

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

LECTURE 24 – REFORMATION IN ENGLAND; PURITANS AND PILGRIMS

We'll start with a prayer from the period to be studied. The Reformation in England produced the first *Book of Common Prayer*, 1549. Although it has been revised several times, one of the loveliest prayers in the original *Prayer Book* is still in use:

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secret are hidden; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The rest of this page is an outline of this Lecture.

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In preparation, read Cairns, 320-8 (Reformation), 328-35 (Puritans), 358-64 (Pilgrims) Olson, 429-49 (Reformation), 494-509 (Puritans); Lion, 386-94; Vos, 95-98.

1 REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

(Cairns, 320-28; Olson, 429-444; Lion, 386-7, 390-8; Vos, 95-8; Lane 155-7, for Cranmer, Hanks, *Great Events*, 193-2, for Henry VIII.)

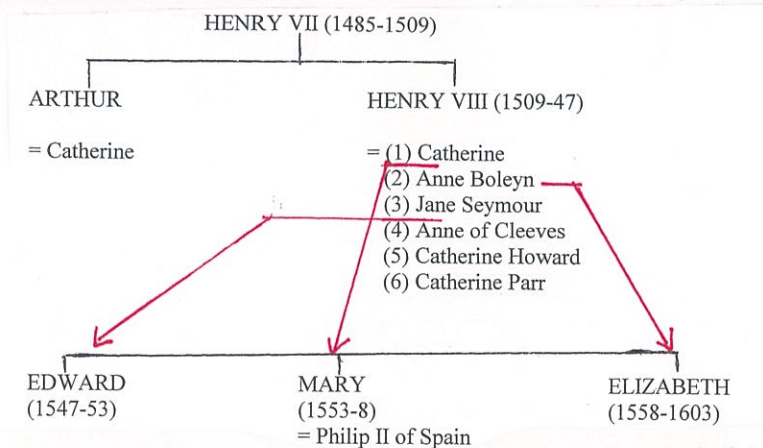
1.1 Introduction

We come now to the fourth of the four Protestant Reformations of the 16th century: First, (Lecture 19), Lutheran Churches, about 64 million members worldwide now, Second, (Lecture 20), Reformed Churches, about 49 million members worldwide now, Third, (Lectures 21/22), Baptist Churches, about 58 million members, worldwide now, Fourth, (this Lecture), Anglican or Episcopal Churches, about 83 million worldwide.

The Reformation in England was different from the Continent of Europe in two respects: (1) it was political, not religious, in origin, started by the King, Henry VIII, who looked neither to Luther nor Calvin for a model and (2) it was piecemeal and took twenty years from the first attack on Rome in 1532 to the first Protestant church service in 1552. The result was a distinctive form of Protestantism, sometimes known as 'Anglican', because it started in England, although it has now spread throughout the world, and sometimes known as Episcopal, from the Greek word *episcopos*, meaning 'bishop', because its characteristic is a distinct form of Church government, with the monarch (king or queen) as the Supreme Head of the national Church, and a hierarchy of Archbishops and bishops.

1.2 Henry VIII's first marriage

In 1500, England was a Catholic nation, loyal to the Pope. In 1501, King Henry VII of England married his older son, Arthur, to Catherine of Aragon, a Spanish princess, in order to get Spain onto his side in his war with France – that's the way they did things.



When Arthur died five months later, the widowed Catherine was married to King Henry's second son, also called Henry. Because she was young Henry's sister-in-law, and because to marry one's sister-in-law was prohibited by Church law, the Pope had to be asked to grant a dispensation for the marriage, which he did - regularly did - for money.

Twenty-four years later, in 1527, young Henry was King of England, Henry VIII, and Catherine was 42, past the age of child-bearing. There was no male heir to carry on the Tudor line - all their children, except one daughter (Mary) were stillborn. Henry decided that the Pope had been wrong, 24 years earlier, to allow him to marry Catherine, and that his marriage should now to be dissolved, so that he could marry Anne Boleyn, a vivacious 24-year old, and try for a son. Henry asked the Pope to annul his marriage to Catherine. Before we leave this page, note Henry's four other wives after Anne Boleyn - Jane Seymour (died twelve days after Edward VI's birth), Anne of Cleves (marriage annulled, outlived the rest of the wives), Catherine Howard (beheaded) and Catherine Parr (widowed at the death of Henry VIII and remarried Thomas Seymour) - remembered by the mnemonic 'divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived'.

Normally, there would have been no problem with annulling Henry's marriage to Catherine, but the King of Spain, Charles V, had recently captured Rome and occupied it, so the Pope was a prisoner - literally a prisoner - of Charles, and Charles was Catherine of Aragon's nephew, so there was no way he would allow the Pope to dissolve Aunt Catherine's marriage. So the Pope refused Henry's claim, not on moral grounds, but through fear of King Charles of Spain.

The next five years are complex, but in 1532, two things happened. (1) Anne Boleyn was pregnant, and (2) the Archbishop of Canterbury (head of the Church in England) died. Henry appointed his own man, Thomas Cranmer (picture below) (1489-1556), as the new Archbishop. Cranmer defied the Pope, annulled Henry's marriage, and married Henry to Anne Boleyn. The Pope excommunicated Henry and ordered the faithful to resist him, but in 1534 Henry got Parliament to pass the Act of Supremacy, which made Henry 'Supreme Head of the Church of England'. The Church of England was now under his control. The public supported him, because they now didn't need to pay taxes to Rome.

1.3 Initial Reformation in England

What followed could scarcely be called a Reformation. Everything remained as before, except for two changes: (1) the king, not the Pope, was now the Head of the Church, and (2) Henry took over / dissolved all the monasteries. Otherwise, the bishops and priests continued the theology and practice of the Catholic Church.



Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury in 1532 during the reign of Henry VIII. *The Book of Common Prayer*, which emphasized the use of English in services, was the work of Cranmer.

Catherine of Aragon. When Henry wanted rid of her, the Pope's legate in England, trying desperately to find a solution, suggested that if she became a nun, Henry would be free to remarry, but she refused even to consider it.



1.4 Dissolution of the monasteries, 1536 and 1539

(Cairns, 323)

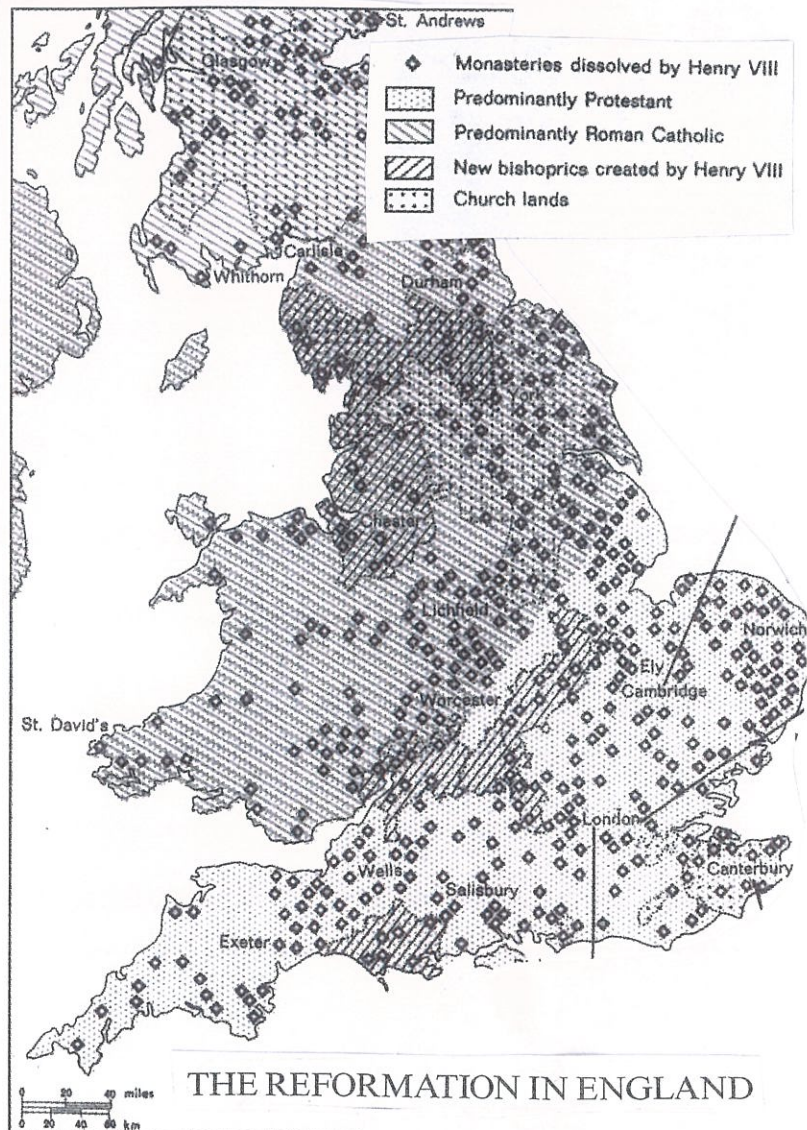
The Church of England owned about a quarter of the land in England. Over the years, people who become monks gave their land to the monastery in exchange for the monastery taking them in and looking after them, and others had made over land in exchange for the monks praying for their souls and so on. The Church derived much of its income from the land. Henry needed money, so in 1536 he dissolved/nationalized/took over 376 of the smaller monasteries, and sold their lands to his friends. In 1539, he did the same to the others, another 150. (Map on the next page.) Most of them were reduced to ruins, and builders removed the stones. This was Henry's masterstroke against the Pope - if an Englishman had paid good money for monastic land, there was no way he was going to vote for a Pope who wanted it back. See the pictures on the next page.

Valuables in the monasteries were looted and their precious libraries were often destroyed.

The community suffered by the loss of the charitable services which the monks had provided.



↑ Henry VIII's personal life led to an historic break with the Church of Rome.



1.5 England on Henry's death in 1547 - 'Catholic without the Pope'

The English Reformation consisted, so far, of only two things - the break with Rome and the suppression of the monasteries. It didn't resemble any of the Reformations on the Continent - the Church of England still encouraged confession to a priest and penance, masses, taught transubstantiation, withheld wine from lay people, the clergy could not marry, etc. However, things were about to change; two of the next three in line for the throne, Henry's only son, Edward and his second daughter, Elizabeth, were, with Henry's approval, educated as Protestants. His first daughter, Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, was and remained fiercely Catholic.

1.6 Reforms of King Edward VI (reigned 1547-1553) (Vos, 96)



Edward VI was a sickly boy who died young.

On the death of Henry VIII, his only son, Edward, succeeded him. Edward, in the picture, was a sickly child, aged only nine when he became king, so his Protestant tutors ran the country and rapidly imposed Protestant reform. Images in churches were taken down, services were in English not Latin for the first time, the Lord's Supper replaced the Mass, and clergy were allowed to marry.

1.7 The *Book of Common Prayer* and the 42 (later, 39) *Articles* (Lane, 158-9; Hanks, *Great Christians*. 123-7.)

Anglicanism today has two fundamental documents, the *Book of Common Prayer* and the 39 *Articles*. Both of these were framed and first issued at this time.

Edward's advisors (he himself was too young to initiate change, and he was dead by age 15 – he was king for only six years) issued the first *Book of Common Prayer*, popularly called the *Prayer Book*. It was written in English, not Latin, and it encouraged everyone who could read, to read the Bible, and it involved the congregation to participate in the services. To use any other form of public prayer was a punishable offence, so it was

deliberately phrased so as not to cause unnecessary offence to Catholics. It was therefore only a 'half-Protestant *Prayer Book*', which did not please the more thoroughgoing Reformers. On the other hand, many parishes were hostile to it and some riots occurred.

It was replaced in 1552 by the *Second Prayer Book*, openly Protestant, like the continental Reformed Churches. This *Second Prayer Book* is important because all succeeding *Prayer Books* were essentially the same until the late C20, when, in 1980, an *Alternative Service Book* was introduced. When England planted colonies all over the world, in the imperialism of the C19, Church of England clergy took the *Prayer Book* with them, and taught it as the proper way to run a church. In the words of Bishop J. C. Ryle, 'People were taught that justification was by faith without the deeds of law, and that every heavy-laden sinner on earth had a right to go straight to the Lord Jesus Christ for remission of sins, without waiting for pope or priest, confession or absolution, masses or extreme unction.'

The other innovation was the Church of England's Articles of Faith. The '39 *Articles*' are the principal confession of faith of the Church of England to this day - its doctrinal basis. They began life in 1553, during the reign of Edward VI, when Thomas Cranmer and

Nicholas Ridley (drawings below) drew up *Forty-two Articles*. Ten years later, they were revised, as the *Thirty-nine Articles* of today. (Lane, 155-9, Hanks, *Gt. Christians*, 123-7.)

Until the C19, all Church of England clergy had to sign the *39 Articles*, and anyone applying to study at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the only two universities in England at that time, had to assent to them - so non Church of England people came to Scotland for their tertiary education.

1.8 The Catholic Church re-established under Queen Mary 1 (reigned 1553-58) (Vos, 97)

Mary's persecution of Protestants, for which history remembers her as 'Bloody Mary', was vividly reported by John Foxe in his *Book of Martyrs* in 1563. Its account of the suffering under a Catholic monarch gave English people a longstanding horror of Catholicism.



Mary Tudor, eldest daughter of Henry VIII.

Edward was succeeded by his half-sister, Mary Tudor, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, who, like her Spanish mother, was a fanatical Romanist. Edward's advisors had been pushing Reformation too quickly for most of the population, and Mary restored Catholic worship, masses, images, crucifixes, altars, Protestant bishops were imprisoned, replaced by bishops loyal to Rome. The Pope, and not the sovereign, was once more Head of the Church in England.

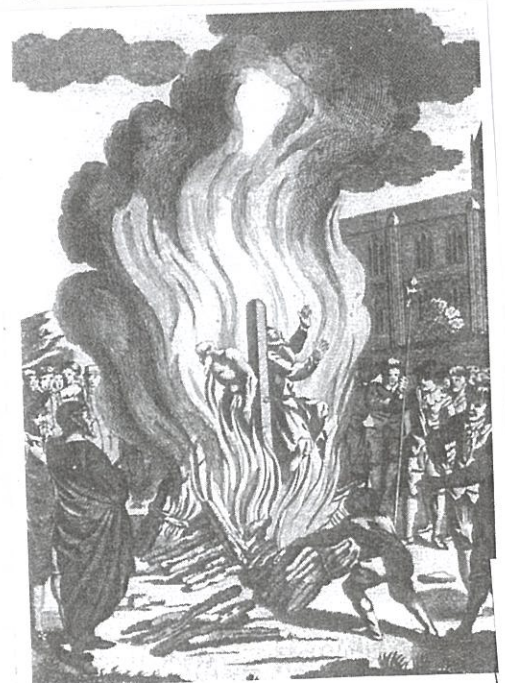
In Mary's five-year reign, nearly 300 Protestant clergymen were killed, - which is why people called her

'Bloody Mary'. Bishops Ridley and Latimer were burnt at the stake at Oxford in October 1555 for denying transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass (see the text below the picture). Just as Edward had been pushing Protestantism too quickly, Mary's reintroduced Catholicism too quickly, and alienated public opinion. She died of cancer in 1558, without children, and Elizabeth, the Protestant daughter of Anne Boleyn, became queen, age twenty-five.

Mary's persecution of Protestants had unexpected, but significant, long-term consequences. Until then, most Protestants in England had looked to Lutheran Germany for ideas. Englishmen who fled for their lives from Mary went mostly to France or Switzerland, where they imbibed 'Reformed' theological ideas. They returned, after Mary's death, as convinced 'Calvinists', determined to impose Reformed theology and politics on the Church of England - which led Queen Elizabeth, who had little sympathy with their theology and who loathed their Presbyterianism polity, to adopt her 'middle way', as described next.

1.9 Queen Elizabeth 1 (reigned 1558-1603)
(Vos, 97-8; Lane, 159-61; Hanks, 123-7)

Persecution ceased. Protestant exiles returned from abroad, but were in for disappointment.



Bishops Latimer and Ridley at the stake. As the fire was being lighted, Latimer said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out."

Elizabeth adopted (what is called) ‘the middle way’ - not just holding Protestants and Catholics in one Church, but accommodating Lutherans, who came from Germany, and Calvinists, who came from Geneva. ‘Good Queen Bess’, as she was known, pleased most of the people most of the time (but not the Puritans, as we will see). Priests could marry, worship was in English, lay people received bread and wine in Communion, (all Protestant practices) but priests could wear Catholic robes if they wished, put up crucifixes, and use words capable of Catholic interpretation; ‘The middle way’ was quite a feat – but under Elizabeth’s strong personal leadership, it worked.

A PROTESTANT RULER

Elizabeth I steered England and Wales away from the Roman Catholic faith that had been restored by her sister. However this direction was not at all popular in Ireland. The English prayer book was restored by the Act of Uniformity in 1559. Elizabeth I was declared the Supreme Governor of the English Church, and public figures had to endorse this appointment under the Act of Supremacy passed in the same year. Elizabeth made her peace with France, but found a potentially dangerous enemy in Catholic Spain.

Elizabeth I was much-loved, and knew how to win public approval. However when she was crossed, she showed a fierce temper.



It had to work, because although Elizabeth loved Catholic ceremony and was drawn to parts of the Catholic faith, in the eyes of the Vatican, she was illegitimate - the Pope didn’t recognize the divorce of her father from Catherine of Aragon. The Roman Church regarded her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, as the legal heir to the English throne, so she had to be hostile to Catholic France and Spain, who wanted to invade and replace her with Mary. That’s what the Spanish armada (painting and map occupy the whole of the next page) was all about – in 1588, 160 Spanish ships with 30,000 marines and sailors set sail to overthrow Elizabeth. If storms hadn’t blown the Armada all round the North Sea, and wrecked the ships, England would have been forced to become Roman Catholic. Elizabeth therefore had to be Protestant, to appoint Protestant bishops, and to call the Church of England Protestant. As a Reformation, however, it was ‘fudged and fumbling’, prompting John Knox to say that Elizabeth was neither a good Protestant nor a good Catholic.

Sincere, Bible-believing Christians, who found this ‘middle way’ unsatisfactory, came to be known as Puritans - they wanted to ‘purify’ the Church of all Catholic elements. We turn now to the Puritans for the remainder of our time.

2. PURITANS (Cairns, 328-35; Lion, 388-94; Vos, 127-8; Olson, 494-509;

Hanks, *70 Great Christians*, 138-143)

2.1 Introduction

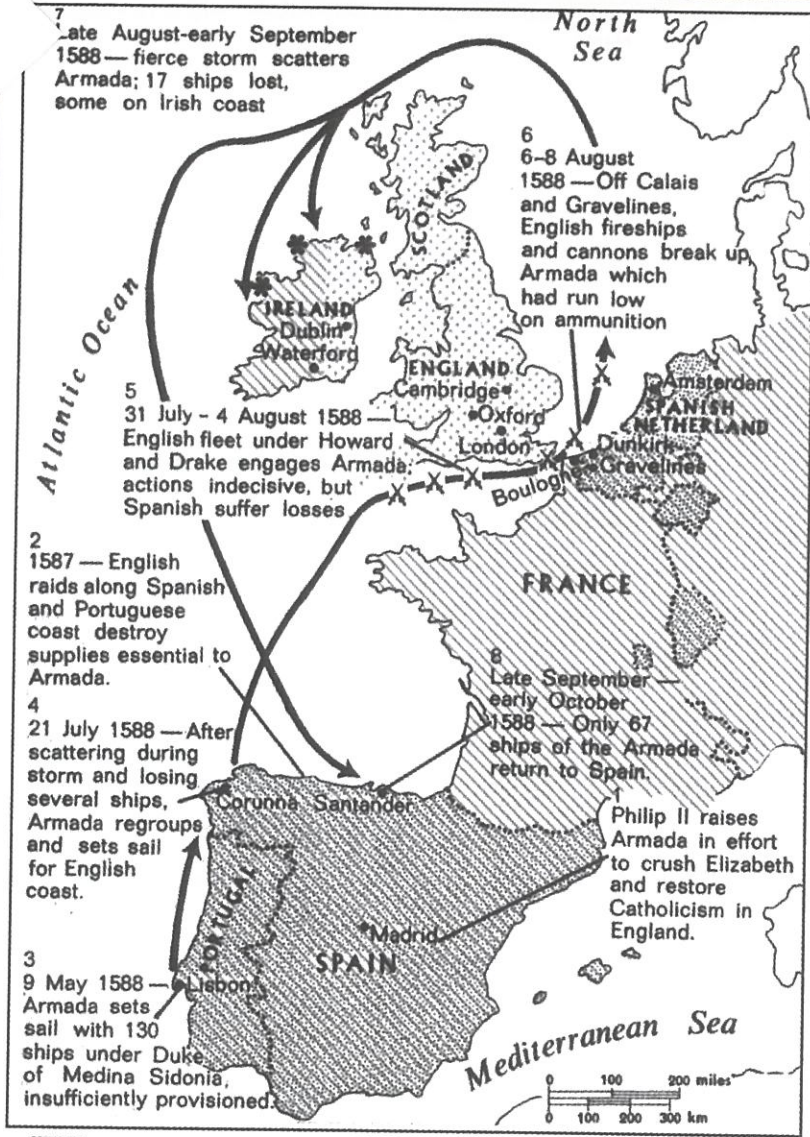
The name Puritan was given in 1564 to various groups who wanted further reform of the Church in England - they wanted to ‘purify’ the Church of elements which they considered to be ‘Roman leftovers’, hence the name ‘Puritan’.¹ They were a major force in British Church life for the next hundred years. There have been Puritans since then - there still are - but for these hundred years they saw themselves as the true Church in England, the covenant people of God, with a divine mission to see both Church and Nation governed by the truths of the Bible. There never was a ‘Puritan Party’ as such; Puritans were diverse groups who opposed Elizabeth’s ‘middle way’. So:

Continued on page 9/

1 By 1564, two parties had developed in the Church of England, (1) those who favoured a rationalistic understanding of Church and State, and (2) those who insisted that further purification of those two bodies was required by Scripture. The first group began to use the term ‘puritan’ as an abusive and derisive epithet for the second group. Their attitude gave rise, for the first time, to some Puritans considering Separation from the Established Church.

Destruction of the Spanish armada, 1588 – picture and map

↓ The smaller, faster English ships defeated the mighty Spanish fleet, or Armada.



-  Spanish territory
-  Roman Catholic
-  Protestant and Anglican
-  Known site of Armada shipwrecks

The word 'Puritan' is used in three different ways:²

(1) Puritans who tried to reform the Church of England by staying inside it and purifying it from within, by abolishing certain ceremonies; some (but not all) also wanted to introduce Presbyterian Church government into the Church of England. We'll see more about them when we come to paragraph 2.3, but distinguish these 'Puritans', who worked within the framework of the Church of England, focusing their energy on preaching and teaching, which they saw as the first priority for the Church, from:

(2) Puritans who despaired of reforming the Church of England from within, so they left it and formed 'purified' Congregational or Baptist or Presbyterian Churches. This 'independency' increased when Oliver Cromwell took over the government of England, as we'll see later, at section 2.7 of the Lecture. It reached its height in 1662, when all Puritans were ejected from the Church of England, as we'll see in section 2.10. From that time on, all non-Anglican Protestants were collectively called 'Non-conformists' or Dissenters'.

and then a third use of the word,

(3) 'Puritan' in the moral sense was, and still is, applied to anyone, irrespective of their church allegiance, who aspires to 'purity' of life. In this sense non-puritans usually use it in a disparaging, disapproving way, like 'Holy Joe'; we'll look at some other illustrations of this in section 4.

Before we consider these three different groups, note that all Puritans had one thing in common -

2.2 The Supremacy of Scripture

All Puritans constantly appealed to Scripture, with the conviction that the Bible, as interpreted by the continental Reformers, was the only source of doctrine, liturgy, church polity and personal religion. Queen Elizabeth went along with the Catholic position, that the Church should base its life equally on tradition as well as on Scripture; she wanted the English church to be broad and inclusive, as it is to this day - it's called 'a broad Church'. The Puritans pressed for further reform 'according to the Word of God'.

Some wanted to purify the Church in England and still keep its Anglican government; others wanted to purify the Church and to introduce Congregational government; others wanted to purify the Church and to introduce Presbyterian government. So, expanding on the first of the three categories we noted a moment ago, let's look in more detail at:

2.2.1 'Puritan' in sense of 'purifying the Church' from within

Protestants who returned to England after living in Europe while 'Bloody Mary' was queen were dissatisfied with the 'middle way' of Elizabeth and wanted a Church along the lines they had seen in Switzerland (especially Geneva). These Puritans worked within the framework of the Church of England, trying to purify it of all ceremonies and customs inherited from the medieval Catholic Church - vestments, crucifixes, etc.

They got no sympathy from Elizabeth, nor from her successor, who was:

² 'Puritan' is not synonymous with 'Reformed'; Continental Calvinists were not Puritans and many English Calvinists were not Puritans in any sense of the word. Conversely, some Puritans were not Calvinists in their theology, notably the poet John Milton, who was Arminian.

2.4 James I (reigned 1603-25) (Vos, 98)

When the childless Queen Elizabeth died in 1603, the next in line to the English throne was King James VI of Scotland; in ‘the union of the Crowns’, he became James I of England. The Puritans in England, who they had 1,000 ministers in their well-organised ranks, met him on his arrival and urged him, as head of the Church of England, to reform the Church, including an end to clerical vestments, making the sign of the Cross, genuflecting (bowing) at the name of Jesus and the use of the word ‘priest’. James, who was a resolute Episcopalian, would have none of it. His only concession was to agree to a new translation of the Bible into English - and even that was in his own interest, because he disliked the popular ‘Geneva Bible’, which had marginal notes, giving a Reformed commentary on the text. He wanted something to replace that and the English-speaking world got the *King James Version* of 1611, the *Authorised Version*. (There is a chart about this on page 18, at the end of these Notes. (Hanks, *Great Events*, 217-24)

Incidentally, the ‘Geneva Bible’, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, introduced verse numbers, which are now universally used - before that, there were only chapter divisions.

James told the Puritans that if they didn’t like the Church of England, they should leave it, and 1,500 Puritan clergymen did - leading to the growth of ‘separatist’ / ‘independent’ churches, Congregational or Baptist - we’ll come to them in a moment.

Some Puritans, both clergy and lay people, so despaired of reform that they emigrated to Massachusetts, America, where they created a purified Church of England. (Will come to them at the end of this Lecture, under ‘Pilgrims’, but note in the meantime that although these Puritans moved to the New World, it was to set up Churches of England there, as as they thought they should be.)

2.5 Charles I (reigned 1625-49)

When James died in 1625, his son Charles I succeeded him, and he quickly alienated two important components of English society - Parliament and the Puritans - leading to civil war. First, Parliament; he had inherited his father’s belief in the ‘divine right of kings’, that monarchs are accountable only to God and not to their subjects. His father, James, had pragmatically realised the advantages of working with Westminster, but Charles ruled for eleven years, 1629-40, without once summoning Parliament. He thus made lasting enemies of all who believed in constitutional government.



King Charles I

Secondly, he and his fiercely anti-Puritan Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud (1573-1645) deliberately set about demonising the Puritans within the Church of England, in order to make it into a ‘High Church’. Furthermore, Charles was Arminian in his theology - remember from lecture 23 how the Arminian movement started in Holland to modify some aspect of Calvinism - whereas the Puritans were all Calvinists. When someone asked Charles the theological question, ‘what do Arminians hold?’, he gave the political answer, ‘all the bishoprics and deaneries in England’. He energetically advanced the High Church movement within Anglicanism - worship had to be according to the *Prayer Book* and no other; his wife was a French Catholic, and he called the communion table the ‘altar’, and encouraged the use of Catholic crucifixes.

The straw that broke restraint against the monarch was Charles' and Laud's attempt to impose the *Book of Common Prayer* on Scotland - Lecture 25. The Scots, rallying under the title 'Covenanters' were so bitterly opposed to this that they invaded England in August 1640 and occupied Newcastle and Durham. Charles, desperate for money to repel them, summoned Parliament. Affronted that Charles had ignored it for eleven years, Parliament cut the king down to size - never again was any king to rule without Parliament - and executed Laud. That done, Parliament split almost equally into Puritans who (as a reaction against Charles' High Church policies and Archbishop Laud) wanted to reform the Church of England's government into some form of Presbyterianism and to do away with the Anglican *Prayer Book*, and the Anglican Establishment, who wanted to keep the traditional Episcopal Church.

Charles cultivated the latter, who responded positively in order to defend historic Anglicanism, while making clear they would not give back the political power which they had taken from him. The Puritan Members of Parliament and the Establishment Members fell out in November 1641 about whether King or Parliament should control the army - the Puritans feared that Charles would use it against them, while the Royalist Members feared that the Puritans would stop at nothing to overthrow the Established Church. The showdown came in January 1642, when Charles burst into the House of Commons with 400 men, to arrest the Puritan leaders who, tipped off, had gone into hiding. London was appalled at this violation of Parliament, and Charles fled. He did not see London again until he was brought back as a prisoner seven years later and executed.

2.6 The English Civil War (1642-45)

The royalist Members of Parliament also left London and set up a rival Parliament in Oxford. When Charles 'raised his standard' at Nottingham in August, England was plunged into Civil War. Most of the south-east of England supported the Puritans, while the north and west of the country supported Charles; this is where we get the words Cavaliers and Roundheads - the Cavaliers were the supporters of the king and the Roundheads were Puritans.

Initially the alliance of the Puritans and the remaining (non-Royalist) Parliamentarians had little success, and they recognised that they needed to reorganise their army, both the infantry and the cavalry, if they were to defeat King Charles' army. They therefore formed the New Model Army in January 1645, led by full-time professional soldiers. By the time it finally defeated Charles' battalions at the Battle of Naseby in June 1645, the dominant leader of the New Model Army was the brilliant cavalryman Oliver Cromwell.

Cromwell was a fervent Puritan layman of the independent type, who recruited religiously motivated soldiers, so the backbone of the



Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)

Under his talented leadership, the Puritans won the military battle in the English Civil War (1642-5); but they lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the English people. When Cromwell died, the people brought back the monarchy, crowning Charles II. ('The Restoration')

New Model Army was Independent and Baptist. Cromwell and his New Model Army became so powerful that at the end of the Civil War a three-pronged struggle for power emerged:

- (1) the defeated but still defiant King Charles, who made Scotland his base for regrouping,
- (2) Parliament, now controlled by Presbyterians who wanted a single Established Church of England, Presbyterian in structure and theology, with no room for dissenters - life imprisonment for all who were baptized as believers.
- (3) Cromwell and his New Model Army. Once Charles had been defeated, Parliament tried to disband the New Model Army, but Cromwell now dominated the political scene. He had no time for the Presbyterian English Parliament, which wanted (as mentioned) a single Established Church of England, Presbyterian in structure and theology. Cromwell and his New Model Army wanted freedom for all Protestants to practice their faith without interference from bishops, Parliament, presbyteries or anyone else.

Charles tried to play Parliament against Cromwell, exasperating both. When Parliament tried to negotiate with Charles, Cromwell marched on London in December 1648 and purged Parliament of all its Presbyterian Members, leaving only 80 MPs who supported Cromwell. They were derisively nicknamed 'the Rump Parliament'. They and the Army arrested King Charles, (illegally) tried him for treason, convicted and publicly executed him in January 1649. They declared England to be a republic, for the first and only time in its history, and called England a 'Commonwealth', with Oliver Cromwell as its head.



King Charles I walks from St. James Palace to his execution at Whitehall on January 30, 1649.

2.7 Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) →

The Royal Household and the Presbyterian (former) Members of Parliament naturally opposed this, but Cromwell dominated the country militarily for the next nine years. In 1653, Cromwell fell out with the Rump Parliament and dissolved it, ruling England (and, later, Scotland, which he subjugated in 1651) as 'Lord Protector'. People had unparalleled freedom to experiment with religion.



The Puritans' avowed aim was now not just to purify the national church, but to run it. They abolished the Episcopal structure of the Church of England, replacing bishops and priests with elders, modelled on Geneva; they banned the *Book of Common Prayer*, replacing it with the *Westminster Directory for Public Worship*; they prohibited the celebration of Anglican and Catholic festivals, including Christmas Day and Easter Day. For the dominant Puritans, 'freedom of religion' did not include freedom to be an Anglican.

2.8 The Westminster Assembly

We'll come in a moment to the consequences of that, but first, we need to step back in time to 1643 and take note of The Westminster Assembly, whose writings reflected C17 British Calvinism, which differed in a number of ways from the teaching of Calvin. (It is outside the scope of this Lecture to explore that.) The Presbyterian Reformers' intention was that the Westminster Assembly would lay the foundation for a 'Presbyterian Church of England', but their hope of that came to nothing because Cromwell dissolved the Parliament which was going to legislate for it.

The Westminster Assembly's greatest and most lasting achievement was *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. That is our Topic, but before we invite the student to present it, a word of background.

When the Puritans in England took over the English Parliament and drove King Charles out of London, they immediately set up a national assembly of Puritan theologians to meet at Westminster Abbey in London, and so it was called The Westminster Assembly. 121 Puritan clergy, 30 lay people and 6 Scots were given the mandate, 'To bring the Church of England into a nearer conformity with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad.' In other words, they were to lay the foundation for a Reformed Church of England, modelled on the Presbyterian Church in Scotland.

The Assembly held 1163 daily sessions between 1643 and 1649, meeting for 9.5 hours a day, Monday to Friday. As well as the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, it produced the *Larger and Shorter Westminster Catechisms*, approved the metrical Psalms for public worship, and much more. The English and the Scots Parliaments both accepted this, and so the State Church of England was Calvinist Presbyterian from 1648 to 1658 - ten years.

Although Charles II rejected the *Confession* and the *Catechisms* when he was restored as head of the Church of England in 1660 (section 2.10, below), and replaced them with the *Thirty-nine Articles*, they became (and remain) the semi-official doctrinal statements for all English-speaking Reformed churches, including Presbyterians and many Puritans.

Perhaps the best known words from The Westminster Assembly are the opening question and answer in the *Shorter Catechism*:

Question 1: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

Dwight L. Moody (Lecture 30 and Topic 30) was addressing a children's meeting during his crusade in Edinburgh in 1873; rhetorically, he asked the question: 'What is prayer?' Not knowing (as an American) that generations of Scottish children had been schooled in the *Shorter Catechism*, he was astounded when hundreds of young voices responded in unison: 'Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.'

So we'll look, for our Topic, at the significance of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*; it was taken at this point in the Lecture; here, it is printed at the end of the Notes for this Lecture.

2.9 A battle for the soul of England

Just before the Topic, we saw that after the Puritans, led by Oliver Cromwell, won the English Civil War (1642-51), they set up a republic called the Commonwealth. Under it, there was in theory freedom of religion but in practice a different type of battle raged, between two rival (incompatible) forms of English-speaking Protestantism - Puritan and Anglican. The Puritans were determined to impose Puritan morality on everyone. They closed all the theatres, as unwholesome influences, made adultery a capital crime, and imposed heavy fines on anyone swearing, drunk or painting their faces. They believed that the Christian Sunday should be modelled on the Old Testament Sabbath, and should be rigorously kept as a day of rest for worship, with neither work nor recreation. (Others, who were not Puritans, also held this but it was a badge of Puritan sympathisers.) They stopped all games and sports on the Lord's Day and, probably the last straw, they banned plum pudding on Christmas Day.



NO MORE FUN

Many of Cromwell's supporters were Puritans. The only joy that they could accept was through religious worship. Dancing and theatre were banned. Meat or ale could

▲ Playing cards were believed to be the work of the Devil.

not be consumed on a Sunday, and even Christmas Day was no longer to be celebrated with plum puddings and merry-making.

When Oliver Cromwell died in 1658, there was no able successor. Many English people were tired the strict way of life of the Puritans and, faced with the choice of more Puritanism or a return to monarchy, they brought back Charles II, who was exiled in Holland, and crowned him in 1660 ('The Restoration'). A new House of Commons was overwhelmingly Anglican, with hardly a Presbyterian Member. The Puritans had won the military battle, but they had lost the battle for the hearts and minds of the people.

2.10 Charles II. (reigned 1660-1685).

The Royalist (Anglican) Parliament not only restored bishops, that is re-imposed Episcopacy on England, with the monarch as supreme governor, and brought back the *Prayer Book*, but it enacted a series of punitive laws against the ten percent of the population who were not Anglicans, now known collectively as the Clarendon Code, the name of Charles' chief minister. Charles himself was more tolerant, but the Anglican Parliament was in no mood to be generous to Presbyterians and Baptists and Independents, who had killed their king and outlawed their worship for a generation. About 2,000 ministers of the Church of England left - about one-fifth of the ordained ministry. Parliament went on to decree, in 1661, that no one other than Church of England communicants could hold public office - magistrates, university tutors, etc. In 1664, any non-Anglican gathering for religious purposes of five or more people not in the same household was declared illegal. In 1665, no nonconformist minister could live, or visit, within five miles of any place he had previously worked. What had started off as a reform movement within the Church of England was now labelled 'non-conformity' and those who left the Church of England were called Separatists - we'll look at them next.

(Hanks, *Great Events*, 225-233, traces the roots of 'Separatism' from 1534 to 1689.)

3. 'PURITAN' in the sense of 'separating from the Church of England'

(Hanks, *Great Christians*, 138-40)

3.1 Introduction

Going back in time to 1581, under Queen Elizabeth, some Puritans in Norwich, under the leadership of Robert Browne (1550-1633), despaired, after two decades of trying, of reforming the Church of England from within, so they left and formed a 'Separatist' church, independent of the national Church. Many similar groups sprang up across the country - this is not the place to go into detail, but the number of known martyrdoms demonstrates how widely 'Separatist' movements spread. They took their name from 2 *Corinthians* 6:17, where Paul spoke of the need to 'come out ... and be separate'.

The fundamental difference was that these churches were not made up of everyone living in a locality - the parish system of the Church of England - but of people 'gathered' together from within or even across parish boundaries. They were run according to what later generations called 'Congregational' principles. The 'Establishment' retaliated by banishing such people from England and executing them if they returned. Some - 5.2 below - emigrated to the sympathetic Dutch Republic and settled in Amsterdam. Anglicans, who had endured 'dark nights' under the Puritans, made sure that Separatists suffered even 'darker nights' once they were back in control of religion in England.

They were the first of many Separatists; we saw, earlier, how 1,500 Puritans left the Established Church when James I came to the throne in 1603, and another 2,000 when Charles II introduced the Clarendon Code in 1662. By this time, the preferred form of church government by those who 'separated' was sometimes presbyterian, sometimes baptist, as well as the original 'congregational' model, but all were outside the National Church. This Lecture is not the place to pursue that, but we will look, in the next Lecture, 25, at the difference between these various forms of church government.

3.2 Puritan writers

Although the Clarendon Code was the death-knell for the Puritan ideal of a Reformed national church, Puritans who 'Separated' from the Church of England wrote some of their finest literature after 1662. The best known are:

John Bunyan (1628-88) (Hanks, *70 Great Christians*, 147-52; Lane, 167-8)

John Owen (1616-1683), 'The Prince of Puritans' (Lane, 164-6)

Richard Baxter (1615-1691) (Hanks, *70 Great Christians*, 143-7)

Jonathan Edwards in New England (Lane, 149-50)

John Bunyan (picture and some details on the next page) wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*, and others, while in prison for refusing to conform to the Clarendon Code.

John Owen's written works run to 24 volumes and represent our best resource for Puritan theology in the English language.

Richard Baxter was another prolific writer and his works consist of practical application of the gospel to every aspect of life.

We will come in Lecture 29 to Jonathon Edward in New England, America, the greatest Puritan preacher and thinker of all.

In recent years there has been a rediscovery of Puritan literary heritage, republished by the Banner of Truth in Britain, and by *Soli Deo Gloria* in America.



John Bunyan, a Puritan writer and preacher, is best-known for his book *Pilgrim's Progress*. He was imprisoned intermittently from 1660 to 1672 for refusing to conform to the Clarendon Code, and he wrote his masterpiece in jail. He was a Puritan (in the moral sense), but theologically he held a Calvinistic view of grace, and denominationally he was a Separatist, as he was a Baptist.

4. 'PURITAN' AS A WAY OF LIFE

A third meaning of the word 'Puritan' was, and still is, used for anyone, of whatever denomination, whose life emphasises Christian sanctification, household prayers, strict morality and a disciplined life-style, particularly a morally pure lifestyle - back to our definition of Puritan - to 'purify'. They were influential, especially in North America, where many went for freedom. The world often pours scorn on such people, as three quotations from unsympathetic critics illustrate:

Gilbert K. Chesterton, an English journalist of 100 years ago, 'A puritan is a person who pours righteous indignation into the wrong things.'

Kenneth Hare, an English scientist, 'The puritan through life's sweet garden goes, to pluck the thorn and cast away the rose.'

Thomas B. Macaulay, a C19 British politician, wrote sarcastically that: 'The puritan hated the popular 'sport' of bear baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.'

That's unfair, but that's the response of the world to goodness - to mock it.

5. PILGRIMS

(Hanks, Great Christians, 158-161)

5.1 Introduction

Two separate groups spearheaded emigration to America for religious reasons - there were others who went for commercial reasons. One group - the best known today - were called 'Pilgrims' ('The Pilgrim Fathers')³. They were English Separatists who founded the Plymouth Colony in New England in 1620.

³ The Mayflower's passengers were later described as Pilgrim Fathers in 1799.

Independently of them, some other Puritans, who had remained within the Church of England, working for reform, also sailed for New England in the late 1620's, and established the Boston Colony at Massachusetts Bay. We'll have a look at both groups: first,

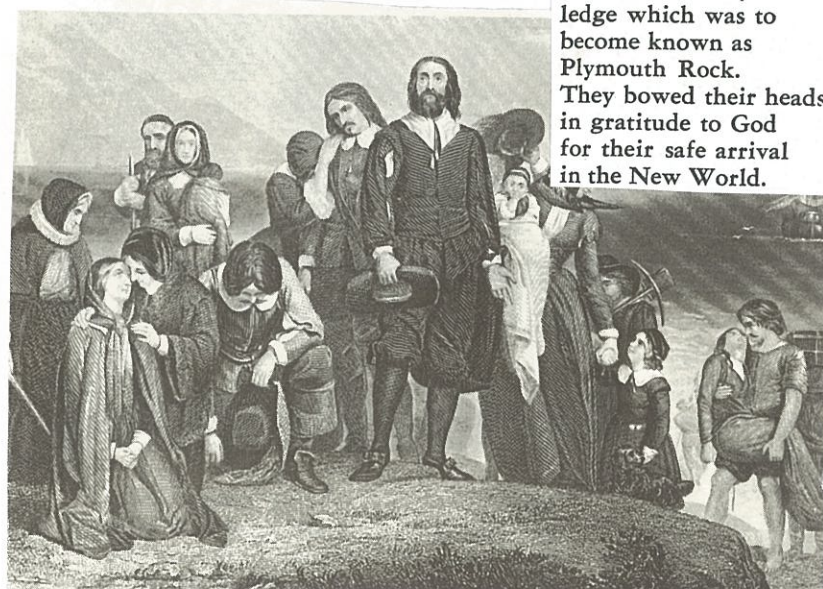
5.2 The Plymouth Colony in New England

The background is that from 1593, an English Act of Parliament (Conventicle Act) provided that anyone over the age of sixteen who refused to attend the Church of England or who attended a separate church for three months, was banished from the country; if they returned, they were hanged. This caused many Separatists to emigrate to Holland, where there was freedom of religion. In 1608, members of an Independent church at Scrooby in Nottinghamshire, who were being harassed by the English authorities, emigrated to Holland. Nine years later, discouraged by economic difficulties, and concerned that their children were growing up as Dutch, half of them voted to emigrate to America. At Plymouth, in south-west England, they joined another group of Separatists, and in 1620 the 180-ton *Mayflower* made its historic voyage to New England with 102 passengers.



On December 21, 1620, the Pilgrims came ashore on a rocky ledge which was to become known as Plymouth Rock. They bowed their heads in gratitude to God for their safe arrival in the New World.

After a 65-day journey, the Pilgrims landed on Cape Cod Bay, and settled at a place they called Plymouth. After severe initial hardships, the colony prospered. After they reaped their first harvest, in 1621, they held a service of thanksgiving to God and had a meal that included wild turkey - commemorated by Americans to this day on the fourth Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day.

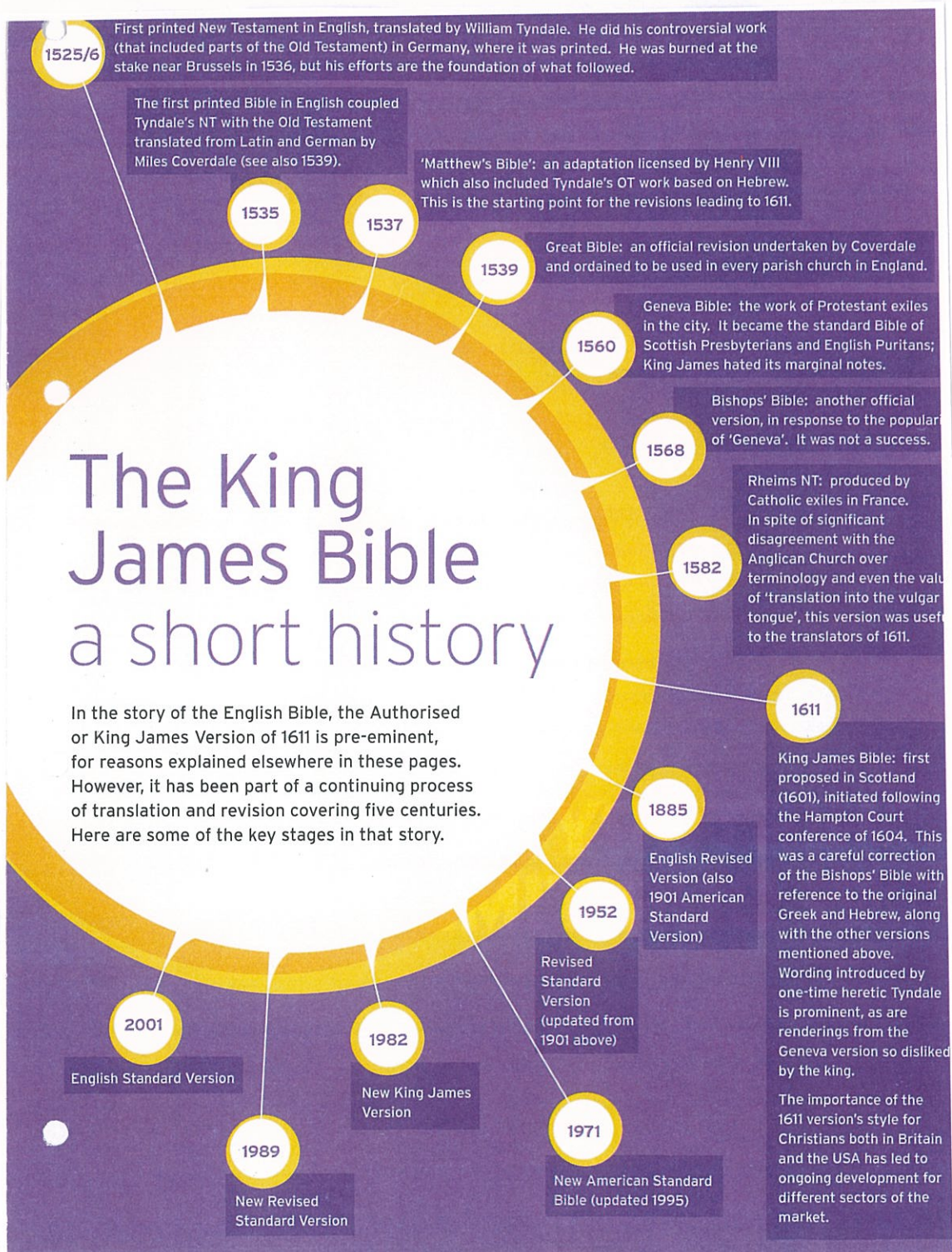


5.3 The Boston Colony at Massachusetts Bay

After 1630, many of the Puritans who were still in the Church of England sailed to the Boston Colony - see the map on the previous page - where they sought to create a purified Church of England as an example to the homeland.

These two colonies (Plymouth and Boston) were distinct political and religious entities until the late 1680's. So the word 'Pilgrim' is not interchangeable with the word 'Puritan'. Many Puritans remained in England, some in and some not in the Church of England. Only those who left the Church of England and then emigrated to America are called Pilgrims.

Appendix to page 10, section 2.4



OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

TOPIC FOR LECTURE 24 - *THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH*

In lecture 24 we will be looking, among other people, at the Puritans. One of their enduring legacies is a Confession of Faith known as the *Westminster Confession*. It is still 'standard' for Presbyterian churches world-wide.

The lecture will cover the political background - the tension between England's King Charles I and an increasingly Puritan Parliament.

Please tell us how the *Westminster Confession of Faith* was drawn up over the years 1643 to 1648, who were involved and what was decided, and something of its impact on the Church ever since.

The Course textbooks mention the *Westminster Confession* only briefly, Cairns, at page 334 and Olson only in passing - hardly worth looking them up - at pages 448, 497, 534, 558 and 595. Lane is good at 162-4.

There is a photograph, overleaf, of a painting about a meeting of the Westminster Assembly.

The contents of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:

Chapters:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Holy Scripture | 2. God, and the Holy Trinity |
| 3. God's Eternal Decree | 4. Creation |
| 5. Providence | 6. The Fall, Man, Sin, and Punishment thereof |
| 7. God's Covenant with Man | 8. Christ the Mediator |
| 9. Free Will | 10. Effectual Calling |
| 11. Justification | 12. Adoption |
| 13. Sanctification | 14. Saving Faith |
| 15. Repentance Unto Life | 16. Good Works |
| 17. Perseverance of the Saints | 18. Assurance, Grace and Salvation |
| 19. The Law of God | 20. Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience |
| 21. Religious Worship and the Sabbath-day | |
| 22. Lawful Oaths and Vows | 23. The Civil Magistrate |
| 24. Marriage and Divorce | 25. The Church |
| 26. the Communion 1. the Saints | 27. The Sacraments |
| 28. Baptism | 29. The Lord's Supper |
| 30. Church Censures | 31. Synods and Councils |
| 32. The State of Man After Death, and the Resurrection of the Dead | |
| 33. The Last Judgment | |

A meeting of the Westminster
Assembly. From a 19th-century
painting by J. R. Herbert R.A.

