

## The Catholic and Protestant Roots of Anglicanism

Saint Barnabas's Church, Falmouth MA

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### Session #5: Henry VIII's Break from Rome and the Elizabethan Settlement

1. Ecclesiastical and doctrinal issues in 16<sup>th</sup> century England
  - a. In 16th century, cannot separate from matters of church and state
  - b. Henry VIII (1491-1547) breaks with Rome, requiring new structure and authority
    - i. National sovereignty and succession management
    - ii. Political detachment from papal authority
    - iii. Political oversight of national church for sake of unity
    - iv. Balance Protestant/Catholic competing claims/forces
  - c. Sovereign as head of Church: Act of Supremacy
  - d. Eucharistic controversies; Luther, Calvin, Zwingli must be critiqued and assimilated
  - e. Book of Common Prayer to restore order and balance Protestant/Roman tendencies
  - f. Calvinism v. Arminianism remains stressor throughout 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries
2. Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), Archbishop of Canterbury, is architect of 1549 BCP
  - a. Cranmer is pastor, liturgist, politician > systematic theologian
  - b. Theology is shaped by selection, arrangement and composition of public prayer
  - c. Daily Office grounded in reading Scriptures throughout year
  - d. Revise Eucharistic rites connected to tradition of early Church
  - e. Simplify medieval traditions—e.g., no secret priestly prayers
  - f. Emphasize Baptism as public rite
  - g. Marriage rite designed for celebration at public Eucharist
  - h. Later revisions in 1552, 1559, 1604, 1662
3. *Lex Orandi—Lex Credendi* (the law of praying is the law of belief)
  - a. In liturgical prayer, important connection between worship and belief
  - b. Distinctive source of authority within Anglican world view

- c. Harmonize polarities of Roman and Protestant theology and piety
  - d. Liturgy presumes that consensus and comprehensiveness are normative modes for establishing and maintaining order in society
  - e. Public liturgy is infused with symbols and metaphors of Scripture as experienced throughout extended tradition, now prayed into contemporary context
  - f. Strong sense of continuity, tradition and order that connects self and larger world
  - g. High ecclesiology—authority of Church that holds this vision together
  - h. High sense of human anthropology: capacity for rational human reflection and deliberation that connects mind and heart
  - i. Critical yet positive orientation toward human culture: history, science, arts
  - j. Liturgy serves as theater in which doctrine, ethics, mythos, social engagement, ritual and inward experience come together to praise God and transform society
4. Elizabethan Settlement after political and ecclesiastical turbulence
- a. Need for reconstruction after extremes of Edward and Mary
  - b. Balance equally powerful appeals—Roman and Protestant—to divine authority
  - c. Equally powerful sanctions against heresy, dissent
  - d. Both sides demanded unquestioning obedience aligned with civil power
  - e. Choose between two rival theocracies:
    - i. Rome: venerable with the unbroken tradition of ages;
    - ii. Geneva: vigorous, inspired by Calvin's genius, high confidence that the future of humanity dictated by God to human agents
  - f. Elizabeth navigates between the two for the sake of national order
5. Richard Hooker (1553 – 1600) and Holy Scripture
- a. *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*: attack on Calvinist Puritans
  - b. Hooker: authority of Calvin—and *sola scriptura*—is not the final word
  - c. Scripture teaches fundamental duties, but does not govern whole lives of societies
  - d. Possession of Scripture does not free us from arduous use of reason in moral and political realms
  - e. Scripture presupposes—rather than replaces—natural and rational laws
  - f. Achievement of bliss depends upon fulfilling natural and supernatural duties

6. Hooker appeals to **reason** in ecclesiastical and civil matters
  - a. Even Christ exercised his reason in argument
  - b. Hooker invokes Aquinas and metaphysical basis of thought
  - c. World is ordered cosmos in which everything works to proper end
  - d. Government concerns itself with search for the *summum bonum*, not just coercion
  - e. Political organization not just remedy for human sinfulness (Fall) but also a condition of human perfection
  - f. Every end is means toward *summum bonum*, or God, and good of society (Aristotle)
  - g. Religion points us to God and the good of society
  - h. Eternal law is laid down by God for Himself and all other things
    - i. Eternal law not arbitrary, but 'reasonable'
    - ii. Reason is at heart of the Godhead; good is only known by reason
    - iii. God always good and reasonable
    - iv. Humanity naturally seeks its perfection: sensual, intellectual, spiritual
    - v. Spiritual perfection only provided by God to remedy damage of Fall
    - vi. Natural law takes humanity only so far; supernatural enables true bliss