

A Brief Overview
of the
English Reformation
1485-1603

Henry VII: The winner of the War of the Roses



Henry VIII in full attire



King Edward: Small, young, intense and sickly



Painting as propaganda: Henry hands off Reform to son Edward



Archbishop Thomas Cranmer: Compiler of the BCP



Mary Tudor: An unhappy childhood followed by a tragic reign



Elizabeth I: Good Queen Bess



- **XXII. OF PURGATORY.**
- THE Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God
- **XXXII. OF THE MARRIAGE OF PRIESTS.**
- BISHOPS, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

- **XX. OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.**
- THE Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for the necessity of Salvation.

VI. OF THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF SALVATION.

- HOLY Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.
- Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books.
 - * Genesis,
 - * Exodus,
 - * Leviticus,
 - * Numbers,
 - * Deuteronomy,
 - * Joshua,
 - * Judges,
 - * Ruth,
 - * The First Book of Samuel,
 - * The Second Book of Samuel,
 - * The First Book of Kings,
 - * The Second Book of Kings,
 - * The First Book of Chronicles,
 - * The Second Book of Chronicles,
 - * The First Book of Esdras [Ezra],
 - * The Second Book of Esdras [Nehemiah],
 - * The Book of Esther,
 - * The Book of Job,
 - * The Psalms,
 - * The Proverbs,
 - * Ecclesiastes or Preacher,
 - * Cantica, or Songs of Solomon,
 - * Four Prophets the greater,
 - * Twelve Prophets the less.
- And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following:
 - * The Third Book of Esdras [I Esdras],
 - * The Fourth Book of Esdras [II Esdras],
 - * The Book of Tobias,
 - * The Book of Judith,
 - * The rest of the Book of Esther,
 - * The Book of Wisdom,
 - * Jesus the Son of Sirach [or Ecclesiasticus],
 - * Baruch the Prophet,
 - * The Song of the Three Children,
 - * The Story of Susanna,
 - * Of Bel and the Dragon,
 - * The Prayer of Manasses,
 - * The First Book of Maccabees,
 - * The Second Book of Maccabees.
- All of the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

- A FRVITFVLL EXHORTATION TO
 - the reading and knowledge of holy Scripture.
- The prayse of holy Scripture. TO a Christian man there can bee nothing either more necessarie or profitable, then the knowledge of holy Scripture, forasmuch as in it is conteyned GODS true word, setting foorth his glory, and also mans duety.
- The Perfection of Holy Scripture: And there is no trueth nor doctrine necessarie for our iustification and euerlasting saluation, but that is (or may bee) drawne out of that fountaine and Well of trueth.
- The knowledge of holy Scripture is necessary. Therefore as many as bee desirous to enter into the right and perfect way vnto GOD, must applie their mindes to know holy Scripture, without the which, they can neither sufficiently know GOD and his will, neither their office and duty.
- To whom the knowledge of holy Scripture is sweet and pleasant. Who be enemies to holy Scripture. And as drinke is pleasant to them that bee drie, and meate to them that be hungrie: so is the reading, hearing, searching, and studying of holy Scripture, to them that bee desirous to know GOD or themselues, and to doe his will. And their stomackes onely doe loathe and abhorre the heauenly knowledge and food of GODS word, that be so drowned in worldly vanities, that they neither fauour GOD, nor any godlinesse: for that is the cause why they desire such vanities, rather then the true knowledge of GOD.
- An apt similitude, declaring of whom the Scripture is abhorred. As they that are sicke of an ague, whatsoeuer they eate and drinke (though it bee never so pleasant) yet it is as bitter to them as wormewood, not for the bitterness of the meate, but for the corrupt and bitter humour that is in their own tongue and mouth: euen so is the sweetness of GODS word bitter, not of it selfe, but onely vnto them that haue their mindes corrupted with long custome of sinne and loue of this world.

- THE I. PART OF THE EXHORTATION
- An exhortation vnto the diligent reading and searching of the holy Scripture. Therefore forsaking the corrupt iudgement of fleshly men, which care not but for their carkasse: let vs reuerently heare and read holy Scriptures, which is the foode of the soule (Matthew 4.4). Let vs diligently search for the Well of Life in the bookes of the New and Old Testament, and not runne to the stinking puddles of mens traditions (deused by mens imagination) for our iustification and saluation.
- The holy Scripture is a sufficient doctrine for our saluation. What things we may learne in the holy Scripture. For in holy Scripture is fully contayned what we ought to doe, and what to eschew; what to beleue, what to loue, and what to looke for at GODS hands at length. In these Bookes we shall finde the father from whom, the sonne by whom, and the holy Ghost, in whom all things haue their being and keeping vp, and these three persons to be but one GOD, and one substance. In these books we may learne to know our selues, how vile and miserable we be, and and also to know GOD, how good he is of himselfe, and how hee maketh vs and all creatures partakers of his goodnesse. We may learne also in these Bookes to know GODS will and pleasure, as much as (for this present time) is conuenient for vs to know. And (as the great Clerke and godly Preacher Saint Iohn Chrysostome sayth) whatsoeuer is required to saluation of man, is fully contayned in the Scripture of GOD. He that is ignorant, may there learne and haue knowledge. He that is hard hearted, and an obstinate sinner, shall there finde euerlasting torments (prepared of GODS iustice) to make him afrayd, and to mollifie or soften him. He that is oppressed with misery in this world, shall there finde releefe in the promises of euerlasting life, to his great consolation and comfort. He that is wounded by the Diuell onto death, shall finde there medicine whereby he may bee restored againe vnto health

- Who profit most in reading GODS word. And in reading of GODS word, hee most profiteth not alwayes, that is most ready in turning of the booke, or in saying of it without the booke, but hee that is most turned into it, that is most inspired with the holy Ghost, most in his heart and life altered and changed into that thing which hee readeth: he that is dayly lesse and lesse proud, lesse wrathfull, lesse couetous, and lesse desirous of worldly and vaine pleasures: he that dayly (forsaking his old vicious life) increaseth in vertue more and more. And to bee short, there is nothing that more maintayneth godlinesse of the minde, and driueth away vngodlinesse, then doeth the continuall reading or hearing of GODS word, if it be ioyned with a godly minde, and a good affection, to know and follow GODS will.
- Scripture in some places is easie, and in some places hard to bee vnderstood. This haue I sayd, as touching the feare to reade, thorow ignorance of the person. And concerning the hardnesse of Scripture, he that is so weake that he is not able to brooke strong meat, yet he may sucke the sweet and tender milke, and deferre the rest, vntill he wax stronger, and come to more knowledge. For GOD receiueth the learned and vnlearned, and casteth away none, but is indifferent vnto all. And the Scripture is full, as well of low valleyes, plaine wayes, and easie for euery man to vse, and to walke in: as also of high hilles & mountaynes, which few men can climbe vnto.
- A good rule for the vnderstanding of Scripture. If wee reade once, twice, or thrice, and vnderstand not, let vs not cease so, but still continue reading, praying, asking of other, and so by still knocking (at the last) the doore shall be opened (as Saint Augustine sayth.) Although many things in the Scripture be spoken in obscure mysteries, yet there is nothing spoken vnder darke mysteries in one place, but the selfe same thing in other places, is spoken more familiarly and plainly, to the capacity both of learned and vnlearned

THERE was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted: As, among other things, it may plainly appear by the Common Prayers in the Church, commonly called Divine Service. The first original and ground whereof if a man would search out by the ancient Fathers, he shall find, that the same was not ordained but of a good purpose, and for a great advancement of godliness. For they so ordered the matter, that all the whole Bible (or the greatest part thereof) should be read over once every year; intending thereby, that the Clergy, and especially such as were Ministers in the congregation, should (by often reading, and meditation in God's word) be stirred up to godliness themselves, and be more able to exhort others by wholesome doctrine, and to confute them that were adversaries to the truth; and further, that the people (by daily hearing of holy Scripture read in the Church) might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true Religion.

- But these many years passed, this godly and decent order of the ancient Fathers hath been so altered, broken, and neglected, by planting in uncertain Stories, and Legends, with multitude of Responds, Verses, vain Repetitions, Commemorations, and Synodals; that commonly when any Book of the Bible was begun, after three or four Chapters were read out, all the rest were unread. And in this sort the Book of Isaiah was begun in Advent, and the Book of Genesis in Septuagesima; but they were only begun, and never read through: After like sort were other Books of holy Scripture used. And moreover, whereas St. Paul would have such language spoken to the people in the Church, as they might understand, and have profit by hearing the same; The Service in this Church of England these many years hath been read in Latin to the people, which they understand not; so that they have heard with their ears only, and their heart, spirit, and mind, have not been edified thereby. And furthermore, notwithstanding that the ancient Fathers have divided the Psalms into seven Portions, whereof every one was called a Nocturn: Now of late time a few of them have been daily said, and the rest utterly omitted. Moreover, the number and hardness of the Rules called the Pie, and the manifold changings of the Service, was the cause, that to turn the Book only was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out.

These inconveniences therefore considered, here is set forth such an Order, whereby the same shall be redressed. And for a readiness in this matter, here is drawn out a Calendar for that purpose, which is plain and easy to be understood; wherein (so much as may be) the reading of holy Scripture is so set forth, that all things shall be done in order, without breaking one piece from another. For this cause be cut off Anthems, Responds, Invitatories, and such like things as did break the continual course of the reading of Scripture. Yet, because there is no remedy, but that of necessity there must be some Rules; therefore certain Rules are here set forth; which, as they are few in number, so they are plain and easy to be understood. So that here you have an Order for Prayer, and for the reading of the holy Scripture, much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the old Fathers, and a great deal more profitable and commodious, than that which of late was used. It is more profitable, because here are left out many things, whereof some are untrue, some uncertain, some vain and superstitious; and nothing is ordained to be read, but the very pure Word of God, the holy Scriptures, or that which is agreeable to the same; and that in such a Language and Order as is most easy and plain for the understanding both of the Readers and Hearers. It is also more commodious, both for the shortness thereof, and the plainness of the Order, and for that the Rules be few and easy.

And whereas heretofore there hath been great diversity in saying and singing in Churches within this Realm; some following Salisbury Use, some Hereford Use, and some the Use of Bangor, some of York, some of Lincoln; now from henceforth all the whole Realm shall have but one Use. ...

THOUGH it be appointed, That all things shall be read and sung in the Church in the English Tongue, to the end that the Congregation may be thereby edified; yet it is not meant, but that when men say Morning and Evening Prayer privately, they may say the same in any language that they themselves do understand.

And all Priests and Deacons are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer either privately or openly, not being let by sickness, or some other urgent cause.

And the Curate that ministers in every Parish-Church or Chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say the same in the Parish-Church or Chapel where he ministers, and shall cause a Bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him.

Further Reading

- **A History of the Church in England** by JRH Moorman, 1952. The easiest reading work on the subject. Find it second hand on the Internet @ Amazon.com, Bookfinder or ABE.
- **The English Reformation** 2nd ed., AG Dickens, 1986.
- **A Brief History of the English Reformation**, by Derek Wilson, (2006) 464 pages.
- **Reformation: Europe's House Divided: 1490-1700** Diarmaid MacCulloch, 2003, 708 pages. A detailed work on the Reformation as a significant phase in the development of European history and civilization.
- **Saints, Sacrilege & Sediton** Eamon Duffy, 2012 - A lament for the artistic and architectural losses of the Reformation.