

History and Survey of the Westminster Confession of Faith

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Part 1: History, Context, and Rationale
Class 09: The Reformation in England, Part 1
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- 1536 Henry VIII introduces the 10 Articles of the church
- The Bible and the three ecumenical creeds – Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian – along with the decrees of the 1st four general Councils
 - Baptism imparts remission of sins and regeneration and is necessary for salvation, even in the case of infants. It condemns the opinions of Anabaptists and Pelagians as heresy.
 - The sacrament of penance, with confession and absolution, is necessary to salvation.
 - That the body and blood of Christ are really present in the Eucharist.
 - Justification is by faith, but good works are necessary.
 - Images as representations of virtue/example but are not objects of worship.
 - Saints honored as examples of life and as furthering the prayers of the faithful.
 - Praying to saints is permitted, holy days observed.
 - Clerical vestments, holy water, candles, ashes are good and laudable but not effectual.
 - Prayers for the dead are laudible, but purgatory is biblically uncertain. Abuses related to purgatory, such as indulgences or masses for the dead are to be rejected.
- 1537 Bishop's Book - Expositions on
- The Apostles Creed
 - The Seven Sacraments - baptism, Eucharist, and penance as sacraments; but also restored confirmation, marriage, holy orders, and extreme unction
 - The Ten Commandments – adopting the Jewish numbering
 - The “Hail, Mary”
 - Justification
 - Purgatory
- 1539 10 Articles reduced to Six
1. Confirmed Transubstantiation without using the word
 2. Communion in both kinds not necessary
 3. Clerical celibacy compulsory

4. Vows of chastity/votive masses allowed
5. Private masses allowed
6. Auricular confession to be retained

1543

King's Book

- Faith – justification by faith rejected
- Endorsed the mass, transubstantiation, confession and church ceremonies
- All seven sacraments included without distinction
- Exposition of
 - the Apostles Creed
 - Ten Commandments – images not forbidden
 - the Lord's Prayer
 - Salutation of the Angel to the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Prayer for Souls Departed and use of the word "purgatory" discouraged

King Edward VI

1553

42 Articles

- Denied transubstantiation
- Denied the sacrifice of the Mass
- Denied the sinlessness of Mary
- Affirmed Scr. As final authority on salvation
- Affirmed that Adam's fall compromised human free will
- Affirmed both elements in the Lord's Supper
- Affirmed that ministers may marry

Mary I

- Announced an immediate return and adherence to the religion of her own profession.
- Suspending any all preaching to the contrary – restoring popish bishops to their positions while imprisoning reformed bishops.
- King Edward's laws concerning religion were repealed.
- The Mass resumed
- Laws against heresy revived

Elizabeth I

1562-3

Convocation held to conduct the revision, reduction and publication of the Forty Two Articles (cf. 1552) as the Thirty Nine Articles of the Anglican religion. Elizabeth rashly requires uniformity and conformity.

1566

Nonconformists determined to be separate and distinct as Puritans from

the Church of England.

- 1603 Elizabeth I of England dies; James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England, Scotland and Ireland, uniting the two crowns.
- 1603-1714 The Stuarts (from now on, the French spelling), remain Protestants but openly tolerant of Catholics until James II comes to the throne who is a convert to Catholicism.
Such royal toleration creates a long-standing tension between king and Parliament throughout the century. The kings of England also gripped the principle of the Divine right of kings which Parliament rebels against in facing Charles I and determines that a republican government is preferable.
- 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible is published.
- 1616 Many Puritans flee to Holland and became more enamoured with the Congregational system of church government.
- 1620 Pilgrim Fathers set sail for America in the *Mayflower*
- 1625-1649 Charles I - He rules under the principle of Divine Right of Kings, exercises autocratic authority, and continues the oppression against the Puritans and clashes repeatedly with Parliament.
- 1637 Charles tries to force his Prayer Book - "the whole mass of prelatric rites and ceremonies" encompassed in the Book of Canons and a Liturgy - on the Scots, who resist by composing and signing the National Covenant at Greyfriar's churchyard in Edinburgh, which directly challenged the royalty's philosophy of "the Divine right of kings", calling them to be subject to the Parliaments of their countries.
- 1640 "Long Parliament" summoned, which lasted until 1660.

New Covenant Presbyterian Church

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