as well - but was refused entry into England on his way to Scotland. However, he arrived in Scotland in May 1559.
- 8.2.10.** At this time, Mary of Guise was still the Regent in stead of her daughter Mary, who was still in France. Under her rule there was increasing persecution of the growing Protestant ranks. When the Queen summoned the Protestant leaders and nobles to Stirling, they chose to go to the walled town of Perth instead. Knox preached a fiery sermon, and later a riot ensued in which the local Roman Catholic church building and two friaries were destroyed and looted for their gold.
- 8.2.11.** The French did send a fleet to aid Mary of Guise, but England also sent troops to aid the Protestants. Eventually Mary of Guise died, and the treaty of Edinburgh was signed, which called for both French and English troops to leave.
- 8.2.12.** The Scottish Parliament then met, and agreed to a number of sweeping changes proposed by Knox and others. These included a new confession for the church, the abolishment of the jurisdiction of the Pope in Scotland, the condemnation of any doctrine or practice other than those in accord with the Reformed faith, and the abolition of the Mass. Unfortunately, during this time Knox's wife died, leaving him to raise his two young sons on his own.
- 8.2.13.** In 1561, Mary Queen of Scots returned home to claim her crown. Mary was a devout Roman Catholic, and began to attend Mass in her Castle. However, she stated that there would be no alteration of the current state of religion in the realm. Knox did not accept this however, and thus began a series of interviews between them.
- 8.2.14.** During his remaining years Knox remarried (to a relative of Queen Mary no less), and continued to lead the Church. By the time of his death in 1572 Scotland was firmly adhering to the Reformed faith. Furthermore, his ideas were also finding a great home among the Puritans in England, which would continue to grow well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Additionally, his influence continued to be felt among Presbyterians and Puritans in America.

**Next Class: The English Bible**

**Reading: None**

**Date: November 25????**