

I. The English Reformation, Part I

In previous lectures we have discussed the German and Swiss Reformation.

The Reformation, however, reached its peak influence in 17th century England, during the era of the Puritans.

We will examine the English Reformation through the lens of its reigning monarchs—Henry VIII, Edward VI, Bloody Mary, and Elizabeth I.

A. 1509-47 **HENRY VIII**

Henry was of the same generation with Luther and Zwingli.

1509 John Calvin is born.

Henry reigned for 38 years. He had at least six wives plus a host of mistresses. He was a **moral monster**. Despite this God used him for good.

Henry VIII was used by God to turn England from Catholicism to the Reformation.

Henry married his older brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon.

1512 **Wm. Tyndale** earned his BA from Oxford. Besides English, he was a gifted linguist, fluent in French, German, Italian, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Spanish.

1517 Luther published his 95 Theses

1517-21 Tyndale studied at Cambridge.

1519 The English crown burnt to death a woman and six men for teaching children the Lord's prayer, the Apostle's Creed, and the Ten Commandments in English.

1521ff Future reformers meet at the **White Horse Inn** Cambridge—Tyndale, Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, Thomas Bilney, Miles Coverdale, John Rogers, etc. Their meetings were nicknamed, "Little Germany."

To a persecuting Catholic Priest Tyndale responded: "I defy the Pope and all his laws; and if God spares my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that drives the plow to know more of the Scriptures than you do! "

1523 The English bureaucracy refused permission to Tyndale to translate the Bible into English. He flees to the Continent.

1526 William Tyndale published his **English New Testament**.

“Tyndale's translation was the first English Bible to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts, the first English translation to take advantage of the printing press, the first of the new English Bibles of the Reformation, and the first English translation to use Jehovah as God's name as preferred by English Protestant Reformers.” Wikipedia

Tyndale's translation was so accurate that 83% of his NT was incorporated by the 47 translators of the King James Version in 1611.

Thomas More hated Tyndale.

In the 1520s and 30s owning a Tyndale NT was punishable by death.

1534 Henry VIII lead Parliament in a break with Roman Catholic Church and made himself the 'supreme head of the Church of England.'"

Thomas Cromwell dissolved the RC monasteries, lands, and libraries and gave this wealth to the king.

1535 Tyndale was betrayed and arrested by English spies on the continent.

1536 Tyndale was executed by strangulation and his body burned.

1539 Miles Coverdale (a friend of Tyndale) published his *Great Bible* with Henry's consent.

B. 1547 EDWARD VI, THE BOY KING, BECAME KING

The son of Jane Seymour, Henry's 3rd wife, he was the first royal child to be raised Protestant.

Edward went beyond his father. Influenced by godly advisors, he established Reformed Protestantism in England.

1549 The Crown published the first version of Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*.

John Knox became a court preacher.

Calvin Corresponded with Edward VI.

Bishops, Latimer, Ridley, and others, traveled throughout England preaching the gospel.

In 1553, at age 16, Edward died.

C. 1553 *MARY I BECAME QUEEN*

She was the daughter of Henry and his first Catholic wife, **Catherine of Aragon**.

Raised Catholic, and bitter toward her father's treatment of her mother, Mary labored to re-establish Roman Catholicism.

Many protestants (4-500 Marian Refugees) flee persecution in the continent and in Geneva with Calvin.

Mary's character was sterling.

Nevertheless, her Catholic administration burnt nearly 300 Protestants at the stake. This included Thomas Cranmer and most of the White Horse Inn fellows.

Latimer and Ridley are two of the best known examples.

Latimer & Ridley

The place of death was on the north side of the town opposite Baliol College:— Dr. Ridley was dressed in a black gown furred, and Mr. Latimer had a long shroud on, hanging down to his feet. When they came to the stake, Dr. Ridley embraced Latimer fervently, and bid him be of good heart. He then knelt by the stake, and after earnestly praying together, they had a short private conversation. Dr. Ridley then took off his gown and tippet, and gave them to his brother-in-law, Mr. Shipside. He gave away also many trifles to his weeping friends, and the populace were anxious to get even a fragment of his garments. Mr. Latimer gave nothing, and from the poverty of his garb, was soon stripped to his shroud, and stood venerable and erect, fearless of death.

A lighted fagot was now laid at Dr. Ridley's feet, which caused Mr. Latimer to say, **'Be of good cheer, Ridley; and play the man. We shall this day, by God's grace, light up such a candle in England, as, I trust, will never be put out.'**

When Dr. Ridley saw the flame approaching him, he exclaimed, 'Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!' and repeated often, 'Lord receive my spirit!' Mr. **Latimer**, too, ceased not to say, 'O Father of heaven receive my

soul!’ Embracing the flame, he bathed his hands in it, and soon died, apparently with little pain;

But Dr. Ridley, by the ill-adjustment of the fagots, which were green, was burnt much downwards. At this time, piteously begging for more fire to come to him, his brother-in-law imprudently heaped the fagots up over him, which caused the fire more fiercely to burn his limbs, whence he literally leaped up and down under the fagots, exclaiming that he could not burn; indeed, his dreadful extremity was but too plain, for after his legs were quite consumed, he showed his body and shirt unsinged by the flame. Crying upon God for mercy, a man pulled the fagots down, and when the flames arose, he bent himself towards that side; at length the gunpowder was ignited, and then he ceased to move, burning on the other side, and falling down at Mr. Latimer’s feet over the chain that had hitherto supported him.

Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, who produced the Thirty-Nine Articles, and the *Book of Common Prayer* was also burnt.

In 1558, mercifully, Mary I died.

D. 1558 ELIZABETH, HALF-SISTER OF MARY AND EDWARD, INHERITS THE THRONE

Elizabeth was the Virgin Queen. She was the only surviving daughter of Henry VIII, and Anne Boleyn, his second wife.

She reigned for 45 years.

Her reign was the era of Francis Bacon, Walter Raleigh, Shakespeare, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and Francis Drake.

After the years of spiritual yo-yo, the reigns of Edward then Mary, Elizabeth’s reign was a time of peace and prosperity.

She restored Protestantism, but to keep the peace created a compromise church between Catholics and Reformed Protestantism. She called it the “Middle Way” between her sister, Mary and her brother, Edward.

1558 William Perkins was born. He was an early Puritan leader. *The Art of Prophesying*.

The leaders who fled to Geneva during Mary’s reign, The Marian Exiles, returned.

1559 Parliament passed the Act of Uniformity requiring the use of Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer in public worship.

1564 Six years into Elizabeth's "middle way" the pejorative term, Puritan, was first used. Who were the Puritans? They were Christians who opposed Elizabeth's "middle way." They wanted to go all the way with the Bible. They resented the compromises with RC practices in the Church of England.

They wanted to "purify" the English State Church, established by Henry VIII and now headed by Elizabeth, of all unbiblical "popish" influences.

The Puritans were Calvinists. They loved the Bible, and they embraced Covenant Theology.

Elizabeth's "settlement" preserved the RC cathedrals, choirs, smells and bells, vestments, the sign of the cross, bowing, kneeling at communion, and episcopal church government. To all of this the Puritans objected.

1565 Calvin died in Geneva.

1567 There was a controversy over clerical vestments. It became a symptom of the Puritan desire for further reformation

1. 1535-1603 Puritan leader Thomas Cartwright.

1553, for his Protestant sympathies, Bloody Mary expelled him from Cambridge.

1660, two years into the reign of Elizabeth, at age 25, he returned and began graduate studies and began to preach. He had a preaching gift.

1569 Age 34 Appointed Lady Margaret chair of divinity at Cambridge.

He married Alice Stubbs, the sister of a friend, who served him as a godly helpmeet for the remainder of his life.

1570-71 Lectured on Acts at Cambridge.

Until this time the Puritan complaint had been about vestments, candles, the sign of the cross, etc. Now the subject changed to church government.

"As one of those selected to debate on theology in Elizabeth's presence when she visited Cambridge, he is said to have drawn such a crowd that the windows

of St. Mary's Cathedral were removed to permit those standing outside to hear him."

"A man of genius and one who would have been prominent in any age...an eloquent preacher and a rising theological scholar...the first one to introduce extemporary prayer into the service."¹

Cartwright noticed that there was no central government in the NT. Church authority was decentralized. The closest thing he could find to any kind of centralized control was the first ecumenical Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15).

So he suggested that church government should be decentralized—taken from the State and given to local presbyteries comprised of local elders. (Subsidiarity).

"He suggested that bishops should preach, deacons should look after the poor, and only ministers who knew how to preach should be selected to govern their own churches; that it was the right of the churches, rather than of the state or of the bishops, to elect their own pastors; and only what the Scriptures taught should be sanctioned in a church."²

His lectures were immensely popular. People sat in the windows. Presbyteries begin to form in London and SE England.

Here was the beginning of religious freedom.

However, this was a tremendous threat to the Queen.

When Queen Elizabeth heard, she famously responded, "*No bishops: No Queen.*"

She had just hung several pastors because they started non-Anglican churches.

She sent police to arrest Cartwright. To save his life he fled to the Continent.

In **1572** he returned to England. More Presbyteries were secretly organized.

¹ Hagstotz, Gideon, *Heroes of the Reformation*, 44 (Albany, Ore, Ages, 1998)

² *Ibid* Hagstotz, pg 45

In **1574** the queen issued another warrant for his arrest. He fled to Antwerp. There, he became a minister to an English-speaking congregation.

In **1583** he drafted the first book of discipline for Presbyterian churches.

In **1585** he returned to England, and was put in the Tower of London for two months.

In **1590** he was imprisoned again, this time for two years. Why? the growth of Presbyterianism. He was released at age 56 with his health permanently broken.

1603 He died, the same year as Elizabeth.

His last sermon, a few days before his death, was from Eccl 12:7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Two day later, after spending two hours in prayer, he told his wife moments before he died that he found "wonderful and unutterable joy and comfort, for God had given a glimpse of heaven."

At his death (age 68) he had spent over two years in prison and 20 years in exile.

1571 Parliament approved the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* stating the doctrinal beliefs of the English church.

1577-80 Francis Drake, a Puritan Pirate, circumnavigated the globe.

1583 John Whitgift becomes Archbishop of Canterbury and enforces the *The Book of Common Prayer* in public worship.

1588 England's navy defeated the Spanish Armada

1599 Oliver Cromwell and King Charles I were both born.

1602 Death of William Perkins.

1603 Elizabeth died childless.

E. 1603 JAMES VI OF SCOTLAND BECOMES JAMES I OF ENGLAND

The Puritan movement is now almost forty years old. Only 20% of England's 10,000 clergy are Puritan, but they influence affairs religious and civil out of proportion to their numbers.

Increasingly Parliament is becoming Puritan. Those portends conflict with the crown.

Their spiritual power was a byproduct of their preaching, personal holiness, and faithfulness to biblical, Reformed doctrine.

After his coronation, the Puritan leaders met with James asking for a new translation of the Bible. In 1604 James agreed, and in 1611 *The King James Bible* was published.