

HM 4.1 – Puritan Perspectives on Ministry

Seventeenth Century – Social / Intellectual Background

Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed* pp.1-65
Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*
Basil Willey, *Seventeenth Century Background*
Keeble, *Literary Culture of English Nonconformity*
Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England*
C Durston and J Eales (eds) *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700*
J Sutherland, *English Literature of the Later Seventeenth Century*

As much Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, George Herbert, other Metaphysical Poets, John Milton as possible.
(Addison, Marvell, Pope, Defoe, perhaps. But do you really want to read Restoration Drama ?)

1. Population and Economy

England - 1500 – 2m; 1600 – 4 m; 1700 – 5 m
London – 1600 – 200k; 1640 – 400k; 1700 – 575k
Norwich and Bristol largest provincial cities – 15,000 each
Birmingham, Exeter, York, Newcastle – 10,000
23 towns more than 5000
Lots small market towns of several hundreds

Population rising so
- labour costs down
- rents up
- enclosure going on apace

Movement to prosperous agric areas and to towns – large growth of unskilled urban poor

Average life expectancy – 35-40 yrs; 10% of population reach 40 yrs; high child mortality – one third die before reach 5 yrs

Wool – only major industry. Cloth = 80% exports.
Coal (Britain 3x as much as rest of Europe)
Glass, brick, soap; spinning and weaving
Rye bread the staff.

Backward economy – too easy for the idle to be idle – take all hols etc

Wage labourers suffered

Wages fixed by JPs

Poor Law and private charity. “God’s Poor and the Devil’s” (impotent and idle). Responsibility of their parish.

No police force, no standing army.

Mixed animal and grain husbandry

“the transformation of the English mercantile economy from its previous dependence upon a single commodity into a diversified entrepot that transhipped dozens of domestic and colonial products was one of the most significant developments of the century”

diff b/w surplus and subsistence producers

2. Social Order and Political Structure

Social order

V hierarchical; ‘stratified not ossified’; great chain of being; body politic

King – Divine Right

Gentlemen – nobles, knights, esquires, gents – blood

Peers – 60-200 of them; vast county magnates (5-20,000 acres); much time at court

Gentry – knights, esquires: 12,000 recognised by College of Heralds; 50-5000 acres

- provide hospitality for neighbours

- treat tenants paternally

- governed counties, JPs (enforce law and keep peace) - mediate local disputes and try petty crimes at quarter sessions; captains of militia

Yeomen - prosperous tenants; 40s freehold / farmers to gents

- village elders, constables, tax collectors, jurymen for quarter sessions

- most owned sufficient freehold land to be enfranchised

Citizens and burgesses of the cities – occupation / freedom of the city; tradesmen and shopkeepers – ‘the middling sort’ – active in civic and church affairs

Husbandmen, labourers, artificers, artisans, servants, cottagers, labourers, apprentices

Criteria – education, wealth, blood, occupation

Evidences – wealth, styles of address, comportment, dress, seats etc

Mobility:

Both citizens and yeomen might see their sons become gentlemen.

Yeomen and minor gentry getting further away from the labourers

Lots change: 1600-42; 1643-64; 1665-95 – between one third and one half of the gentry changed in each of these periods.

Diff b/w yeoman and husbandman ?

- land – to value of 40s p.a. / amount mattered – 50 acres plus

- right to vote

- £40-200 p.a. – servants, fish, milk, butter, fruit, fuel, candles, soap etc

- cf husbandman - £15 p.a. – bread, cheese, bacon and beer

Labourers/cottagers

– an acre or two or common pasture rights

- day labour – 1s per day

- £9-15 p.a.. battle for survival - bread, cheese, lard soup, beer, greens

Social Relationships

Localism and mobility

- fair bit of moving around – mostly econ reasons

- vast majority of households were nuclear families (contrary to pop perception)

- links of kinship not so great as often thought

- those recog as kin were relatively few

- few binding obligations recog beyond nuclear

Gentry much more interested in kin cos of their claim to gentry. Social life of gentry revolved more round kin.

Neighbourhoods – people knew others; lending and borrowing; peaceable and decent cf quarrel, gossip, drunk, idle etc

Paternalism and deference

- landlord – preferential terms, lower rents when harvest failed etc; give regular employment; intervene in court case; gifts – money, food, clothes, fuel

- deference in response

Lots contact: - recreations; christenings, weddings, funerals; manner of address mattered

Family formation

10% women not marry

Ave age men 28, women 26

Ready to marry when ready to set up home – personal saving v v impt

Selection of partners

Used to go (Lawrence Stone, e.g.):

16th C to early 17th C – parents' choice, partners cd veto, econ consideration

late 17th C to 18th C – partners' choice, parents' consent, affection as main thing

More fluid than that

Husbands / wives etc

“The picture which emerges indicates the private existence of a strong complementary and companionate ethos, side by side with, and often overshadowing, theoretical adherence to the doctrine of male authority and public female subordination.” 92

'Government'

Court – a floating body of royal servants, officeholders and place-seekers
aristocracy and some gentlemen in almost constant attendance at the court

Privy Council – from among court – fluid membership

- Lord Treasurer – revenue

- Lord Chancellor – legal

- Lord Chamberlain – charge of royal household

Parliament

- all the peers in Lords

- reps of counties and boroughs in Commons – roughly 500 MPs

- selection not election – not contests with indiv votes cast

Local government – local magistrates – regular directives from central govt, + supervision

- strong local discretion on implementation

Big Picture - Wrightson

Two crucial developments: “On the one hand local communities were penetrated more deeply than had been the case previously, by forces of economic, administrative and cultural integration which bound them more closely together into a national society and economy. On the other hand, however, there was a simultaneous enhancement of the extent and the complexity of social differentiation with local communities.” 13

- social change both unifying and dividing

- polarisation of living standards

- middling ranks more important to the life of the nation

- 'facilitate the dissociation of polite and plebeian cultures'

3. Perhaps of Interest

- Great Plague – 1665 - 70-100k killed
- Great Fire – 1666 - 87 churches, 13,000 homes; 9 people
- Thames froze several times. In 1676-7 and 1683-4 parties were held on it.
- Penny Post – 1680
- Street lights – oil – 1680
- Halley's Comet – 1682
- Tea and Coffee drinking became popular; coffee houses (inn; tavern; alehouse)
- Emergence of newspapers – 1662 on; 1695 expiration of Licensing Laws – Tory 'Post Man' and Whig 'Flying Post' 3x p.w.; 1702, first daily, 'The Daily Courant'
- Bank of England founded 1694
- Witchcraft, Bear-baiting, Cock-fighting, Gambling, Drinking, Dancing, Theatres
- Using forks – towards the end of the century; Pineapple / bananas
- More rooms in peasant homes, Use of glass in windows
- Use of coal in grates; Replacement of benches by chairs; Use of mirrors

Some Puritan names: Kill-sin, Increase, Faint-not, Search-the-Scriptures, Safety-on-High

“We’ve now reached a point where the average weekday edition of the *New York Times* contains more [news] information than Jonathan Edwards would have encountered in his entire eighteenth century lifetime. no instant world news, television, radio, telephone, rapid transportation, junk mail” ... less information, less intellectual clutter, less mental distraction and much less bombardment of the senses. Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*

People

- William Shakespeare – 1564-1616
- John Donne – 1572-1631
- George Herbert – 1593-1633
- John Milton – 1608-74
- Andrew Marvell – 1621-78
- John Bunyan - 1628-88
- John Dryden – 1631-1700
- Samuel Pepys – 1633-1703
- John Wilmot (Rochester) 1647-80
- Daniel Defoe – 1660-1731

- Inigo Jones – 1573-1652
- Sir Christopher Wren - 1632-1723
- Henry Purcell – 1659-95

- Rene Descartes – 1596-1650
- Baruch de Spinoza – 1632-77
- Thomas Hobbes – 1588-1679
- John Locke – 1632-1704

- Francis Bacon - 1561-1626
- Galilei Galileo - 1564-1642
- William Harvey - 1578-1657
- Robert Boyle - 1627-91
- Sir Isaac Newton - 1642-1727

Currents of thought

Complexity of history of ideas – can’t wrap into single story line and v difficult to tell cause and effect ...

1. The Scientific Revolution

Pre-scientific

External authority gives foundational principles (authorities – philosophy – Aristotle; medicine, Galen; geog and astron, Ptolemy).

Science proceeds by deduction from those principles

Certainty

Scientific

Observation, induction, experiment

Probability – “probabilistic empiricism ... the most distinctive feature of seventeenth century English intellectual life” (Shapiro)

Motives – Puritan – utilitarianism combined with millenarianism (Webster) – i.e. intense practicality at the service of building the new world – agric, medicine, economics. Not irreligious.

Establishment of Royal Society 1660

Scientific replacing theological explanation; how not why; metaphysics not physics

From contemplation of Being to the observation of Becoming

Demand for explanation as flight from mystery

Master / take control of nature

Enthusiasm for observation

2. Philosophical Movements

Descartes and rationalism

Attempt to attain sure knowledge through careful use of reason alone. Can't trust senses Copernicus, Galileo – so must adopt method of doubt and proceed deductively from indubitable clear and distinct ideas – the most fundamental of which is *Cogito ergo sum*. The 'turn to the subject' begins. Spinoza and Leibniz rationalist methodology too.

Locke and empiricism

Only sure knowledge to be had reached through sense experience. Never complete. Never eternally valid truths. Abandonment of metaphysics. Related to scientific revolution. Deism.

Hobbes

Materialist. Denies immaterial soul; determinist; pessimist. Political philosophy. 'Atheist'. Biblical criticism.

The beginnings of liberalism

Reason and reasonableness

Argument for toleration / latitude from probabilistic empiricism.

Desire for reasonableness, moderation in reaction to 'enthusiasm'

Reason as inner light / common notions

Losing battle: "intellectual history of seventeenth century was marked by a gradual dissociation of knowledge and virtue as accepted and individual elements in the ideal structure of human reason" Had kept intellectual and moral together till now. (Hoopes)

Doctrine of benevolence – essential goodness of humans

Additional background

- travel
- Reformation – breakdown of monolithic Christendom
- astronomy – man not 'central', universe orderly anyway
- political authority – challenge to Divine Right of Kings

Sommerville – 'the list of beliefs which were assured was growing shorter.'

And yet ... strong belief in witches – Joseph Mede, Henry More, Isaac Newton, Thomas Browne, Richard Baxter

John Milton (1608–1674)

On his blindness

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
E're half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide,
Lodg'd with me useless, though my Soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, least he returning chide,
Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd,
I fondly ask; But patience to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts, who best
Bear his milde yoke, they serve him best, his State
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o're Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and waite.

John Hall (1627-56)

On an Houre-glasse

MY Life is measur'd by this glasse, this glasse
By all those little Sands that thorough passe.
See how they presse, see how they strive, which shall
With greatest speed and greatest quicknesse fall.
See how they raise a little Mount, and then
With their owne weight doe levell it agen.
But when th' have all got thorough, they give o're
Their nimble sliding downe, and move no more.
Just such is man whose houres still forward run,
Being almost finisht ere they are begun;
So perfect nothings, such light blasts are we,
That ere w'are ought at all, we cease to be.

Do what we will, our hasty minutes fly,
And while we sleep, what do we else but die?
How transient are our Joyes, how short their day!
They creepe on towards us, but flie away.
How stinging are our sorrowes! where they gaine
But the least footing, there they will remaine.
How groundlesse are our hopes, how they deceive
Our childish thoughts, and onely sorrow leave!
How reall are our feares! they blast us still,
Still rend us, still with gnawing passions fill;
How senselesse are our wishes, yet how great!
With what toile we pursue them, with what sweat!
Yet most times for our hurts, so small we see,
Like Children crying for some Mercurie.
This gapes for Marriage, yet his fickle head
Knows not what cares waite on a Marriage bed.
This vows Virginitie, yet knowes not what
Lonenesse, grieffe, discontent, attends that state.
Desires of wealth anothers wishes hold,
And yet how many have been choak't with Gold?
This onely hunts for honour, yet who shall
Ascend the higher, shall more wretched fall.
This thirsts for knowledge, yet how is it bought
With many a sleeplesse night and racking thought?
This needs will travell, yet how dangers lay
Most secret Ambuscado's in the way?
These triumph in their Beauty, though it shall
Like a pluck't Rose or fading Lillie fall.
Another boasts strong armes, 'las Giants have
By silly Dwarfes been drag'd unto their grave.
These ruffle in rich silke, though ne're so gay,
A well plum'd Peacock is more gay then they.
Poore man, what art! A Tennis ball of Errour,
A Ship of Glasse toss'd in a Sea of terrour,
Issuing in blood and sorrow from the wombe,
Craulng in teares and mourning to the tombe,
How slippery are thy pathes, how sure thy fall,
How art thou Nothing when th' art most of all!

Sinnes round

Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am,
That my offences course it in a ring.
My thoughts are working like a busie flame,
Untill their cockatrice they hatch and bring;
And when they once have perfected their draughts,
My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts.

My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts,
Which spit it forth like the Sicilian Hill.
They vent the wares, and passe them with their faults,
And by their breathing ventilate the ill.
But words suffice not, where are lewd intentions:
My hands do joyn to finish the inventions.

My hands do joyn to finish the inventions:
And so my sinnes ascend three stories high,
As Babel grew, before there were dissensions.
Yet ill deeds loyter not: for they supplie
New thoughts of sinning: wherefore, to my shame,
Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am.

Redemption

Having been tenant long to a rich Lord,
Not thriving, I resolved to be bold,
And make a suit unto him, to afford
a new small-rented lease, and cancel th'old.

In heaven at his manor I him sought:
They told me there, that he was lately gone
About some land, which he had dearly brought
Long since on earth, to take possession.

I straight returned, and knowing his great birth,
sought him accordingly in great resorts,
In cities, theatres, gardens, parks and courts:
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth

Of thieves and murderers: there I him espied
Who straight, Your suit is granted, said, and died.

The Sonne

Let forrain nations of their language boast,
What fine varietie each tongue affords:
I like our language, as our men and coast:
Who cannot dresse it well, want wit, not words.
How neatly doe we give one onely name
To parents issue and the sunnes bright starre!
A sonne is light and fruit; a fruitfull flame
Chasing the fathers dimnesse, carri'd farre
From the first man in th' East, to fresh and new
Western discov'ries of posteritie.
So in one word our Lords humilitie
We turn upon him in a sense most true:
For what Christ once in humblenesse began,
We him in glorie call, The Sonne of Man.

A Dialogue-Antheme.

Christian. Death.

Chr. Alas, poore Death, where is thy glorie?
Where is thy famous force, the ancient sting?
Dea. Alas poore mortall, void of storie,
Go spell and reade how I have kill'd thy King.

Chr. Poore Death! and who was hurt thereby?
Thy curse being laid on him, makes thee accurst.

Dea. Let losers talk: yet thou shalt die;
These arms shall crush thee. Chr. Spare not, do thy worst.
I shall be one day better then before:
Thou so much worse, that thou shalt be no more