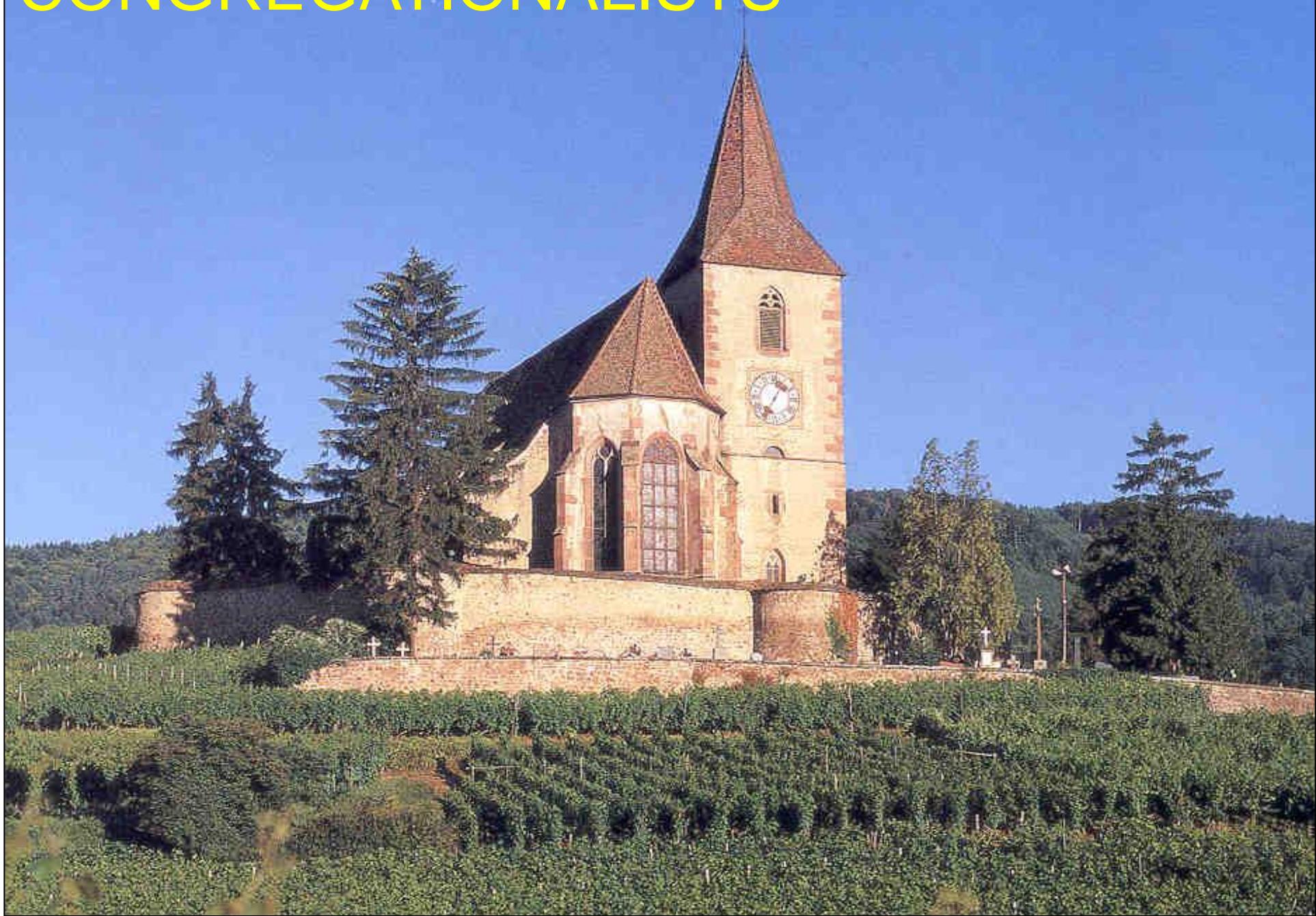
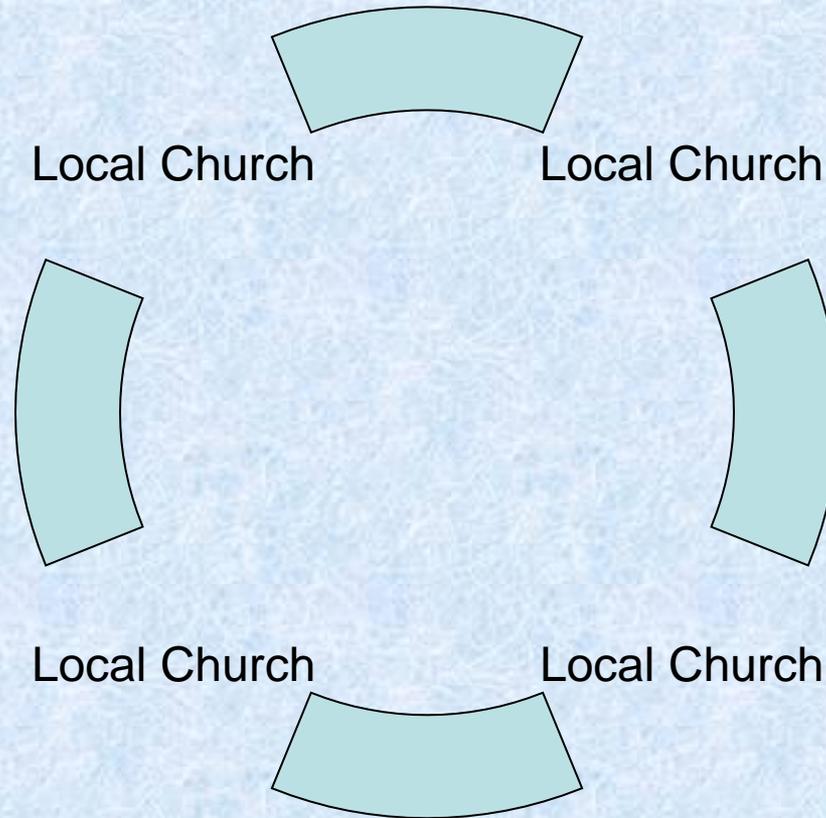


CONGREGATIONALISTS



Congregational Governance: Confederacy of Locally Ruled



Loose Confederations of Congregational Churches called “Conventions”, “Associations or Assemblies”. No church to church control or discipline. Each church is independent.

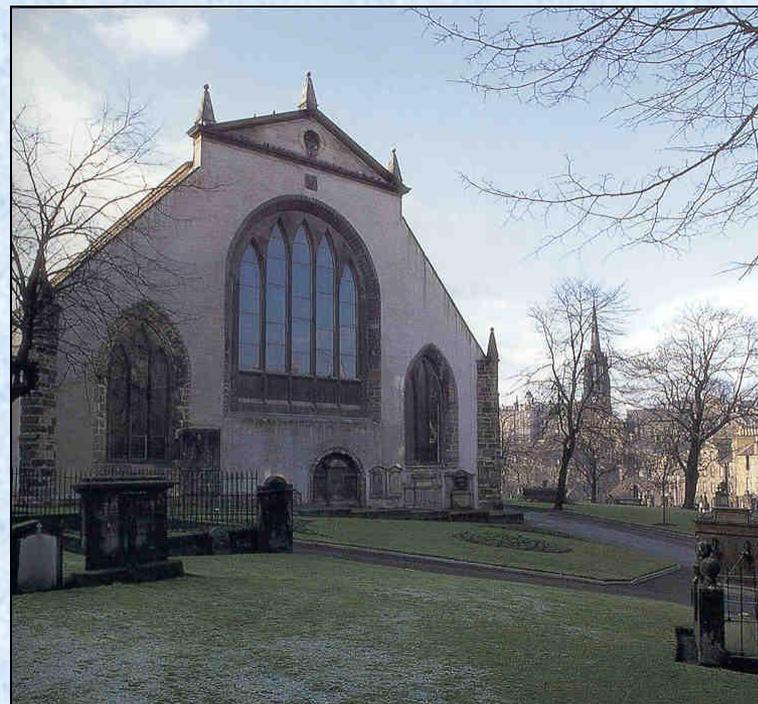
- The first Separatist congregation was formed around 1567 by Richard Fitz.
 - *not* calling for the reform of the Church of England, but rather its dissolution
 - no longer considered the Church of England as the true church, but a false church
 - believed that the Church of England was corrupt and beyond repair, and so they separated from it
- They believed that church life should be ordered according to the pattern of the New Testament churches, and to them this meant that churches should be self-governing bodies composed of believers only.

Richard Fitz Forms First Separatist Congregation, 1567



- brief but well-known pamphlet war carried on by English Puritans using secret presses
 - attacked the episcopacy as “profane, proud, paltry, popish, pestilent, pernicious, presumptuous prelates.”
 - The identity of the author, who signed himself “Martin Marprelate gentleman” is still a mystery.
- Anonymous replies appeared in 1589, and Richard Bancroft delivered a sermon against the tracts which is considered the first statement of the “divine right” of episcopacy in Anglican apologetics.

Marprelate Tracts (1588–89)



Robert Browne (1550-1631)

Forms Congregational Church, 1581

- In 1581 Robert Browne, formed a separated congregation
- true Christians must separate from others who were Christians in name only.
- It was futile to hope that such separation would be brought about by the bishops and clergy of the Established Church or by the civil rulers. Yet the necessity for it was immediate. Hence the only course possible was for the faithful to secede and organize themselves.



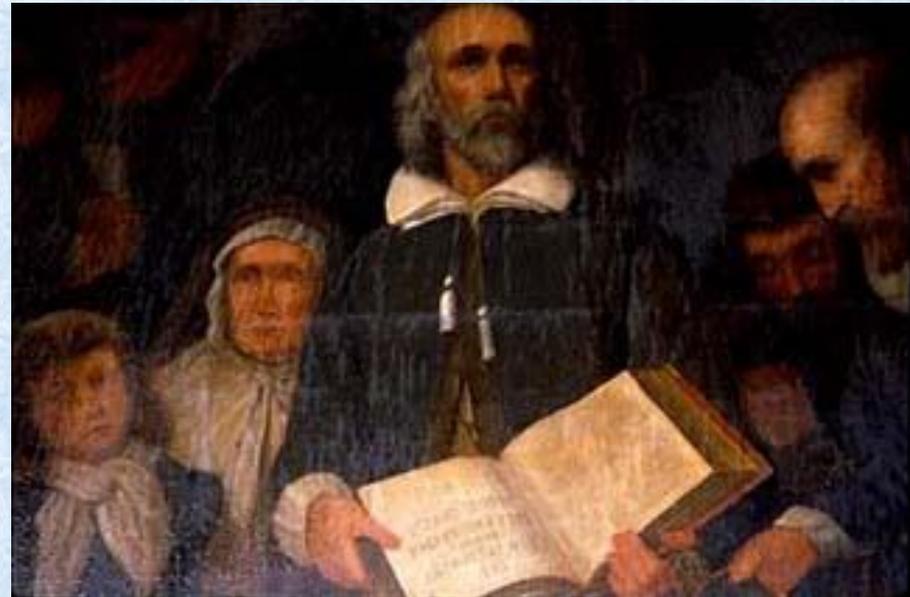
• "the kingdom of God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather of the worthiest, were they never so few."

Henry Barrow

(c. 1550-1593)

Martyr for

Congregationalism, 1593



- Persecuted by Archbishop John Whitgift
- imprisoned and executed on April 6, 1593.
- In prison Barrow wrote several works, defending separatism and congregational independency, particularly *A True Description out of the Word of God of the Visible Church* (1589) and *A Brief Discovery of the False Church* (1590).
- Barrow defined the church as "a company of faithful people, separated from the unbelievers and heathen of the land, gathered in the name of Christ."

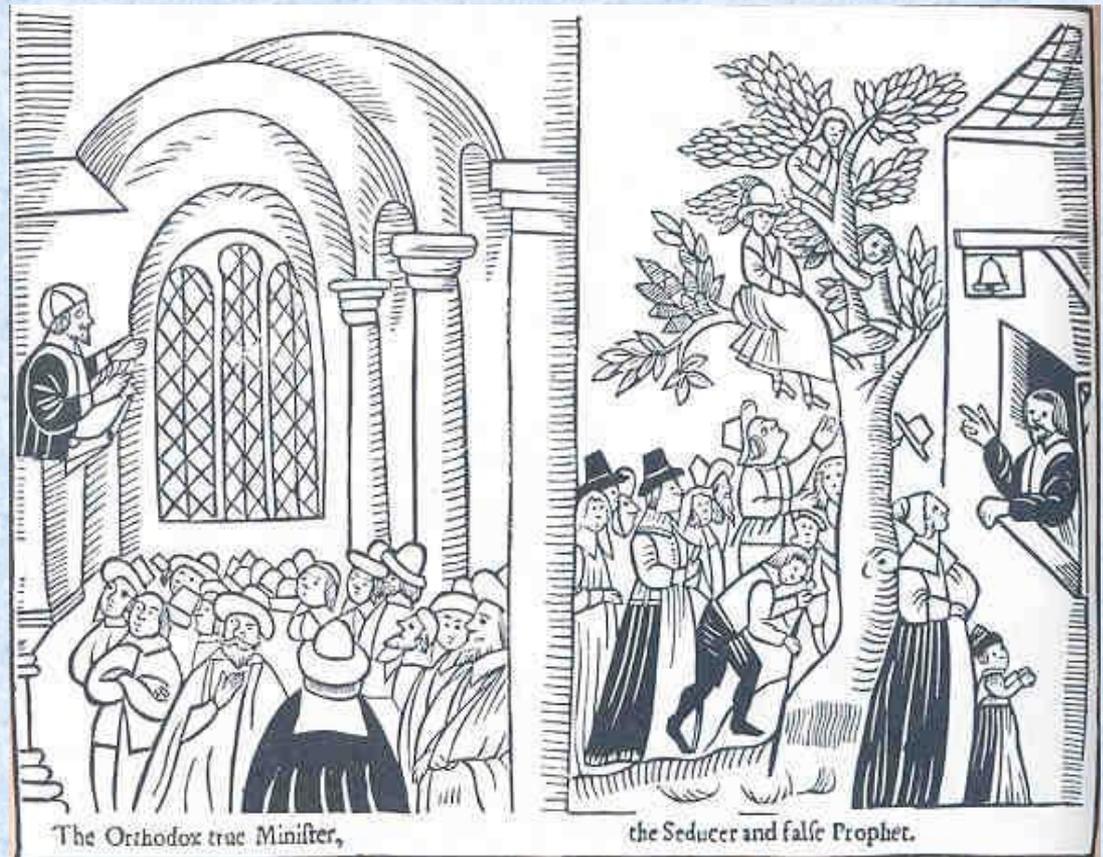
John Robinson, Speech on Mayflower



- "I Charge you before God and his blessed angels that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow Christ. If God reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as you were to receive any truth from my ministry, for I am verily persuaded the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth from His holy word.
- "The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw. Whatever part of His will our God has revealed to Calvin, they (Lutherans) will rather die than embrace it; and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented.
- "For though they were precious shining lights in their time, yet God has not revealed his whole will to them. And were they now living, they would be as ready and willing to embrace further light, as they had received."
- John Robinson, Speech on Mayflower.

Congregationalist View of the Church and the State

- Church consists only of true Christians, in a gathered church, in contrast to the territorial basis of the Church of England whereby everyone in a certain area was assigned to the parish church.
- The civil authorities should have nothing to do with spiritual matters, and it is not their province to enforce conformity to any ecclesiastical system.
- established 'national churches are wrong
- for individual religious liberty and freedom of conscience



Congregationalist Church Governance

• "the people [are] to be the orderers of all things."



“Mayflower Compact”

- the congregation binds itself in a voluntary association, called a ‘covenant’ and elects or deposes its own ministers
- Church’s government, worship and discipline were to be taken from the New Testament only
- no distinction of clergy and laity
- each local congregation was sovereign and autonomous
- The “abiding” church “officers are the pastor, teacher, elders, deacons, and widows who have their charge in one church only.”

Congregational Worship

- Some English congregations revived the agape or love feast, a common meal of the congregation held before the Lord's Supper. Others adopted a rite of foot washing. They practiced mutual examination and corporate moral discipline at weekly meetings.
 - Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation*, p.206.



“Anglicans” and “Congregationalists” Compared

| Issue | Anglicans | Congregationalists |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Baptism | Babies, sprinkling | Babies, sprinkling |
| Lord’s Supper | Mixed | Mixed |
| Oaths, Military and Gov service | Allowed | Allowed |
| Church | State Church, controlled by Bishops, Attendance required, Liturgical worship, professional clergy | Separated and autonomous body of believers, separate from State, voluntary membership, lay preachers, Iconoclasm |
| Salvation | Strong emphasis on outward rituals and conformance | Strong emphasis and godly living |
| God’s Sovereignty in Salvation | Mixed | Strong “Calvinism” |

“Congregationalists” and “Presbyterians” Compared

| Issue | Congregationalists | Presbyterians |
|--|--|--|
| Baptism | Babies, sprinkling | Babies, sprinkling |
| Lord’s Supper | Memorial / Spiritual | Spiritual |
| Oaths, Military and Government service | Allowed | Allowed |
| Church | Separated and autonomous body of believers, separate from State, voluntary membership, lay preachers, Iconoclasm | State Church, controlled by representative assemblies and run locally by consistories, strong discipline. Attendance required, Liturgical worship, professional clergy, Iconoclasm |
| Salvation | Strong emphasis and godly living | Strong emphasis on godly living |
| God’s Sovereignty in Salvation | Strong “Calvinism” | Strong “Calvinism” |

“Congregationalists” and “Baptists” Compared

| Issue | Congregationalists | Baptists |
|--|--|--|
| Baptism | Babies, sprinkling | Only believers, immersion |
| Lord’s Supper | Mixed | Memorial |
| Oaths, Military and Government service | Allowed | Allowed |
| Church | Separated and autonomous body of believers, separate from State, voluntary membership, lay preachers, Iconoclasm | Separated and autonomous body of believers, separate from State, voluntary membership, lay preachers, Iconoclasm |
| Salvation | Strong emphasis and godly living | Strong emphasis on new birth godly living |
| God’s Sovereignty in Salvation | Strong “Calvinism” | Mixed |



One Evans a welch man
was lately comited to New-
gate for saying hee was
Christ



Ie fuit

Heers one blasphemously
That hee was christ did say
Such spirits were foretold
To rise ith latter daye

Arminian

Libertine



Ante scripturian

Soule Sleeper

Anabaptist

Divorcer



Richard Baxter (1615-91).

- Puritan evangelist of Kidderminster who oversaw the transformation of his town through catechisms, preaching, church discipline, and small-group ministry.
 - "On the Lord's Days there was no disorder to be seen in the streets, but you might hear an hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons as you passed through the streets. In a word, when I came thither at first there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and when I came away, there were some streets where there was not passed one family.....that did not....."
- He is probably the most effective pastor- England has ever had.

Baxter the Preacher

• "Nothing is more indecent than a dead preacher, speaking to dead hearers the living truths of the living God!"

I preached as never sure
to preach again,
And as a dying man to
dying men.

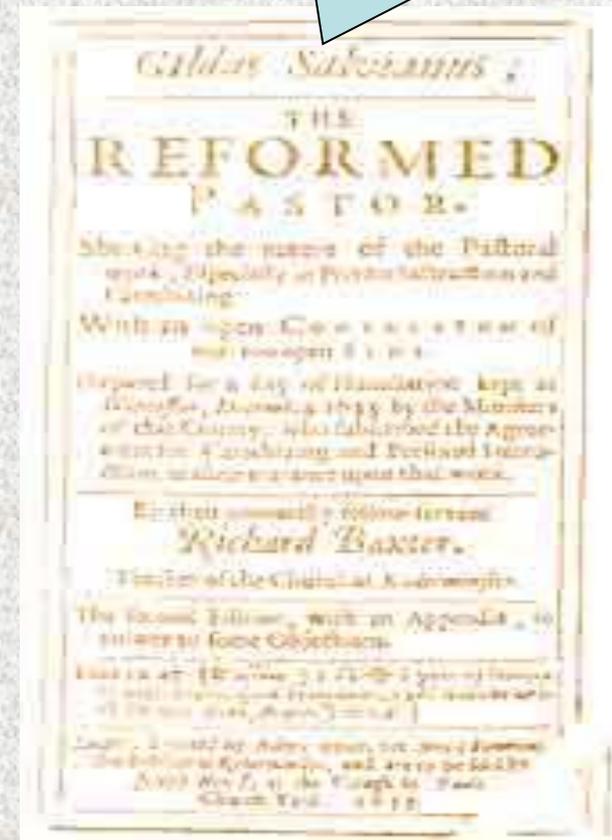
- "In my labours at Kidderminster after my return I did all under languishing weakness, being seldom an hour free from pain....."
- "I have pain, there is no arguing against sense, but I have peace, I have peace."
- Baxter continued preaching until the end. After his last sermon, he crept home to his bed, utterly exhausted.



Baxter the Author

- Baxter wrote 141 books.
- *The Reformed Pastor,*
- *The Saints' Everlasting Rest,*
- *Ministers of Love,*
- *Call to the Unconverted*
- *How to Spend the Day with God,*
- *The Advantages of Pleasing God,*
- *Hindrances to a Heavenly Life on Earth,*
- *Directions for Young Christians.*

In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity



Baxter the Army Chaplain

- Early in the English Civil War he joined the Parliamentary Army
- After the battle in Naseby in 1645, Baxter determined to accept the call to the chaplaincy of the Parliamentary forces. Two years prior, Oliver Cromwell had “purposed to make their Troop a gathered Church, and they all subscribed an invitation to [Baxter] to be their Pastor.”

• "I bless God I have a well grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within."





Baxter's Theology

• "I was but a pen in the hand of God; and what praise is due to a pen!"

- He liked to call himself a 'catholic Christian' and a 'mere nonconformist' who would as soon be a 'martyr for love as any article of the creed'.
- While he believed Arminians were in error at many points, he believed that many Calvinists were guilty of an overreaction. Baxter argued in England that a biblical balance was to be observed between the paradox of God's hidden purposes and His revealed promises. While Baxter urged the truth of sovereign divine election, he also maintained a designed sufficiency in the death of Christ for all mankind.

Baxter's Desire for Christian Unity

Richard Baxter



- I apprehended it a Matter of great Necessity to imprint true catholicism on the Minds of Christians, it being a most lamentable thing to observe how few Christians in the World there be, that fall not into one Sect or another And if they can but get to be of a Sect which they think the holiest (as the Anabaptists and the Separatists), or which is the largest (as the Greeks and the Romans), they think then that they are sufficiently warranted to deny others to be God's Church, or at least to deny them Christian love and communion.

1642 Civil War between Parliament and King

A few honest men are
better than numbers



Oliver Cromwell

•Not only strike while the iron is hot, but make it hot by striking.

Put your trust in God but keep your powder dry.



• "Truly England and the church of God hath had a great favour from the Lord, in this great victory given us."

• "I could not riding out alone about my business, but smile out to God in praises, in assurance of victory because God would, by things that are not, bring to naught things that are".



**Oliver Cromwell on
the Battle of
Marston Moor. 1644**

**Cromwell before the Battle of
Naseby. 1645.**

Oliver Cromwell

letter to Sir Thmas Fairfax,
7 March 1646



It's a blessed thing to die daily. For what is there in this world to be accounted of! The best men according to the flesh, and things, are lighter than vanity. I find this only good, to love the Lord and his poor despised people, to do for them and to be ready to suffer with them....and he that is found worthy of this hath obtained great favour from the Lord; and he that is established in this shall (being conformed to Christ and the rest of the Body) participate in the glory of a resurrection which will answer all.--

1646 Charles surrendered to the Scots

• This is our comfort, God is in heaven... His and only His counsel shall stand.



Oliver Cromwell Refusing to Become King by J. Schex.

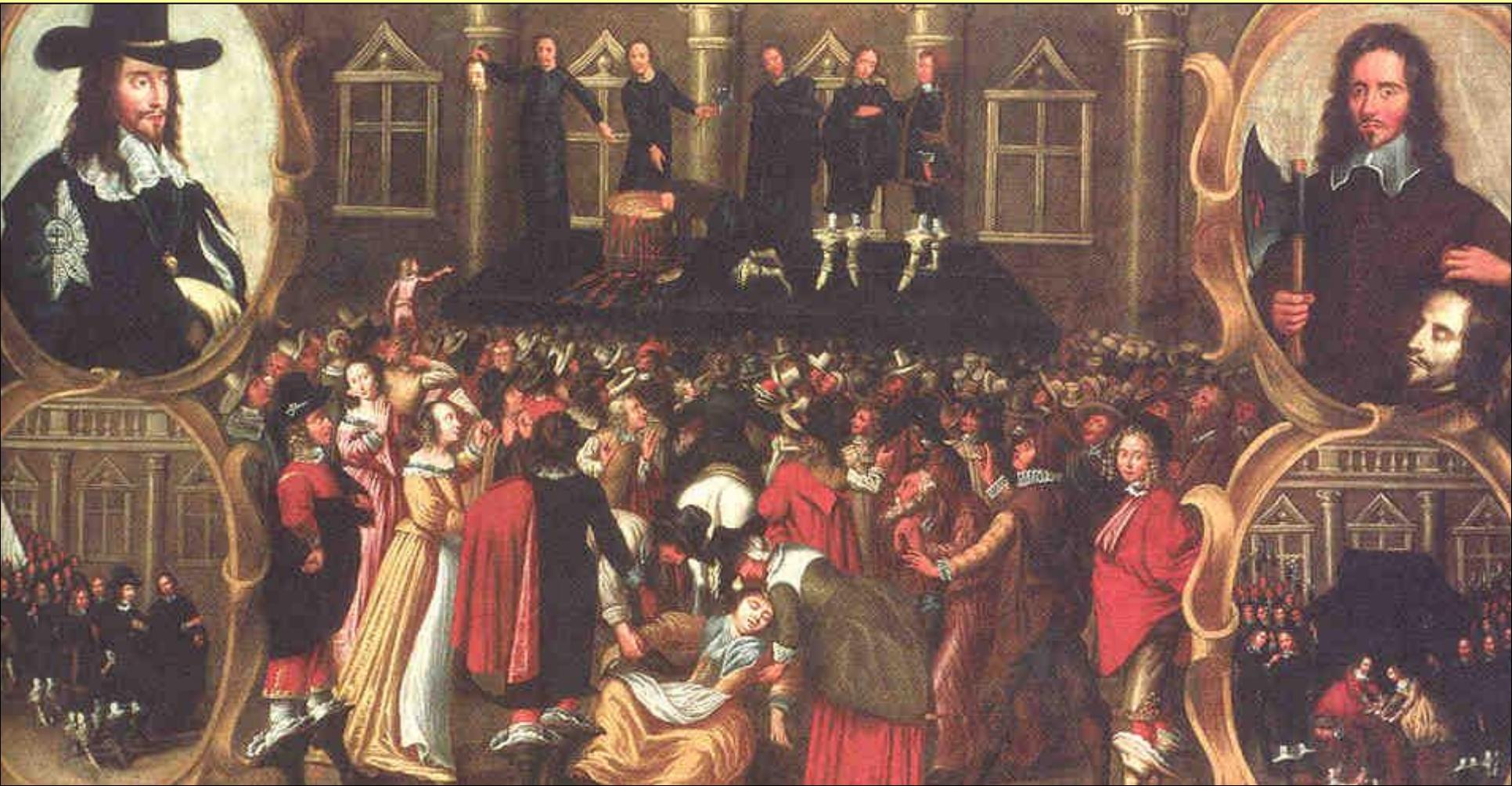
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King
Charles I

-- Oliver Cromwell, letter
21 December 1646

King Charles I Beheaded, 1649



Cromwell's Religious Toleration

• "I beseech you in the bowels of Christ think it possible you may be mistaken."



From a letter to the Scots Presbyterian National Assembly

- Cromwell a Congregationalist.
- religious toleration to all, except Catholics
- welcomed Jews
- Trying to accommodate all: the brick wall in Exeter Cathedral: Presbyterians on one side; Independents on the other
- The Prayer Book was not to be used.

Wave of Puritan Iconoclasm

- The rejection of monarchy and an Episcopal system of church government after the execution of the king in January 1649 opened the floodgates for religious reform.
 - A parliamentary commission, led by William Dowsing, saw to it that English churches were cleansed of 'superstitious' pictures.
 - The ornate interior of St George's Chapel at Windsor was stripped bare and:
 - 'The whole chapel so dismantled that, at the burial of Charles I, the former arrangement could not be recognised'.
- Tighe, *Annals of Windsor*



The Rule of the Major-Generals 1655-1656

- Puritanism at its godliest
- Despised by populace
- Anglican services prohibited in England
- Swearing was punished by a fine, though those who kept swearing could be sent to prison.
- Cromwell shut many inns and the theatres were all closed down.
- Sunday -- Most forms of work were banned.
- Those caught doing unnecessary work could be put in the stocks.
- Church attendance required
- Christmas banned!



GAMBLING



1658 Congregationalists' Savoy Declaration

- statement of faith prepared in 1658 by a conference of English Congregationalists who met at Savoy Palace, London. The declaration consisted of three parts: a preface, a confession of faith, and a platform of discipline.
- In matters of doctrine it was primarily a restatement (with some modifications) of the Presbyterian Westminster Confession (1646), but in the declaration concerning church government it advocated the autonomy of each local church. As with other statements of faith prepared by Congregationalist conventions, it was considered to be a presentation of beliefs shared by the church membership and was not treated as doctrinal law.

John Owen, 1616-1683

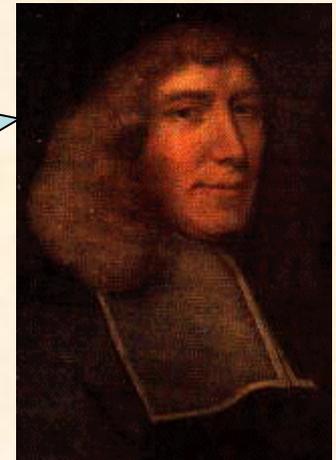
“The Calvin of England”

“A man may take the measure of his growth and decay in grace according to his thoughts and meditations upon the person of Christ.”

- JOHN OWEN

It is better for 500 errors to be scattered among individuals than for one error to have power and jurisdiction over all others

" Without absolutes revealed from without by God Himself, we are left rudderless in a sea of conflicting ideas about manners, justice and right and wrong, issuing from a multitude of self-opinionated thinkers."

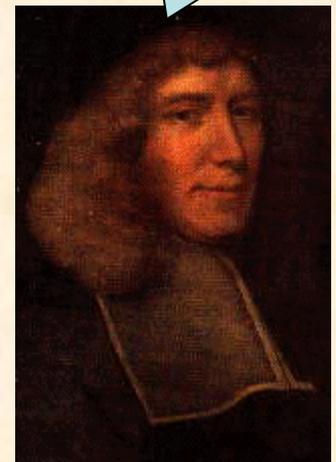


John Owen,

Owen as Cromwell's Chief Religious Advisor

- advocate of Congregationalism
- studying at Oxford by age 12.
- Driven from Oxford in 1637 by Archbishop Laud
- His frequent preaching before Parliament led to his attachment to Cromwell.
- Chief Religious Aide to Oliver Cromwell
 - accompanied Cromwell on his military ventures to Ireland and Scotland (1649–50).
 - guided the religious settlement under Cromwell.
 - Owen opposed plans to offer the English crown to Cromwell

"The foundation of true holiness and true Christian worship is the doctrine of the gospel, what we are to believe. So when Christian doctrine is neglected, forsaken, or corrupted, true holiness and worship will also be neglected, forsaken, and corrupted."

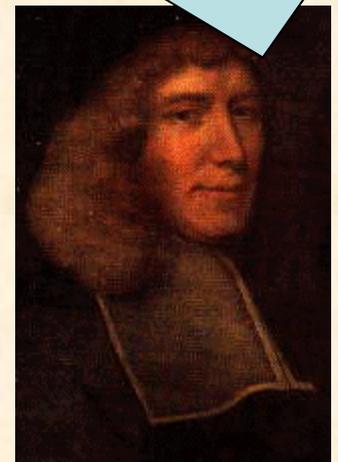


John Owen

Writings

- Among his works are historical treatises on religion, several studies of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and defenses of Nonconformist views and a rebuke of Arminianism
- His works comprise 24 volumes
- Owen influenced the development of Puritan and Baptist theology
- His books include *Communion with God, Sin and Temptation, Christians Are Forever*, and the classic *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*.
- He maintained that the “reformation of England shall be more glorious than of any Nation in the world, being carried on, neither by might nor power, but only by the spirit of the Lord of Hosts.”

"We need to attend diligently to the state of our soul, and to deal fervently and effectively with God about it."



John Owen Quotes

- "When someone acts weak, negligent, or casual in a duty—performing it carelessly or lifelessly, without any genuine satisfaction, joy, or interest—he has already entered into the spirit that will lead him into trouble. How many we see today who have departed from warmhearted service and have become negligent, careless, and indifferent in their prayer life or in the reading of the Scriptures. For each one who escapes this peril, a hundred others will be ensnared. Then it may be too late to acknowledge, "I neglected private prayer," or "I did not meditate on God's Word," or "I did not hear what I should have listened to."

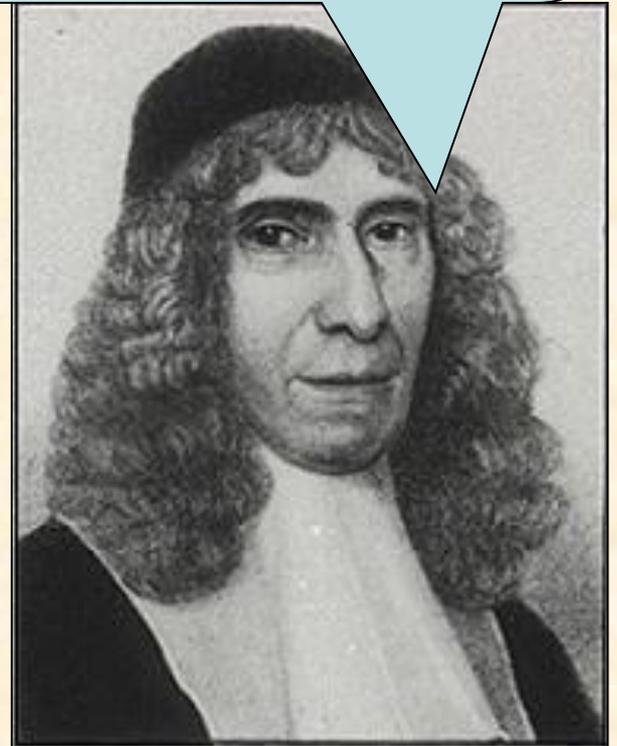
More John Owen Quotes

- "I will not judge a person to be spiritually dead whom I have judged formerly to have had spiritual life, though I see him at present in a swoon (faint) as to all evidences of the spiritual life. And the reason why I will not judge him so is this -- because if you judge a person dead, you neglect him, you leave him; but if you judge him in a swoon, (faint) though never so dangerous, you use all means for the retrieving of his life. "
- "Unless men see a beauty and delight in the worship of God, they will not do it willingly."
- "No men can be lords of our faith, though they may be helpers of our joy."

John Owen Seeks Christian Unity

- In 1654 Oliver Cromwell and the Parliament called upon the divines to define what should be tolerated or indulged among those who profess the fundamentals of Christianity.
- Owen produced 16 Articles which stated the fundamentals.
- No mention of predestination, free will, extent of atonement, or baptism or Lord's Supper

• "Christ did not die for any upon condition, *if they do believe*; but he died for all God's elect, *that they should believe.*"



John Milton

(1608-1674) - Poet

What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low
raise and support,
That to the height of
this great argument
I may assert eternal
Providence,
And justify the ways of
God to men.



- one of the greatest poets of the English language.
- Milton ranks second only to Shakespeare among English poets
- his writings and his influence are an important part of the history of English literature, culture, and libertarian thought.
- His works include a metrical rendition of the Psalms.
- He is best known for *Paradise Lost*, which is generally regarded as the greatest epic poem in the English language.
- Congregationalist
- From young Calvinist to old Arminian

John Milton, Polemicist

“New presbyter
is but old priest
writ large”



- noted historian, scholar, pamphleteer, and civil servant for the Parliamentarians and the Puritan Commonwealth.
- Advocated “incompatibility” as a grounds for divorce
- expounds the doctrine that power resides always in the people, who delegate it to a sovereign but may, if it is abused, resume it and depose or even execute the tyrant.
- attacked made on “prelacy” in the Anglican church, The Book of Common Prayer, and ritual, as being a compromise with Rome.
- urged a return to the democratic simplicity and purity of the apostolic church.
- argued for religious freedom (except for Roman Catholics, since Catholicism had shown itself a danger to national security)

Latin Secretary under Cromwell, 1649-1660

- wrote treatises defending the actions of the English in deposing King Charles.
- loss of his eyesight
- Blindness reduced his strictly secretarial duties, though he continued through 1659 as a translator of state letters.
- When Charles II was restored to the English throne, Milton lost his position as Latin Secretary.

Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wip'd them soon;

The world was all before them, where to choose

Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.

They hand in hand, with wand'ring steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.



Wanted Man

- The Restoration government executed the Commonwealth leader and exhumed and hanged at Tyburn the body of Cromwell.
- Milton himself, as a noted defender of the regicides, was in real danger.
- In the summer of 1660 a warrant was out for his arrest; he was kept in hiding by friends.
- his life was spared through the intercession either of the poet Andrew Marvell,
- It may have been decided that the blind writer was now harmless.

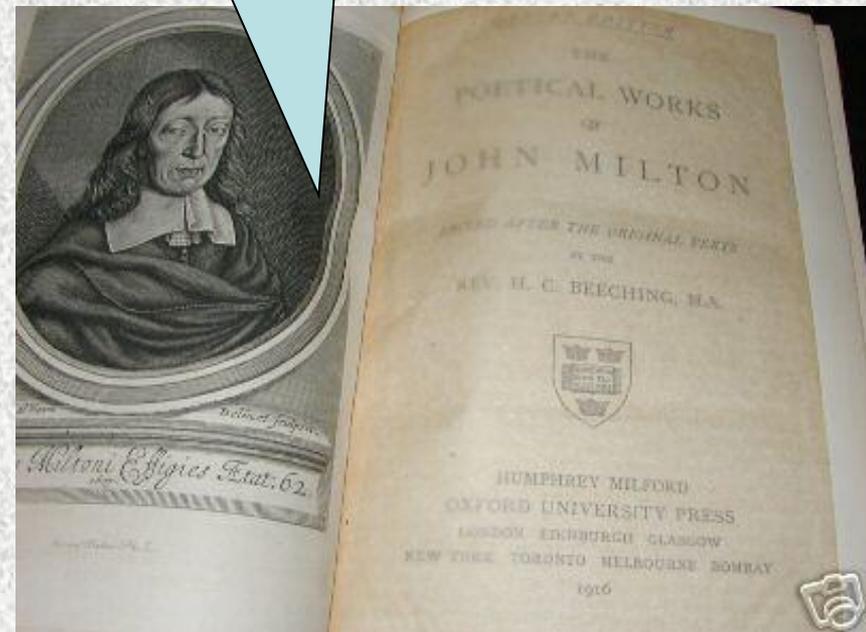
I cannot praise a fugitive
and cloistered virtue,
unexercised and
unbreathed, that never
sallies out and sees her
adversary, but slinks out of
the race where that
immortal garland is to be
run for, not without dust
and heat.



Paradise Lost, 1670

- epic poem written in blank verse—
i.e., unrhymed iambic pentameter
verse.
- story of the fall of man, that is, how
the first man and woman in the
world, Adam and Eve, were
tempted by Satan to disobey God by
eating the forbidden fruit from the
Tree of Knowledge, and how they
were consequently punished by God
and driven out of paradise, with the
prospect of the eventual redemption
of mankind by Jesus Christ, the Son
of God.

**Revenge, at first
though sweet,
Bitter ere long back
on itself recoils.**



Paradise Lost

- Irony, profoundly compassionate irony, pervades the moving last lines which describe Adam and Eve as they depart from Eden—not now the majestic lords of creation but two frail human beings beginning life anew in the world of sin and sorrow and death, though “with Providence their guide” and the hope of achieving a “paradise within.”
- conflict and contrast between good and evil, heaven and hell, light and darkness, order and chaos, love and hate, humility and pride, reason and passion.

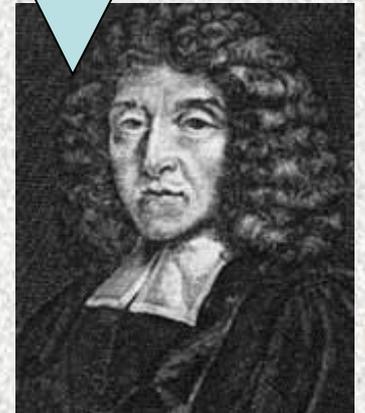
**In discourse more sweet;
For eloquence the soul, song
charms the sense.
Others apart sat on a hill retir'd,
In thoughts more elevate, and
reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge,
will, and fate,
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge
absolute;
And found no end, in wand'ring
mazes lost.**



Paradise Regained 1671

Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do ingloriously, by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple: who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?

- sequel to Paradise Lost: the redemption of man by Christ.
- Christ, the second Adam, wins back for man what the first Adam had lost.
- how Christ in the forty days in the wilderness resists one temptation after another and how finally Satan the tempter falls into crushing defeat.



How charming is divine
philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull
fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of
nectar'd sweets
Where no crude surfeit
reigns.

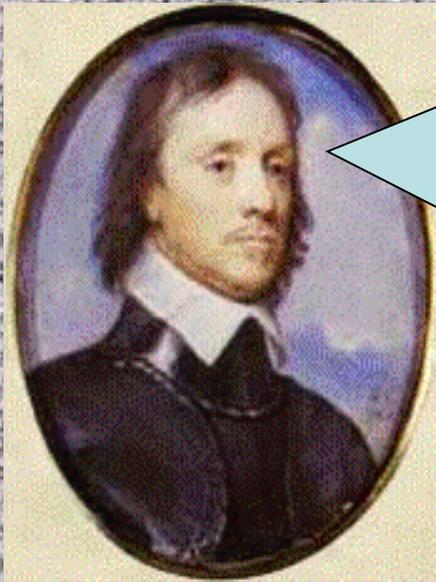


Samson Agonistes

1671

- most powerful and completely satisfying of Milton's major works.
- The play deals with the final phase of Samson's life.
- the process by which Samson, “eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,” moves from preoccupation with his misery and disgrace to selfless humility and renewed spiritual strength, so that he can once more feel himself God's chosen champion.

Oliver
Cromwell,
Letter to
Charles
Fleetwood,
1652.



• Shall we seek for the root of our comforts within us? What God hath done, what he is to us in Christ, is the root of our comfort. In this is stability; in us is weakness. Acts of obedience are not perfect, and therefore yield not perfect peace. Faith, as an act, yields it not, but as it carries us into him, who is our perfect rest and peace; in whom we are accounted of, and received by, the Father, even as Christ himself. This is our high calling. Rest we here, and here only.-