Civil War in England: The Triumph of Presbyterianism and Independence Over Anglicanism

Prayer
Scripture: Colossians 3:12-17
Hymn: 433 "Let Us with a Gladsome Mind"

Throughout the English Reformation the religious and political were intertwined.

The Mounting Tension During the Reign of King James I (1603-1625)

James I inherited from Queen Elizabeth a troubled religious situation. The beheading of Mary Queen of Scotland and the defeat of the Spanish Armada gave England some relief from the threat from the Catholic minority in the kingdom. Dissatisfaction with the English settlement among the Puritans continued to grow. The failure of Robert Browne's Separatist church and his return to Anglicanism did not end Separatism. The discovery of the Separatist church of Greenwood and Barrow in London in 1592 moved Parliament to pass in 1593 a statute proclaiming banishment against all who challenged the Queen's ecclesiastical authority, against all who refused to attend the Established Church, and against all who attended some "conventicle" where unauthorized worship was conducted. The London Separatist church fled to Amsterdam where it continued under the leadership of Francis Johnson and Henry Ainsworth.

In the closing years of Elizabeth's reign a new controversy broke out in Cambridge. Peter Baro's advocating the doctrines of Arminius led to the publication in 1595 under the leadership of Whitgift of the strongly Calvinistic Lambe's Articles. The strong Calvinism of the Puritans led to a growing criticism of Calvinism among Anglicans.

James I very quickly put to an end any hopes that the Presbyterian Puritans had that he would be true to his Presbyterian rearing in Scotland by his treatment of the Puritan's Millenary Petition. He rejected all the demands of the Puritans except the call for a new translation of the Bible that resulted in the King James Version. James' experiences in Scotland convinced him he wanted nothing of Presbyterianism. At the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 he made clear his conviction of "No bishop, no king." He would favor Anglicanism and Puritans would conform or he would harry them out of the land. With little tact James loudly proclaimed his belief in the divine right of the king and his devotion to an absolute monarchy. Under his archbishops, Bancroft and Abbot, some of the more vocal Puritan ministers were deprived of their offices. From the beginning he clashed with the House of Commons that contained many Puritans. The first Parliament (1604-1611) resulted in a series of bitter clashes. James made it plain that the power of the king was unlimited and that all the rights and privileges of Parliament came from the king. In the Goodwin election case he tried to control the membership of the House of Commons. In the Bate's case he tried to control the right to tax. When Parliament debated religious reforms James tried to deny Parliament's right to deal with religious reform. The clashes with Parliament led to
an increase in the spirit of rebellion among the Puritans. Both Puritan and Separatism increased.

After the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 a convocation of the Anglican bishops enacted into church law declarations and practices against which the Puritans had protested. Persecution led John Smyth to lead his Gainsborough Separatist church to go into exile in Amsterdam in 1608. Robinson and Brewster led their Scrooby Separatist congregation first to Amsterdam and then to Leyden in 1609. In 1609 Smyth formed the first English Baptist Church on Dutch soil. It was the General Baptist Church. Helwys and Murton led a return of the General Baptists back to England in 1612 determined to spread their faith in England in spite of persecution. Non-separatist Congregationalism developed in the Leyden church and Henry Jacob led part of the church back to England to establish a Congregational church at Southwark in London in 1616. In 1620 part of the Leyden church crossed the Atlantic in the Mayflower to plant Congregationalism in New England. Part of the Southwark church became Particular Baptists.

Puritans in England were scandalized at the immorality and worldliness of the court of James. Puritans were offended at the extravagance of his court and the vanity of his Scotch favorites. Puritans were scandalized at the disregard of justice in the case of Somerset's marrying a woman who divorced her husband and their murdering a witness in their trial. The animosity toward James and his Anglicans increased when he published in 1618 his Book of Sports commending popular games and dances on Sunday. To the Puritans it was a royal command to disobey the will of God.

When a Puritan Parliament would not grant James' request for funds he tried to get along without Parliament. He quickly disbanded his second Parliament in 1614 (the Addled Parliament) after bitter debate. Some of the more vocal members of Parliament were arrested and imprisoned in the Tower. James sought needed funds by the sale of monopolies, by claiming the liberty to raise existing taxes, and by putting strong pressures on people to make gifts to the king.

He further incurred ill will by putting pressure on the common law courts by removing judges like Sir Edward Coke who denied the right of the king to interfere with the courts. James increased the hatred by his reviving the High Commission and Star Chamber to punish his enemies.

James further alienated the Puritans by his Spanish policy. Puritans resented the influence of the Spanish ambassador, Gondomar, and feared James planned to lead England back into Catholicism. He failed to give backing to Protestants on the continent in their wars with the Catholics. He let the Spanish influence him not to support his Protestant son-in-law in the Palatinate. He tried to negotiate a marriage arrangement for his son, Charles, with the Spanish princess. Gondomar engineered the execution of Raleigh in 1618, accusing him of an attack on the Spanish.

The Puritans resented the rise of Villiers in royal favor and his promotion to Duke of Buckingham. The Parliament of 1621 refused
to grant the large sums for war that the king requested. After
Charles and Buckingham went to Spain and failed to win the Spanish
princess, sentiment for war with Spain grew and the Parliament of
1624 was more accommodating but Buckingham's adventures against
Spain and France proved embarrassing failures for England.

In the later years of James Puritans were alarmed by a young
Anglican, William Laud, a vigorous opponent of Calvinism who had
adopted Arminian views. Arminianism was spreading among Anglicans.
Laud advocated an Anglo-Catholic tradition that was willing to
admit that the Roman Church was a true church, a branch of the
Catholic Church Universal, of which the Church of England was the
purest part. Laud was an advocate of the high church ritual and
ceremony that was hated by Puritans.

James made a determined effort to replace Presbyterianism in
Scotland with episcopacy. Melville and other Presbyterian leaders
were exiled. Two high commission courts were established to
handle ecclesiastical cases. English bishops consecrated bishops
for the Scotch church. The General Assembly was pressured to order
Anglican ritual that included kneeling at communion and church
festivals. Scotland was seething with the spirit of rebellion at
the death of James.

THE RISING STORM UNDER CHARLES I (1625-1649)

From the very beginning of his reign the Puritans suspected
Charles of double-dealing and dishonesty. Buckingham, who was
greatly disliked and distrusted by the Puritans, continued as chief
adviser to the king just as he had been to his father. Before
the death of James, Buckingham had engineered the marriage of
Charles to the Catholic Henrietta Maria, sister of King Louis XIII
of France. A secret clause in the marriage agreement was that
Catholics in England would be allowed to practise their religion
without persecution. Puritans became suspicious when Catholics
were released from prison. Catholics publicly paid fines for
recusancy and then secretly received back their payments. The
French alliance and Catholic queen were unpopular.

Charles held his father's views of the divine right of the
king and his unlimited power. Charles clashed with his first
Parliament called in 1625. In 1624 Parliament had granted money
for war with Spain but no attack had been made on Spain. When
Parliament responded to the king's request for more money with
questions about how the earlier money had been spent and with
criticisms of Buckingham the king dissolved the Parliament. Before
the Parliament disbanded it called on the king to enforce the laws
against the Catholics and called for reforms in the church.
Ministers should be allowed greater freedom in preaching. Parliament
called for higher standards of education and moral living among
the clergy. Also the Puritans wanted rigid observance of Sunday
with business and recreation forbidden. Also the Puritan Parliament
wanted Arminian criticisms of Calvinism silenced.

An attack on the harbor of Cadiz that failed disgraced the
English and further discredited Buckingham.
Charles summoned a second Parliament in 1626 to demand more money but when Parliament manifested determination to impeach Buckingham Charles again dissolved the Parliament. He turned to forced loans for needed money. Those who refused the loans were imprisoned. When judges refused to declare the forced loans were legal they were removed from office. Buckingham failed again in an expedition to relieve French Protestants. Charles lacked money to pay troops and troops were quartered on the inhabitants. When some of the inhabitants tried to take the case to court Charles called for martial law to handle the cases.

When Charles called a third Parliament in 1628 it drew up its "Petition of Right" demanding that no man could be made to make a gift or loan to the king, there should be no imprisonment without just cause, no troops could be quartered on the people, and no martial law could be declared in time of peace. Parliament was placing restrictions on the king. The king had to accept the demands of Parliament. He claimed the tonnage and poundage tax was not included in the Petition of Right and sought to increase his revenues by increasing the tax. When he called Parliament back in 1629 for another session, Buckingham had been assassinated (1628). Parliament took the king to task on the issue of tonnage and poundage. Parliament then turned to religious grievances, protesting the rising influence of the Arminians and their attack on Calvinism. Laud had replaced Buckingham as the king's adviser. Only Arminians were being promoted to ecclesiastical offices. The king replied by ordering an end to bickering. The king issued the Royal Declaration forbidding a Calvinistic interpretation of the Thirty Nine Articles. The Puritans did not like the Thirty Nine Articles but deeply resented the king's declaration. Parliament refused to disband until it had declared anyone an enemy of the kingdom who introduced innovations in religion or who would pay the increase in tonnage. England was heading toward Civil War.

Charles determined to rule without Parliament. For eleven years he did not call Parliament. One of his first acts was to arrest and imprison nine leaders of the parliamentary opposition. They were tried in the court of the king's bench. Six paid their fines and were released. Two remained in prison ten years. Sir John Eliot refused to buy freedom and died in prison of tuberculosis. Puritan opposition was greatly strengthened by this affair.

The king's inability to act in foreign affairs greatly reduced the influence of England. The king was determined to undermine the Petition of Right. He revived old taxes. He invented a multitude of new fines. He created new monopolies that were sold. He levied taxes called "ship money" not only on port cities but on the interior. Heavy fines were levied on any Puritan who criticised the Anglican church.

In 1633 King Charles made William Laud Archbishop of Canterbury. Laud was an Oxford trained High Anglican and Arminian. His goal was to establish absolute outward uniformity in religion. Between 1633 and 1637 he conducted a visitation of all the parishes in England. Clergymen who differed from his views were removed from
office. Puritans were excluded from all favors. He hunted out and closed unauthorized meeting houses. Puritan preachers were silenced or exiled. All lectureships were broken up. Spies were appointed to check on private devotions in homes. French and Dutch refugee churches were ordered to conform to the Anglican way or leave England. The English ambassador to Paris was ordered not to attend Huguenot services. Only Arminians received promotions. When a lady asked Bishop Morely what the Arminians held, he replied, "The best bishoprics and deaneries in England." Laud ordered the presses not to publish unacceptable books and sought to prevent Geneva Bibles and unacceptable foreign published books from being imported into England. He had communion tables moved from the center to the east end of the churches. He took great pride in the restoration of cathedrals. He encouraged the use of candles, pictures, images, crucifixes, and elaborate robes, bowing and genuflexions. To the Puritans it was a return to popery. Even Rome felt he was moving toward reconciliation and twice he was offered a cardinal's hat.

Laud with the king's backing reissued the Book of Sports. When William Prynne, a learned Puritan lawyer published a book attacking dancing, the theatres, and the actors he was condemned by the Star Chamber to be pilloried, to have his ears cut off, to be branded on his cheeks and forehead with hot irons, to be fined five thousand pounds, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Leighton, a Scotchman, Bastwick, a learned physician, and Henry Burton, a cleric, were given similar sentences for writing against the bishops. There were popular demonstrations of sympathy for the condemned. Laud was turning the whole nation against King Charles.

A great exodus to America began with at least 20,000 crossing the ocean. Laud attempted to stop and search the ships carrying Puritans to America.

In 1637 Charles ordered Scotland to use a prayer book modeled on the Anglican Prayer Book. The Scots bound themselves by the National Covenant to defend Presbyterianism against the bishops and their prayer book. Charles tried to raise money for war by forced loans but met universal resistance. He drafted an army to put down the rebellion in Scotland but the army refused to fight. Charles had to yield to the Scots.

The Irish revolted against England. Wentworth, Lord Strafford, in 1639 brutally put down the revolt and advised Charles to treat the English as he had treated the Irish.

Charles was determined to put down the Scots. He called Parliament in 1640 to demand money for the war. Parliament insisted on discussing grievances and Charles adjourned "The Short Parliament." In London there were violent mob demonstrations against the king.

Charles was alarmed by the mob demonstrations and determined to put down the Scottish rebellion. The king drafted an army that was described as "all the arch knaves of the kingdom" and used forced loans and other financial expedients to equip the army. He
failed to raise enough to adequately supply his army but he marched it to the border to meet the Scots. The army refused to fight. The Scots invaded England. Charles had to sue for an armistice.

On November 3, 1640 Charles summoned "The Long Parliament." Led by John Pym and John Hampden Parliament began a series of reforms. First, Parliament moved to remove the King's evil advisers. Strafford and Laud were arrested. Strafford was accused of treason. When the members of Commons saw that they could not prove their charges to the satisfaction of the House of Lords, by a bill of attainder Strafford was executed. Then followed a series of enactments: (1) Parliament should meet every three years and could not be dissolved without its own consent. (2) The special royal courts including Star Chamber and the High Commission Court were abolished. (3) No taxes could be levied without Parliamentary consent. (4) The king could not dismiss judges. The king was powerless to resist.

Next Parliament turned to religious reform. The more radical members wanted to abolish episcopy. A large party wanted only to remove the abuses and innovations of Laud. Parliament could not agree on what should be put in the place of Laud's system. Wild fanatical groups sprang up that began to worship as they pleased. Moderate members of Parliament grew conservative feeling that episcopy and the Prayer Book were the only way to preserve orderly government. The Anglicans began to turn Royalist.

When Parliament met again in the fall the Irish had revolted again. Parliament was afraid to put an army under the king's command. Some wanted the king to accept ministers approved by Parliament. Hyde wanted to make the king and Parliament equal. Pym wanted to make Parliament the stronger partner. Pym and his party drew up the Grand Remonstrance summarizing the grievances against Charles and stating the reforms necessary. Pym's program carried the House of Commons by a majority of eleven. The king had a party of supporters in Commons.

In 1642 Charles came to the House of Commons with troops to arrest five leaders of the radical party. Even many of the Royalists resented this attack on parliamentary privilege. Parliament resisted the king and passed a bill giving Parliament the power to appoint commanders of the militia. The king refused approval and Parliament declared the bill law without the king's approval. In June, 1642 Parliament presented a program for reconstruction of the government. All principal officers of government could be appointed only with the approval of Parliament and the church should be reformed as Parliament directed. This program would have made the king a figurehead and Charles refused. The king rallied his forces at Nottingham for Civil War.

THE CIVIL WAR

Charles I raised the royal standard at Nottingham and called for all his loyal subjects to suppress the rebellion. Most of the nobles, the high church Anglicans, the Catholics, and many country squires and all who disliked the austere morals and pious manners
of the Puritans, rallied behind their king. A few of the great earls, a large part of the Puritan middle classes that included small landholders, merchants, manufacturers, shop-keepers of London and other busy towns, supported Parliament. The North and West followed the King. The South and East were for Parliament. Principle was the main dividing line. Those who favored episcopacy fought for the king. Those who wanted to abolish episcopacy fought for Parliament. Some who were only half-hearted for bishops but who hated rebellion, stood by the king. Some who favored episcopacy but who distrusted Charles fought for Parliament. Those who believed in the superiority of Parliament fought against the king. Many royalists who fought for the king did not believe in absolutism as Charles did. Districts, classes, and even families split and father fought against son, son against father, brother against brother. The Parliamentary forces with their close cropped hair were nicknamed "Round-heads." The Royalists in their long curls were called "Cavaliers."

The fighting broke out in August, 1642. During the first two years the King's forces had a slight advantage. The wealthy poured money into supplying his forces. Gentlemen were more accustomed to handling the sword and in commanding and organizing. Their cavalry gave them an advantage. Neither side had great leaders until the war brought to the front Oliver Cromwell, one of the gentry in the parliamentary forces. Cromwell pointed out to Hampden that the king had gentlemen of honor and people of quality, while they had old men and people accustomed to serving. Cromwell declared that they must get men of spirit.

The Parliamentary supporters contributed liberally for the war. Parliament developed a successful tax system, confiscated the property of Royalists, levied an excise tax on articles of common consumption, and took control of the navy. With an adequate financial base the fortunes of the Parliamentary forces began to improve. Cromwell reorganized the army with an effective cavalry. It was an army of honest, sober Christians. A fine of 12 pence was levied for swearing. The men went into battle singing hymns. They had Bible studies, hymn sings and prayer. In 1643 Parliament in which the Presbyterians predominated formed "a solemn league and covenant" with the Scottish Presbyterians. Cromwell won a smashing victory at Marston Moor in 1644.

The Presbyterian majority in Parliament abolished the office of bishop, decreed the removal of altars and communion rails from churches, tolerated the smashing of crucifixes, images, and stained-glass windows. The Anglican liturgy was abolished. About two thousand royalist ministers were ejected to live in poverty. The Presbyterians were willing to make peace with the king and to restore him to office if he would recognize their religious settlement. Even before the victory at Marston Moor, early in 1643, Parliament called an assembly of one hundred and twenty-one clergymen and thirty laymen to meet at Westminster on July 1, 1643, to advise Parliament on religious matters; Parliament kept the power of enactment in its own hands. This Westminster Assembly contained a few Anglicans and Congregationalists but the overwhelming
majority were Presbyterian Puritans. Scotch Presbyterians sat in the assembly and took part in the discussions but did not vote. The Assembly worked to prepare a Directory of Worship, a Confession of Faith, and Catechisms.

While the Assembly worked on a religious solution the army continued the war. In the summer of 1645 Fairfax and Cromwell badly defeated and almost annihilated the main Royalist army at Naseby. Early in 1646 they captured the few strongholds left to Charles. The king surrendered to the Scots.

The Presbyterians wanted a Presbyterian state church. The Independents, including Cromwell, and much of his army, wanted freedom of worship for all except Catholics. Baptists multiplied rapidly in Cromwell's army and they wanted religious liberty.

The Presbyterian Parliament with utter disregard for these fighting men, went ahead with plans for the establishment of the Presbyterian system. Parliament submitted to Charles the Propositions of Newcastle as the basis of peace. They demanded the establishment of the Presbyterian church in England and Scotland. Parliament would control both army and navy. Parliament passed bills establishing the Presbyterian church and imposing severe penalties on all who did not conform. Early in 1647 Parliament ordered the disbanding of the army without arrears of pay.

The army would not submit to such a plan and began organizing a new program. The Independents in the army hated and feared Presbyterians as much as they did Anglicans and Catholics.

The Westminster Assembly had submitted to Parliament a "Directory of worship" in 1644 that provided a thoroughly Presbyterian system of church government. Parliament abolished the Prayer Book, and provided an order of worship that struck a balance between prescribed liturgy and extemporaneous prayer that both Presbyterians and Congregationalists could accept. Congregationalists hesitated to accept the Presbyterian government that Parliament ordered. The Presbyterian government was adopted by steps in 1646 and 1647 but never fully put in operation.

Laud was brought to trial but when it was clear that the charges would not justify putting him to death, he was executed under a bill of attainder in January 1645.

The Westminster Confession was put before Parliament late in 1646. The English Parliament refused approval until June, 1648, and then only with some modifications. The Scotch Assembly adopted the Confession on August 27, 1647. In 1647 the Assembly submitted a Larger and a Shorter Catechism. Both were approved by the English Parliament and the Scotch General Assembly in 1648.

The Scots were displeased when the Parliamentary army refused to accept the Presbyterian settlement. Charles saw an opportunity to intrigue with the Scots to invade England, leading them to believe that he would establish Presbyterianism.
Cromwell defeated and scattered the Scotch army near Preston August 17-20, 1648. Colonel Pride was stationed at the door of the House of Commons with orders to purge the House of its 143 Presbyterian members. The "Rump" Parliament of sixty Independents planned for the future. A high court of justice was appointed and Charles was sentenced and beheaded on January 30, 1649. Baron Fairfax, a Puritan noble who had been commander-in-chief of the parliamentary army, opposed the execution of the king and resigned. In 1650 Cromwell became supreme commander. Parliament appointed a Council of State of forty-one members--thirty were members of the House--to represent the people. A Radical Puritan oligarchy of Congregationalists were in control of England.

Unrest and mutiny spread in England. In Scotland outraged Presbyterians and Anglicans gave their support to the son of the executed king, Charles II. The Irish revolted and Cromwell marched his army into Ireland, crushed the revolt and shipped a number of the Irish to Barbados as slaves. Cromwell then marched on Scotland and Charles II fled to France. In 1650 Cromwell set up a new government in Scotland. He allowed the Presbyterian church to continue but all other Protestant sects had to be tolerated. This toleration was galling to the Presbyterians.

Cromwell greatly encouraged the English colonies and allowed extensive self-government. He encouraged trade and England prospered. In 1651 the Rump Parliament passed the Navigation Act that required all exports and imports to be carried on English ships. Dutch ships were excluded from trading between England and other lands. This led to war with Holland. The English were victorious--a victory that enhanced the prestige of Cromwell and the English navy.

In 1653 the Rump Parliament was dissolved. Cromwell realized it was unpopular and no longer represented the people. It was accused of enriching its members and neglecting the country. Cromwell called the Little Parliament that became known as the Barebone Parliament because it was led by Praise-God Barebone. It consisted of 140 members selected by officers of the army from a list nominated by the Independent congregations throughout the country. It turned out to be a Parliament of reforming fanatics.

Cromwell's supporters in the army prepared an "Instrument of Government" that provided for a "Protectorate" replacing the Commonwealth. Cromwell was made "Lord Protector" for life. Parliament would meet every three years to make laws. The Protector could delay but not veto legislation. Puritan Congregationalism was made the state religion. Royalists were excluded from the elections but enough Presbyterians were elected to form a majority in the Parliament--the Congregationalists were a minority in the population. Cromwell dismissed the Parliament in 1655.

Cromwell became a military dictator. In 1656 he needed money and called a new Parliament. It framed a new constitution called "Humble Petition and Advice." Forty of Cromwell's staunchest became "The House of Lords." Many Presbyterians were elected to the House
of Commons. The clash between the two houses led Cromwell to
dissolve the parliament.

Cromwell died on September 3, 1658 and was buried with great
pomp among the kings of England in Westminster Abbey.

Oliver Cromwell's son, Richard, attempted to fill his father's
place but he soon lost control of both army and Parliament. The
army asked for his retirement and took over the government. The
army officers recalled the Rump Parliament. General Monck opened
negotiations for the restoration of the Stuart family to the throne.
The army expelled the Rump Parliament but Monck restored it. He
ordered it to dissolve itself and when it refused he recalled the
Presbyterians who had been excluded in Pride's Purge in 1648.
Parliament ordered a new election and dissolved itself. The New
Parliament met in 1660 and invited Charles II to the throne.
Anglicans and Presbyterians had united in the effort to bring back
the king, the Presbyterians expecting to be rewarded by recognition
from the Anglicans. The Anglicans had no intention of granting
recognition to Presbyterians.