

The History of the Word Puritan

by J.I. Packer

This course on Puritanism will focus on understanding the people and their actions, rather than just the forces and pressures that shaped their lives.

Duration: 53:15

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Acts 17:11, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:23, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Church History", "Social Justice"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by emphasizing the importance of understanding the overall standpoint before delving into the subject. He states that this course is a study of history and highlights the need to look for the essence of history and what to focus on when studying it. The speaker also mentions the limitations of textbooks and the importance of seeing through the eyes of historical figures. He then briefly touches on the social injustices perpetrated by the king and his advisors in the 17th century, as well as the church of England's alignment with Arminianism. The sermon concludes with the mention of a civil war and the resulting chaos in the country.

Transcript

...subject of Puritanism has done me that much good that it will have the same effect on you. But it has generated in me more than a little enthusiasm for communicating to others what I have learned about the Puritans and what the Puritans have taught me. And so I myself am looking forward to this course very much.

Well, I hope you'll enjoy it too. A word, sir, about the books which will come nearest to the state of the textbooks in this course. Though let me say straight away that because we are doing it in a great rush, four lectures a week, and because in any case it's an elective and not, therefore, compulsory, I would think it a little rough to inflict on you a lot of textbook work, and I would think it a little rough to inflict on you a lot of essay writing.

And so, in fact, these books will not be used as textbooks, in the sense that I shall ask you to read sections of them in preparation for particular lectures. All that I shall do is refer you to them and to sections in them where you can read at measure, following up things that I say. This course is going to be a self-contained affair.

I shall take it out of you when we get to the examinations, but I'm not going to demand any specific reading or any specific essay writing during the next six weeks. That, I hope, comes as good news. Right now to our first lecture, which I've entitled, Puritanism, the Word and the Thing.

I'm sorry, I haven't given the titles of the textbooks that I'm thinking of. Pewter Puritanism by M. M. Nathan. There's the paperback edition of it which you can get if you want to own one of your own.

That, as the title indicates, takes you up to the beginning of the 17th century. The Rise of Puritanism by William Haller. That's the complementary book, written from a different standpoint, which takes you up to 1640.

Hugh Martin, Puritanism and Richard Baxter. The value of this is as a survey. It's not a deeply technical work at all, but it's a good survey of the various clarifications about the Puritans that have resulted from thirty years and more of study in this century.

Oh, by the way, Craig, I've forgotten his initials for the moment, I haven't put it down here. Craig Puritan, C-R-A-G-G. Puritanism and the Period of the Great Revolution.

That's the one book that covers the period from 1660 up to 1690. It's not a complete survey of the period, it's just a study of certain aspects of the movement during the persecuting times. There isn't, in fact, a good textbook that covers the whole of Restoration Puritanism.

A certain H. G. Plum, in the preface to his book entitled Restoration Puritanism, published in 1943, wrote very justly, I quote him, that students of English history must long have been dissatisfied with historians' treatments of Restoration Puritanism. But unfortunately his own book doesn't do very much to lessen this dissatisfaction, and we're still in need of a textbook for the later period of the quality of Nathan and Paula, which, once you accept their presuppositions and standpoints, are both of them very good textbooks indeed. And the final work, the first volume by Terry Miller, on the New England Mind, entitled The New England Mind of the 17th Century.

And that's the study of Puritan culture, a cross-sectional study, very able, and again, once you accept his presuppositions, a work of permanent value and very great helpfulness on a whole lot of issues. I'll explain in a moment what these cryptic references to the presuppositions mean. It's a rather important point, if you'll take it in its proper order and in its proper place in the lecture.

So then, to our first topic, our first lecture subject, Puritanism, the Word and the Thing. First, some very general remarks, designed to give you my point of view in presenting this material to you. As I said to the class before this one, I think that it's part of a teacher's business to make his overall standpoint plain to those at the receiving end before he begins.

You don't have to agree with my point of view, but at least it'll help you in assessing what I say if you know what the overriding point of view is. So here are just a few remarks designed to give you my point of view and to lead us into our subject. The remarks, actually, number three, and I'll give you the unwritten numbers.

One, this course is a course in history. What is the essence of history? What should you look for when you study history? Well, to cut a long story short, I think that a Christian philosophy of history will always guide you to what common sense also would lead you to, namely the proposition that the essence of history is people and what they do and what happens to them. I make that point at the outset because in these days

there are many secular historians who would say that the essence of history is the study of forces operating in societies over periods of time.

If they're Marxist historians, they'll specify economic forces. If they're not Marxists, they will be able to point to other forces whose influence their concerns trace. My comment on that is, well, it's certainly part of the story, but if you stopped there, your history would be viciously abstract.

The essence of history, I say again, is people. The people caught up in these movements, the people who, if you like, are the subject of the pressure which these forces exert. And the real interest of history is in the people.

And it seems to me the real task of the historian is not done until he's focused on the people and not simply used them as lay figures who from time to time say comic things that you can quote in the text verbatim for light relief, but as people who were just as serious, just as honest, just as much alive as the historian is himself. And the real interest in history is to get inside their minds and to see what makes them tick. They were contemporary to themselves.

What the historian has got to try and do when he's fed up with pressure of forces and operative pressures and the abstract, he then goes to try and get into the minds of these people, to try by an effort of imagination to make himself contemporary with them, to see through their eyes, to hear through their ears, to see what made them tick, and to write about them in the way that a good biographer writes about people. To this extent, every historian should have the quality of a good biographer. He should be able to get into the minds of people and see how they work.

So I think, of course, this is something which other professional historians, historians with more claim to be called professional indeed than I have, would dispute. But that's my point of view, and that's going to be my aim in this course. It's a course on English Puritanism.

I am interested in these chaps who were called Puritans. And I want to try and show you what sort of people they were and to enable you to understand them. That's point one.

Point two, solidarity, is this. As this is a course in history, so it's a course in church history. Now, what is church history? Church history must be understood not simply as the action and reaction of ordinary secular forces on secular people.

Church history has a further sector added, which makes a difference from any other sort of history. In church history, what you are studying is the action of the word of God on people and on situations, and men's reaction to the word of God in those situations. And this, too, must be part of the story whenever you're studying church history.

These people on whom our attention is directed, they worshipped God, they had Bibles, they said their prayers, they sought to walk before God, just as we do. They lived under the word of God according to their love. And when studying church history, we've never got to lose sight of that fact.

Here we are studying the action of men who were trying to serve God. And we haven't understood any of the things that any of them do until we understand it in the light of their beliefs that hereby they did God's service. Now, I labour this point a bit, because most textbooks of church history stop a good way short of that.

And they show you these churches acting in what, to our minds, also seems to be a perfectly fantastic manner. And sometimes they make a joke of it. Historians know their subjects don't, and it's their way to bring in any light and comic relief that they can to adorn their pages and make them easier to read.

But this is not enough. You've got to ask, well, how the dickens, that's English in case you didn't know, how the dickens did these people ever suppose that by behaving the way they did, they could please God? Now that's the real question which church history raises at point after point. And we haven't finished our job as church historians until we've carried the inquiry up to the place where we can answer that question.

And this means that you can't do church history without also doing a certain amount of historical theology and history of Christian piety. That's true of all periods of church history. And it's supremely true of the Puritan.

For the Puritan age was a supremely theological age, and it was supremely an age in which piety, living to God, was everybody's admitted concern, and the only question at issue was how are you to do it? And our study of English Puritanism would be an inadequate study if theology and piety were neglected. And it's at just this point that I want to warn you against those textbooks that I mentioned just now. Because it's just here that they fail.

They're honest minds, they tell you in their prefaces that from our standpoint they're going to fail. The subtitle of Nathan's book is A Chapter in the History of Idealism. And in his preface he makes it very plain that what he means by idealism is the state in which you have ideals as ethical objectives as contrasted with the state in which you don't have either.

So that's simply a relativist, a pragmatist, a secularist, in the full sense of that word. Well, all right. That's his point of view, and from that standpoint he tells the story.

But what it means is that when he comes to the Puritan... comes to the point of telling us how the Puritan fits, he usually doesn't get there. And his presentation of the Puritan is external. And his work as a historian, therefore, from our standpoint, is not finished.

But it's even more so with William Harlow and the rise of Puritanism. Harlow was a student of English literature, and he tells us, in the first sentences of his preface, that the privilege which led to this book, I'm quoting, was first prompted by a desire to understand the face of Milton's early apologetica in its own time. In other words, he's interested in the ideas of Milton's early apologetica.

He's got a secular interest. He's interested in democracy and liberty and that kind of issue. But he's not interested, and he makes it very plain in the way that he writes this book, that he's not interested in theology, Godliness, Christianity as such.

And he writes this book from that standpoint, and it's a very able book. But again, like Harlow, it comes short of explaining to us how the Puritan fits. And the same is true of Terry Miller, who wrote his book as the prolegometer to a generic intellectual history of New England.

And here again, understanding of the theological motivation of Puritanism is not merely lacking, but this list of the subjects which need not concern us, because this is the age in which we've all outgrown that kind of thing. Miller is quite open in telling you that this is his point of view, but it means that in his presentation of the Puritan culture, just as in Nassau and Harlow's presentation of Puritan history, there is, in a very real

sense, a God-shaped blank. And you must always make allowance for that when you're reading these books, and you must remember that the very heart of the matter is something about which these brethren aren't qualified to tell you, and for the most part don't even attempt to tell you.

They're content with a merely external description, categorized perhaps in terms of literary criticism, a purely external description of some of the things that they did. So as to the further question of how and why it was that these men thought that by the things that they were doing they were serving God, these books don't give you very much help. Well, once you know that, it's all right.

You can get what's valuable from the textbooks, but you're also alerted to what the textbooks don't tell you. And that's something which I think is always important in a situation like this situation, in which the textbooks don't tell you enough. One always tends to assume that a textbook on a subject tells you everything, basically, that you need to know.

And that's why, right at the outset, I was hesitant about calling these books textbooks, not just because they're not going to use them as textbooks, but because they aren't quite that, because of this central and fundamental thing that they leave out. Well, by saying that, you'll be able to see what it is that I'm going to try and do in my treatment of this period. I am going to attempt, whether I shall succeed at another question, but at least I'm going to attempt to show you how these people picked and why it was that they thought that their course of action was through an authentic service of God.

In fact, at this point, I want to put in a little lamentation about the way in which modern study of the Puritans, not simply in these books I mention, but quite generally, has been weakened, or triggered, in one way, by the contentment, which these various writers have shown, contentment in an external posture, an attitude of standing outside the Puritans, so far as their theology and their piety is concerned, a contentment, that is, to dismiss those things as so outmoded, as not even to be interesting, and certainly not an essential part of the picture they're trying to paint, matter, therefore, that can be treated as both quaint and dead, and dismissed from consideration. The truth is that if you review the historiography of Puritanism in this last, well, let's say, this last sixty years of this century, you'll find that modern Puritan study has been motivated, chiefly, by what we would call a liberal concern, using that word liberal in its modern political and secular sense, where it stands for a general interest in moral and cultural and political progress, and the refining of culture, and the refining of moral attitudes in the light of developing knowledge. It's a kind of evolutionism, this liberalism, and it's led to a study of the Puritans as forerunners of the better and more fully developed, and highly developed culture that we have today.

That's been the standpoint, and of course your standpoint, as you know, operates the spectacle, or rather, blinkers. In any field of study, your standpoint determines what you're looking for, and what you're looking for determines what you see. So it's not surprising that historians with this particular limitation and definition of interest have not seen certain things which we certainly, I hope, will be unable to see in our own study of the Puritans.

And Haller himself is an instance of this. Haller is interested in libertarianism. He's written a good deal beside the rise of Puritanism on Puritan thoughts about civil liberty, liberty and reformation in the Puritan revolution, the level of trend on civil liberty.

These are other works by William Haller. Or think of a title like Woodhouse's Puritanism of Liberty, or the subtitle of that book by Plum that I mentioned just now, A Study of the Growth of English Liberty. Same secular interest.

That is why, that's a justification for my saying earlier on that his book doesn't provide the treatment of post-restoration Puritanism that we want. It's not interested in the religious springs of the movement. It's not interested in theology.

It's not interested in piety. The interest is fundamentally secular. Hence, as I say, these points, these central things get missed.

Another writer on Puritanism who's an avowed Marxist, Christopher Hill. He, of course, with his Marxist preoccupation on economic and revolutionary forces, he's even less, from the standpoint of our interest, than do these other writers. And so on might go on.

But all that I'm doing here is illustrating the way that this secular interest has determined the direction of Puritan studies and explaining to you why it is that you'll find the book. I think I may say you should find, you ought to find the books on Puritanism woefully inadequate. From their own standpoint, they're learned and competent enough.

But from the standpoint of presenting us with what Puritanism actually was, they fall seriously and sadly short. And this is why the standard presentation in the books of the activities, the particular activities of the Puritan movement and those who made it up, those which are in fact presented, often leaves one feeling, well, these Puritans, surely they were a pretty pernicky crowd. Because they're presented by the books as a pretty pernicky crowd.

Not that the actual external states are wrong, it's simply that the motivation isn't understood. You find, in fact, that the standard presentation of Puritan history in most of the recognized, the academically recognized textbooks of the present time, is essentially an episode in the power politics of Ecclesiasticism, a movement motivated by certain social pressure, a movement aimed at the capture of the Church simply because these people were the sort of people who wanted to have the Church under their control, a movement whose professed theological preoccupations marked fundamentally secular concerns, a movement that is, which used theology as a blind for the pursuit of secular ambitions, a movement which has at its heart the love of power, pride, self-assertiveness, all those secular motivations which have prompted, well, shall I say, secular history, which are common in secular history, which indeed form part of the story, but which are not, I repeat, not, and I hope to prove this before I finish, at the heart of the Puritan movement. The story is told something like this.

Here were these men who, just because they were men who temperamentally were inclined to extremes, were dissatisfied with the Elizabethan settlement in England after 1568, and they'd made friends, some of them on the continent, and they wanted to see the English Church brought into line with the greater austerity of outward form which the Church, the Reformed Churches of the continent had acquired, and so they campaigned for more reformation, and the big battalions of the establishment and the civil power were turned against them, and they didn't get what they wanted, and this made them mad and made them more insistent in campaigning, and made them more radical in stating what they wanted. They couldn't get reform of the Church's worship, abolition of the serfdom, and the conduct of worship, and little things like that, so they started campaigning for pre-superializing of the whole form of the establishment, and they campaigned for 20 years. It pointed out, truly, that their leaders were young men, and young men, the historians imply, were inclined to run to extremes, and they fought this fight, and they were beaten, and by the end of the 16th century, that particular sort of Puritanism had been temporally exhausted, and the Church of England could go on with its own development.

One thing that had happened in the Elizabethan period was that, as Carla will tell you in great detail, in great length, frustrated by the impossibility of reforming the outward face of the Church, some of the Puritans became preachers, and they tried to solace their egos by dramatizing the Christian life and using their influence as preachers to encourage people to engage in the dramatic and exciting business of living the Christian life as the preachers presented it in their sermons. Solace to a wounded ego. This is how Carla presents the motivation at that point.

And then in the 17th century, various social injustices were perpetrated by the powers that were, the king and his advisers, and similarly the Church of England fell more and more into line with Arminianism on the continent, and the children of the Elizabethan Puritan movement, whose friends were still amongst the reformed churches of the continent, were shocked at the Arminianism, and they were even more shocked by the things that the Lord was doing, and they saw it as a halfway house back to Romanism, and that made them fight again, and then eventually things got so hot that they had a civil war about it. And then when they'd won the civil war, none of them knew what to do with the situation, and the country was thrown into chaos. They couldn't make, they couldn't restore order, either ecclesiastical or civil order, once they got power, they didn't know what to do with it, they had to have the king dead, they were outsmarted in the restoration debate, their ministers were ejected from the Church of England because they were required to abjure certain things that they stood for in the past, and they were too proud to do that, and so they had to leave the Church of England and English non-conformity began, and so the whole story teetered out, really, in a shambles and a heap of ashes.

These cantankerous fellows, these awkward men, they'd fought their fight, they'd lost it, that was the end of the pure little episode. And the implication is that since the Church of England was allied more directly with, well, was allied fairly directly with the political and social developments of England after that time, it was probably a good job that it went that way. Well, that's a bit of a caricature, telling the story in that session, but you will find in the book that that is the way that it's been.

Perhaps the language used is politer, but the motivation to which weight is given is the secular motivation of pride, self-assertiveness, natural inclination to run to extreme, natural cantankerousness, the desire to rule, the desire to have things under your hand, and nothing more respectable, really, is allowed to have operated. The theological and Christian and biblical motivation is not given any serious weight at all. If it's mentioned, and sometimes in the books it is mentioned, it's mentioned on the grounds of the chap's professed that their motivation was theological and religious.

But it's not always the case that the writer commits himself to believing that it was so, or he does commit himself to believing that he was so. He will usually hasten to tell you that he thinks that their theological position was really quite unreasonable and untenable. So you don't get sympathy with the Puritan at the point at which I'm seeking to identify as the real heart of Puritanism, the theological, the religious, the theological and the religious area, the area of serving God and seeking to please God.

But the truth is that Puritanism, more or less than any movement of its kind in history, had religion, theology and piety at its heart. We may say with truth that its watchword, and this doesn't really get you to the heart of Puritanism, was holiness unto the Lord. And if I wanted to give you a preliminary characterization of the Puritan spirit, I couldn't do better than tell you a little story.

A story found in a book by Giles Sterlin entitled *The Real Christian*, concerning one of the earliest of the Puritan ministers, a person Richard Rogers, who preached the word of God in Ethics in the 1880s and

1890s. Now, those were the days in which the people called Puritans were also called Precisions, because of their alleged preciseness and what seemed to non-Puritans pernicativeness in the way in which they served God. And Richard Rogers was out riding one day and the Lord of the Manor overtook him and they were riding along together and the Lord of the Manor took occasion to upbraid Richard Rogers for his Puritanism.

And he said, why are you fellows so precise? Why are you fellows so precise? What is it that makes you so? Don't you see how unreasonable it is? Don't you see what awkward customers it makes you? Why so precise? And Richard Rogers came out with the unanswerable reply, Oh sir, he said, oh sir, I serve a precise God. Now that's Puritanism. That's historical Puritanism.

And that is what surely gives you the real party to the movement that we're going to study together. There then is my second introductory point. This is church history, we must study it as we must study all church history in terms of the Word of God as men's response to the Word of God.

And this last quarter of an hour I've been seeking to work that out a bit with reference to the Puritan movement and the book that you may chance to read about the Puritans. And now my third point, which is a very short one. This is a study in English church history.

Not American. The history of American and English Puritanism well I say the history as well of English and American Puritanism has to be studied separately. They went quite different ways.

In New England, the Puritans came, they colonized they were the dominant, indeed the sole cultural and ecclesiastical force. And the problems which arose for them arose out of that situation in which, for better or for worse, they were in charge. But in England, Puritanism would never be dominant even less the sole cultural and ecclesiastical force.

Except perhaps for that very short period between 1645 and 1660 and only doubtfully actually even during that period Puritans, apart from that period anyway Puritans were always a minority. And the main course of English ecclesiastical and cultural development was not going their way. In other words, from their standpoint it was an evangelistic situation throughout in the broadest sense of their frame.

They were seeking to win their fellow men for the gospel they were seeking to win the church for the gospel they were seeking in the broadest way to win the whole of English culture for the gospel but they never actually won that battle. They were a minority movement they did great things but it can't be said that they ever won the country although they made lasting contributions to the religious the religious heritage of England perhaps right at the end of the course I'll be able to say something about those contributions down the line, two and a half centuries. But they were never in charge they were never dominant in their own day and this must always be borne in mind when you're comparing English and American Puritans.

I don't want to develop that fact now I don't want to draw out the differences I just warn you at this stage that there is a fundamental difference at that point leading to all sorts of detailed differences in the way that the two movements developed in the two cultures. Now we move directly to some evidence and we set ourselves this question Who were the Puritans? And that is going to lead on to a second question which we'll answer in a preliminary way before we get down to any detailed history What was Puritanism?

First, who were the Puritans?

And I propose to answer this question for the present at any rate by glancing at the history of the word Puritan. Now, in origin, just as at the present time the word Puritan was a nickname, an abusive nickname. When it was first used in the 1560s and on the list of those who used it after that time during the Elizabethan period it had a specific meaning. It was used as the English equivalent of Cathari, but pure people. C-H-A-R-I in English there's the Greek word katharos there which you may recognise. The Cathari, which was the name given to them by the novation of schismatics in the first century. And the implication of this abusive nickname therefore straight away was that these people are sectarian and schismatic that they believe that they're pure where other people aren't pure in other words,

that they're probably they're probably hypocrites into the bargain. So it was a nickname and a rude word. And there have been others in the history of the Church. Think, for instance, of the word fundamentalist in this century or the word necessitarian in the 18th century. Both of them have been, or were in the first instance at any rate, or at any rate rapidly became after they've been coined abusive nicknames. And there's a certain law of nicknames, a kind of anatomy of abuse. First, nicknames always spread in application. When you've got a bad name that will hang any dog you give it to you're inclined to give it to any dog in sight anyone whom you want to damn with a name. So these abusive words spread in their application and were applied to more and more people whom you want to knock down by

calling them a rude name. Secondly, the word is differently used by different people it loses its preciseness. People use it for its emotional force rather than because they think that it particularly fits the person to whom they're applying it. So its precise meaning, if ever it had a precise meaning it eroded away. And different people turned out to be using it in a number of quite distinct senses. So that you can't give a single crisp definition of it after it's been in the world for a few years. Already you need half a dozen definitions to cover the various applications of it that are being made. Think of the difficulty now, in our 1967 situation of defining the word fundamentally for a parallel situation. And then the third law in the anatomy of abuse. The word gets claimed by some because of

the good core of meaning which they believe they find in it. There's always a few who claim these words just as there's always been a few who think that it's better to call themselves fundamentalists than have done with it. And just as in the 18th century the Methodists went on calling themselves Methodists and gloried in the world although it was a word of ridicule on the lips of other people. But equally, there are always other people who think it's better to disclaim the word because it's so tainted and so imprecise. And they think that for them to claim it would be to mislead people and to jeopardise their own chances of bearing witness to the things for which they stand. So they prefer to say, we are not one of those. We don't recognise this label. We don't want to be called by that name.

Well, it's happened with the word Puritan just as it's happened with these other nicknames that I've mentioned. Now, here's the history. In 1564 a separatist group in London who'd organised themselves as a private little congregation distinct from the established Church of England and its parochial network covering the country were described by a contemporary chronicler as, I quote his phrase calling themselves Puritans the unspotted lambs of the Lord claiming in other words purity for their lives and for their churchmanship and justifying their separation on the ground that it was necessary for purity. In 1567 the word began to be applied by the opponent it began to be applied to those who were campaigning for the abolition of the separatists people who in the books are called the bestiality

of reformers began to be applied to them by their opponent. Then after 1570 it began to be applied to the different and distinct group who under the leadership of Thomas Cartwright at Cambridge I mean, he was

at Cambridge for 12 months and then he was thrown out In 1570 he was at Cambridge and this group of people started a movement campaigning for the Presbyterian I mean, of the Anglican hierarchy These people were sometimes called the discretionarians because part of their passion was a desire for parish discipline in a way that the established Anglican order wouldn't provide it But here was another application of the word purity It wasn't applied, I may say under an Elizabeth reign that is 1558 to 1603 if you haven't got the date During that period it wasn't applied by the opponent of

separatists to those who separated and set up their own independent congregations Those people were called Brownists after Thomas Brown, one of the first of them In fact, there weren't very many of them Separatist experiments under Elizabeth were crowned on by the orthologists Because they involved separation from the established church they were subjected to official pressure and they were, in fact, all of them suppressed There weren't any separatists operating in Britain in 1603, when Elizabeth died But none of these separatist experiments had been given the name of Puritans In those days, Puritanism didn't commence separatism Rather, it implied that you took a certain line within the established church This is interesting The first Puritans, the unspotted lambs of the Lord apparently

no longer existed Saving separatists, but apparently their usage just died out During the closing 30 years of Elizabeth's reign the word was repudiated both by those who wanted the abolition of the surface and by those who wanted a Presbyterianizing of the hierarchy They said, this is not a proper name to apply to us It implies separatist tendencies We haven't got separatist tendencies We are seeking the reformation of the national church But then, by the end of the century the Disciplinarians and the Vestiarians the Vestiarian Reformers just ceased to make this point They seemed to have recognized the situation had gone so far that it was useless to make the point They would be called Puritans whether they repudiated the name or not so they might as well grin and bear it The further

thing that has happened during those 30 years is that a pastoral prompt of the Puritan movement has developed which was doing great work on the pastoral front in some of the English towns and villages more about that at a later stage And this in itself was giving a positive content to the word that is, these pastors were known as Puritans and their pastoral ministry was winning them golden words words of approval from very many English people This had done something to rehabilitate the word So for all these reasons, towards the end of the 16th century the protests from those who were called Puritans against the word petered out and the complaints against its application to the police But meanwhile, in the 1580s and after the word had come more and more to be used by the ordinary people,

the ordinary secular-minded people of England who were many to apply quite indiscriminately to anyone who was noted for his strict personal morality The implication being that he was a prig and a killjoy and self-righteous And as an example of that, think of Malvolio the butt of the jokes in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night who is then a stupid and conceited and self-righteous fellow and is described by one of the clones in the play as a kind of a Puritan And in a play by Ben Johnson, produced in the 1590s, called Bartholomew Fair there's a Puritan character with the revealing name of Zeal of the Land Busy Zeal of the Land Busy and then he just hops around doing the Puritan thing trying to prevent his fellow men enjoying themselves Richard Baxter has his comment on this development of the use

of the word that it had come by the end of the 16th century to express, quote, the vulgar hatred of serious godliness Inconformist and non-conformist In other words, it was being given an application now that had no relation at all to one's church view It simply meant that you were a serious, moral man with at least a form of godliness that you took very seriously but the chances are you were a hypocrite and a frig and a

killjoy Next step in the history the word had become a good right term of abuse by now and in the 1620s certain persons in the hierarchy of the Church of England whose own theology was anti-Calvinist Arminians, if you like they coined the phrase doctrinal Puritan as a bad name to give their Calvinistic opponents that is, those who stood for the five points of the Syllabus

d'Or and Montague certain Richard Montague who afterwards became Bishop of Chichester wrote in a book of his about the Puritan doctrine of final perseverance which earned a protest from Bishop Carlton who had been one of the Anglican one of the Anglican ministers, I may say, to the Syllabus d'Or and his protest was that I never heard of a doctrinal Puritan there's no such thing as a doctrinal Puritan this is just a new phrase you've invented in order to malign people who stand for what the sinners stood for but the usage went on and Archbishop Lord on one occasion gave to his patron, his then patron, the Duke of Buckingham what he called in his diary a little tract quote, about doctrinal Puritanism in 1624, same year as Montague wrote this phrase and on another occasion he gave to Charles

I a list no, sorry, he gave to Buckingham, I should say Buckingham again a list of men who might be thought eligible for preferment preferment, that is appointment to the position of a dean or a bishop or any other high dignitary in the Church of England then and now was a matter of royal prerogatives the king chose and in the 17th century the monarch did it personally and so Lord is sending off this list of people who might be thought eligible for preferment distinguished churchmen, distinguished in their own line but he marked against them either O or P and O stood for Orthodox, a man to be preferred and P stood for Puritan, a man not to be preferred a man not to be given any high appointment in the church and it's interesting that their Lord is drawing this contrast O, Orthodox, that's

people who hold my doxy and P, that's people who hold a different doxy who hold a different doxy so here in 1624 and 1625 you've got this new usage, doctrinal Puritanism referring in fact to what we would call Orthodox Calvinism then in the civil war, after 1640 the royalists supplied the word indiscriminately to all those who supported the parliament including the independents from the separatists who now for the first time began to be called Puritan because of their politics and this broadened the use of the word still further then finally after 1662 the word dropped from current usage and became a historical term used in the way that it's used today that is, if you called a man a Puritan you were implying that he is just as bad as those shocking people of old who used to be called

Puritans once upon a time a term of abuse with a historical reference the historical reference being for the first half of the 17th century culminating in the civil war in the commonwealth for the people who couldn't conform to the restored Church of England in 1662 the people who were rejected from their livings they were in fact ministers who had been called Puritans before but now they were called either Presbyterians which for many of them actually was a misnomer but that's what they were called or non-conformists or dissenters Puritan became, as I say, a term of abuse with a historical reference however, this is the last thing I'll say now in the mid-17th century one or two people turn up content to vindicate the word to vindicate it as an honourable title for men who were concerned

to live lives that were pure in the sight of God and so you get in 1646 the work of a certain John Geary entitled The Character of an Old English Puritan or Protestant Non-Conformist and that little track ends with these words quote the Puritans were men who sorry the Puritans were men who stood four square, unmovable so that they who in the midst of many opinions have lost the view of true religion may return to him and there find it that was the claim and Richard Baxter, writing after the restoration deals with the accusation of a certain person who, writing against him, has said I quote Baxter, and I think he saved me

he says that I am purus putus puritanus a pure Puritan pop pop used apparently in the same way that it's now used in a in a vulgar word like sex pop I am a pure Puritan

pop and one qui totum puritanismum totus puract one who wholly breathes out the whole of Puritanism and Baxter's comment on that is alas I am not so good and happy not worthy to be spoken of in words of such high praise well, this is the story of the history of the word and by this history you can already see what kind of phenomenon it is that we're going to study my time has gone the kind thing to do is to say to you now hold any questions that you've got until three o'clock tomorrow the lecture's gone and I won't speak thank you

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