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Toward a Definition of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism': A Study in Puritan Historiography

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'Defining' as an Historical Problem

The debate over the definition of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism' is not new. Peter Lewis notes in *The Genius of Puritanism*—

> The definitions of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism' have been, since their earliest use in England, a matter of crowded debate and widespread confusion. National, political and social elements which were closely allied with the idea of Puritanism at various stages of its progress have largely obscured the vital religious and spiritual meaning of the term[s].[1]

In *The Culture of English Puritanism 1560-1700*, Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales have made a similar observation—

> Attempts to define early-modern English '[P]uritanism' and to agree on a common usage for the noun and adjective 'puritan' have been going on for well over 400 years.[2]

They go on to say that the central reason *why* the debate over a definition has continued for so long is that it has 'proved exceptionally difficult to reach any common ground'.[3] Articles from Basil Hall's *Puritanism: the Problem of Definition*[4] in 1965 to the more recent chapter in *Puritanism: Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith* by Peter Lake, "Defining Puritanism: Again?"[5] reveal the intrinsic ambiguity of the terms even over the last fifty years.

The need to define them is particularly urgent, given the recent interest in Puritan literature, theology, and culture. This interest may be traced back to four books that revived the serious study of Puritanism in the late 1930s: *The Rise of Puritanism* by William Haller,[6] *Puritanism and Liberty* by A. S. P. Woodhouse,[7] *Tudor Puritanism* by M. M. Knappen,[8] and *The New England Mind Vol I; The Seventeenth Century* by Perry Miller,[9] although popular interest in the Puritans did not become widespread until the late 1960s.[10]

Through the efforts of publishing companies like The Banner of Truth Trust and Soli Deo Gloria Publications, we have witnessed, since then, a renewed printing of, and demand for, Puritan literature. This, in turn, has been a major factor in prompting the renewal of interest in Reformed theology.[11]

Contemporary Definitions

Kelly Kapic and Randall Gleason have recently attempted definitions of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism' in their "Introduction" to *The Devoted Life*,[12] a collection of chapters surveying the life and writings of eighteen significant Puritans. They maintain that 'Puritanism was a genuine movement that wielded considerable force within seventeenth-century England and New England'.[13] They go on to say that—

> Puritans should not be limited strictly to radical Protestant nonconformists, but rather to a much broader movement of individuals distinguished by a cluster of characteristics that transcends their political, ecclesiastical, and religious differences.[14]

These 'characteristics' are seven in number: (1) Puritanism was a movement of spirituality; (2) it lays stress on experiencing communion with God; (3) Puritans were united in their dependence upon the Bible as their supreme source of spiritual sustenance and guide for the reformation of life; (4) they were predominantly Augustinian in their emphasis upon human sinfulness and divine grace; (5) they placed great emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life; (6) they were deeply troubled by sacramental forms of Catholic spirituality fostered within the Anglican Church; and (7) Puritanism was also, in part, a revival movement.[15] These characteristics are the foundation of Kapic and Gleason's overarching definition—'a genuine movement that wielded considerable force'—and not their definition itself. But are these qualifications necessary ingredients of a proper definition? As we shall see, no generally acceptable definition of these terms is possible without at least some qualifications.

In *A Quest for Godliness*, James I. Packer defines the Puritans as 'Englishmen who embraced whole-heartedly a version of Christianity that paraded a particular blend of biblicist, pietist, churchly and worldly concerns'.[16] 'Puritanism,' he contends, 'was essentially a movement for church reform, pastoral renewal and evangelism, and spiritual revival'.[17] When it comes to the

time-frame of Puritan*ism*, Packer is somewhat vague. At one point, he states that Puritanism (as a historical movement) flourished between 1550 and 1700.[18] At another point, he writes, 'When John Howe, the last of the [Puritan] giants, died in 1705, Puritanism was over.'[19] But he calls Jonathan Edwards, who was not born until 1703, 'that pure Puritan'[20] and even devotes a whole chapter[21] to his thought and contribution. He even calls Spurgeon (1834-1892) and Martin Lloyd–Jones (1899-1981) 'Puritans'.[22] On what grounds can men who lived in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries be called 'Puritans' when 'Puritanism' ended in 1705?

The late pastor and historian, John Brown, made quite a different case for the definitions of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism.' In his book, *The English Puritans*, he analysed the terms in much more of a political light. He explained—

> While in the sixteenth century [Puritanism] was descriptive of the men bent on carrying on the protestant Reformation to a further point, in the seventeenth century it became the recognized name of that party in the State which contended for the constitutional rights and liberties of the people as against the encroachments of the Crown.[23]

To this he added a list of qualifications, which marked out the Puritans: (1) reverence for Scripture, (2) reverence for the sovereign majesty of God, (3) a severe morality, (4) popular sympathies, and (5) a fervent attachment to the cause of civil freedom.[24] These, he said, have been the signs and tokens of the Puritan spirit. Like Kapic and Gleason, Brown too found that such a list was necessary to make a short, general definition of the terms 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism'.

When it came to defining the perimeters of Puritanism, Brown argued that 'Puritanism proper … was a period of a hundred years, from the accession of Queen Elizabeth in 1558 to the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658'.[25] Throughout his book, Brown argued that Puritanism was predominantly a reactionary movement against political and ecclesiastical impositions, for the Parliament and the church were both under the headship of the monarch.[26] In his attempt to define the terms, then, Brown painted them in a more political light and limited the time-period to the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658. At that point, he maintained, Puritanism essentially 'lost'. The Puritans had no more power or influence and ceased to be a movement properly so called.

John Spurr's book, *English Puritanism: 1603-1689*,[27] is considered by many to be one of the best books available on the subject. Spurr carefully dissects the many terms similar to 'Puritan' like 'dissenter', 'separatist', and 'noncon-formist', and shows that they have only made defining Puritanism itself that much more difficult. As Spurr points out, the varying degrees of Puritanism that existed within the rank and file of English Protestants makes labelling and generalising their essential characteristics quite complicated.[28] At times it is hard for a modern historian to distinguish a 'dissenting protestant' from a 'Puritan', but Spurr argues that the seventeenth-century Puritans understood the distinction. They knew who their comrades were simply by their strict piety and concern for personal holiness.[29]

Spurr concludes that '[Puritans] were simply more intensely protestant than their protestant neighbours or even the Church of England'.[30] 'In short,' he says, 'the puritans … stood out for their criticism of the Church of England and for their piety.' He further qualifies this summary definition by saying that they believed that they had been personally saved by God, elected to salvation by a merciful God for no merit of their own, and that, as a consequence of this election, they must lead a life of visible piety,[31] must be a member of a church modelled on the pattern of the New Testament, and must work to make their community and nation a model Christian society.[32]

In the final analysis, Spurr argues that the reason any attempt at defining the terms is so difficult is that, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they were constantly changing their meaning.

> Theological innovation reflected pastoral experience; some groups emphasize[d] one aspect rather than another …. The term 'puritan' was dynamic, changing in response to the world around it and applying to several denominations … but [it] also denotes a cluster of ideas, attitudes and habits, all built upon the experience of justification, election and regeneration, and this in turn differentiates puritans from other groups such as conformists or the Quakers.[33]

Spurr points out that the term 'Puritan' was first used in the late 1560s and was applied to tiny protestant sects or congregations that formed within the Elizabethan Church of England. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the term 'Puritan' denoted a kill-joy, a contentious busy-body, who rebuked

others for alleged failures of morality and piety while being unaware of the mote in his own eye. By the late 1620s, the term 'Puritan' acquired a more theological definition, and came to denote a staunch Calvinist.[34]

By the late 1640s, a positive romanticism accompanied the term many contemporaries saw Puritans as people who put God first in their lives. After the Restoration in the 1660s, the word was closely associated with 'Presbyterian' because that term had come to refer to any person who promoted a spiritually serious worship and lived according to his profession. According to Spurr, by the time Puritanism ended in 1689,[35] the term was already set in a historical perspective—the Puritans were the 'godly'.[36] On the surface, the name was often used in jest with implied negative connotations, but many believed that they were genuinely godly people, albeit somewhat oppressive toward others.

Over against John Brown, Spurr argues that Puritanism did not end with the collapse of the Puritan revolution in 1660, but in 1689.[37] The Toleration Act of that year created several conditions that ended the Puritan movement: it exempted the Puritans from religious penalty, freed them from persecution, and allowed them to worship freely at registered and unlocked meeting houses. In addition, the clergy did not have to subscribe to all Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, but only the thirty-six that pertained to doctrine and faith.[38] Moreover, within two years, most of the notable and famous Puritans had died, including Thomas Goodwin (1680), John Owen (1683), John Bunyan (1688), Richard Baxter (1691), and John Flavel (1691). When freedom of worship was granted and these last great Puritans had died, Puritanism, as a historical movement came to an end.

In contrast to both Brown and Spurr, one of the most influential Puritan scholars of the last century, William Haller, has argued that the questions of who was the first and last Puritan are a waste of time. He explains: 'There were Puritans before the name was invented, and there probably will continue to be Puritans long after it has ceased to be a common epithet.'[39] He defines Puritanism, in part, as a 'movement for reform of religion, Puritan in spirit, begun…in the reign of Elizabeth'.[40] Fundamentally, Puritanism was a spiritual outlook, a way of life, and a mode of expression that insisted upon further reform in the Church in England. Dissatisfaction with the established church

was the soil from which the Puritan movement arose. Haller argues that although they were certainly Calvinists, that characteristic should not obscure their overall desire to bring about a more thorough reform in the Church.[41]

That reform was to be accomplished, primarily, through Puritan preachers. 'The real energy of [Puritanism] was supplied by the preacher, whatever his party or sect.'[42] Haller maintains that there were two distinct though closely related objectives within Puritanism: (1) the reform of government, worship, and discipline in the English church beyond the limits fixed by the Elizabethan Settlement, and (2) the preaching of the Word of God. In this latter objective, Puritanism 'was in fact nothing but English Protestantism in its most dynamic form'.[43]

In his book *Worldly Saints*, Leland Ryken characterises Puritanism as: (1) a religious movement that was characterised by a strong moral consciousness; (2) a reform movement; (3) a visionary movement (vision of a re-formed society); (4) a protest movement against attitudes of Roman Catholicism; (5) a lay movement; (6) a movement in which the Bible was central to everything; and (7) a political and economic movement.[44] When trying to fix the time-frame of the movement, he differs. He explains: 'Just as Puritanism had no specific birth date, it had no precise termination.'[45] He adds, however, that for the purposes of his book, he has 'fixed its limit at the end of the seventeenth century'.[46]

In *The Genius of Puritanism*, Peter Lewis has steered away from giving a proper definition of 'Puritan' or 'Puritanism'. Instead, he presents the characteristics of Puritanism as: (1) the endeavour to reform the face of the English Church, (2) a conviction bound by Scripture, (3) outward and visible piety, (4) guided by the sovereignty of God, and (5) deeply devotional.[47] These characteristics are in harmony with the other Puritan scholars noted above, but where Lewis would differ from some is in his view of how the Puritan movement has continued to the present day.

> Puritanism, not destroyed … passed over into a thorough-going religious Nonconformity, and, as such, began a new stage in its own and in the nation's religious development: a stage which survived the long period of Stuart persecution and saw the restoration of old liberties in the Glorious Revolution of 1688; a stage which survived, too, the … period of widespread apathy and hardening in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century; a state … which survives in our own day in evangelical Nonconformity.[48]

Lewis understands present-day evangelical nonconformity as a metamorphosis of Puritanism, a single thread from the sixteenth century to our own time. John Coffey, reader in history at the University of Leicester, gives a helpful summary definition in *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689*.

> Puritans [were] [z]ealous Protestants who immersed themselves in Bible reading, sermon attendance, religious meetings, prayer and fasting, and who agitated for 'further reformation' in England. The Puritan subculture gradually became very diverse and included moderate supporters of episcopacy, Presbyterians, Independents, Separatists, Baptists and Seekers.[49]

By this definition, he holds the elements of unity and diversity together. The Puritans were unified by certain characteristics which they shared, yet, at the same time, they belonged to different denominations and sects. Coffey further helps our discussion of the Puritans by explaining: 'To Anglican eyes, Puritans and Dissenters were legalistic fundamentalists, who protested at the violation of their conscience every time a minor ceremony offended their narrow principles.'[50] Thus, we get a glimpse of how the Puritans were portrayed by their contemporaries as 'fundamentalists'.

Patrick Collinson, whom Coffey has called 'the leading historian of Puritanism',[51] has noted the variety of Puritans and said that any general definition of them should not concentrate too narrowly on any one of them. He explains—

> The coherence of our concept of Puritanism depends upon knowing as little about particular Puritans as possible. It might disintegrate altogether if we knew everything. Historians of Puritanism sit in Plato's cave, describing not reality but those shadows of reality which are 'characters' and stereotypes.[52]

Collinson acknowledges the 'usual' description of the essence of Puritanism as 'a certain kind of intense religious experience … an internal spiritual dynamic associated with ... "experimental Calvinism".'[53] He argues that any attempt 'to define Puritanism exactly, and within itself, [is] actually counter-productive'.[54] To try to distinguish this person or that idea as 'Puritan' is liable to fail because the term itself is now taken out of historical context. He argues that the term 'Puritan' must be studied with a certain suspicious reserve and always in context.[55]

Like Spurr, Collinson traces the development of the term 'Puritan' through the many stages of its development. Albeit reluctant to give a definition, he does espouse some level of summary: '[Puritans] were Protestants as they were perceived in a particular set of circumstances.'[56] Collinson argues elsewhere that 'Puritanism … should be defined with respect to the Puritans, and not *vice versa*'.[57] However, despite the fact that the terms 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism' are so elusive, it was, according to Collinson, a movement, a church within the Church, with its own standards and traditions and even its own discipline and spiritual government. These elements give the concept of 'Puritanism' its validity. But the most basic trait designated to this group of people is that they all wanted a 'further reformation'.[58]

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, following the lead of John F. H. New,[59] takes a different angle on defining 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism'. He argues—

> There was always a fundamental difference between the Puritan and the Anglican in matters of fundamental doctrine, such as the doctrine of man, the doctrine of the church, the doctrine of the sacraments, and doctrine in respect to eschatology.[60]

Lloyd-Jones claims that both Anglicanism and Puritanism began at roughly the same time.[61] He argues that Puritanism can be traced back to William Tyndale as early as 1524. The basis of his argument is that 'Puritanism', as he defines it, is a 'type of mind'.[62] It is an 'attitude' and a 'spirit'.[63] These two traits began to show themselves in Tyndale. Tyndale not only issued a translation of the Bible without the endorsement and sanction of the bishops, he did so after leaving England without the king's permission. Both of these actions were typical of what continued to be the Puritan attitude towards authority: advocating biblical truth before interpretations of tradition and authority and insisting upon liberty to serve God in what one believes is the true way.[64]

Therefore, according to Lloyd-Jones, Puritanism was not a reactionary movement against Anglicanism, but against ecclesiastical and political authority in general. In essence, he considered it a belief that could be tested by the truth found in Scripture. Because of this, even those with Protestant convictions who fled from England under the reign of Queen ('Bloody') Mary were Puritans because they held to what he considered was typical Puritan thinking and action.[65] These men were driven by their foundational concern

for a pure church. He concludes his discussion in *The Puritans* by saying, 'If [the Puritan's] first concern is not for a pure church, a gathering of saints, he surely has no right to call himself a Puritan.'[66]

Horton Davies, in his book *The Worship of the English Puritans* defines 'Puritanism' as—

> [T]he outlook that characterised the radical Protestant party in Queen Elizabeth's day, who regarded the Reformation as incomplete and wished to model English church worship and government according to the Word of God.[67]

He defines a 'Puritan' as he 'who longed for further reformation in England according to the Word of God'.[68] In terms of the time-frame of Puritanism (despite the explicit reference to Elizabeth in his definition above), he formally calls those who left England for North America, 'Puritans.' He maintains this distinction by being careful to call those in England, 'English Puritans,' and those in America, 'New England Puritans'.[69] Thus, for Davies, the characteristics of the Puritans are virtually synonymous with those of the other scholars above, but his time-frame for the movement extends into the New England colonies during the eighteenth century.[70]

Other Puritan scholars, such as Dewey Wallace, Jr., Christopher Durston, and Jacqueline Eales, all essentially agree on the characteristics of Puritanism and its time-frame from 1560 to about 1700.[71] Erroll Hulse, in his book *Who are the Puritans?* claims that Puritanism ended with the death of Thomas Doolittle in 1707.[72] All of these scholars provide distinct summary definitions, with different emphases, but most emphasize the same fundamental characteristics—devotion to Scripture, piety, family, and church—of the Puritan. In most cases, definitions of the Puritans given by scholars today capture a blend of theological, ecclesiological, and outward piety. Leland Ryken, for example, in his book *Worldly Saints* states, 'In Puritanism, a theology of personal salvation was wedded to an active life in the world.'

Ernest Kevan, late Principal of London Bible College, blended these elements together when he wrote—'Puritanism must be understood in two ways: first, as the endeavour to effect thoroughgoing reforms of ecclesiastical practice, and second, as the attempt at a godly way of life.'[74]

Kevan, however, differs from other modern-day scholars on the time-frame of the Puritan movement. He states that Puritanism flourished in 'the century between the Acts of Uniformity 1559 and 1662',[75] which brings the movement to an end before the date that a majority espouses. Interestingly, though, he contends that Richard Baxter (d. 1691) was the last Puritan.[76] There are other Puritan scholars who have contributed to the discussion of how best to define 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism', but most would concur with those mentioned above.

Response and Analysis

It will now be clear that there are three separate strands (in the effort to define the terms) that emerge as points of similarity and difference among Puritan scholars. The first strand pertains to providing a summary definition of the terms. Without necessarily disagreeing with one another's definition, most scholars would emphasize one particular aspect of Puritanism—political, theological, or social—in their respective definitions.

A second strand of difference that emerges concerns the list of individual characteristics or qualifications of Puritan and Puritanism. Most scholars, as we have seen, list many of the same characteristics, though they might highlight one or two over and above the others. For example, Packer emphasised that 'Puritanism was, above all else, a Bible movement'.[77] Peter Lake, on the other hand, stressed that the movement was structured around 'religious experience'.[78] Spurr argued that at its heart 'lay a personal commitment to, and experience of, the doctrines of justification by faith alone and the predestination of the elect'.[79]

A third strand that emerges is the question of the time-frame of Puritanism. On this issue, we have seen a wide variety of historical interpretations. Most will agree on the beginning date to be about 1558,[80] after Elizabeth I took the throne. The main point of division, however, is the concluding or ending date of the movement. Some prefer an earlier ending like John Brown (in 1658) and Ernest Kevan (in 1662) while others argue for a later date, like John Spurr (in 1689), Dewey Wallace, Jr. (in 1695), Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (in 1700), J. I. Packer (in 1705), and Erroll Hulse (in 1707). Some push the ending date much further into the eighteenth century, like Horton Davies, Kelly Kapic, and Randall Gleason, and a few extend the movement into the present-day in the form of nonconformity, like Peter Lewis. The disagreement on the

ending date of 'Puritanism' reveals an underlying disagreement on the particular definition of who a 'Puritan' was, which brings us back to our initial observation that the problem of defining these terms has not yet been satisfactorily resolved.

Definitions of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism'

Without wishing to claim absolute precision, I would propose the following working definitions of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism'.

A 'Puritan' was one who, politically, reacted against the *via media* of the Elizabethan Settlement in favour of a more thorough reformation in England; who, socially, promoted evangelism, catechism, and spiritual nourishment through the preaching and teaching of the Bible; who, theologically, held the views of Luther's doctrine of faith (*sola fide*), Calvin's doctrine of grace (*sola gratia*), and the Reformers' doctrine of Scripture (*sola scriptura*); and who, devotionally, strove for personal holiness, a practical faith, communion with God, and the glory of God in all things.

The first part of this definition is directed toward the Puritans' reaction against a perceived compromise between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The 1559 Act of Uniformity enjoined a Settlement which was clearly Protestant, though not fully sympathetic, to the more thorough Reformation on the Continent. A number of minor concessions were made to Catholic sensibilities, in the hope that they might be reconciled to the new order. Many Protestants accepted the apparent compromise in the hope of a fuller reform later. The Puritans emerged to make a case for a more thorough Reformation, but Elizabeth I consistently opposed their demands.[81]

This first part of the definition also locates the Puritan in England. Many disagree with this narrowness and argue that those who left England for New England are also rightly called 'Puritan'.[82] Though the present discussion does not afford a fuller and more adequate response, there are two main reasons why we would do better to call those who left for the new world 'Separatists'. First, those who left forfeited the objective of thoroughly reforming the Church *in* England, which was one of the primary reasons, if not the primary reason, that made a Protestant a 'Puritan'. Second, those who left not only denied royal supremacy over the church, but were also, for the most part, socially isolated.

Both of these things were unacceptable to mainstream Puritans. Moreover, many of the Separatists held a strong belief that the Holy Spirit was the ultimate religious guide. But this, too, was in opposition to the fundamental Puritan belief that the only true guide in religion—both faith and practice—was the will of God as revealed in the Bible.[83] Those who lived in New England, like Jonathan Edwards, were *puritanical* (holding many elements of Puritanism) but not properly 'Puritans'.

The second part of this definition deals principally with the lens through which the Puritan viewed himself, God, and the world: the Bible. The Bible was the Puritan's tool to attack heresy, to defend a simplified style of worship, to teach and catechize the parishioners, and to evangelize the lost. The exposition of Scripture was the chief means by which God called his elect.[84]

The third part of this definition is theological. The Puritans embraced the (general) theology of the Continental Reformers: Luther, Bucer, Calvin, Zwingli, and Melanchthon. Luther championed the doctrine of justification by faith alone (*sola fide*).[85] Calvin championed the doctrine of grace alone (*sola gratia*).[86] All of them championed the doctrine of Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*).[87] The Puritans, within their heritage, held firmly to these doctrines of faith alone, grace alone, and Scripture alone. Their theology was very much entrenched in Continental Reformation theology.[88]

The fourth and final part of this definition deals with the devotional life of the Puritan, which strove for personal holiness, a practical faith, communion with God, and the glory of God in all things. The Puritan was passionately concerned with holiness or, to use their preferred term, 'godliness'. Spurr states that 'a godly life was the expression of holiness'.[89] One's life must display the fruits of a saving faith and must be open to the scrutiny and admiration of other godly individuals. But that faith was not an abstract, theoretical faith; it had hands and feet. The Puritan was a master of practical divinity. Leland Ryken says—

> Overall, the typical Puritan would have impressed us as hardworking, thrifty, serious, moderate, practical in outlook, doctrinaire in religious and political matters, well-informed about the latest political and ecclesiastical developments, well-educated, and thoroughly familiar with the content of the Bible. To attain all this, Puritans had to be self-disciplined.[90]

The motivation behind this practical faith was the fundamental devotional quality in the Christian life: communion with God.

Packer wrote that the 'thought of communion with God takes us to the very heart of Puritan theology and religion'.[91] Communion with God was made possible by the believer's union with Christ. Union is what Christ did for us while communion is what the Spirit does in us by bringing us into fellowship with God. All of this—striving for holiness, practical faith, and communion with God—is ultimately carried out for the glory of God alone. This is stated explicitly in the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.'[92] A 'Puritan' was one who exemplified these political, social, theological, and devotional elements all centred on the glory of God in all things. 'Puritanism' as a movement flourished from 1558 (with the accession of Elizabeth I) until 1689 (with the Toleration Act under William and Mary). It was English in origin, polemical in nature, revivalistic in character, had holiness as its goal, and which sought to thoroughly reform the Church *in* England from its Roman Catholic roots.

A general survey of the history of Puritanism will show that the desire of the earlier Puritans (i.e., sixteenth century) was, first and foremost, to bring a more thorough Reformation to the Church in England. However, as time went on, and as the Puritans came under intense persecution (especially after the Great Ejection of 1662), their goal shifted toward simply wanting freedom of worship.[93] The Toleration Act of 1689, under William and Mary, brought about this freedom; in a real sense, it also brought about the end of the 'fight' of Puritanism.[94] To that extent, they won the battle. They had achieved their goal and even brought about a moral consciousness throughout the nation that was 'puritanical'. However, their original desire to fully reform the Church was never realised. Because of the freedom given by the Toleration Act, because subsequent ministers did not need to subscribe to all Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, and because most of the more prominent and influential Puritans had died, the Act of 1689 witnessed the end of Puritanism.

Another aspect of this definition concerns revival. To be sure, the spirit of revival was an essential part of the Puritan movement. As Packer points out, 'Spiritual revival was central to what the Puritans professed to be seeking.'[95] The Puritans wanted a renewed ministry among the clergy[96] and a renewed

spiritual life among all Englishmen. Their devotional literature focused on personal revival, and this trait characterised the internal thrust of the movement.

The study of 'Puritanism' then, is predicated on individual Puritans, but with the special concern of tracing a particular cultural trend that had its own attitude, spirit, goal, and ecclesiological emphasis. For these reasons, it may be appropriately defined as a 'historical movement' and not just a mindset or theology that can be seen in our culture today.

Conclusion

The present attempt to survey Puritan historiography in search of appropriate working definitions of 'Puritan' and 'Puritanism' has sought to capture some of what has been said on the subject by noted historians and theologians. It has also sought to provide a summary definition of these terms in light of this conversation. Mindful of the fact that the Puritans themselves were quite diverse, we would be wise to be more flexible when giving summary definitions, lists of qualifications, and time-frames. May we endeavour to understand these 'intense Protestants' for who they really were and not for what the modern world has often portrayed them to be—killjoys, radical oppressors, and sectarian hypocrites—for they were men and women who sought a life of holiness unto their God.

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ENDNOTES

1. Peter Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism* (Morgan, PA: *Soli Deo Gloria* Publications, 1996), p. 11. One reason for this ambiguity during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is that the term itself changed over time. See Erroll Hulse in "The Story of the Puritans" in *Reformation and Revival Journal* 5:2 (Spring, 1996): 16-17.
2. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales, (eds.), "Introduction: The Puritan Ethos, 1650-1700," in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*, (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), p. 1.
3. Durston and Eales, "Introduction," p. 1.
4. Basil Hall, "Puritanism: the Problem of Definition," in *Studies in Church History*, G. J. Cuming (ed.), (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1965), 2:283-96.

5. Peter Lake, "Defining Puritanism: Again?" in *Puritanism: Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith*, Francis J. Bremer, (ed.), (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1993), pp. 3-29.

6. New York: Columbia University Press, 1938.

7. London: Macmillan, 1938.

8. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1939.

9. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939.

10. See Glenn Miller, "Puritanism: A Survey," in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 27 (Spring, 1972), pp. 169-75. This can also be seen by the barrage of publications produced during these years.

11. This trend can be seen not only in the publishing and printing of so many Puritan and Reformed articles and books, but also in the articles being written on the phenomenon of this renewal itself. In Collin Hanson's article, "Young, Restless, Reformed: Calvinism is Making a Comeback and Shaking Up the Church," in *Christianity Today* (September, 2006), he writes: 'You can't miss the trend even at some of the leading evangelical seminaries, like Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, which reports a significant Reformed uptick among students over the past 20 years. Or the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, now the largest Southern Baptist seminary and a Reformed hotbed.' See also Erroll Hulse, *Who are the Puritans?* (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2000), p. 27.

12. Kelly M. Kapic and Randall C. Gleason (eds.), *The Devoted Life: An Invitation to the Purtian Classics* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

13. Kapic and Gleason, *The Devoted Life*, p. 17.

14. Kapic and Gleason, *The Devoted Life*, p. 17.

15. Kapic and Gleason, *The Devoted Life*, pp. 24-30.

16. James I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1990), p. 329.

17. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, p. 28.

18. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, p. 11. In his definition of 'Puritanism,' he explicitly notes that it was a movement 'in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England' (p. 35).

19. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, p. 60.

20. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, p. 46.

21. Chapter 19.

22. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, p. 69.

23. John Brown, *The English Puritans* (Ross-shire, GB: Christian Focus Publications, 1998), pp. 15-16.

24. Brown, *The English Puritans*, p. 17.

25. Brown, *The English Puritans*, p. 18. See also pp. 149-53.

26. Brown, *The English Puritans*, p. 92.

27. John Spurr, *English Puritanism: 1603-1689* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998).

28. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, pp. 6, 17.

29. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 8.

30. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 4.

31. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 29.

32. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 5.

33. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, pp. 6-8.

34. This was due to the rise of Arminianism within the clergy.

35. The Toleration Act by William and Mary.

36. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, pp. 20-27.

37. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 47.

38. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 149.

39. William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (NY: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), p. 3.

40. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, p. 5.

41. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, pp. 6-10.

42. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, p. 15.

43. William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. xi.

44. Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), pp. 10-14.

45. Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, p. 8.

46. Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, p. 8.

47. Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism*, pp. 11-13.

48. Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism*, p. 18.

49. John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689* (London: Longman, 2000), p. 227.

50. Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689*, p. 37.

51. John Coffey, "Letters by Samuel Rutherford" in *The Devoted Life*, p. 94.

52. Patrick Collinson, *The Puritan Character: Polemics and Polarities in Early Seventeenth-Century English Culture* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1989), p. 8.

53. Collinson, *The Puritan Character*, p. 7.

54. Collinson, *The Puritan Character*, p. 16.

55. Collinson, *The Puritan Character*, pp. 15-17.

56. Collinson, *The Puritan Character*, p. 29. How the meaning of the term 'Puritan' changed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is further explained in his book, *English Puritanism* (London: The Historical Association, 1983), pp. 7-11.

57. Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), p. 13.

58. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 13-15.

59. See John F. H. New, *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558-1640* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964).

60. D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), pp. 239-40.

61. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, p. 240.

62. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, p. 241.

63. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, p. 241.

64. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, p. 241.

65. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, p. 241.

66. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, p. 258.

67. Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Morgan, PA: *Soli Deo Gloria* Publications, 1997), p. 1.

68. Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, p. 11.

69. This can clearly be seen also in his accompanying book, *The Worship of the American Puritans, 1929-1730* (NY: P. Lang, 1990).

70. The idea of 'International Puritanism'—Puritans of England and New England—has been espoused by David Mullan in his recent article "International Puritanism," in *Puritans and Puritanism in Europe and America: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia*, Francis J. Bremer and Tom Webster (eds.), (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), pp. 428-30.

71. Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., *Puritans and Predestination* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1982); Durston and Eales, *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*.

72. Erroll Hulse, *Who are the Puritans?* p. 58.

73. Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, p. 221.

74. Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology* (Morgan, Pennsylvania: *Soli Deo Gloria* Publications, 1993), p. 17.

75. Kevan, *The Grace of Law*, p. 17.

76. Kevan, *The Grace of Law*, pp. 17, 36, 38.

77. Packer, *The Grace of Law*, p. 98.

78. Lake, "Defining Puritanism, Again?," p. 7.

79. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 15.

80. Though some trace an early form of Puritanism in people like William Tyndale (1494-1536). See the discussion below.

81. Gerald Bray (ed.), *Documents of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: James

Clarke & Co., 1994), 329; J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, 3rd edn. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1980), pp. 208-12.

82. Cf. Kapic and Gleason, *The Devoted Life*, p. 17; Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, pp. 6, 10; Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, p. 258.

83. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, pp. 7, 57.

84. W. Gary Crampton, *What the Puritans Taught* (Morgan, Pennsylvania: *Soli Deo Gloria Publications*, 2003), pp. 5-7, 10, 16-18, 44; Kapic and Gleason, *The Devoted Life*, pp. 26-27.

85. Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1988), p. 62.

86. Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley (trans.), (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 165, 178, 267. Calvin's 'doctrine of grace' is developed specifically from St. Augustine's. See Augustine, *On Original Sin, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), pp. 252-55; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (Peabody: Prince Press, 1978), pp. 361-69.

87. George, *Theology of the Reformers*, pp79-86, 117, 166.

88. William Barker, Puritan Profiles (Ross-Shire, Scotland: Mentor, 1996), 12; Kevan; *The Grace of Law*, p. 38; Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination*, pp. 27, 36, 45, 63.

89. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 187.

90. Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, p. 20.

91. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, p. 201.

92. Answer to question #1. The Westminster Assembly met from 1643 and 1647. The Westminster Confession of Faith is the most representative confession of Puritan theology and ecclesiology. See Paul Smith, *The Westminster Confession: Enjoying God Forever* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), pp. 13-17.

93. Their desire to bring further reform to the Church was always a trait of Puritanism, even to the end, though freedom of worship became a trait later on.

94. Spurr, *English Puritanism*, p. 149.

95. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, p. 37.

96. Which they called 'reformation'. This is the primary issue that Richard Baxter deals with in *The Reformed Pastor* (1656). Packer, in his "Introduction" to Baxter's *The Reformed Pastor* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974), explains that by 'reformed' Baxter means, 'not Calvinistic in doctrine, but renewed in practice' (p. 14).