

## 1: Thankful for the Puritans | The Liberty Blessing

*Christian liberty: the Puritans in Britain and America Christian without attacking the idea of Christian liberty. Politically, the Puritans did not want the reformation of the church to be in.*

Joel Leave a comment Origin of Civil Liberty. Almost all the civil liberty now enjoyed in the world owes its origin to the principles of the Christian religion. By the principles of the christian religion we are not to understand the decisions of ecclesiastical councils, for these are the opinions of mere men; nor are we to suppose that religion to be any particular church established by law, with numerous dignitaries, living in stately palaces, arrayed in gorgeous attire, and rioting in luxury and wealth, squeezed from the scanty earnings of the laboring poor; nor is it a religion which consists in a round of forms, and in pompous rites and ceremonies. This is genuine Christianity, and to this we owe our free constitutions of government. Character of the Puritans. For the progress and enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, in modern times, the world is more indebted to the Puritans in Great Britain and America, than to any other body of men, or to any other cause. They were not without their failings and errors. Emerging from the darkness of despotism, they did not at once see the full light of Christian liberty; their notions of civil and religious rights were narrow and confined, and their principles and behavior were too rigid. These were the errors of the age. But they were pious and devout; they endeavored to model their conduct by the principles of the Bible and by the example of Christ and his apostles. They rejected all ostentatious forms and rites ; they were industrious in their callings, and plain in their apparel. Institutions of the Puritans in America. The Puritans who planted the first colonies in New England, established institutions on republican principles. They admitted no superiority in ecclesiastical orders, but formed churches on the plan of the independence of each church. They distributed the land among all persons, in free hold, by which every man, lord of his own soil, enjoyed independence of opinion and of rights. They founded governments on the principle that the people are the sources of power ; the representatives being elected annually, and of course responsible to their constituents. And especially they made early provision for schools for diffusing knowledge among all the members of their communities, that the people might learn their rights and their duties. Effects of the principles and institutions of the Puritans. The principles of the Puritans fortified them to resist all invasions of their rights; and prepared them to vindicate their independence in the war of the revolution. That war ended in the establishment of the independence of the United States. The manifestoes, or public addresses of the first American congress, and the act declaring independence, proclaimed to all the world the principles of free governments. These papers circulated extensively in foreign countries. The French officers who assisted in the defense of American rights, became acquainted in this country with the principles of our statesmen, and the blessings of our free institutions; and this circumstance was the germ of a revolution in France. It is thus that the principles of free government, borrowed from the Puritans, have been conveyed to foreign countries, and are gradually undermining arbitrary governments, with all their oppressive institutions, civil and ecclesiastical.

## 2: Puritans - Wikipedia

*Christian liberty: the Puritans in Britain and America IN , a number of clergymen returned to England from exile in Europe. They were members of the Church of England, who had taken refuge there to escape the persecution of Protestants in Queen Mary's reign.*

Puritan belief and the future history of America. It will take us back years into time. We shall be taking a look at the extraordinary history of the Puritans. This was a company of people who emerged in the spiritual ferment of the English Reformation. The ensuing Biblical Revival fired Christian zeal. This was the first of many Great Awakenings among the English speaking people. And this new realization of personal worth before God inspired great expectations among individual citizens in England. Its wider corporate impact was to foster a spiritual atmosphere in the English society for new beginnings, those being Biblical reform in the English and political reform of the English monarchy. Historians have noted that took form in the womb of England. This truth is overlooked but extremely important. At that time a certain company of Christian activists were beginning to stir and kick within the English mother country. These were the people who sparked the English Reformation. The Puritans were a people who caused others to sit up and listen. They were bound and determined to make an impact in their generation. Their dreams and their goals were both individual and national. They were quite vociferous in the way they engaged the challenges of their time. The Puritans were inclined to express their opinion quite forcefully, even to the point of straining the social constraints of a rigid monarchical English society. This would cause them, and the mother country, some significant pains of travail. Their political emergence came in the following century. This was the beginning of a rather spectacular history, to say the least. The story of the Puritans is much bigger than we have been told. These people have been the leading lights of America since the time of the early English colonies. And the settlement of the New World is a history we have heard much about. But our journey of discovery must trace the roots of the Puritans back into English history as well. This is where we shall make some rather startling discoveries. Then our trip will take another interesting turn. It will lead us "back to the future". It is important to consider the spiritual elements that are at work in peoples, land masses, and nations. This is essential in any study of history and for geography as well. It is especially true as we study Puritan history. And in the English Civil War that ensued they would change England forever. During the ferment of those epic times the Puritans were also setting forth on a great migration across the Atlantic Ocean. There in the new World they would set the standards for not only English colonial history but the subsequent birth of the American nation. They would continue to have an impact on America in the centuries that followed. And the latter half of the 20th Century would see them emerge as the greatest superpower Western Christendom has ever seen. The Puritan impact on world history has been profound so far. Future Puritan history will be even more spectacular. Indeed it will be more awesome than words can describe. This was during the very same time period in which they began to embark upon their epic migrations to the New World. Here were a vibrant, spiritually energized, and hopeful company of people. Their new status as free men walking personally and as a nation under God blessed the nation greatly. In spite of their shortcomings this faith fed their personal and national dreams and visions for a bright future. In England they had been bound and determined to set a new agenda for their English Church. These were the true movers and shakers of their time but their emergence did not come merely because of political aspirations. That reason, as we shall discuss, involved some very telling spiritual factors, not least of them being the coming of the English Bible to the common man. This same time period saw very large migrations of Puritans to America. But the English part of Puritan history is not often appreciated in America. This is in part due to the way that this history is taught. As Westerners we are inclined to lapse back into the Hellenistic Greco-Roman mindset we learned in our former passage through the Greek culture. We think in boxes. Our educational systems compartmentalize history. It chops up the sweep of history and boxes it up into separate subjects according to nation or a certain century. This is most unfortunate. American students know their American history and the role the Puritans played in the early settlement of the New World. So they are not getting the complete picture. Students are not being told the "rest of the story".

And in the rush to do well and please the teacher or professor few are inclined to think "outside the box". There are other reasons Puritan history has been neglected. It is no secret that the academic elites at the top of the teaching hierarchies espouse a secular humanist view of this world and its histories. When we look at the slanted way they characterize the Puritans in the syllabuses their disdain for them becomes very obvious. We also see that Puritan history is minimized and the impact and scope of the Puritan contribution to American history is cloaked. Why is this so? Secular humanism was and remains today part of an Illuminist agenda to rid the West of the Judeo-Christian faith. Quite clearly there has been and continues to be a spiritual war, an ideological war, and an information war going on here in America. So it should come as no surprise that American educators at the top of the pyramid do not like the Puritans. Quite clearly from the textbooks we see that they very definitely champion the Enlightenment, all this in spite of its dismal failure when it was let loose and crashed in flames amidst the bloodshed of the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution. The matter of academic freedom and control over the content of textbooks is troubling. School teachers and college professors are no longer given the teaching liberty they once had. Local schools are not permitted to decide which textbooks they will teach from. Under the educational elites the writers of textbooks quickly learn what elements of history to emphasize or de-emphasize to land these massive contracts. The elites currently bearing rule over public education would particularly like to delete from the record any positive contribution Biblical Christian faith has brought to America. So it is not surprising that they use their academic power over the curriculum to present the Biblical Christianity in a bad light. That is why they have consigned the Puritans to the dustbin of history. Why is this happening? It seems that nestled in the public trust we have some decidedly godless hardliners. They are driven by their dark angels to not only set a certain social agenda but also indoctrinate students into their own secularist and humanist mindset. Most of all, they, or the angels that deceive them, intimidate them, and pull their strings, do not want to see American students continue in or develop a Biblical world view. The matter of "separation of church and state" is a case in point. The original intent of the Founding Fathers was the "non-establishment of any Church Institution by the state". But the people behind the curtain have re-engineered and twisted this doctrine. They now proffer it to Americans as "the rigid exclusion of Christian faith from the state and from public places". The impact of this on the schoolroom, as is now well known has been devastating. The serious decline in academic scores, the bullying which is tolerated, the jungle classrooms, and the school shootings all attest to the moral bankruptcy of public education. And yet elitists setting the agenda for the teaching of American history continue to be hard-liners. They still seek to undermine the very Christian faith that made the nation rise to greatness. The broad trans-Atlantic scope of what is really an Anglo-American Puritan History is just not appreciated in America today. It is difficult for history students to connect the dots. And the full sweeping saga of the Puritans is a story yet untold. So in order to see what the Puritans did in England America we must seek out earlier more reliable sources and do our own homework. What we are seeing here is in fact a form of academic censorship. Because when the facts of history happen to be of a spiritual nature we discover that they have been studiously ignored. They have been left out of the story. Some very important historical details and themes are missing from the textbooks. So we are left with a false and decidedly negative view of the Puritans, and a boring one at that. This academic tyranny over the facts is not just true of history and the liberal arts. Over in the higher halls of science another academic war on truth is being waged right now. In place of the truth they are very keen to advance a number of their favorite myths about the Puritans. They seem to want their students to denigrate them as a people. Then they want students to file Puritan history away in the dustbin of history and forget it.

## 3: PURITAN HISTORY, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

*Puritans Arrive in America. First came the Pilgrims in the s. They were followed by thousands of Puritans in the s, and these Puritans left their mark on their new land, becoming the most dynamic Christian force in the American colonies.*

Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Protestant Communalism. Political theorist George Armstrong Kelly, in a brilliant and much ignored book, *Politics and Religious Consciousness in America*, published over twenty years ago, argued that it was impossible to understand American history and life without coming to grips with the "fragmenting" offshoots of Calvinist orthodoxy that quite literally peopled and defined the American republic. Shain shows that the doctrines of original sin and human depravity grounded much of the political theory and practice of the day. But again, he treats the doctrines as Calvinist or Reformed, although his evidence shows that, within the limits here applicable, the Reformed theologians shared this ground with other Christians. Since he is right to stress the dominance of the Reformed churches, the criticism might seem a pedantic quibble. Paul Gottfried, "Concepts of Government. *A Quarterly Review*, Vol. More important from a political and theoretical standpoint, how did the Calvinist ideas of Covenant and the right to rebellion influence English Puritans, Scottish Presbyterians, French Huguenots, and New England Congregationalists? Such a question is still asked in history classes, and for good reason. Kirk, *The Roots of American Order*, p. James Wilson, signer of the Declaration of Independence, member of the Constitutional Convention, a principal author of the Constitution, and later an associate justice of the Supreme Court, was one of the more ardent advocates of popular sovereignty; he had been born and schooled at the Scottish university town of St. Scottish Presbyterianism worked intricately upon American life and character. The Calvinist who believes in a Sovereign God will not allow any king or prince to claim a similar sovereignty. What Calvin placed in the center of his thinking was not predestination, but the theocracy after the manner of the Old Testament, and it was this that gave Calvinism its tremendous fighting edge and its political significance. Little, Brown and Company, , p. Did a proud aristocracy trace its lineage through generations of a high-born ancestry, the republican reformer, with a loftier pride, invaded the invisible world, and from the book of life brought down the record of the noblest rank, decreed from all eternity by the King of kings. His converts defied the opposing world as a world of reprobates, whom God had despised and rejected. To them the senses were a totally depraved foundation, on which neither truth nor goodness could rest. They went forth in confidence that men who were kindling with the same exalted instincts would listen to their voice, and be effectually "called into the brunt of the battle" by their side. And, standing serenely amid the crumbling fabrics of centuries of superstitions, they had faith in one another; and the martyrdoms of Cambray, the fires of Smithfield, the surrender of benefices by two thousand non-conforming Presbyterians, attest their perseverance. Such was the system which, for a century and a half, assumed the guardianship of liberty for the English world. To advance intellectual freedom, Calvinism denied, absolutely denied, the sacrament of ordination, thus breaking up the great monopoly of priestcraft, and knowing no master, mediator, or teacher but the eternal reason. To restrain absolute monarchy in France, in Scotland, in England, it allied itself with the party of the past, the decaying feudal aristocracy, which it was sure to outlive; for protection against feudal aristocracy, it infused itself into the mercantile class and the inferior gentry; to secure a life in the public mind, in Geneva, in Scotland, wherever it gained dominion, it invoked intelligence for the people, and in every parish planted the common school. In an age of commerce, to stamp its influence on the New World, it went on board the fleet of Winthrop, and was wafted to the bay of Massachusetts. Is it denied that events follow principles, that mind rules the world? The institutions of Massachusetts were the exact counterpart of its religious system. Calvinism overthrew priestcraft; in Massachusetts, none but the magistrate could marry; the brethren could ordain. Calvinism saw in goodness infinite joy, in evil infinite woe, and, recognising no other abiding distinctions, opposed secretly but surely hereditary monarchy, aristocracy, and bondage; Massachusetts owned no king but the king of heaven, no aristocracy but of the redeemed, no bondage but the hopeless, infinite, and eternal bondage of sin. Calvinism invoked intelligence against satan, the great enemy of the human race; and the farmers and seamen of Massachusetts nourished its college with gifts of corn and strings of wampum, and

wherever there were families, built the free school. But as a historian he was able to see the political effects of Calvinism, and able unlike modern historians to report it. The separation of churches and state a completely different doctrine than the modern myth of "separation of church and state is a Calvinist doctrine.

## 4: Puritanism and Predestination, Divining America, TeacherServe®®, National Humanities Center

*For the progress and enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, in modern times, the world is more indebted to the Puritans in Great Britain and America, than to any other body of men, or to any other cause.*

Mary had rejected the reformation of the church that had taken place under her father, Henry VI. She wanted to restore the English church to the folds of Roman Catholicism, and to enforce her wishes she had burned those people who opposed her. With her death and the ascension to the throne of Elizabeth, a Protestant, many of the exiled clergy returned from their European refuges. They brought with them new patterns of belief which they had learned from their Continental friends, especially John Calvin in Geneva and Martin Bucer in Strasbourg. These emphases distinguished them from the rest of the clergy and became the earliest hallmarks of the Puritan movement. Theologically, they would accept nothing as binding on the church that was not proved from the pages of Scripture. What was not demanded by the Bible could not be made mandatory on the conscience of an individual Christian without attacking the idea of Christian liberty. Politically, the Puritans did not want the reformation of the church to be in the hands of the secular authorities. Queen Elizabeth was sympathetic to the Protestant cause. Yet she was convinced that she herself must govern the church directly, because it was too powerful an institution to be left in hands that might not support her. And so she forced two Acts of Parliament to be passed. The first was the Act of Supremacy, which established the monarch as the head of the Church of England, and vested in her the power to rule and reform the church. The second was the Act of Uniformity, which required that all Englishmen should give religious obedience to the established Church of England. The history of the Puritan protest movement falls into three periods, each period with specific demands for change, and each producing its own leaders: The Puritans made an early impact on American history, through the Pilgrim Fathers, who were concerned to set up a godly community under the rule of the Bible. Not reformed enough The initial principles of Puritanism were brought from Geneva and Zurich where the majority of the exiles had been given shelter. One of the first things they learned was to disdain the outward show of religion. On their return, the exiles found themselves in bitter opposition to the clergy wearing vestments, especially the surplice. But their objections were much more fundamental than simply refusing to dress up for church services. They were concerned that the reformation within the Church of England had not gone nearly far enough. As they saw it, Elizabeth was not prepared for a really thorough-going reform; she wanted only to preserve her own control of the church. Thomas Cartwright was a young and very brilliant Professor of Divinity at the University. He delivered a series of lectures on the Book of Acts, in which he claimed that the Bible provided the outline for church government, and that this outline was better expressed in Presbyterian church government than by the system of bishops. Cartwright called for bishops to be abolished and for a form of church order to be set up based more on laypeople. He wanted to establish the kingdom of God on earth, and in England. The church was to be independent of the control of rulers: The first task of the church was to call people to obey God; only then should they be taught their duty to the state. He firmly maintained that we are all sinners, and that secular power, whoever holds it, is purely a gift from God. Within the church, anybody with the spiritual equality, regardless of social position, can be chosen to teach and serve. Along with this, he advocated the Presbyterian idea of church democracy: Cartwright was dismissed from his position of Professor of Divinity at Cambridge by Archbishop Whitgift, who was a firm supporter of the royal control of the church. Cartwright continued to write and lecture. He gained a great following within the established church, but yet none of the reforms he so badly wanted actually came to fruition. This was partly due to a division within the Puritan party itself. One group rejected the idea that the Presbyterian system was taught in the New Testament. They found in the Bible that each local church was vested with the absolute power to determine its own course of action and its own destiny. They also thought unbiblical the idea of a mixed church, combining devoted Christian people with purely nominal attenders. They wanted to restrict membership of the church to the clearly committed. It went against the whole idea of a national or established church to which all members of the nation belonged, and at the same time it imposed a threat to the power that the monarch could influence within the church. It certainly would

have reduced the political importance of the church, and the crown would no longer have been able to use the church to affect the life of the people. Because of this division within his own supporters, Cartwright could not put together a unified opposition to the episcopal structure of the Church of England. He was frustrated not only by those who held independent views, but also by those who, while holding the general spiritual principles of Puritanism, remained loyal to the Church of England and would have no part in the specific demands for reform. With Cartwright dismissed and his attempts to effect a Presbyterian order of church government aborted, the first phase of the Puritan movement was completed. He was destined to be one of the most popular and influential of the Puritan leaders. Like him, he was concerned for an educated ministry. All too often, churches found themselves under the ministry of the youngest sons of nobles, who saw the system of patronage within the church as a lucrative and easy path to advancement. Sometimes these men knew so little that they hired others to say services for them, and the worship became unintelligible. Again, Perkins recognized the prime place of preaching within worship, and this was another Puritan emphasis. All sorts of rituals and ceremonies had been introduced, so that many of the services contained little or no teaching. Perkins, in common with most Puritans, realized the importance of educating the congregations in the truths of the Bible. The Puritans believed that the Bible contained the perfect rule for living, believing and worshipping, and so they strove to make its teaching as widely known and understood as possible. Perkins had the same beliefs as all Puritans. God is sovereign in everything, and people can only find the forgiveness they need through the death of Jesus Christ reconciling them to God. Together with this intellectual framework, Perkins had the Puritan longing for simplicity in worship, uncluttered by ceremony or ritual. Because of this, there were two attempts to have him removed from his position and ejected from the Church of England. Yet his clear loyalty to the established church, together with the support of some of his influential friends, protected him from being seriously threatened. His early death in , at the age of forty-four, robbed Puritanism of one of its most influential advocates. He was respected as a prominent churchman, was a popular apologist for Protestantism against Roman Catholicism, and had wide influence through his writings. In these writings he stressed something which was to become one of the key points of Puritan spirituality. Until Perkins, dogmatic or systematic theology had been seen as the major task of a theologian. But he brought a vision of applying the Calvinist system of belief to practical questions. No bishop, no king When Elizabeth died in , she was succeeded by James VI of Scotland, who had been brought up in a Presbyterian church with a strict discipline, aware of Calvinist theology. The Puritans gained a new hope. Would this new king make their dream of reform a reality? While on his way to claim the throne, James was met by a delegation of Puritans and asked to reform the church. He agreed to meet with Puritan representatives at a later date, and a meeting was eventually held at Hampton Court Palace. At the conference, the Puritans presented to the King a list of obvious reforms that they felt should be implemented to bring the church in line with the Bible. Their list included the abolition of the bishops, and the restructuring of the church along Presbyterian lines. This reminded James of experiences he wanted to forget. This made him determined that, as Ruler of England, he would control the church and never again be subject to the discipline of ministers. He had also come to believe that government by bishops was a means of maintaining the position of the monarch as the supreme earthly governor of the church - a position to which James believed himself divinely appointed. Instead of the debate and reform they hoped for, the Puritan party received a crushing blow. In fact, the only one of their proposals that the King accepted, was for a new translation of the Bible in the English language. James had become afraid of the growing influence of the Puritans and was determined to drive them out of the church. He deprived them of their livings and, unlike Elizabeth, refused to tolerate their existence within the established church. Although he agreed with them theologically, and even wrote some theological books with a Calvinist position, he was determined to prevent the creation of a church which could in any way challenge the power of the crown. Laud is supposed to have had a list drawn up of all the clergymen in England. Against each of the names he allegedly placed either a P or an O - Puritan or Orthodox. He then began to try and drive the Puritans from their churches. At the same time as attacking the Puritan clergy, James and Laud determined to reduce some of the power of the nobility and to frustrate the growing call for democratic rule. Many of the emerging middle class and some nobles joined the Puritan movement as a vehicle for their political opposition to James

and the policies of Laud. The Puritans were driven underground. They began to preach a strong gospel, directing their calls for reform no longer towards the ruler, but to any or all of the people of God. People who were searching for salvation should not only trust in Jesus Christ, but also put on the whole armour of God. They preached a gospel which called for strength and action as well as faith. Within one generation this hostility was to break out in civil war - a war in which the supporters of royal privilege were found opposed to the growing democratic party, whose leadership was solidly Puritan. The period between James coming to the throne and the eventual triumph of the Puritan party saw the rise of two famous leaders whose names have become synonymous with Puritanism: John Owen and Richard Baxter. Owen was born and educated in the climate of political and theological controversy created by Stuart policies. He was a staunch supporter of the rights of a democratic Parliament over and against the royal supremacy. He was also an Independent in church government, demanding the right of the local congregation to elect its own leaders and to be accountable to God alone under the Bible. Owen was also a rigid Calvinist in his theological position, and this at a time when the leaders of the Church of England under Laud were quite the opposite-liturgical and idealistic in practice, anti-Calvinist in theology. Eventually, the rift between Charles and his Parliament became an open civil war, with the vast majority of the Puritan party ranged against the King. Owen became one of the chaplains to the Parliamentary Army and in this capacity exercised great influence and travelled extensively. Among its first acts was one to abolish the Church of England as an episcopal church - no more bishops. This meant that a Parliamentary Committee had to be set up to validate the ordination of those who presented themselves for ministry within churches, and to oversee the transfer of clergy from one church to another. Owen was not included in this structure, nor was he invited to be a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines which was convened to produce an alternative basis of faith to the 39 Articles of the old Church of England. The reason for his exclusion was that he held very firm Independent views, while Parliament was inclined to Presbyterian thought, confirmed by the help the Scots and their Presbyterian army had given in the Civil War. Eventually the Long Parliament was dismissed and Cromwell assumed the rule of the nation as the Lord Protector.

## 5: God In America: People: John Winthrop | PBS

*Christian liberty: the Puritans in Britain and America* The Puritans wanted even more reformation in the established church. Their emphasis helped bring about civil war in Britain.

Calvinism Puritanism broadly refers to a diverse religious reform movement in Britain committed to the continental Reformed tradition. They believed that all of their beliefs should be based on the Bible, which they considered to be divinely inspired. As sinners, every person deserved damnation. Therefore, being a Christian could never be reduced to simple "intellectual acknowledgment" of the truth of Christianity. Over time, however, Puritan theologians developed a framework for authentic religious experience based on their own experiences as well as those of their parishioners. It began with a preparatory phase designed to produce contrition for sin through introspection, Bible study and listening to preaching. This was followed by humiliation, when the sinner realized that he or she was helpless to break free from sin and that their good works could never earn forgiveness. For some Puritans, this was a dramatic experience and they referred to it as being born again. Historian Perry Miller wrote that the Puritans "liberated men from the treadmill of indulgences and penances, but cast them on the iron couch of introspection". Puritan clergy wrote many spiritual guides to help their parishioners pursue personal piety and sanctification. Many Puritans relied on both personal religious experience and self-examination to assess their spiritual condition. They rejected confirmation as unnecessary. Most Puritans practiced infant baptism, but a minority held credobaptist beliefs. In "A Discourse on the Nature of Regeneration", Stephen Charnock distinguished regeneration from "external baptism" writing that baptism "confers not grace" but rather is a means of conveying the grace of regeneration only "when the [Holy] Spirit is pleased to operate with it". Therefore, one cannot assume that baptism produces regeneration. The Westminster Confession states that the grace of baptism is only effective for those who are among the elect; however, its effects are not tied to the moment of baptism but lies dormant until one experiences conversion later in life. In agreement with Thomas Cranmer, the Puritans stressed "that Christ comes down to us in the sacrament by His Word and Spirit, offering Himself as our spiritual food and drink". The episcopalians known as the prelatial party were conservatives who supported retaining bishops if those leaders supported reform and agreed to share power with local churches. In addition, these Puritans called for a renewal of preaching, pastoral care and Christian discipline within the Church of England. The Westminster Assembly proposed the creation of a presbyterian system, but the Long Parliament left implementation to local authorities. As a result, the Church of England never developed a complete presbyterian hierarchy. Furthermore, the sacraments would only be administered to those in the church covenant. The New England Congregationalists were also adamant that they were not separating from the Church of England. However, some Puritans equated the Church of England with the Roman Catholic Church, and therefore considered it no Christian church at all. These groups, such as the Brownists, would split from the established church and become known as Separatists. Puritan husbands commanded authority through family direction and prayer. The female relationship to her husband and to God was marked by submissiveness and humility. I had eight birds hatched in one nest; Four cocks there were, and hens the rest. I nursed them up with pain and care, Nor cost nor labour I did spare. Bradstreet alludes to the temporality of motherhood by comparing her children to a flock of birds on the precipice of leaving home. While Puritans praised the obedience of young children, they also believed that, by separating children from their mothers at adolescence, children could better sustain a superior relationship with God. The pinnacle of achievement for children in Puritan society, however, occurred with the conversion process. Just as parents were expected to uphold Puritan religious values in the home, masters assumed the parental responsibility of housing and educating young servants. Older servants also dwelt with masters and were cared for in the event of illness or injury. African-American and Indian servants were likely excluded from such benefits. Christian demonology Like most Christians in the early modern period, Puritans believed in the active existence of the devil and demons as evil forces that could possess and cause harm to men and women. There was also widespread belief in witchcraft and witches—persons in league with the devil. However, Harsnett was in the minority, and many clergy, not only

Puritans, believed in witchcraft and possession. In England and America, Puritans engaged in witch hunts as well. In the s, Matthew Hopkins , the self-proclaimed "Witchfinder General", was responsible for accusing over two hundred people of witchcraft, mainly in East Anglia. In New England, few people were accused and convicted of witchcraft before ; there were at most sixteen convictions.

*Some Puritan ideals became incorporated into the Church of England, such as the formal rejection of Roman Catholicism; others were absorbed into the many Protestant denominations that emerged in the late 17th and early 18th centuries in America and Britain.*

The hypocrisy is apparently meant to shame Americans about their founding. Yes, the Puritans did leave England because they had been persecuted for their religion. For the whole story go to parts 1 and 2 of the Truth v. Myth series on the Protestant Work Ethic. For their loud and continual protests and complaints against the Anglican Church, the church hierarchy, and even the English monarch and Parliament, the Puritans were disliked and marginalized throughout the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Laud harried them out, putting a price on the heads of more outspoken and powerful Puritan ministers, making it a criminal offense to attend Puritan worship services, and generally doing his best to squash all opposition to the Anglican Church. So in the 1630s the Puritans headed to what is now New England. So why were the Puritans in New England? Because they had been forced out of England. But these were not generalized goals; that is, the Puritans did not believe that any or every religion, diligently applied, could result in such a paradise. They believed that only their reformed version of Anglican Christianity could put such goals within reach. They were not completely crazy for thinking so. Puritans were supposed to live exemplary lives in every respect so that anyone they dealt with—their customers, friends, even strangers they met—would see God through them, and be inspired to seek God themselves. Thus the Puritans might be excused for thinking their religion was the only one that could save the world. In their limited experience of the world, theirs was the most actively reformist faith. They left England to preserve that faith, so that Puritanism would not be diluted or destroyed. They left England to create a place where Puritanism could thrive, and eventually grow so strong that when England was destroyed by God for its apostasy, the fugitive Puritans would be left to re-establish Christian civilization. Now we see why the Puritans did not encourage religious diversity or practice religious tolerance in New England. It was not because they were terrible, hateful people. They left England to establish a Puritan state where Puritan Anglicanism—Congregationalism—could be practiced. They did not leave England to establish a state where people were free to practice whatever religion they wanted. It is incorrect to say the Puritans wanted freedom of religion; they did not. They wanted to be able to practice their own religion freely. Those are two very different things, and we should not misrepresent the Puritans by claiming they believed in freedom of religion. The Puritans in New England broadcast their intentions, making it as clear as they possibly could that people of other faiths were not welcome there. They made no secret of their hostility to outside religious presence. When people of other faiths insisted on entering New England, the Puritans boiled over with anger. The question we ask ourselves at this point is, why did people of other faiths go to New England when they knew the situation there? Because they were just as zealous and single-minded about their own faiths as the Puritans. We tend to think of the Quakers who were persecuted in New England as gentle innocents who did no wrong. But Quakers in the 17th century were the most radical Protestant sect in England, maybe even in Europe. They entered Puritan towns banging pots and pans, screaming and singing, entering meeting-houses during Puritan worship and yelling to the congregation to hear their words. Sometimes Quakers stripped themselves naked in the center of town to call attention to the need to strip oneself of earthly attachments. The Quakers, then, were a radical and alarming people who went into New England with the express mission to destroy the Puritan way and introduce their own religious beliefs. They were just as feverishly devoted to Quakerism as the Puritans were fanatically devoted to Puritanism. What we have are two radical groups with zero tolerance for other beliefs who were, once the Quakers entered New England, trapped in the same space. It is only if we think that the 18th-century beliefs about religious tolerance enshrined in our Constitution came directly from the 17th century, then, that we can be dismayed to find no freedom of religion in Puritan New England. Almost no one in 17th-century Europe believed in freedom of religion or freedom of conscience. The Quakers did not, the Puritans did not. Almost all sects believed they alone had the truth of God and that they alone should exist. It took years of religious co-existence in America to get to the point

where freedom of religion could be put forward as a basic human right.

## 7: The Puritans and Freedom of Religion | The Historic Present

*Like the Pilgrims, the Puritans were English Protestants who believed that the reforms of the Church of England did not go far enough. In their view, the liturgy was still too Catholic.*

Three key theological concepts from the Protestant Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries—congregational self governance, the covenantal nature of the relationship between man and God, and the free will of individuals to choose—eventually found expression in political philosophy and formed the basis for notions of popular sovereignty and self governance that our founders used in writing and approving the Declaration of Independence in and the Constitution between and . When Catholic Queen Mary ascended to the throne of England in , a group of Protestant theologians and scholars, fearing for their lives, fled to Geneva, Switzerland. There, under the protection of Protestant Reformation leader John Calvin, they labored several years to produce the first widely available English version of the Bible. Published in , the Geneva Bible gained widespread popularity in England, especially because Protestant Elizabeth I succeeded Mary in . The translation was a giant leap ahead of earlier versions, but of particular interest were the annotations offered by the English translators, which tended to promote a more republican view of governance, as opposed to the sort of absolute monarchy that was emerging across Europe. In his magnum opus, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin described his system of Protestant theology, including the covenantal relationship between the church and civil governance. The *Institutes* provided a biblical justification for Christian resistance to the rule of tyrannical monarchs. It also laid the framework for the establishment of a biblically based civil government, as practiced in Geneva, then a city of 20, Its republican form of government tolerated but a single theological perspective: All men had the potential to be saved, they argued, and it was that potential that formed their original natural rights. Tired of the challenges to his absolute authority implicit in the annotations found in the Geneva Bible, James I convened a group of clerics and instructed them to produce a new English translation, which was finally published in as the King James version of the Bible, which eventually supplanted the Geneva Bible, both in England and the colonies in British North America. Puritans—English Protestants who adhered to a Calvinist interpretation of Christianity—were in constant conflict with James I and his successor Charles I over their absolutist—some called it tyrannical—approach to governance. These Puritans also experienced internal conflicts, with some adhering strictly to Calvinist principles, while others began to reject notions of predestination with the more hopeful notion of individual free will. When Charles I dismissed Parliament in , he began an eleven year period of personal rule in which Parliament did not meet at all. English Puritans reacted strongly to what they perceived as another unsupportable action by an increasingly tyrannical monarch: From to , an estimated forty thousand Puritans made the trek to Massachusetts, where Winthrop and other elders established the first Christian theocracy in the new world—the Massachusetts Bay Colony. These early attempts to establish a Christian theocracy based on narrow Calvinist principles, however, soon ran into opposition from developing Christian notions of free will. Released from prison in , Lilburne went on to become a founder of the Leveller movement, a group that applied their Christian faith to the civil realm and advocated for popular sovereignty and covenantal acceptance by the people of the constitutionally limited rules of governance. Though never adopted, the document was seen as the first model for our American Constitution, as Justice Hugo Black wrote in his dissenting opinion in the case *Goldberg v. Kelly* in the . The goal of a written constitution with fixed limits on governmental power had long been desired. Prior to our colonial constitutions, the closest man had come to realizing this goal was the political movement of the Levellers in England in the s. In , the Levellers proposed the adoption of *An Agreement of the People* which set forth written limitations on the English Government. This proposal contained many of the ideas which were later incorporated in the constitutions of this Nation. An ardent Christian who took the idea of the great commission seriously—he learned several Native American languages and spent much of his time promoting the Gospel and converting Native Americans in New England to Christianity—Williams also believed that every person must live by the dictates of his or her conscience. He studied the Bible in great detail, and held views that many in the

Massachusetts Bay Colony considered heretical. In he was expelled, and fled south to what is now Rhode Island, where he was soon followed by a small number of similar outcasts from Massachusetts. He ultimately received a royal charter to establish a new colony there, one which guaranteed freedom of religion. In , another Christian who believed in freedom of religion, the Quaker William Penn, secured a royal charter for the colony of Pennsylvania. A decade later, the disastrous Salem Witch trials marked the end of the liberty-limiting theocracy of the original Massachusetts Bay Colony. By the s, the generation of Colonial leaders who fought the American Revolution and passed and ratified the Constitution embraced the concepts of popular sovereignty, individual free choice, and need for covenantal agreementsâ€”expressed in writing and clearly understood by all to either accept or rejectâ€”that Roger Williams and John Lilburne had first advanced more than a century before as natural continuations of their Christian faith to the civil realm.

## 8: Christian liberty: the Puritans in Britain and America | Christian History Magazine

*See the main articles on each of the colonies for information on their political and social history; this article focuses on the religious history of the Puritans in North America. The Puritans of New England evolved into the Congregationalist churches.*

The first English settlement in North America had actually been established some 20 years before, in 1585, when a group of colonists 91 men, 17 women and nine children led by Sir Walter Raleigh settled on the island of Roanoke. Mysteriously, by the time the Roanoke colony had vanished entirely. Historians still do not know what became of its inhabitants. In 1607, just a few months after James I issued its charter, the London Company sent men to Virginia on three ships: They reached the Chesapeake Bay in the spring of 1607 and headed about 60 miles up the James River, where they built a settlement they called Jamestown. The Jamestown colonists had a rough time of it: They were so busy looking for gold and other exportable resources that they could barely feed themselves. The first African slaves arrived in Virginia in 1619. In 1632, the English crown granted about 12 million acres of land at the top of the Chesapeake Bay to Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore. This colony, named Maryland after the queen, was similar to Virginia in many ways. Its landowners produced tobacco on large plantations that depended on the labor of indentured servants and later African slaves. Maryland became known for its policy of religious toleration for all. The New England Colonies The first English emigrants to what would become the New England colonies were a small group of Puritan separatists, later called the Pilgrims, who arrived in Plymouth in 1620. Ten years later, a wealthy syndicate known as the Massachusetts Bay Company sent a much larger and more liberal group of Puritans to establish another Massachusetts settlement. With the help of local natives, the colonists soon got the hang of farming, fishing and hunting, and Massachusetts prospered. As the Massachusetts settlements expanded, they generated new colonies in New England. Puritans who thought that Massachusetts was not pious enough formed the colonies of Connecticut and New Haven the two combined in 1636. This made New York one of the most diverse and prosperous colonies in the New World. In 1681, the king granted 45,000 square miles of land west of the Delaware River to William Penn, a Quaker who owned large swaths of land in Ireland. Lured by the fertile soil and the religious toleration that Penn promised, people migrated there from all over Europe. Like their Puritan counterparts in New England, most of these emigrants paid their own way to the colonies—they were not indentured servants—and had enough money to establish themselves when they arrived. As a result, Pennsylvania soon became a prosperous and relatively egalitarian place. The Southern Colonies By contrast, the Carolina colony, a territory that stretched south from Virginia to Florida and west to the Pacific Ocean, was much less cosmopolitan. In its northern half, hardscrabble farmers eked out a living. In its southern half, planters presided over vast estates that produced corn, lumber, beef and pork, and—starting in the 1690s—rice. These Carolinians had close ties to the English planter colony on the Caribbean island of Barbados, which relied heavily on African slave labor, and many were involved in the slave trade themselves. As a result, slavery played an important role in the development of the Carolina colony. It split into North Carolina and South Carolina in 1733. In 1733, inspired by the need to build a buffer between South Carolina and the Spanish settlements in Florida, the Englishman James Oglethorpe established the Georgia colony. By 1776, on the eve of revolution, there were nearly 20,000. These colonists did not have much in common, but they were able to band together and fight for their independence. Start your free trial today.

## 9: History of the Puritans in North America - Wikipedia

*Puritans in both Britain and British North America sought to cleanse the culture of what they regarded as corrupt, sinful practices. They believed that the civil government should strictly enforce public morality by prohibiting vices like drunkenness, gambling, ostentatious dress, swearing, and Sabbath-breaking.*

It takes some heavy lifting to persuade them that, on the contrary, most American Puritans sought the liberty to practice their own faith but refused to grant others the same freedom. To create a holy commonwealth and a godly society, the founders of Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut instituted religious establishments—arrangements by which the civil government favored one church and penalized anyone who dissented from its teachings. By adopting religious establishments, New England Puritans followed the course deemed wise and prudent by most early modern Christians on both sides of the Atlantic. Throughout Western Europe, civil governments lent official support to one Christian denomination, granted temporal powers and privileges to the clergy of those churches, and persecuted men and women who held other religious views. A majority of Protestants and Catholics alike believed that these close alliances between temporal and spiritual powers benefited both the church and the state by promoting individual morality, social harmony, and political stability. The matter of religion was too important, the stakes in this world and the next too high, to be left to the free choice of individuals. No surprise, then, that the founders of most colonies in mainland British North America moved quickly to set up religious establishments. Even so, the strength of colonial religious establishments varied considerably. The firmest alliance between church and state existed in Massachusetts Bay, where for most of the seventeenth century only male members of the Congregational Church enjoyed the right to vote in colony elections. In those colonies, too, the civil government dealt harshly with religious dissenters, exiling Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams for their outspoken criticism of the Puritan way and whipping Baptists or cropping the ears of Quakers for their determined efforts to proselytize. Despite those measures, dissenters endured discrimination and financial penalties well into the eighteenth century. Many devout Puritans refused to intermarry or to conduct business with Baptists and Quakers, and civil governments resisted granting them exemptions from the taxes, which supported Congregationalist ministers. Even so, colony laws obliged all Virginians to attend Anglican public worship and taxed dissenters to pay for the support of the Anglican clergy; after , as Baptist ranks swelled in that colony, outspoken preachers met with sporadic abuse from angry mobs and fines and imprisonment from outraged local magistrates. Elsewhere in British North America outside of New England and Pennsylvania , colonial Anglicans enjoyed less official support, despite the benefits of establishment. In the Carolinas as well as in New York, New Jersey, and Delaware, Anglicans never made up a majority, and thus competed with and were obliged to tolerate, even if grudgingly ethnically diverse groups of Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, Dutch Reformed, and a variety of German Pietists. In other words, the first point to emphasize in class is that colonial religious establishments afforded powerful advantages to two denominations, the Anglicans and Congregationalists, who together claimed the largest number of churches in British North America by William Penn The second point, one meriting equal emphasis, is that a small but influential minority of colonials rejected the widely held conviction that religious establishments were essential to a unified state and an orderly society. By the lights of Roger Williams the founder of Rhode Island and William Penn the founder of Pennsylvania , government efforts to enforce religious conformity provoked discord in civic life, promoted corruption within state-sponsored churches, and encouraged hypocrisy and ignorance among ordinary men and women. Those two radical thinkers contended that it was the duty of governments to uphold liberty of conscience: Swelling that sea change of opinion were two opposing historical tsunamis, which, paradoxically, contributed to the same result: The first wave of influence was the Enlightenment, which nurtured a new liberal world-view exemplified by the writings of John Locke. Locke contended that government originated from a voluntary contract among individuals and that its sole purpose was to secure their natural rights. It followed that the state should serve merely as a referee in contests among individuals seeking to advance their private interests; government had no responsibility to promote morality and religion or to help steer men and women toward

eternal salvation. The second influence crested in mid-eighteenth-century evangelical religious revivals, which swept across Great Britain as well as parts of present-day Germany and its American colonies where those revivals came to be called the first Great Awakening. Indeed, their mistake attests to how firmly those values have struck root in our civic life. Within the globalization of life, three major changes were of special significance. The development of new-style empires and large state systems that came to dominate global political and military affairs. The internal transformation of the major societies, but especially the transformation of society in western Europe. The emergence of networks of interaction that were global in their scope. These developments reoriented the global balance of societal power. In there were four predominant traditions of civilization in the Eastern Hemisphere in a position of relative parity, but by , one of these societies, the West, was in a position to assume political and military control over the whole world. Ancient, Medieval, and Modern, 6th ed. One way to drive home that point is by encouraging your students to explore the possible reasons that religious establishments enjoyed broad support among both elites and ordinary people in early modern Europe and colonial America. Why did so many people on both sides of the Atlantic embrace close alliances between church and state as a positive good? If your classes are like mine, you might be saved the trouble of asking that question by the stray student who wonders aloud: Defend the proponents of religious establishments from the perspective of the early modern period. Remind your students that sixteenth and seventeenth-century Western Europe weathered a long series of bloody conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, accompanied by constant political turmoil and mounting levels of poverty, unemployment, and crime. Many victims of those upheavals ended up in British North America only to confront new challenges to staying alive. The determination of southern planters to exploit and control indentured servantsâ€”the majority of whites settling in the seventeenth-century Chesapeakeâ€”made for a violent and volatile society. Meanwhile, embattled Puritans in New England defended their settlements from Indian nations striving to reclaim their lands and French Catholic traders and missionaries seeking to expand their influence in Canada. Small wonder, then, that many early modern Christians turned to religious establishments as institutional bulwarks against the violence and disorder closing in on all sides. Another angle worth stressing in class discussion is the distinctive emphasis of the earliest arguments advanced in favor of religious liberty by Roger Williams and William Penn. Unlike the principal political architects of the new United States e. As for the rank-and-file Euro-American colonists who founded outposts of empires along the north Atlantic coast many millennia later, they embraced diverse Christian teachings and ritual practices, often intermixed with robust beliefs in the supernatural powers of magic, witchcraft, and astrology, and their attendance at Christian worship ranged from regular to never. Historians Debate The relation between church and state in British North America is one of those rare topics, which provokes little disagreement among historians. In seventeenth century Britain, bishops of the Church of England which owned a great deal of property sat in the House of Lords and voted on all legislation. By contrast, in Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut, there were no church courts empowered to levy fines on offenders against the law, Congregational churches typically held no property even the local meetinghouse was owned by the town and used to conduct both town meetings and religious services , and ministers, while often called upon to advise the civil magistrates, enjoyed no official role in town or colony governments. It includes short excerpts from the seminal debate between John Cotton and Roger Williams over liberty of conscienceâ€”an exchange guaranteed to provoke a lively response from students. Recent scholarship on the Church of England in the American colonies has convincingly criticized earlier interpretations for understating the vitality of Anglican establishments and their increasing influence and appeal during the first half of the eighteenth century: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State Laurence Moore, an in-your-face polemic against the Christian Right which includes thoughtful analyses of the thought of Roger Williams, John Locke, Baptist leaders Isaac Backus and John Leland, and Thomas Jefferson on the subject of separating church and state. She holds a Ph. Heyrman is the author of Commerce and Culture:

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