

Religions in Britain

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Why Religion Matters

- **Salvation by Religion (People)**

- Salvation of utmost importance for everyone; fear of purgatory and eternal damnation
- Mighty clergy, guarding the doors to heaven
- Plurality of opinions difficult, humorless discussions
- Dissenters punished or excluded
- enforced Unity (Catholic Church) **OR** plethora of different creeds (> 30.000 varieties of Protestantism).

- **Legitimation by Religion (Monarchs and Emperors).**

- Alliance of State and Church ever fluctuating between mutual support, rivalry and open conflict.
- Deviators not only heretic but also suspect of high treason.
- Wars and civil wars caused in whole or in part by religion (30 Years War, France, England)

BUT

By 1500 the Catholic Church was rotten

- Pope Alexander VI, the Borgia Family (nice film series with Jeremy Irons!)
- Indulgences sold to reduce time in purgatory; formulas used to compute that time!
- Deplorable state of affairs in many countries, e.g. England and Scotland

The World was waiting for something to happen.

Martin Luther, 1483 – 1546



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EXPRIMIT. AT VLTVS CERA LVCAE OCCIDVOS.

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ACTUS DEI VALUANTUS REVERENDIA LITURGIA
EXPOSITUS AT VENTUS ERA DNAS DECIDUUS
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Jean Calvin, 1509 – 1564



Calvin on Predestination



- All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death (Calvin, Book III of the *Institutes*)
- THUS:
People are good because they are elected.
AND NOT:
People are elected because they are good.
AND IN CONSEQUENCE
People are good in order to convince themselves and others of their being elected.

See also: Max Weber, Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

- Complaining about not being elected is as pointless as a dog complaining about not being human.
- This was confirmed in the **Westminster Confession of Faith** (1646)

John Knox (1513 – 1572)

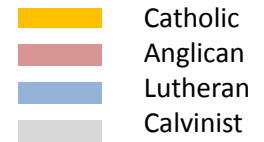


- Confinement on French Galleys (1547 – 1549)
- Exile in England (1549 – 1554)
- Stay in Geneva and Frankfurt, pupil of Jean Calvin (1554 – 1559)
- Leader of the Calvinist Reformation in Scotland (1559 – 1572)

Some of his Works

- The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women (1558)
- (Scottish) Confession of Faith (1560)
- Book of Discipline (1560)

Main Religions Compared



Puritans

- Jean Calvin
- John Knox
- Salvation by predestination
- bare walls
- no kneeling
- no sermon
- no feasts
- no fun
- Mainly Presbyterian
- Episcopalian only if enforced

Lutherans

- Martin Luther
- Philipp Melanchthon

Anglicans

- Thomas Cranmer
- Richard Hooker

Laudians

- Jakobus Arminius
- William Laud

Catholics

- St. Augustine
- Thomas Aquinas
- ...
- Salvation by work
- rich ornaments
- kneeling
- sermon
- many feasts
- some fun
- Never Presbyterian
- Always Episcopalian



Catholic: Wieskirche (Bavaria), 1754



Lutheran: St. Paul, Heidingsfeld, Franconia



Baptist Church in North America

Riots in St Giles' Cathedral, 1637



Westminster Assembly, 1643 – 1649

Parties represented:

- **the Episcopalians** who supported a moderate form of Episcopal polity
- **the Presbyterians** who favoured a Presbyterian polity – this position was pushed hard by the Scottish
- **the Independents** who favoured Congregationalist polity: every local church congregation is independent, ecclesiastically sovereign.
- **the Erastians** who favoured an ecclesiastical polity as an indifferent matter, which ought to be determined by the state.

Questions discussed:

- Was the matter of ecclesiastical polity established by divine law or a matter indifferent, with each national church free to establish its own polity?
- What amount of hierarchy was proper in the church?
- What was the proper relationship of church and state?
- How uniform should the church's liturgy be?

Westminster Standards include

- the Westminster Confession of Faith
- the Westminster Catechism (Shorter and Larger)
- the Directory of Public Worship

Reformation in Europe

