

The Reformation in England – Part 2

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – An overview of the reformation in England, including the various Protestant groups
2. aim – To cause us to understand the roots of the reformed church in America

b. outline

1. The Early Reformation in England
2. The Puritan Reformation in England

c. overview

1. the **state** of the Reformation
 - a. our timeframe (up to this point) has been the first-half of the 16th C – the reformation is in *full swing* throughout Europe
 1. the theological epiphany of Luther, the simultaneous rise of Zwingli, the appearance of the *radical reformers*, and the life and legacy of Calvin in Geneva
 2. the movement of Lutheranism and Protestantism throughout C and W Europe
 3. **i.e.** a great movement of the Spirit of God throughout the church during a period of only about 50 years (out of 1500 in the Church Age)
2. the **place** of the English-speaking Reformation
 - a. in two parts: 1) the Early Reformation, occurring during the 16th C, 2) the Puritan Reformation occurring during the early 17th C
 1. **note:** to understand the English Reformation fully, we bring together two *disparate* time-periods across two lectures, and then “go back” and talk about events *intervening* between them
 2. the Early Reformation under Henry VIII and his successors: Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth I
 - a. the arrival of the ideas of Luther spreading throughout Europe to England and Scotland
 - b. the response of the monarchs to reformed thinking: Henry VIII trying to “rid” himself of the strictures of the pope, his successors dealing with the Catholic church according to their own heritage
 - c. **e.g.** Mary Tudor hating the reformers because of the claim of her mother’s (Catherine) marriage to Henry VIII being illegitimate; Elizabeth seeing the situation differently (Anne)
 3. (**now**) the Puritan Reformation occurring *later*, but building off of this early reformation
 - b. but ... to understand this *later* reformation, we must *briefly* discuss the reformation that came to Scotland during the early 16th C. ...

II. The Puritan Reformation in England

Content

a. the reformation in Scotland

1. Scotland was independent from England at this time, and it followed a policy of seeking support from the French (over against the English, who sought support from Spain)
 - a. in 1502, James IV married Margaret Tudor (a daughter of Henry VII) – the hope now was that the two kingdoms could be united and live in peace
 - b. but, James V (the son of James IV) married the French Mary of Guise – this caused the two nations to diverge politically, and this affected the course of the Reformation in Scotland
2. Protestantism was taking hold in Scotland during this time
 - a. the doctrines of the Lollards and the Hussites (**i.e.** followers of Wycliffe and Huss) were deeply ingrained in Scotland, and the teachings of Luther found fertile soil in the nation
 - b. persecution against these ideas broke out c. 1528 with the first martyr of those who had returned from Europe with the teachings of Luther, but it did not stop its advance (particularly amongst the nobility and university students)
 - c. and ... although James V’s daughter, Mary Stuart, was heir to the throne (and Henry VIII hatched a scheme to marry her to his son Edward), she ultimately married a French prince, thus keeping Scotland separate from England for some time

3. the rise of **John Knox** (1515-72) the great Scottish reformer
 - a. born c. 1515, he studied theology and was ordained a priest before 1540
 - b. he became involved (and was exiled because of) a coup against the castle of St. Andrew's, which became the bastion of the reformed faith in Scotland
 1. he was ultimately released from hard labor during an English interlude
 - c. when Mary Tudor came to the throne of England (and persecution against Protestants broke out in Scotland), Knox fled to Switzerland – he spent some time with Calvin and Zwingli's successor
 - d. ultimately, Knox returned to Scotland, and became the “voice” of Protestantism speaking against both the queens of England and the newly returned Mary Stuart of Scotland
 - e. in the midst of *massive* conflict and confusion (both politically and religiously) he organized the Reformed (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland, with a polity similar to later Presbyterians in England
 - f. Knox suffered an attack of paralysis – he preached one last time, urging his fellow Scots to continue their struggle to bring reformation to Scotland, and died a few days later (24 Nov 1572)

b. the Puritan reformation

1. **remember:** the following events are at the beginning of the 17th C. (but are linked here as a part of the larger picture of the Reformation coming to England and Scotland)
2. **(from above)** after Mary Tudor, Elizabeth I had attempted to chart an “intermediate” course between the Catholic conservatives and the Calvinist Protestants in England
 - a. Elizabeth died in 1603; she had declared the son of Mary Stuart, James (now king of Scotland), to be her heir – he became James I of England *and* James VI of Scotland
 - b. he joined the two nations together, but not without conflict
 1. his greatest conflicts were with the English Protestants who did not believe that the reformation had gone far enough, particularly since it had advanced *significantly further* in Scotland
3. English Protestants at the beginning of the 17th C. were not unified into a single group
 - a. the **Puritans** = they *all* saw the need to *purify* the church through a return to *biblical* religion:
 1. they opposed much of the *traditionalism* of the Church of England (and its lack of *vibrancy*)
 2. they rejected much of the *elaborate worship* of the Church of England, including the Book of Common Prayer (and all written prayers; **e.g.** the Lord's Prayer)
 3. they insisted on the need for a *sober life*, guided by the Scriptures and lacking in luxury
 - a. which is where many *assume* the word “puritan” originates (**incorrectly!**)
 4. they were critical of drunkenness (but not opposed to alcohol), and opposed various forms of licentiousness (**e.g.** the theater, with the *duplicity* implicit in acting)
 5. they believed that many English translations of the Bible used by the official church had been corrupted, and they were not inclined to use them (**see Smyth below**)
 - a. **e.g.** the Tyndale in 1525; the Geneva Bible in 1560; the Bishop's Bible in 1568
 - b. so, in 1604, James convened the Hampton Court Conference to translate a new English version, eventually published in 1611 as *The King James Bible (The Authorized Version)*
 - c. the goal: a new version that would conform to the ecclesiology and episcopal structure of the Church of England (**i.e.** to *limit* Puritan influence)
 - d. the translation was based on Erasmus' work from c. 1512 – he compiled a new *Latin* manuscript of the NT, including the Greek (some in Revelation he translated *back* into Greek from Latin), in which the Greek manuscript became known as the *Textus Receptus* (1516)
 1. it is based on the Byzantine text-type (or Majority Text); most modern translations are based on the Alexandrian text-type (or Western text-type)
 - e. **IOW:** the KJV was authorized by a practicing homosexual to specifically “push back” against the Puritans from a manuscript created by a man from a base of Latin texts – *radical* KJVO adherents apparently *overlook* this irony!
 6. they were opposed to a *formal* episcopacy, centered around bishops governing territories of churches, as a later invention of the church (and not found in the Bible)
 7. they insisted that the structure of the church (along with all of its doctrine) should be based *solely* on the regulations of Scripture
 - a. in 1604 Richard Bancroft, archbishop of Canterbury affirmed that episcopal hierarchy was an institution of divine origin (**i.e.** the true church) – the Puritans saw this as a means of “reintroducing” Catholicism back into the country
 - b. James I had already called Parliament into session to invoke new taxes – many Puritans seized the moment to appeal against Bancroft's canons
 - c. all this did was to *increase* the differences between the official church and the Puritans

- b. the Puritans were not *unified* on matters of church government (their differing *interpretations*):
 1. some held to the view of Knox in Scotland, and became the English Presbyterians – **i.e.** each church governed by a group of local presbyters who “answered” to a wider presbyterian session governing several churches in an “area” (**note:** this became the *largest* denomination of Protestants in England in the mid-17th C.; **see below**)
 2. others held to the autonomy of the local church, and became the Independents (or Congregationalists) – **i.e.** each church entirely autonomous, governed only by its own elders and answering to no “larger” ecclesiastical body
 3. the Baptists arose from the Independents – taking the concept of church autonomy and combining it with the ideas of the Anabaptists, particularly in the areas of baptism and the Lord’s Supper
- 4. the church of **John Smyth** (1554-1612)
 - a. Smyth was an Anglican priest – he became convinced that the reformation had not gone far enough in England – so ... he established an independent (thus illegal!) congregation
 1. as the fledging church grew, his followers (being persecuted by other Protestants), fled to Amsterdam (1609) – he was financed by a well-to-do lawyer, **Thomas Helwys** (c. 1575-1616)
 2. in Amsterdam, through his study of Scripture, became convinced that *only the original languages* could have absolute authority for worship and morality – he would preach from the original Hebrew or Greek, translating it along the way
 3. he eventually became convinced that infant baptism was invalid – so, he baptized himself with a bucket and ladle (the “self-baptizer”), and then rebaptized his followers
 4. he came in contact with the Mennonites and embraced their ideas of pacifism and not taking oaths – this caused he and Helwys to break ranks, disagreeing over these positions
 - b. Helwys took some of the members of Smyth’s church and returned to England, establishing the first Baptist Church in the country (1613)
 1. however, as the Calvinist-Arminian debate took hold, the Baptist church was split into the *Particular Baptists* (embracing a “particular” stance on who would be saved; **i.e.** in predestination) vs. the *General Baptists* (embracing a more “general” stance on who would be saved; **i.e.** a *general* view of the work of Christ in atonement)
 2. **note:** the majority of Baptist who established the SBC in 1845 were *Particular* Baptists
- 5. the Confessions of the Puritans
 - a. the **Westminster Confession of Faith** (Presbyterian) – authorized in 1643 by the English Parliament, the Westminster Assembly met in order to provide advice on issues of worship, doctrine, government, and discipline of the Church of England (published 1648)
 1. it is the confession embraced as a *subordinate standard* of the Church of Scotland and of Presbyterians (and some reformed denominations) worldwide
 - b. the **Savoy Declaration** (Congregationalists) – developed in 1658 by English Independents and Congregationalists, using the Westminster as the base, redeveloping chaps. 30 & 31 on church government, and adding a chapter *Of the Gospel, and the Extent of the Grace Thereof* (**i.e.** that faith cannot be wrought by reason or science, but only by the work of the Spirit of God; a reaction to Enlightenment thinking now creeping into the church; **see later**)
 - c. the **London Baptist Confession of Faith** (Baptist) – conceived in 1644 (as the *First*) by English *Particular* Baptists, it was redrafted in 1677 (and 1689) as the *Second*, using the Savoy Declaration and the Westminster Confession, modifying the chapters on church organization and baptism
 1. the *Act of Toleration of 1689* allowed for those dissenting from the official Church of England (**i.e.** non-conformists) to worship in their own way, as long as they swore allegiance to the king
 2. thus, by the end of the 17th C., the Church of England and the Presbyterians were the dominate Protestant groups in England – the Baptists moved (mostly!) to the Colonies (**see later**); the Congregationalists “faded” into the others