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From Reform to Reason (1550 to 1650)



Church History - Steve Gregg

In "From Reform to Reason (1550 to 1650)," Steve Gregg discusses the transition from the Reformation to the rise of the Puritans and Separatists in the British Isles. He notes significant events during this period, including the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 and the Thirty Years' War, which was initially a religious war between Calvinists and Catholics. The rise of the Puritans and Separatists, who sought to restructure the governmental organization of the Church of England, also played a significant role in this period.

Transcript

Having spent as long as we have in a study of the Reformation period, I wasn't exactly sure how to transition out of that period. It seems as though we could go week after week after week and talk about what was going on in different countries with different interesting leaders and fringe movements related to the Reformation. Some of these, to my mind, are very inspiring.

But I wasn't really sure where to go from there. Partly because it simply isn't possible to look at every country at every period and say everything that happened. And yet we have to condense the rest of Church history into a few sessions.

And it became clear to me that although there were some things of importance happening in continental Europe following the Reformation, many things fell into more or less a stasis. I'm not saying nothing changed or nothing happened, but nothing worth writing home about happened over a somewhat long period of time in the continent of Europe. Although exciting and important things were happening in the British Isles.

And in this lecture we are going to talk about the period from 1550 to 1650 approximately. Those dates are chosen almost, with a little bit of arbitrariness, in order to make that an even century, from 1550 to 1650. But they're not entirely arbitrary.

The period is really the gap between the time of the Reformation and the time that is usually referred to as the Age of Reason, which began in the mid-17th century. And so there was a time of great and noteworthy activity in all of Europe during the Reformation period. And other important things were happening in Europe during the Age of Reason.

Between those two periods though, there was approximately a century during which mostly the things of importance worth noting were happening in the British Isles. And that is what much of our focus will be. This lecture will be looking at the period from the Age of Reform to the Age of Reason, as it is sometimes called.

From 1550 approximately to 1650. Now on the continent, the main thing of note during that period of time seems to have been religious wars. These religious wars actually had their beginnings during the Reformation time and continued afterwards.

We have already studied some of this. In Germany, because of Luther's influence and because of a division among the German people as to whether Luther's ideas or the Pope's ideas should be normative and followed, and because many priests in Germany were converting to Lutheranism, there was tremendous strife. Once Luther was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church, of course that meant that those that followed his views were regarded as heretics.

And yet his views were spreading like wildfire, so that although branded as heresy, they were very influential still. And eventually, there were a number of wars that broke out in various provinces between Catholic forces and Lutheran forces, the Catholics trying to suppress the spread of Lutheranism, and of course Lutheranism trying to spread its influence further. Finally, at what was called the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, a decision was made officially that the prince of a given province would determine the religious convictions of everyone in his domain.

So that Germany had many provinces and many princes, but if a prince happened to embrace Lutheranism, then that would be the official religion of his province. And if he happened to be a Roman Catholic, that would be the official religion of his province. And everyone within the province was required to observe the religion of the prince.

So although this was a compromise of sorts, it was nothing like religious toleration, because there was no plurality or pluralism, I should say, within a province. If you were a Protestant and your prince happened to be a Catholic, then you had to either become a Catholic or you had to move to a province that had a Protestant prince. And that was how things resolved themselves in Germany at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555.

In France, we have studied this in an earlier lecture, the Huguenots, which were the French Calvinists, actually fought a number of armed conflicts, I think eight in all, between the Catholic forces in France. Eventually, the Huguenots, though defeated or nearly defeated, were granted toleration when one of their own, Henry, became the king of France. He had to convert to Roman Catholicism to take the throne, although he had been a leader of the Huguenots before that.

And in converting to Catholicism, of course, the Huguenots saw him as one who had been a traitor to them. But from his role as king of France, he was able to issue an edict,

the Edict of Nantes. Actually, I don't speak French, so I'm probably not pronouncing that correctly.

But in 1598, the Edict of Nantes or Nantes granted toleration to the Huguenots, although France remained an officially Catholic country. And therefore, the strife between the Catholics and the Protestants ended in France for the time being. Much later, almost a century later, Louis XIV, later king of France, revoked the Edict of Nantes and persecution of Huguenots was resumed.

And many Huguenots, thousands of them, fled. Some of them converted to Catholicism for convenience. Many of them fled to the continent for safety.

But France wiped out essentially the presence or the influence of the Huguenots during that time. At a much later date, Huguenot churches were granted toleration in France. And I believe there are still Huguenot or at least Calvinist churches in France, although the country is still very largely Roman Catholic.

In Holland, we have seen that there were wars. There was especially the Dutch War of Independence. The northern provinces of Holland favored Calvinism.

The southern provinces of Holland were still fairly loyal to the Roman Catholic Church. These two groups of provinces fought a bloody civil war for about 18 years altogether. At the end of which, Holland was partitioned.

The southern provinces became what is now called Belgium and remained Roman Catholic under the rule of the king of Spain. The northern provinces became modern Netherlands, modern Holland, and are officially Calvinistic. And so these early wars, we've actually talked about these in previous lectures about these different countries, but those were simply the beginning of religious wars.

What followed was what has been called the Thirty Years' War, which was essentially, at least initially, a religious war. By the time the thirty years had elapsed, the war had become more political than religious, but it definitely started on religious grounds between Catholics and Protestants. It is called the Thirty Years' War for a very predictable reason.

It lasted almost exactly thirty years. It began in 1618 and it came to an end basically when everyone got worn out and tired of it in 1648, just thirty years later. As I said, the war began primarily as a religious war, though it had political overtones.

By the end of the thirty years, it was largely a political war with religious overtones. But the violence began essentially when certain nobles in Bohemia or Germany in 1618 reacted to violence. Roman Catholics began to show some violence toward these nobles.

And the nobles appealed to King Ferdinand II for protection of their religious liberties

there, but he did not respond favorably to them. And as a result of that, these nobles revolted and started what became the Thirty Years' War. Originally, this war was between Calvinists and Catholics.

Now, this was in Germany. Now, the Peace of Augsburg allowed provinces to either be Lutheran or Catholic, but Calvinism was yet another branch of the Reformation. Luther and Calvin had different ideas about many things, and the Calvinists predominated largely in Switzerland and France and Netherlands.

But in Germany, the recognized Protestants were Lutheran. And at the Peace of Augsburg, Lutheranism and Catholicism were both recognized as official religions, and a prince could be one of those two and his subjects legally of those two, but Calvinism was not recognized. Even to this day, though it's considerably less so in Germany, Catholicism and Lutheranism are still considered to be basically the legitimate religions.

Although, of course, all denominations seem to be tolerated in Germany today. In Germany, if you're Pentecostal or Baptist or Methodist, many Germans just view that as belonging to a cult, because Lutheranism and Catholicism to this day are considered to be the respectable religions of Germany. But it started with these nobles who were Calvinists, and they didn't really have any legal standing in Germany at all as Calvinists, because they were neither Lutheran nor Catholic.

And the Bohemian nobles who had become Calvinists declared the King Ferdinand deposed. They just declared their king not king anymore. He was a Catholic.

And they offered the crown to a Calvinist ruler of one of the major German states, and he accepted it. And so there was now a Calvinist man who had accepted the crown of Bohemia, and that is the event that occasioned all-out war between the Catholics and the Calvinists all over Germany. German Lutherans eventually sided with the German Calvinists, of course, because they had a mutual enemy in the Roman Catholics.

And people from Denmark and Sweden and France also became involved in Germany's conflict, and this fighting continued for about 30 years until the Peace of Westphalia, which was hammered out between the belligerent parties from 1643 to 1648, a period of about five or six years. And when they reached terms of agreement over which they were willing to stop fighting, that was the end of religious wars in Europe, which had been pretty dominant from the time of the beginning of the Reformation until this time in 1648. After the war, after the Thirty Years' War, Germany was really in bad shape.

It was left devastated economically because a war had just been continued from decade after decade, using up resources physically. It was very much demolished. Many of the provinces, all except one, were really just in shambles because of the sustained period of war.

Politically and culturally, it was devastated. The ironic thing about it is that the agreement that was reached that brought an end to the Thirty Years' War actually just returned things to the way they were before the Peace of Augsburg. Back in 1529, a condition had existed at the time of the Diet of Speyer, and basically Germany was apportioned between different religious camps, and that condition largely exists today in Germany.

So what was accomplished after a 30-year bloodbath was really going back to square one, is basically how it ended up. And that is probably the most significant thing worth studying or talking about that happened on the continent of Europe during this general period. It was just a long period of sustained war.

However, in Great Britain, there were some things that should interest us going on during the period. During the period from 1567 till about 1660, which roughly corresponds with the period we're talking about, there was the rise of a movement in England called Puritanism, and this movement eventually became dominant in England, and many of the settlers that came from England to America in that period of time were also of this movement, the Puritan movement. Unfortunately, the Puritans have been somewhat demonized in literature, and the word Puritan in the minds of many people is almost a bad word, suggesting hypocrisy and a holier-than-thou attitude and sternness and joylessness of religious sentiments and so forth.

I don't know whether it was the book *The Scarlet Letter* or other literature of this type that first kind of gave Puritans this bad name, but I personally do not believe that in general the Puritans deserve a bad name. Now, there were some blots on Puritan history, especially the cruelty of Oliver Cromwell toward the Irish Catholics in his wars with them. He was a Puritan leader in England at a certain point, and he didn't do everything in a Christian manner, and so the Puritans were not lily-white.

However, many Puritans were extremely godly people, and I would dare say that the majority of Puritan preachers were very sincere and godly and had a very high standard that they raised and maintained. To this day, some of my very favorite writers are the older Puritan writers. They are very edifying to read, although I'm not a Calvinist, and they were staunchly Calvinist.

You can sometimes see past that element in their writings and see truly edifying things there. Let me talk about the Puritans a little bit here, because the rise of the Puritans and the Separatists was probably the most significant thing spiritually happening in England during the period of time we're considering. Under Mary, Bloody Mary, England had been brought back into the Catholic fold.

You might recall that Henry VIII had separated from the Pope, and he declared himself, and had Parliament declare him, the Supreme Head of the Church, and that was the birth of the Anglican Church, which was said to be neither fully Protestant nor fully Catholic,

but it was fully broken, free from the Pope. In fact, it had very little difference from the Catholic Church in it. Its theology and liturgy was still very much Roman Catholic.

The only difference is that instead of the Pope, the Church had the King of England as its head. Other than that, it was in almost all respects still Roman Catholic, but that didn't please the Pope. The fact that the Anglican Church still was loyal to Catholic doctrine and liturgy was not sufficient to please the Pope since the Church had broken free and declared its independence from his leadership.

And so after Henry had died, and we have the reign of Mary, one of his daughters, you will recall from our teaching on this a previous time, she brought England back under the Catholic Church. Her reign was not very long, but it was a bloody one. She killed quite a few Protestants during that period of time.

And then upon her death, she was succeeded by her half-sister, Elizabeth I. Now Elizabeth I had Catholic leanings, but because she was declared an illegitimate child of Henry VIII by the Roman Catholic Church, she was strongly motivated to not side with the Roman Catholic Church. And there were Catholic and Protestant elements in England at this time, and she finally threw in her lot with the Protestants, and Catholicism was basically deposed from prominence in England during Elizabeth's time, and England returned to Protestantism at that time. So much so that the Pope and the Jesuits actually made several attempts against her life and tried to depose her and replace her with a Catholic monarch, which they did not succeed in doing.

But though England became officially Protestant, or Anglican, under Elizabeth, there were many Englishmen who believed that the Church of England still needed to be further purified of the residual trappings of Roman Catholicism, of which there were many. These people came to be nicknamed the Puritans. In 1668, this seems to be the year that they first were called by this name.

And they were vocally opposed to many of the Popish practices in the liturgy, the priests' Popish vestments. They opposed the observance of the saints' days. They were against the doctrine of clerical absolution, meaning that the priests had the power to absolve you of sin, to forgive sins.

They didn't believe that. That was a very Roman Catholic idea that remained in the Anglican Church. They were opposed to the use of the sign of the cross when praying, still a very Catholic practice that was found in Anglicanism.

They opposed kneeling in communion, even though the Eucharist or the communion did not have its Catholic interpretation in England. In other words, they were not practicing a belief in transubstantiation. The Puritans felt that by assuming a kneeling posture while taking communion, this encouraged too much of a veneration of the elements of the communion meal, that kneeling was a lot like bowing down to the elements and had lots

of the overtones of the Catholic worship of the host, because the Catholics, of course, believed it became the body of Jesus.

The Anglicans did not teach this, but they still kneeled while doing it, and the Puritans felt this kneeling should be done away with. They also were very strongly concerned about what they considered laxity of the keeping of the Sabbath, which they regarded to be Sunday. Apparently, although England was a religious nation, Sunday was not treated as a holy day by the general populace, and the Puritans felt that it should be because they regarded the Sunday as the Sabbath, and they felt that they should keep the Sabbath holy.

These are the objections that the Puritans first were noted for, at least prior to the year 1670. In later years, they extended their concern not only to liturgical things, but also to daily practices. They began to become outspokenly opposed to vanity of dress, because many of the British lords and ladies dressed in a very immodest and flamboyant way, and the Puritans advocated much more simplicity in dress and much less vanity in that area.

Also, the Puritans began to complain that the people who were professing Christians in England did not really have much conviction of sin, that they practiced sin in their daily lives and did not seem to have any conviction about it, so they began to preach very strongly against sin. All in all, I would say the influence of the Puritans was positive. I can't really think of anything about the rise of the movement that I can think negative to say about it, although had I been there and known some of the people, I might have, I don't know, I might have disliked some of them, but I don't know of any of them that I would have disliked.

As I said, I read a lot of Puritan books now, and there are some just classics, some wonderful classic Puritan writings. Richard Baxter's book, *The Reformed Pastor*, is a classic work for ministers, and anyone who would love to minister in pastoral ministry at all would be extremely convicted by reading of the very high standard that he set for Reformed pastors in his book, *The Reformed Pastor*. That's Richard Baxter.

William Gurnall, who wrote *The Christian in Complete Armor*, the only book of his that has survived, but it's only about 1,300 pages long, a wonderful classic. It's a thick volume, as you could guess from the number of pages I mentioned, that is an exposition of a few verses in Ephesians 6, the few verses where Paul talks about taking the whole armor of God. And William Gurnall, in classic Puritan manner, dissects that thing a thousand different ways, and every one of them edifying.

One of the things I have marveled at in reading Puritan writings is they were, generally speaking, able to illustrate a biblical principle a thousand ways, always using illustrations from Scripture itself, from the stories of the Old Testament or whatever. They were just thoroughly saturated with Scripture. And some of my favorite writings of the Puritans are

those of Thomas Watson and Jeremiah Burroughs, and there are many other wonderful Puritan writers.

There is a resurgence, by the way, in our time of interest in the Puritan writers, so that a particular publisher called Banner of Truth Trust has issued a series of books called Puritan Paperbacks, and they have actually taken some of the better works of the Puritans that are still available and reissued them in inexpensive paperback books. And there's a hope that this may make them more accessible and popular to a more general readership. Frankly, I think the reissuing of these Puritan books in modern times has contributed greatly to the current revival of Calvinism in the modern evangelical church, which revival of Calvinism I'm not all that excited about.

But anyone who's an observer of the evangelical scene has observed that Calvinism is making a mighty resurgence, and there are many militant Calvinists, not militant in the sense that they'd take the sword and make a Calvinist out of you, but they're definitely strongly motivated to turn every Christian into a Calvinist. I encounter these people on a regular basis. Good people, apart from that.

But I have a feeling that the resurgence of interest in the Puritan writers is very possibly what is at the root of this resurgence of interest in Calvinism because the Puritan writers were very much Calvinist, some of them like John Owen. The first books that John Owen wrote were anti-Arminian books. He wrote, John Owen is a very important Calvinist writer, Puritan writer.

The first book he ever published as a young minister was called *The Death of Death and the Death of Christ*, which is a sustained support for the limited atonement doctrine of Calvinism. And his second book, or maybe I've got them in reverse, I think another book he wrote was called, if I'm not mistaken, *A Display of Arminianism*, which was a sustained defense of Calvinism against Arminianism. Suffice it to say, John Owen is not one of my favorite Calvinist Puritan writers, but there are some Puritan writers that I could recommend above almost any modern writer for just plain edification.

And you can hardly saturate yourself in the writings of these men without being thoroughly uplifted spiritually. I highly recommend their books with that one caveat, that they do push pretty heavily on the Calvinist side. All in all, I certainly believe that the influence of the Puritans was positive in the English church.

Among the things that the Calvinists, or the Puritans, I should say, were very into was a restructuring of the governmental organization of the Church of England. The Church of England was an Episcopal church. In fact, in this country, the Anglican Church is called the Episcopal denomination.

The word Episcopal comes from the Greek word *episkopos*, which means a bishop. And in the Church of England, the church was governed by bishops who were really

appointed by the king. And therefore, they were as much political as spiritual men.

And some of them were more political than spiritual. But the Church of England was governed by these bishops. Now, the Puritans wanted to throw out the episcopate, the episcopal form of church government.

And some of them wanted to replace it with a Presbyterian form, and some wished to replace it with a congregational form. To this day, all churches have one of these three forms of government, episcopal, Presbyterian, or congregational. We've talked about these before.

The episcopal form of government is government of the church by bishops. The Presbyterian form of government is the government of the congregation by a body of elders, or presbyteroi. Presbyteros, the singular, means elder.

Presbyteroi is the plural elders. And Presbyterianism comes from the word eldership, or elders. So the rule of a congregation by local elders was the Presbyterian form of government.

And then the congregational form of government is a form that is essentially a democratic form of church government, where a congregation elects a leader, a pastor, to guide them. But it's strictly a democratic kind of government by the people, for the people kind of a thing in the congregational form. Now, some of the Puritans advocated a Presbyterian form of church government for the Church of England, and others advocated congregational form.

I'm not aware that there was very much hostility between these two camps. I think Puritans tended to embrace other Puritans, even if they differed on this particular point. But they did have slight differences of opinion on which form of church government would be desirable.

Cambridge University became the center of Puritan influence in England. And many of the Puritan writers and leaders were either trained at Cambridge, or they were professors of theology at Cambridge. And to this day, while Oxford University in England is a bastion of the English Catholicism, the old order, the high church Anglicanism, Oxford, Cambridge to this day is still low church Puritan in its orientation.

So these are two forms, two different philosophies, really, of religion in England, and two different universities that are the centers of these opinions, really. Support for the Puritan cause increased in England in the late 16th century. And especially among lawyers and merchants and some of the landowners, the rural landowners, the country gentry.

And the movement gained a lot of support, in other words, among the educated and the landed classes. One of the leaders of the Puritans in England was a man named Thomas

Cartwright, who lived from 1535 to 1603. He was a professor of theology at Cambridge University.

He favored a Presbyterian state church. He opposed political bishops. His views were enunciated in 1570 when he was lecturing at Cambridge through the Book of Acts.

And there he proposed that the churches should be governed by a presbytery of bishops or elders. Now, see, here, from teaching through the Book of Acts, and probably the related material in the pastoral epistles, he recognized something that the institutional church has largely missed, and that is that bishops and elders are interchangeable terms. Through most of church history from the second century on, the term bishop assumed a different meaning than elders, and it became a different office in the church.

But clearly in the New Testament, bishops and elders were the same men. They were just interchangeable titles for them. The word bishop meaning overseer.

The word elder meaning older person. And there's no question, if you compare all the scriptures that use these terms, that they are used interchangeably, by Paul especially. So Thomas Cartwright rediscovered this fact as he was studying and lecturing through Acts, and he believed that every church should have a body of elders or bishops who are elected by each congregation, and he wanted these elders and bishops to have only spiritual functions.

In other words, they were not connected to political activities of the state. Now, he was not advocating a separation of church and state. There was a group that arose that did advocate separation of churches and said they were called separatists, and they were also Puritans, but the early Puritans were not separatists.

They were not so enlightened, in my opinion, as to recognize there should be separation of church and state, but they did believe that the church leaders should not be political men but should be spiritual men, and the church should not be run by people who were principally political appointees to carry out political agendas. So Thomas Cartwright proposed that each church have its elders elected by each congregation who would only have spiritual functions and that each congregation should choose its own minister. or pastor.

Henry Jacob was another early Puritan leader in England. He lived from 1563 to 1624. He was a little bit younger than Thomas Cartwright.

He favored a Congregationalist state church as opposed to a Presbyterian. He taught that each church should be left free to choose its own pastor and determine its own policies and manage its own affairs. In other words, he wanted each congregation to be autonomous and not to be connected with some kind of a trans-local authoritarian structure.

He was one of a thousand signers to a document called the Millenary Petition. We'll have more to say about that later, which was sent to King James I in 1603 asking for changes in the church structure, but because of his Puritan views, he was imprisoned, but not forever. He was eventually released and from 1616 to 1622, after having gone to Holland to avoid persecution, he came back to England and pastored an English congregation of independent people.

The group that he started or that he was a leader in came to be called Independents. It's sort of a denomination by that name of Puritans. His views became more dominant than Presbyterianism in England under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, about whom we'll have more to say later.

There was another movement of Puritans that we call the Separatists, and they differed from the other Puritans in that they did advocate a separation of church and state. They did not believe that the king or parliament or any governmental body, secular government, should have any influence or say in the church. They promoted the idea of a church covenant by which the members bound themselves to God and to each other apart from the state church.

So instead of finding their legitimacy in a connectedness to the state church, which found its legitimacy in its connectedness to the head of the church, the king, the Separatists believed that the legitimacy of their church was a spiritual, independent covenant that they made with each other and with God, and that in thus covenanting, they formed a church that God would honor and recognize, although it was not connected with the established church. The first to advocate this idea was a man named Richard Fitz in 1570. Later, Robert Brown became more influential among the Separatists than anyone else.

He lived from 1550 to 1633. He started a Separatist congregation in 1581, but because of persecution, he had to flee to Holland for a while. John Greenwood and Henry Burrow also started Separatist congregations in London in 1587, but they were both hanged for their views because England was not a tolerant country in those days.

It was a Protestant country, but not a tolerant country. Just as the Lutherans and the Calvinists killed Anabaptists, so also the Anglican Protestants killed Puritans, Separatists, and Roman Catholics and Anabaptists. So these men were hanged for starting a Separatist congregation in London.

This all was taking place during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who was a Protestant, but she was greatly opposed to the Puritan cause. In 1593, Elizabeth passed an act against the Puritans, granting the authorities the power to imprison Puritans for not attending the Anglican services. About the same time, a man named Richard Hooker wrote a treatise, which was largely directed against the Puritans' ideas.

It was called Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity. He was Anglican. He emphasized that all the citizens of the state are members of the state church, and just as the king is ordained by God, so the state church is ordained by God, because it is under the king, and therefore any Christians that were not subject to the state church were part of an institution that was not ordained by God.

And therefore, of course, that condemned especially the Separatists. But even the other Puritans, although they did not advocate a total separation of church and state, they did tend in the direction of the church acting somewhat independently of state control. Now, if you'll turn over the notes, I want to talk about the arising of the Baptists out of the Puritan roots and also some of the early congregations in America that arose out of the persecution of the Puritans in England.

There was a group of Separatist Congregationalists that appeared in Scrooby, England in 1606. This was shortly after the death of Queen Elizabeth, and Charles I was the successor. He was not a good king, and he persecuted Puritans.

And so in 1620, many of the members of this group that had formed in 1606 in England migrated to America, and they were on a ship that everyone knows the name of called the Mayflower. William Bradford was a member of this group that formed in England at that time, and they fled to America because of the intolerable conditions under King Charles in persecuting the Puritans in England. So in 1620, they came to America.

Of course, they founded the Plymouth Colony. Eventually, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which was, of course, a different one, came under their influence and largely became a Puritan colony as well, though it didn't start out as one. There was another group of Separatist Congregationalists in England.

They appeared in Gainesborough in 1606, the same year as the previous group mentioned did in Scrooby. And these were under the leadership of a man named John Smith, who lived from 1570 to 1612. This group also left England because of persecution.

They went to Amsterdam, not America, in 1607. There, they came under the influence of Mennonites, who were in Amsterdam. Yay! It's a good influence to come under, in my opinion.

And they got rebaptized because of the influence of the Anabaptists. Now, you have to realize these Puritans were not rebaptizers, generally speaking. The Puritans were still very much like the Catholics and Anglicans in that they practiced infant baptism.

So it was unusual for a group of Puritans to rebaptize themselves, but this particular group did because of the influence of the Mennonites that they met there in Amsterdam. Some of this group, for example, Thomas Helwys, or Helwise, I don't know how to pronounce it, and John Merton, returned to England from the Netherlands, and they

organized the first Baptist church in England. They practiced baptism by pouring, not immersion, because the Mennonites did.

And so they got their ideas about baptism from the Mennonites, and they practiced a pouring form of baptism. But they were nonetheless the first Baptist church in England. They adopted an Arminian theology, having been in the Netherlands, where Arminius had tremendous influence.

They rejected Calvinism, which was unusual for Puritans to do, and adopted Arminianism. This group were called the General Baptists. By the way, today there are over 40 different denominations of Baptists.

There were only a few in the early days. And the General Baptists baptized by pouring, and they are Arminian, not Calvinistic. That might surprise you, because your contact with Baptists probably has led you to the assumption that Baptist means Calvinist.

As a matter of fact, even the Baptists that you may be acquainted with, who you would call Calvinists, probably would not be Calvinists by Presbyterian standards. I was raised a Baptist in a group that would be technically, I think most people would say Calvinistic. But the beliefs of my Baptist group that I was raised in would not be considered Calvinistic by Presbyterians.

Not enough Calvinists. There are not enough of the five points there. Probably only about three and a half out of the five.

But the original Baptist congregation, which started in England under these men, was not in any sense Calvinist. They rejected Calvinism altogether, embraced Arminian theology, and were largely like Mennonites in many respects. There was another group of Baptists formed in England shortly after this.

They became stronger in England and more influential, and they were Calvinistic. They grew out of a split in Henry Jacob's congregation in London, of whom we have spoken earlier, in the year 1633. They baptized by immersion, and they were very strongly and adamantly Calvinistic.

Their main point of emphasis was limited atonement. Now this is an amazing thing, because when you meet people today who are largely Calvinist, but not entirely, usually the one Calvinist point they have reservations about is limited atonement. But this group emphasized limited atonement more than any other point.

And guess what they came to be called? Well, it's not that they came to be called this, but they gave rise to the movement that's called the American Baptists. Sadly, in America today, the American Baptist denomination, of all Baptist denominations, is the most liberal. In almost every major historic denomination, there is a conservative branch and a liberal branch.

Among Baptists, the American Baptist Church tends to be the most liberal. Although it has its roots going back to a very conservative, very puritanical, very Calvinistic group in England. Roger Williams, a very important figure in American history because he's the founder of Rhode Island, he migrated to America with his wife in 1631 in order to obtain freedom of religious expression, which he did not have adequately in England.

He had been a member in England of a separatist church, not a Baptist. But after he came to America, he eventually adopted Baptist ideas. Originally, he pastored a separatist church in Boston, Massachusetts, and later in Salem.

But he taught very strongly that the government officials had no authority to interfere with religious church affairs. This caused him not to be favored by the government officials in Massachusetts, they called it. And they gave him, I think, six weeks to leave.

Eventually, they gave him an extension. He could stay until the following spring. But he had to leave, although he was well loved by his congregation as a teacher and preacher there.

But he did leave Massachusetts, and eventually he founded Rhode Island. And he established the first church in America to have Baptist beliefs. We could call it the first Baptist church of America.

And that was in Providence, Rhode Island. So even though he was not a Baptist when he left England, he became the first founder of a Baptist church in the United States in 1639. So we have seen not only the rise of the Puritans, but out of some of those Puritan roots, the rise of the Baptists.

Of course, the original Baptists in England were sort of a hybrid, not simply of Congregationalist Puritans, but also mixed in some influence from the Mennonites. So they had Anabaptist influence as well as ordinary Puritan Calvinist influence. Also, there was some Arminianism thrown in there in the general Baptists.

Now, we need to, before we finish with this period, need to comment on the ongoing struggle and conflict between the Puritans and the Stuart monarchs. Queen Elizabeth was not a Stuart. She was a Tudor queen.

There were two royal houses that, at different periods of time, supplied monarchs to the English throne. Elizabeth and Mary before her and Henry VIII and his father Henry VII were all Tudors. But with the death of Elizabeth, you came to the end of the Tudor line.

Henry VIII had very bad fortune in producing heirs for the throne. He was only one of many Englishmen because they felt that there should not be a woman on the throne, that it was not the place of women to rule countries. One of the early writings of John Knox was his first blast of the trumpet against the, what did he call it, the monstrous regime of women.

And he was writing against both the English and the Scottish monarchs, who were both queens at that time. But when Elizabeth died, not only was the throne left to a male, but it was left to a male of the Stuart house. And so a different dynasty came to power in England.

Elizabeth, you recall, had been Protestant officially. But the Stuarts had control in Scotland during this time, and there was quite a bit of influence of Catholicism in the monarchy there in Scotland. And the king that replaced her in England was the man who had been the king in Scotland.

He had been called James VI of Scotland. But with the death of Elizabeth and no other heirs of the Tudor family to the throne, the Scottish king became the English king as well. And so James VI of Scotland became James I of England.

And he was Catholic. I shouldn't say that. He was not Catholic.

I take that back. But he was not Puritan. He was Anglican, of course.

The king of England always was Anglican because he was the head of the Church of England. But he had more of a Catholic flavor to his Christianity, let's put it that way. And therefore, he did not side with the Puritans.

Now, at first they thought he might, because the Puritans were strongly Calvinistic, and this particular king had strongly Calvinistic theology. James I was a strong Calvinist, and therefore the Puritan ministers hoped that he might sympathize with them because they were stronger in their Calvinism than the Anglican side of the conflict usually were. And a thousand Puritan ministers signed a document called the Millenary Petition when James came from Scotland and took the throne of England in 1603.

In order to answer this document, which by the way was calling for reforms of a Puritan sort in the Church of England, James called for what was called the Hampton Court Conference, which took place in 1604, where he was to hear and respond to their requests in this document. As it turned out, he refused them. He even threatened to drive them out of England if they persisted in their views.

He said that Presbyterianism agrees with monarchy about as much as God agrees with the devil. This is because Presbyterianism largely declared the churches to be governed not by state officials, but by spiritual leaders who were merely church officials. And so apparently James felt like this kind of removes the control of the church from the hands of the politicians of whom the king is chief.

And so he felt that if you're going to have monarchy and a state church that is Presbyterian, you've got a conflict of interest, you've got a contradiction in terms. He felt that a state church that was Presbyterian was as much an oxymoron as saying the devil is an agent of God. So he refused them, which of course lost the Puritans an opportunity

to gain ascendancy in the Church of England, and the Church of England continued to be at that time more Anglican Catholic in its orientation.

One good and lasting thing that did come out of that Hampton Court Conference was that at that time King James commissioned a group of scholars and translators to make a new translation of the Bible in English. And they did, and they completed their work in the year 1611, and we know of course that book as the King James Version of the Bible, named after the king who commissioned it. And whatever we may think positively or fondly of the King James Version of the Bible, those of us who are more Puritan in our beliefs than Anglican, would have to say the man himself was not any friend to pure Christianity.

Although it is to his credit that he commissioned a translation of the Bible in English, which he authorized for use in all the churches. When James died, his successor Charles I, And Charles had strong opinions about the divine right of kings, and therefore of course he did not favor separatists or Puritans who weakened the king's authority in the church. In fact, he didn't much like the idea that the king was checked by Parliament either.

And so he just kind of ruled over the heads of Parliament for a number of years. This made him unpopular with Parliament, and it made him seem to be too autocratic. Actually, King Charles I was a, from what I've heard, a man of moderate temperament.

He was not, you know, a harsh dictator like, say, Adolf Hitler or something like that. But at the same time, he just believed that the Bible gives the kings the divine right to be the autocrat, to be the total rule of the country. And so he ruled essentially without Parliament from 1629 to 1640.

As I said, he had no sympathy for the Puritans, and many of them, at least 20,000 Puritans during the same period of time, migrated to America because they found Puritan life in England was not an easy life under King Charles. And so 20,000 English Puritans migrated to America between 1628 and 1640. In the year 1637, Charles sought to impose a new book of common prayer upon the Scottish church.

Now, the Scottish church were very independent in their thinking. And very Calvinistic in their thinking. And they opposed the King of England imposing a new liturgy or a new book of common prayer upon their church that led the Scottish leaders to sign a national covenant to defend Presbyterianism and to march against England.

And there was a war. During that war, Parliament in England was divided between those that sided with Puritanism, really, and those who sided with Anglicanism. Those that sided with Anglicanism in the Episcopacy were called the Royalists because they supported the right of the king to be the head of the church.

Those who sided with the Puritans were called Roundheads. And I'm not sure that I could tell you why they were called Roundheads. I'm sure some astute church historian knows why they were called Roundheads, but that person is not me, and I don't know why they were called Roundheads.

But that happened to be what they were dubbed. So you had the Royalists and the Roundheads in Parliament. The Royalists favoring the Episcopacy and the Anglican form of church, and the Roundheads supporting a Puritan agenda and being either Presbyterian or Congregational in their favored forms of church organization.

The Parliament being divided like this, of course, destabilized Parliament and it eventually led to a civil war. What caused this civil war principally was Charles attempted to arrest some of the members of Parliament for treason, probably because of their Puritanism, but he did not succeed. Instead, a war broke out between the two sides, and one of the leaders, well, the most notable leader on the Puritan side was a member of Parliament named Oliver Cromwell, who led the armies of England, a very highly trained and well-disciplined armies, against the Royalists, and he won every battle he fought.

He never lost a battle. He was an incredibly successful commander of the armies. And in time, he had Charles the King captured and personally was one of the signers to the death warrant that King Charles executed in 1648.

There were actually, I'm summarizing a little bit, there were two civil conflicts with a brief interlude between them, but in both cases, Oliver Cromwell led the Puritan cause to victory over the Royalists and eventually saw the King himself killed. Now, Oliver Cromwell took charge of the country at that point. He actually abolished the rule of the House of Lords, I believe it was.

Now, there's the House of Commons and the House of Lords in Parliament. I believe it was the House of Lords he abolished, and he abolished the monarchy, which was a pretty radical thing to do in England, which has always been a monarchy. But for the rest of his life, he ruled England as the dictator, really, of a commonwealth between the years 1649 and 1658, the year of his death.

He had the support of the army, which is what allowed him to do this, and he was generally regarded as a moderate and tolerant person in matters of religion. That is to say, even though he was a Puritan, he was moderate to those and granting freedom to those who had other religious convictions. In other words, he was not the type who would go and purge all opposition in that way, although he did purge opposition in the Parliament.

He actually commanded his army during the Second Civil War to go into Parliament and remove all the members of Parliament that were on the King's side, and eventually he just dismissed the Parliament altogether. So he did remove political opposition, but in

terms of religion, he supported a toleration and a religious freedom in England to a large extent. However, in his wars against Ireland, which was Catholic, he is said to have exhibited great cruelty, and it is considered to be one of the blots on his record.

I'm sure that depending on which historians you read, you'll get either a positive or a negative summary of Oliver Cromwell's protectorate. He was called the Lord Protector of the Empire or of the Realm. And those who favor Catholicism are going to make him out to be the arch enemy of all decency.

Those who favor Puritanism are likely to have a more charitable way of looking at his time and a more charitable way of protecting there. But whether for good or for ill, there was that period of time under Oliver Cromwell where there was no monarchy in England. Now after Cromwell died, the English had lived for nine years under his control or ten years, and they were tired of the strictness of the Puritan way of life because Cromwell's England was a Puritan England.

And the English were not all converts. Not all of them were really Christians. And when you try to impose Puritan Christian standards on an unconverted populace, you're going to cause resentment and so forth.

And basically when the man died, most of England didn't want to continue the Puritan rule. And so they called Charles II, who was at that time the King of Scotland, to be the King of England. And he was not a Puritan.

And he restored the Episcopacy. He gave positions in the church and positions in the state to the Anglicans, that is the more high church Anglicans that were the rival party to the Puritans. And he prohibited Puritan meetings so that Puritanism was not even tolerated, whereas at least Oliver Cromwell had tolerated other groups.

King Charles II did not. The Puritans were persona non grata in England. They were outlawed.

Two thousand Calvinist clergymen at that time were driven from their churches. Puritanism became one of the many groups that were labeled as non-conformist groups in England. There are two men in particular that are very well known from this period as non-conformists and either completely or at least moderately Puritan during that period of time.

John Milton, who lived from 1608 to 1674, and is best known as the author of Paradise Lost. It was an English poet and philosopher. At one time considered going into the ministry but didn't.

Actually went blind early in life but continued to write books for a secretary. Lived out a natural lifetime. Was not executed or anything like that for his position, although he did serve a little time in jail for supporting the Puritan cause.

But he was not entirely a Puritan. Milton was definitely a non-conformist during this period of time. And he had a lot of theology that most of us would call errant.

Now, the Calvinists would not like him because he opposed the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. Many of us would disagree with Milton because he largely was Aryan in his viewpoint. He was not Trinitarian.

But he was a mixture of a lot of different streams. He was not technically a theologian. He was more of a poet, philosopher, writer.

And yet he was a religious man. He was not a secular man. And he had religious views and he wrote religious as well as other kinds of works.

And his most famous religious work that he wrote was Paradise Lost. Another person that we can feel much more positive about at the same time, another non-conformist, was our friend John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress. Lived from 1628 to 1688.

Now, John Bunyan was converted by his wife. He married a praying woman before he was a Christian. He later wrote of his conversion in an autobiographical work called Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, his own autobiography.

And he, after he was converted, became an adamant student of the Bible and preacher. Only problem was, in England you weren't allowed to be a preacher if you weren't ordained in the Anglican church. In fact, it was illegal to preach outside the walls of an Anglican church in those days.

And so he was arrested. And he was put in the Bedford jail. He was in the city of Bedford, England.

And he languished in prison or in jail for twelve and a half years for no worse crime than that he preached the gospel outside the Anglican church. During that time it was very hard on his family. He had a wife and children.

They were allowed to visit him somewhat as his principal consolation during the twelve years in prison. He had a blind daughter that he particularly was fond of seeing. While he was in prison, he wrote Pilgrim's Progress, which has become, apart from the Bible itself, the best-selling book in history.

It's been the most influential book in the Christian world, apart from the King James Version of the Bible itself. So these two great works that have influenced more than any others the Western culture were both produced under the influence of Puritan England, really. In 1611, the King James Version of the Bible, and then Pilgrim's Progress by a Puritan writer, John Bunyan.

Anyone who has read Pilgrim's Progress, I believe, has a positive impression of that

book. It's hard to imagine anyone not finding Pilgrim's Progress inestimably edifying and profitable to read again and again. Nonconformist sects were not granted toleration in England until the end of the reign of James II, who was driven from England in an episode called the Glorious Revolution in 1689.

And at that time, nonconformist sects were given toleration or tolerance. And that pretty much covers all that's worth writing home about, at least all that I care to discuss in this series, in the century from 1550 to 1650, basically with the aftermath of the Reformation and bringing us up into the mid-17th century, which we will pick up at next time in what is usually referred to as the Age of Reason. There were some very important influential people, not only memorable historically, but people whose views have impacted Western civilization to this present day.

And we will read or we'll study of the rise of the Westleaf influence and of the Great Awakening. We'll be talking about the Westleaf brothers. We'll be talking about George Whitefield and also Jonathan Edwards and some other inspiring people.

I think we'll get to talk about all of them next time. I'm going with my point to do so. We'll be talking about the Age of Reason and the Great Awakenings in several... Well, America was the Great Awakening, so there were revivals going on in Wales and in England also at the time.

That's the period that we'll look at next time.