

Puritanism Under the Stuarts 1603 - 1640

by J.I. Packer

The Puritans' attempts at reforming the Church of England were thwarted by James I's opposition to Presbyterianism, leading to a period of conformity and a focus on preaching and teaching.

Duration: 54:35

Scripture: Matthew 7:7, John 14:6, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Puritan Theology", "Christian Living"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the background of the Puritan preachers who were educated at Cambridge colleges. It emphasizes the importance of seeking salvation, repentance, and faith in order to become a Christian. Once one becomes a Christian, they are seen as a traveler on the way to God. The sermon also touches on the Puritan view of handling material things and the need for God's law to govern all aspects of life, including political matters. The sermon highlights the significance of making personal applications in preaching that search the heart and convict the hearers.

Transcript

May we pray. O God our Father, once more we ask Thee that Thou would sanctify our studies, and enable us to think, and then act, to Thy praise and Thy glory, for Christ's sake. Were there any questions left over that you wanted to discuss relating to the Elizabethan separatists we had to finish in rather a hurry last time? I hope not, frankly, but no, that's good.

Let's go on, then, from Elizabethan Puritanism to Puritanism under the Stuarts, that is, under Charles I, sorry, under James I and Charles I, between the years 1603 and 1640. We'll stop there because a new chapter in the history starts with the calling of the Long Parliament in 1640. One of the first things that happened in the Stuart period was that when James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603, the Puritans sent him a petition asking him to reform the various abuses, or some of the abuses in the Church, which they criticised under his predecessor Elizabeth.

And in this petition, which has gone down in the books as the Millenary Petition, because the Puritans said that they had a thousand signatures on it, although in no text that was ever produced or discovered at any stage were any signatures found at all. So the whole thing at that point is a little bit obscure. But anyway, there it is in the books, the Millenary Petition, and they asked for the removal of the ceremonies which the Elizabethan Puritans were opposed to, also the abandoning of the practice of reading the Apocrypha, which Anglicans then did and still do, not for doctrine but for examples of life and manners, in the ordinary

course of public worship.

Also they asked for the reform of the system of Church court. Also they asked for official action by the new monarch to stop non-residence and pluralism, to censure non-preaching ministers, and to make up the stipends or endowments of particular livings so that men would not need to do another job in addition to being minister in order to eke out a living. Well, these might have seemed to be reasonable requests, and James I received the petition politely and said he would call a conference about it.

And this he did, the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. Unhappily, the conference didn't achieve any of the things that the Puritans were most anxious to achieve. You'll notice that in their requests in the Millenary Petition, they'd said nothing about Presbyterianising the establishment.

No doubt they realised that this might well be an impolitic thing to say, after the difficulty they'd had on this subject with Elizabeth. But James was quite convinced that the ultimate objective of the Puritans was to Presbyterianise the establishment, and of course that was quite perceptive, because undoubtedly it was. And James had had his fill of Presbyterianism while he was king in Scotland, and he didn't want to have any more to do with it in England.

He wanted to be a Tudor autocrat. Quite evidently he was glad to have been invited south of the border, to a land where Tudor autocracy had become the pattern, and he didn't intend to abandon the pattern. This is that James I, who in a very few years' time will be writing a book called *Basilikon Doron*, Greek for the kingly gift, arguing the doctrine which came to be called the divine right of kings, that is, that kings in the hereditary line are appointed by God, rebellion against them therefore, or opposition to their wishes or enactments, is not merely a crime from the civil standpoint, but a sin against God himself.

God had set kings on the throne to govern in his name, and they were to be obeyed as God. Well, holding this doctrine, this doctrine of kingly prerogative, James, as you can see, had no sympathy whatever with people who he suspected of wanting to Presbyterianise, because on the Presbyterian system, as you know, even a monarch as a church member is exposed to ecclesiastical censure. You've got this clear distinction between the two spheres of authority, as I was explaining last time.

And just as in civil matters all church members are subject to the king, so in spiritual matters the king, as a church member, may be disciplined by ecclesiastical authority. And James had had just about enough of this kind of talk and this kind of thinking. And so, as the Hampton Court Conference proceeded, he got progressively more and more bad-tempered, and eventually he told the Puritan representatives, Presbytery agreeth with monarchy as well as God with the devil, and furthermore he enunciated the dictum, no bishop, no king, with, you see, the unspoken corollary that since you are jolly well going to have a king, I think you'd better make up your mind that you're going to have bishops too to go with him.

And he told the Puritans that they'd better hurry up and conform or else he would harry them out of the land. And the conference finished in a fine flurry of royal bad-temper. All that was achieved of it was two quite incidental gains for English religion.

The catechism of the Church of England was to be extended. There was nothing in it before on the sacraments, and the promise was given that a sacramental section would be added. And the authorised version, the new version of the Bible, was asked for, and James said that a new version would be made.

Previously, the Puritans had all been using the Geneva Bible, or one of the other Elizabethan versions. Meanwhile, in the same year, 1604, Archbishop Bancroft, he was Archbishop now following Whitgift's death, and he, you remember, was the man who had hunted out the shadow Presbyterian movement in the 1580s. Archbishop Bancroft pushed through convocation, a clerical assembly, a clerical synod in the Anglican pattern.

He pushed through convocation a set of new canons, a new pattern that is of church discipline, which established the episcopal form of the Church of England, established, re-established, reaffirmed all the ceremonies and all the features in Anglican life which the Puritans had disliked. And then in 1605, he really went at the business of enforcing conformity to the established order in a big way. 300 Puritan clergy were suspended, temporarily, in most cases.

50 of them, however, were actually deprived of their livings and never got them back. What a deprived clergyman did, after he'd been deprived, by the way, in those days, was to become a schoolmaster. You could open a school and teach in school, even though you'd been deprived of your living.

Well, now, this final purge of 1605 really marked the end of reforming agitation in the Church of England until 1640. Neither about the ceremonies and the vestments and the services, nor about Presbyterianism, did the Puritans, for a whole generation, let out, really, anything more than the softest of squeaks. No more campaigns, no more agitation.

Why? Not so much because they were persuaded that their original convictions had been mistaken, as because they saw that it simply wouldn't wash, that they simply couldn't fight authority on these terms. And so they simply prayed, and they did pray earnestly over these years for better times, and meanwhile they kept quiet. So there was no more reforming agitation until 1640.

Now, before we go any further in the story, because this is a real transition point, at which some of the old issues were put on the shelf, and some new issues between the Puritans and the government began to arise, I wanted to stop and to take stock for a moment, and try and get a general view of the situation as it came to be after 1605. So put down a new heading, the situation at and after 1605, and let's just go through the various elements in it so as to get the overall sketch. Here are the Puritans.

At the heart of the movement, a body of clergy. But with, one just doesn't know, how strong lay support, certainly pretty strong lay support, amongst the smaller landlords, amongst the trading classes, the commercial classes, and among the common people too. But they had abandoned their agitation for church reform, after the millinery petition.

They had accepted ceremonial conformity, with minor exceptions, that is, the exceptions of certain individuals, who still wouldn't wear the surplice, and still wouldn't use the sign of the cross in baptism. So it was said, proudly, of John Carter, by his son, writing his biography, that during these years, oh, wait a minute, where's the quote? During these years, he was always a non-conformist, one of the good old Puritans of England. He never swallowed any of the ceremonies against his conscience, so that he was often troubled by the bishops.

But God raised him up friends that always brought him off and maintained his liberty. These friends would be eminent laymen, who were often the smaller landlords, who would put in a word, you see, for the minister, when the bishop took notice of his non-conformity, and then the thing would be quietly settled, and the issue would be dropped, and the minister would not be preceded against further. This was the

pattern.

But a lot of clergy, like Richard Sibbes, like John Preston, like some of the leading theological writers among the Puritans, were complete conformists during this period. They were men absorbed in their parishes and their lectureships, and in the case of the Cambridge dons, in teaching their subjects, and giving religious training to the young men in the university. They were, for the most part, pacific men.

There'd been real agitators and firebrands amongst the Elizabethan Puritans, but during this next generation, the Puritans, for the most part, were not men of that sort at all. They had the Greenham spirit. When Greenham was called before his bishop, the Bishop of Ely, on one occasion, because of his non-conformity, he didn't wear the purples, you see, and from time to time he got into trouble on this account, he told the bishop, in effect, that he would be grateful if he were allowed not to argue about this issue.

Other Puritans would have taken occasion to put up a terrific argument about what a monstrous thing it was to require anyone to wear the purples, but Greenham was a man of a pacific spirit, and this was what he wrote back to the bishop when the first episcopal summons to answer for his ways came. I don't want to argue, he said, I perceive by experience that dissension of reason does cause alienation of affections. Again, these matters have been and are debated betwixt the godly learned, whereas I, a so poor countryman, a young scholar, having occupied myself daily by the space of these three years last past in preaching Christ crucified unto myself and country people, am not in these matters any wit to reason with you.

I don't want to argue about it, I simply want leave, says Greenham, to go on preaching Christ crucified unto myself and country people. That's the vision, you see, which Greenham had of his calling. That's what he was there to do, and he just didn't want to bother about secondary questions of conformity and all the rest of it, provided that he had liberty to preach Christ crucified unto himself and country people, well, he had enough.

And, in fact, Greenham was known to be such a good man that proceedings were not taken against him on that occasion, and on others later he got off. Similarly, it was said of another Puritan of the first, well, in the middle years, one would say, of the 17th century, a man named Samuel Fairclough, If a man lives holily and walks humbly with God, I shall ever love him, notwithstanding his conformity. And if he be proud, contentious, and profane, I will never think well of him for his non-conformity.

In other words, to Fairclough, what matters is not conformity or non-conformity, but rather that a man should not be ungodly, that he should instead be holy. This is really a natural development in the Puritan ministry. Here are these chaps called, as they believe, to be evangelists and pastors, and now finding fulfilment in preaching and teaching and catechising and visiting the sick and writing books to help people in questions of Christian faith and life.

And it was taking all their time, and they were finding joy in it, and in this situation they were less and less enamoured of ecclesiastical controversy. What was the strength of the ministerial core of the movement? Oh, we can't say. In the 1580s they reckoned that half of the London ministers, that would be about 200, were men of Puritan sympathies.

So about that same time the Puritans took a census of the clergy and the council of Essex and announced that only 30 out of 300 were competent preachers and pastors, that is presumably were Puritan

sympathisers. If that was typical, then it might be that half the urban ministers in the country and 10% or less, probably in the counties furthest from the centre of the population a good deal less, 10 or less percent of country clergy were men of Puritan sympathies. Did it amount to anything like a quarter of the total ministry of the Church of England? Well, it might have done, but statistics don't enable us definitely to say.

An estimate of a quarter, though, would get the assent of most scholars these days of being about the best guesswork estimate that one can make. Cambridge remained the centre of the movement. It had been right from the start.

It was so still, in a way that, interestingly enough, Oxford wasn't. On one occasion the question was put to Paul Baines, C-A-Y-N-E-S, one of the great Puritan ministers of Cambridge University, why Cambridge men were accounted more profitable preachers than Oxford men. And Mr. Baines said, the reason was that God had from the First Reformation blessed Cambridge with exemplary plain and spiritual preachers.

Plain and spiritual, who taught men the way of the Lord and taught them in their turn, by object lesson, how to preach this same gospel to others. The pre-eminence of Cambridge over Oxford in producing Puritan ministers can be gauged from the fact that when the Pilgrim Fathers left England over those 15 years of emigration altogether, first to last, there were just over 100 Cambridge-trained ministers who went with them as compared with a mere 30 from Oxford. From which I suppose you ought to argue that Puritan-wise, Cambridge was three times better than Oxford and Oxford three times worse than Cambridge.

Well, there it is. I'm an Oxford man, I just have to grin and bear it. And get the pattern, by the way, of life in Cambridge University in those days in order to see how this tradition of Puritan teaching in the university worked.

Oxford and Cambridge, you may know, are really rather like the United States. They are federations of autonomous colleges, making up between them the university. Each college then, as now, appointed its own fellows.

Then, in the 16th and 17th century, the fellows took pupils. They were resident in the college, they had a fellowship and a stipend, a basic stipend which the college gave them. They were there just to teach.

And if you wanted your boy to go to the university, what you did was to write either to the master of the college, but more usually in those days, to the particular fellow of the particular college that you would like to be responsible for the chap's education. And then the fellow would take on this chap as his own pupil and he would have him in the university, he'd find lodgings for him, and he would have these young men of the kind of class, learning their subjects in his own chambers, he would live in the college buildings, at least if he was unmarried he would, unmarried because the Cambridge, Oxford and Cambridge colleges were all monastic foundations and of course, in the days when they were founded it was only celibates anyway who were eligible because only celibates were monks. So the colleges all had celibacy written into their foundation and it was only single fellows who had rooms in college, as we would say.

But they used to, as I say, to get their pupils together in their rooms and they would take family prayers with them and they would put them through the catechism and make them read divinity, Christian books, as well as making them read other subjects and they would drill them in the basis of the Reformed religion and the biblical gospel and they would do everything that they could to bring them to a living faith. This

was part of the tutor's job as it was understood at Puritan Cambridge. And then men who had studied at Cambridge, or in some cases out of Cambridge with these godly pastors, same pattern you see in Greenham's house, Richard Rogers' house, we've referred to that already, these men would then go out, imbued we hope, with Puritan principles and also the reality of Puritan piety and out they'd go to country parishes and the torch would be passed on.

And you had in Cambridge, during the more than 40 years, 70 years, right through from 1570 to 1640, a whole sequence of men who were very great preachers and very great pastors, very great evangelicals in their own right, rather like the famous Princeton succession, with this stress on practical piety added on. William Dearing, who preached that fierce sermon before Queen Elizabeth in 1570, he was an eminent Puritan divine and he did a lot with his young men. Lawrence Chanderton, C-H-A-D-E-R-T-O-N, who became the first master of Emanuel College, a Puritan foundation.

Perkins, of whom we've already heard, Paul Baines, Thomas Goodwin, Richard Sibbes, S-I-B-B-E-S, some of these names you know because their works have been reprinted in modern times. John Preston, William Gouge, John Dodd, Thomas Taylor, They all had a spell, at least, and some of them spent their lives as fellows and teachers in Cambridge colleges. Now, read Haller, chapters 1-4, for more information about these brethren.

In the examination I shall expect you to know more about them than I am telling you now you have been warned. And the succession went on right the way through up to 1640. Now, these Puritan ministers, when they got into the parishes, were admired.

To start with, they had virtually no rivals, either as preachers or as pastors, or indeed as public communicators in any form. There were no public meetings, no radio, no television, no newspapers. The only form of public communication which most people in the English countryside were ever exposed to was the sermon.

A man's coming to preach, they'd all crowd round to listen. And the Puritans, as we've already seen, could preach. And because they were serious, and because they preached and taught in a way that was biblical, a way that was intelligible, a way that was practical, they won themselves great respect in the English parishes.

But more so because of their moral force. We've spoken already of their insistence on application. It isn't enough just to teach truth, you've got to apply it.

Think of the different classes of people that you're preaching to and bring the truth right home to them. And I give you some phrases which were used of the best Puritan preachers just to show you how seriously this was taken. They ripped up men's consciences.

You meet that phrase again and again. And it's a vivid phrase, isn't it? It's a pretty homecoming application that can be said to rip up the congregation's conscience. They used to get inside you.

Now it isn't everybody's preaching of whom you would say he really got inside me in his application. Or this, they would dive into men's hearts. That's a lovely phrase, isn't it? Heart readers.

Not thought readers in the fairground sense, but heart readers in the sense that they would apply the word and make the congregation feel that this man is talking to me, this man speaks as if he knows just what's inside me. And they used to say that it was in application, in the use of the sermon, as they called it, that a

sermon's excellency does consist. The thought was that any fool can teach sound doctrine, but it takes a man of God to make an application that really searches the heart and does something to the hearers.

John Dodd was a preacher like this, and in his life this is the way they described his preaching. He didn't dwell so long on the doctrine as to fill up all the time. He spoke, quote, most largely and very home, that is, very homecoming, in application, mightily convincing and diving into men's hearts and consciences, there it is, diving into men's hearts and consciences, leaving them little or nothing to object against it.

Robert Harris, Dodd's admirer, complained that some people spent too much time insisting on doctrinal points and too little upon the applications, yet it's in an application, I'm quoting his phrase now, that a sermon's excellency does consist. And he, for his part, confessed that he, quote, contrived the uses first. He thought his sermons through backward, in other words, from the needs of men to the form in which the teaching of the text was going to be presented, before he thought it through forward, from the text to the application.

He contrived the uses first. He thought of the application before he thought of the details of the doctrine he was going to teach. And, he said, he did often handle the same text of the same points and yet would still pen new applications.

And, brethren, here for you in the ministry is a tip. Has it ever struck you that one text has got an infinite number of applications, or rather, one truth has got an infinite number of applications, and you can make many new sermons on the same text by varying the angle of application? That's a thought worth thinking. Well, this, as I say, is the way that they were preaching with this tremendous stress on the application and showing great moral and spiritual insight and what we would call real power in the way that they drove the application home.

Their books, too, were valued. The first popular literature ever in England, that is, the first class of books that were widely distributed and widely read were the little books that the Puritans produced. And they went through edition after edition.

People lapped them up and loved them. The pioneer evangelical literature ministry. Little wonder, then, that more and more as time went on, more and more as time went on, the ideals of which the Puritan preachers held permeated the middle classes, the administrators, the businessmen, and the common people of the country.

The old aristocratic families, many of whom, indeed, had remained secret papists, were often untouched. And there was always an ignorant rabble in the cities, then as now, who were also untouched. But the landlords and the lawyers and the commercial classes and the ordinary working people, for the most part, came more and more to accept and make their own Puritan standards and Puritan ideals.

So this was the great leavening of England that went on during the first 40 years of the 17th century that made possible the tremendous upsurge of moral and spiritual concern which marked the revolution years 1640 to 1660. You see, what the Puritan ministers were doing, what nobody else at the time was doing, was to give men a real vision of the Christian life as a whole, a vision that gave meaning to everything. Again, read Haller for the details, but the essence of the vision is this, that here am I, utterly helpless in my sin, but in the mercy of God, saved by grace.

Of course, if I don't start there, then the initial statement has to be amended. Here am I, addressed by the gospel of God. And the word is given me, he that seeks shall find, to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

So seek salvation. Lay hold of the promises. Seek repentance and faith till you find them.

And then when you become a Christian, as those who seek in this way surely will become Christians of the Puritans, then realise where you are. Now you're a traveller, in via, on the way, travelling home to God. And on the way you've got to fight.

You're a warrior, opposed by the world, the flesh and the devil, opposed by sin within, and opposed by all kinds of temptations and alluring circumstances without. And what you've got to do, in your character as a traveller and a warrior, is to resist sin and Satan and evil at every point, and to sanctify every department of your life unto the Lord. Build a holy home.

Fulfil your calling. The Puritans took up that Reformation doctrine of the calling and gave it a great comprehensive development. Fulfil your calling, your job in life, unto the Lord.

Give yourself to furthering the public good. This again was a central thought in the Puritan vision of life. The good man is the public-spirited man.

It's a Christian virtue to lay yourself out for the public good. That was their phrase. It's a Puritan virtue to be public-spirited.

And equally with that, part of your service of God is to enjoy His good gifts, to receive them thankfully, to use those so-called recreations that really do recreate, and to praise God for them. Here's a philosophy then of leisure and of amusement to go alongside the Puritan philosophy of work. It was a Puritan who, as indeed I shall be telling you next class, advised or urged the propriety of wearing your best clothes and indulging in moderate feasting on the Lord's Day.

Now you don't associate that with the Puritans, do you? But that's what Richard Baxter actually said. Well, you see, it's a total view of life. Nobody else in England was attempting to communicate a Christian view of life of this kind to ordinary people.

This is the way you should live, said the Puritans, and for those who live so, there's a hope of glorious reward. God will give you glory. God will give you ultimately himself.

In all this teaching, the Puritans are insistent on the fact that God himself is the greatest gift he can give any man. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there's none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee. The Lord is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

This is central. And the Puritans were only concerned with material things as a stewardship. And when material things came and brought pleasure, well, you were to have your eye to God in the pleasure and you were to praise God for the pleasure and then just because you were sanctifying in that way, go ahead and enjoy it to the full.

This was a very positive Puritan view of the handling of material things and the coping with this world's pleasures. Of course, if people were being indoctrinated in this way, sooner or later, questions about the established order, political questions in particular, were bound to arise. God's law ought to govern the whole of life.

How then ought God's law to be expressed in the life of this community of England? The question had to be raised sooner or later. In fact, it was precipitated by the fact that the Stuart monarchs, Charles I in particular, had a habit of doing unconstitutional things. Of course, you might say, Elizabeth had done unconstitutional things before them, and that was perfectly true.

The pattern of Tudor absolutism had caused constitutional lawyers a number of headaches, a good deal of uneasiness in the second half of the 16th century, but Elizabeth, remember, had succeeded. Elizabeth the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth Gloriana, Elizabeth the heroine of her people. They always retained this terrific affection for her.

A mere woman who had the stomach of a king of England. Do you remember? They loved Elizabeth, even when she made them tear their hair because she wouldn't allow them to reform her church. And as I say, as you know, nothing succeeds like success.

Elizabeth had come off, and God had blessed Elizabeth's reign, and the country had gone from strength to strength. And under those circumstances, people had allowed Elizabeth, you might say, the Puritans themselves had allowed Elizabeth to get away with it. When we get on to Charles I, on the other hand, we shall find that the state of mind amongst lawyers, amongst common people, amongst responsible laymen in the professional classes and the commercial classes and the landowning classes in England, their state of mind was different.

They were just not prepared to let an absolutist monarch get away with it anymore. And they found, as we shall be seeing, they found in scripture, in the biblical insistence on righteousness, in the biblical teaching about the will of God for human life and community, a basis for their objections to some of the things that the Stuart monarch was doing. And this led on to all the things that you get after 1640.

Puritans were so convinced that there was a biblical basis for opposition to Charles I and his unconstitutional tax laws and other things he was doing, that they were prepared to fight him, that they believed that scripture gave them a right to revolt against an ungodly monarch, and you get the various movements that sprang from that, the various points of view that sprang from that after 1640, the civil war, the egalitarian movement in England and similar types of movement, which we'll be dealing with in due course. Suffice it for the moment to say that what you had after 1640 was a kind of composite crusade in which was combined a campaign for law, a law against tyranny, a campaign for liberty, a campaign too for reforming the church, a campaign which required that kings and bishops should be eliminated together. Well, that's rather garbled, I'm afraid.

I'm just trying to give you, remember, a general sense of the situation. Some of these matters, particularly as they relate to 1640 and after, we'll have to look at in more detail later on. That, I say, is the background.

And now the story of this next generation, seen from the Puritan standpoint, is the story of a number of ways, four ways, in fact, in which king and bishops came to appear more and more to the Puritans to be quite literally partners in crime and partners in sin. The story climaxes, you see, with Charles I and Archbishop Laud, whom the Puritans regarded as really about the end. And when I tell you a bit more about Laud later on, you'll see reason why they regarded him so.

Charles became king in 1625. Laud became archbishop in 1633. Both of them eventually lost their heads, as you probably know, for high treason.

Laud was bishop of London before he became archbishop of Canterbury. When he was translated from the one position to the other, he hired a boat to take his coach and horses across the River Thames. For as bishop of London, his palace had been on the north side of the Thames, and as archbishop of Canterbury, his palace was at Lambeth on the south side of the Thames.

And I am sorry to say that in the course of the journey, the boat sank, and the coach and horses were lost. And afterwards they told this story as an omen. But Laud went ahead, and as we, I think, must say, mismanaged his archiepiscopate grossly, convinced the Puritans that this man was actually a traitor to God and a traitor to his country, and in 1645 he lost his head.

And four years later, Charles, the unconstitutional ruler, lost his head as well. But as I say, there were four issues that led up to this consummation, in all of which king and bishops lined up against Puritans. For the Puritans at least felt that king and bishops were lining up against them.

First, the ethical issue, Sabbatarianism. This was the smallest, actually, of the four. Second, the doctrinal issue, Arminianism.

Third, the ecclesiastical issue, Prelacy. The divine right of the bishop in the church. And fourth issue, the political issue, Tyranny.

The divine right of the monarch in the state. All these issues were argued out. This fourfold development took place against the backcloth of fear of Rome.

This was more intense in the first half of the 17th century than it had been, I think it's fair to say, at any time since 1570. 1570, when the Pope excommunicated Elizabeth. And certainly, more so than it had been during the 15 years since the Armada, when England had basked in the sunshine of being effectively free from Rome and the threat of Rome.

But now, in the first half of the 17th century, both Spain and France were free, if they so desired, to make war on England. And this was a constant threat on the political horizon. Here were two great and strong nations, and there was a constant risk of the Pope jockeying them, digging them in the ribs, as it were, to make war on England.

And the whole country knew that England, by comparison with these two great nations, was not really too strong at all. And James I spent a lot of his time trying to acquire a Spanish marriage. Well, politically, of course, this was the best thing to do, to make a political alliance with one of these nations in order to gain strength against the other.

But from the ordinary, popular Puritan standpoint, neither of the alternatives was pleasing. That is, to make an alliance with a Roman nation was as bad, really, as not to make an alliance with this nation and then having it constantly threatening you. James, as I say, tried for a Spanish marriage and the whole thing went on for years.

And then negotiations fell through. In the first weeks of his reign, Charles I put his eggs into the other basket and made a French marriage with the French princess Henrietta Maria. Well, that was all right.

Then he had an alliance with France to make him strong against Spain. But still, England had a Roman Catholic queen and England didn't like that either. Romanism was not the issue at any stage, but it was the background.

Now, constantly people were feeling that Rome was threatening England, Rome was making inroads against England. Rome, in actual fact, was held to be, and with truth, making real inroads in England by reconverting Englishmen. We have it on record that in 1623 the Jesuits claimed 2,600 converts.

And certainly a lot of eminent people at court were swept into the Roman fold by Henrietta Maria's retinue of Roman priests. This was happening. And one of the things that people didn't like about Archbishop Laud was the fear that he was going to Rome.

They saw in what he was doing and the line of policy for which he stood the high road to Rome, a definitely Romanising movement. Well, more of that when we come to it under its proper heads. This is the background and these are the four issues.

And we shall begin to discuss the first of them next time. But it may be that you've got questions to ask about what I've said, and certainly I hardly think it's worth launching out on Sabbatarianism at this stage. Any questions? Well, it's true, but what's in doubt, surely, is whether it's a criticism.

You've got to remember that part of the cultural background of those days was that children were encouraged to become little adults just as soon as possible. There was no ideology of children being allowed to be children. There hadn't been since the Renaissance.

When popular education, school education, began to spread through the country at the time of the Renaissance, people founding schools in Britain under Edward VI and in the years after, it became very obvious that there was no time allowed for children to be children. The whole business of school education was to turn them into adults as rapidly as possible, so that John Milton, to take one random example from the 17th century, was doing Latin when he was two. How's that? And Thomas Goodwin, to take another random 17th century example, was sent up to the university, Cambridge University, at age 13.

And generally people, generally children were, they were dressed like little adults. Haven't you ever seen pictures of 17th century children dressed up in scaled-down adult clothes? And they were treated as little adults, and by the time you were five or six you were expected to be able to behave as a little adult. And this meant that nobody questioned that a six-year-old, being a little adult in other ways, could have a genuine conviction of sin.

And so they applied, the Puritans did apply the word in the same way, in principle to children, as they did to adults, the only difference being that they urged the children to repent and turn to God now, and seek the grace of God now, before they got as bad as some of their grown-up relatives who'd been at it longer. But you see, the background of all this is the culture of the time. And if you're going to criticise the Puritans for treating children as little adults, well you've got to criticise the whole 16th and 17th century for treating children as little adults.

And it ought to be said that a lot of the children responded surprisingly well to the treatment. And it's at least a question whether this tremendous emphasis of our day on not making children grow up too soon, and letting them have their years of childishness, won't in fact appear to later generations to be as one-sided in that direction, as this stress on educating them in their earliest years and making them into little adults as rapidly as possible seems one-sided to us. Isn't this the age in which they're putting out a programme, teach your baby to read? We get that in the English shops, except you've got it here.

It may be that the pendulum's swinging back. well that is, as you say, the modern psychology approach. All that I can say is that there's plenty of material on record from children of 7, 8, 9, 10, in the 17th and the 18th and the 19th centuries.

Material that is, in which the children not merely talk a rather stilted adult-type dialect, but do actually use that dialect to express what appears to be genuine Christian awareness of things. And it seems to me it's purely arbitrary and impossible of proof to say that none of this could have been real. In fact, in times of religious awakening, child conversion has been a recurring phenomenon.

And who am I to say that it's all been spoof? I will certainly say, as categorically as I can, that this 20th century, at least as much of it as we've seen, has been very far from a time of religious awakening. But you see, this doesn't enable us to go around pontificating and saying that all the products of what they used to call infant piety in earlier generations was purely spoof and made the children unhealthy. It just isn't so.

One of the things that I've been trying to show you in what I've said about, what I've taken time off to say about the Puritan view of life and the way the Puritans behaved, and I shall have more, which I hope will make the same point before this course of classes is through, is that the Puritans essentially were very level-headed, normal men. They had their strange, odd, narrow-minded, lopsided people. We were introduced to some of the stranger Puritans last time.

But the mainstream Puritans were very level-headed men. You only got to start reading their autobiographies and their sermons to realise this, in fact. Reading Haller, I think, when you've allowed for his rather sneering way of speaking of the Puritan view of life, he's not a Christian, doesn't pretend to be.

When you read Perry Miller, when you read Nathan on Puritan culture, you will, I think, see that there's abundant reason to recognise healthy-mindedness in these fellows. When I tell you about, I've got a lecture coming on the Puritan ideal of the home. Now, it's in the home that personal oddity comes out, if it's going to come out at all, in the way that a chap treats his wife and his children.

Well, I hope that that lecture on the Puritan home, which is documented, will suffice to convince you, if you're still in doubt, that the Puritans grew up to be very level-headed, sane, sober, human people, even those who had suffered, if that's the right word, from infant piety. Well, there it is. It's all part of a general Puritan caricature that we've got to try and correct.

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