

Anglican Theology

I. The Riddle of Anglicanism

A. "Anglican"

1. Means simply "English"
2. Refers to Church of England (C. of E.)
3. "Episcopal" in United States

B. Bible-believing Protestants' View of the C. of E.

1. On one hand, disturbing elements: liturgy and rites, liberalism
2. On other hand, a rich heritage: hymns, Bible translation, & a strong evangelical element

C. Protestant or Catholic?

1. Many Anglicans (Episcopalians) refuse to use the name *Protestant*
2. Apparently "Catholic" practices and ceremonies
3. Diverse groups within church
4. Some strongly Protestant Anglicans play down formal elements (the Wesleys, John Newton, J. C. Ryle)
5. Example: *Book of Common Prayer*
 - a. Evangelicals question idea of a prayer book w/ some questionable liturgy
 - b. Yet part of our language of worship
6. Anglican theology varies w/ time, place, groups

II. Progress of the English Reformation

A. Forerunner: John Wycliffe

1. Stressed preaching over sacramental role of the priesthood
2. Stressed translating & distributing the Bible
3. Questioned some dogmas, such as transubstantiation
4. Resisted the political power of the papacy

B. Henry VIII

1. Broke with the Church of Rome to secure a divorce
2. Became "Supreme Head of the Church in England"
3. Suppressed (dissolved) the monasteries
4. Religious policy of "reformed Catholicism"
5. Formed an Erastian (state-controlled) church

C. Edward VI

1. Height of Protestant reform under Thomas Cranmer
2. Strongly Protestant policy supported by Edward
3. Question: How Protestant were the people?
4. King's early death forestalled efforts

D. Mary I

1. "Bloody Mary" → height of Catholic reaction
2. Some 300 Protestants burned; other "Marian exiles" fled
3. Her death ended Catholic threat
4. Ironically, revulsion against her made England more pro-Protestant politically as well as religiously

E. Elizabeth I

1. Restored Protestantism
2. "Neither good Protestant nor yet resolute papist" (John Knox)
3. Elizabethan Settlement

- a. “Comprehensive”: A Protestant church broad enough to please everyone
- b. Protestant doctrine but traditional rituals & decoration
- c. Pattern for the C. of E. to the present

III. Prominent Figures

A. Thomas Cranmer

- 1. Archbishop of Canterbury → Leader of C. of E.
- 2. Author of the religious Reformation
- 3. Sometimes vacillating in character but Protestant in conviction
- 4. Contributions
 - a. *Book of Common Prayer*: Guide for how to worship
 - b. 42 Articles of Religion: Protestant confession of faith

B. William Tyndale

- 1. Translation of the Bible
 - a. Educated in humanist stress on getting back to the sources
 - b. Saw Scripture as key to Reformation
 - c. Forced to work from the Low Countries
 - d. Arrested & strangled & burned at the stake (1536)
- 2. From Tyndale to the AV (KJV)
 - a. Tyndale translated NT & part of OT
 - b. Became basis of all English Reformation translations
 - c. Geneva Bible: trans. by “Marian exiles”; most popular of Puritan Bibles
 - d. Climax: Authorized (King James) Version (1611)
- 3. Doctrines Implicit in His Work
 - a. Priesthood of Believers
 - b. Sufficiency of Scripture
 - c. Perspicuity of Scripture

C. Richard Hooker

- 1. Great defender of Anglicanism
- 2. Famous work: *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*
- 3. Key Ideas
 - a. Tradition & human reason a source of wisdom for the church
 - b. Tradition preserved some apostolic practices
 - c. Church may make changes not affecting doctrines of salvation
 - d. Defended episcopacy (rule by bishops)
 - e. C. of E. did not need further reformation
- 4. Critique (Broadbent)
 - a. Human reason may serve as a religious authority
 - b. Weakens authority of Scripture
 - c. Implies insufficiency of Scripture

IV. Nature of Anglican Doctrine

A. 39 Articles of Religion

- 1. Revised from 42 Articles
- 2. Protestant but mixing Lutheran, Reformed, & traditional elements
- 3. Broadly “Reformed” in points such as election/predestination, Lord’s Supper
- 4. Teaches baptismal regeneration (art. 27)
- 5. Each Anglican party interprets according to its views

- B. Tendencies within Anglicanism
 - 1. Low Church
 - a. Ceremonies of indifferent importance as long as the creed is good
 - b. Fundamentally Protestant and evangelical
 - c. Initial view of leaders under Elizabeth
 - d. Seen in ongoing evangelical witness (e.g., John Newton, J. C. Ryle, J. I. Packer)
 - 2. High Church
 - a. Believe government by bishops, ceremonies, and traditions divinely necessary for a true church
 - b. Theoretically positioned between evangelicals & Catholics
 - c. Later expressed in Anglo-Catholic Oxford Movement (from 19th cent.)
 - 1) Reaffirmed church tradition & formalism
 - 2) Led some back to Rome (e.g., John Henry Newman)
 - 3. Broad Church
 - a. 1600s: Latitudinarian → Allowed great latitude in doctrine
 - b. Later expressed in theological liberalism
 - c. Stresses *inclusive* nature of C. of E.
 - 4. Those who left
 - a. Puritans: Vain attempt to “purify” C. of E.
 - b. Separatists: Refused to recognize state control
- C. Lambeth Quadrilateral
 - 1. Formulated late 19th cent
 - 2. Purpose
 - a. Originally basis for ecumenical discussions w/ Catholics & Orthodox
 - b. Basis today for all ecumenical discussions
 - 3. Points
 - a. Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation
 - b. Apostles’ & Nicene Creeds a sufficient statement of Christian faith
 - c. Two sacraments: baptism and Holy Communion
 - d. Recognizing the historic episcopate
 - 4. Represents the minimum base of the Anglican position