

THE HISTORY OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

The Westminster Assembly

PREVIOUS WEEKS: the ENGLISH REFORMATION

- The Reformation in England began in earnest with Henry VIII's desire to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which had at required to papal dispensation in the first place.
- With the 1534 *Act of Supremacy*, Henry broke from the ecclesiastical authority of the pope and was declared to be the supreme head of religion in his realm.
- Thus, Henry's annulment was granted. Throughout the remainder of his life, Henry's six wives bore him three children and possible heirs to the throne: Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth, in that order.



PREVIOUS WEEKS: HENRY'S CHILDREN

- Edward VI, whose claim to the throne depended on the legitimacy of the English break with Rome, oversaw (in a manner of speaking) advances for Reform in England.
- Mary's reign rolled back these advances and began a great persecution of Protestants.
- Elizabeth's Church of England was characterized by a search for the *via media*.



JAMES VI/I

- James Stewart (Stuart) of Scotland ascended to the English throne following the death of Elizabeth.
- James, a self-avowed Protestant, was nevertheless at odds with Protestants in his realm for various reasons.
- James did concede on the issue of a new translation of Scripture, which appeared in 1611.



CHARLES I

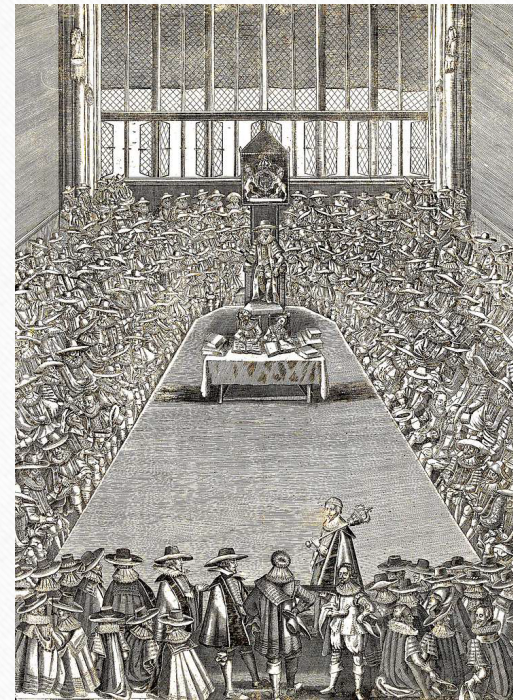
- Charles I succeeded James due to the death of James' protestant son, Henry.
- Charles successfully ran his kingdom without the aid of Parliament and the taxes which needed Parliamentary approval.
- Charles sought to forcibly consolidate religion in his realm, which incited the rebellion of his Scottish subjects.





The ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

- Charles assembled a Parliament to raise taxes for a Royalist army to fight back to the Scots. This Parliament demanded Reform of English religion in return. Charles responded by dissolving “the Short Parliament” three weeks after it convened.
- When Charles tried again, “the Long Parliament” resolved that only Parliament can disband a Parliament.
- War broke out in 1642 between Royalist soldiers and a Puritan-minded Parliamentary militia.



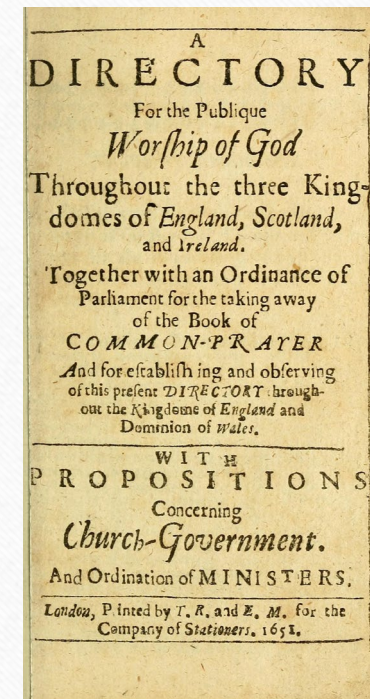
The WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY of DIVINES

- The Westminster Assembly of Divines was summoned by Parliament to provide advice on ecclesiastical matters, to be implemented in full following the English Civil War with Charles I.
- 120 “divines” met from 1643 to 1653 producing theological standards, guides for worship and church government, and examining ministers for English pulpits.



DIRECTORY for the PUBLICK WORSHIP of GOD

- The Assembly produced a Directory for the Publick Worship of God, meant to replace the various Anglican liturgies produced over the preceding years.
- The Directory is comprised of sixteen sections, outlining the requirements for preaching and prayers, singing and sacraments; the manner and content of special services (e.g. marriages and funerals) are also outlined in the Directory.
- The Directory, though adopted by the General Assembly of Scottish Presbyterians ca. 1645, never enjoyed the status for which it was intended in English churches.



DIRECTORY for the PUBLICK WORSHIP of GOD

Assembling the Congregation

Let all enter the assembly, not irreverently, but in a grave and seemly manner, taking their seats or places without adoration, or bowing themselves towards one place or other.

The congregation being assembled, the minister, after solemn calling on them to the worshipping of the great name of God, is to begin with prayer.

“In all reverence and humility acknowledging the incomprehensible greatness and majesty of the Lord, (in whose presence they do then in a special manner appear,) and their own vileness and unworthiness to approach so near him, with their utter inability of themselves to so great a work; and humbly beseeching him for pardon, assistance, and acceptance, in the whole service then to be performed; and for a blessing on that particular portion of his word then to be read: And all in the name and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

DIRECTORY for the PUBLIC WORSHIP of GOD

Preaching of the Word

PREACHING of the word, being the power of God unto salvation, and one of the greatest and most excellent works belonging to the ministry of the gospel, should be so performed, that the workman need not be ashamed, but may save himself, and those that hear him.

It is presupposed, (according to the rules for ordination,) that the minister of Christ is in some good measure gifted for so weighty a service, by his skill in the original languages, and in such arts and sciences as are handmaids unto divinity; by his knowledge in the whole body of theology, but most of all in the holy scriptures, having his senses and heart exercised in them above the common sort of believers; and by the illumination of God's Spirit, and other gifts of edification, which (together with reading and studying of the word) he ought still to seek by prayer, and an humble heart, resolving to admit and receive any truth not yet attained, whenever God shall make it known unto him. All which he is to make use of, and improve, in his private preparations, before he deliver in public what he hath provided.

DIRECTORY for the PUBLICK WORSHIP of GOD

Preaching of the Word

But the servant of Christ, whatever his method be, is to perform his whole ministry:

1. Painfully, not doing the work of the Lord negligently.
 2. Plainly, that the meanest may understand; delivering the truth not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect; abstaining also from an unprofitable use of unknown tongues, strange phrases, and cadences of sounds and words; sparingly citing sentences of ecclesiastical or other human writers, ancient or modern, be they never so elegant.
 3. Faithfully, looking at the honour of Christ, the conversion, edification, and salvation of the people, not at his own gain or glory; keeping nothing back which may promote those holy ends, giving to every one his own portion, and bearing indifferent respect unto all, without neglecting the meanest, or sparing the greatest, in their sins.
 4. Wisely, framing all his doctrines, exhortations, and especially his reproofs, in such a manner as may be most likely to prevail; shewing all due respect to each man's person and place, and not mixing his own passion or bitterness.
- ...

DIRECTORY for the PUBLICK WORSHIP of GOD

Preaching of the Word

...

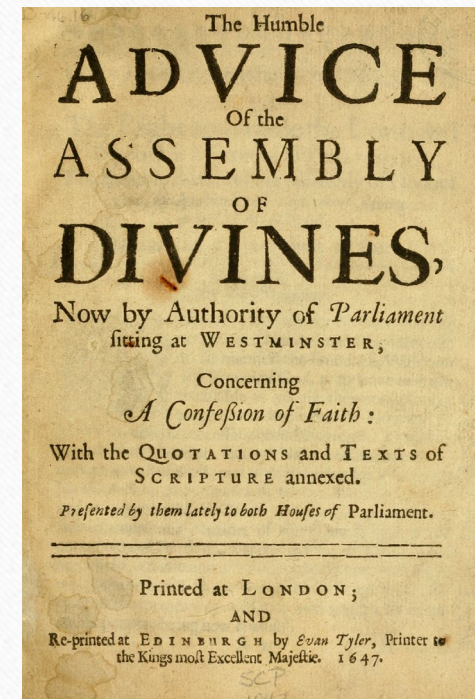
5. Gravely, as becometh the word of God; shunning all such gesture, voice, and expressions, as may occasion the corruptions of men to despise him and his ministry.

6. With loving affection, that the people may see all coming from his godly zeal, and hearty desire to do them good. And,

7. As taught of God, and persuaded in his own heart, that all that he teacheth is the truth of Christ; and walking before his flock, as an example to them in it; earnestly, both in private and publick, recommending his labours to the blessing of God, and watchfully looking to himself, and the flock whereof the Lord hath made him overseer: So shall the doctrine of truth be preserved uncorrupt, many souls converted and built up, and himself receive manifold comforts of his labours even in this life, and afterward the crown of glory laid up for him in the world to come.

STANDARDS PRODUCED by the ASSEMBLY

- The Westminster Assembly also produced: a directory for church govt.; a psalter; a confession of faith; two catechisms, a Larger and a Shorter; majority and minority papers from the Assembly debates.
- The Westminster Confession of Faith, completed in 1646, features 33 chapters covering a variety of doctrinal topics.



WCF 12, *Of Adoption*

1. All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth, in and for His only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption: by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God; have His name put upon them; receive the Spirit of adoption; have access to the throne of grace with boldness; are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by Him as by a father; yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.



CROMWELL'S COMMONWEALTH

- With the end of the Long Parliament, the Westminster Assembly closed in 1653.
- Military commander Oliver Cromwell emerged as the *de facto* leader of the new Commonwealth which favored an extensive policy of religious toleration.



