I – History

- Early (that is, pre-Christian) religions in the British Isles are linked to the cultures present there. They include:
  - Celtic polytheism and druidism
  - Gallo-Roman religion
  - Mithraism
  - Anglo-Saxon paganism
  - Norse paganism

Christianisation(s) and Established Church

- Christianity was introduced to Britannia during the Roman period (3rd century) and became the most common religion.
- The Anglo-Saxons were not Christians when they invaded Britain: they brought with them their own Germanic paganism. Their arrival corresponded to a dechristianisation.
- During the 6th century, the second christianisation of Britain began: the christianisation of Anglo-Saxons. This was done by Celtic missionaries and continental ones.
- At the turn of the 7th century, Augustine converted King Ethelbert of Kent, who thus became the first Christian Anglo-Saxon king. With Ethelbert's permission, Augustine founded the first archbishopric in an Anglo-Saxon kingdom in Canterbury.
- In 664, the Synod of Whitby ruled in favour of Roman Catholicism and against the Celtic clergy. The Celtic clerics either conformed to Roman usages or went away to Ireland, and the Christian Church in "England" became uniformly Roman.

The Middle Ages: recurring conflicts between the Church and the Crown

- In 1164, King Henry II tightened monarchic rule with the Constitutions of Clarendon, which took some powers away from the Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury and former Lord Chancellor, Thomas Becket, opposed his former friend's policy and was assassinated in his cathedral on December 29, 1170 by four knights. As a result of the ensuing outrage (Becket was sainted as a martyr), King Henry abandoned most of his claims in the 1172 Compromise of Avranches.

Late twelfth-century reliquary depicting the murder of Becket.

This event is the subject matter of Thomas Stearns Eliot's 1935 play *Murder in the Cathedral*.

The pilgrimage to the Becket shrine provided **Geoffrey Chaucer** with the frame narrative for *The Canterbury Tales* (written in the 1390s):

A group of pilgrims engage in a storytelling competition on their way from London to Canterbury.

The framed narratives add up to an array of narrative genres and styles.

Chaucer represented as a pilgrim in a fifteenth century illuminated manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*.

- Thirty years later (1205-1213), King John vied with the pope, who retaliated by placing an interdict on England (i.e. he forbade the performance of mass).

  Once again, the monarch lost the fight and the powers of the Church were confirmed.

→ Subsequent generations have seen King John as…

- a traitor (in the Robin Hood narrative, e.g.) for his self-serving regency during Richard's reign
- a loser for his defeats in France and overthrow by the English barons
- a proto-Protestant champion of England's independence from the Holy See.

Reformation of the Church of England:

1) Separation from Rome

2) Protestantism

- Henrician reformation: In 1534, King Henry VIII declared himself to be the only head of the Church of England, denying the Pope any authority in England, but retaining Catholic doctrine and liturgy. For the rest of his reign, the Church of England was a separate Catholic Church.

- After Henry VIII died in 1547, he was succeeded by his Protestant son Edward VI who transformed the Church of England into a Protestant church.

- Edward VI died in 1553. He was succeeded by his Catholic stepsister Mary I (daughter of Henry VIII and the Catholic Catherine of Aragon), who reunited the Church of England with the Roman Church.
- Meanwhile, Protestantism had spread in England. Mary's religious policy was resented and she earned the nickname Bloody Mary for persecuting Protestants.
- In addition, her joint reign with the king consort, the Spanish prince Philip, was also perceived as a deprivation of national independence. → link Protestantism / national identity and sovereignty.

- Mary I died in 1558. She was succeeded by her Protestant stepsister Elizabeth I who separated the Church of England from Rome and made it a Protestant church again. The Church of England has remained a Protestant church since that time.
- Elizabeth's accession and her reformation of the Church meant that the population, church and monarch of England were united by their religion.

- In 1605, the Catholic Gunpowder plot (November 5) against King James I fuelled anti-Catholic feeling among the population and contributed to the growing sense that Protestantism was part and parcel of Englishness. The failure of that plot is still commemorated by bonfires on November 5 as a celebration of English identity, confirming the link in the nation's psyche between its self and Protestantism.

The King James Bible: a literary landmark

In 1604, King James commissioned a new English translation of the Bible.

The resulting work, published in 1611, is referred to as the King James Version (KJV), the King James Bible (KJB), or the Authorised Version (AV).

An eloquent text: An essential use of the Bible was church readings: the translators meant their work to be read, but also spoken and heard, and to make an impression on congregations.

A literary text: To give the Bible a dignified, authoritative tone, the translators often chose wordings which were already archaic. For example, they did not use the possessive 'its,' which was recent, but 'his' or 'of it'. As a result, the language of the Bible was perfectly understandable to all hearers, even the least educated, while not reflecting people's actual everyday diction.

The KJV's wordings are the best-known ones in the English-speaking world: for many people, they are not one translation of the Bible, but the Bible.

- In 1688, the Catholic King James VII and II was ousted in the Glorious Revolution and replaced by his Protestant daughter Mary and her Dutch Calvinist husband, Stadtholder William of Orange (William III).

  - In Northern Ireland, the colour orange is an emblem of Protestant British unionism.

- The 1689 Bill of Rights and the 1701 Act of Settlement barred Catholics from becoming monarchs.
  - When Anne, James VII and II's second daughter, died in 1714, the next monarch was not James VII and II's Catholic son James, but Georg Ludwig, the Protestant Prince Elector of Hanover, who became King George I of Great Britain.

These events have traditionally been interpreted as further evidence that Protestantism was part and parcel of English national identity and that England (and the Church of England) could not have a Catholic monarch at its head.

II – Christianity in England

- The **Church of England** is the established church in England. It has two supreme leaders: the monarch of England is its temporal head while the Archbishop of Canterbury is its spiritual head . Because the United Kingdom is a democracy, the monarch's authority is actually exercised by the government. The Archbishop of Canterbury is chosen by the Prime Minister from a shortlist. The two C. of E. archbishops and most senior bishops of England sit in the House of Lords (they are lords spiritual, as opposed to lords temporal).
- There is still some diversity within the C. of E. The best-known divide is between:
  - low church ("more" Protestant, Calvinist-leaning, Evangelical, less upper-class)
  - high church ("Anglo-Catholic", lays more emphasis on sacraments, more upper-class)
- Distinguish between the Church of England and Anglicanism. Some Christians belong to churches which define themselves as Anglican in their theology and polity, but are not under the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury, nor under the British state's. For example, Desmond Tutu was a South African Anglican archbishop.

John Donne (1572-1631) was a lawyer, poet and Anglican cleric. His early poems are satiric and erotic. Once he became a clergyman, he wrote famous sermons and devotional poems.

George Herbert (1593-1633), after a university and political career, took orders in 1629. His English poems were collected in *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (1633).

Their use of linguistic, intellectual, but also visual, **conceits**—sophisticated devices, unexpected or even far-fetched though extended metaphors and similes—is characteristic of a **Baroque** aesthetics.

Samuel Johnson called them and other authors of the same period the **metaphysical poets**.

The Altar.

A broken ALTAR, Lord, thy ſervant reares,
Made of a heart, and cemented with teares:
Whoſe parts are as thy hand did frame;
No workmans tool hath touch'd the ſame.
A HEART alone
Is ſuch a ſtone,
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut.
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame,
To praiſe thy name.
That if I chance to hold my peace,
Theſe ſtones to praiſe thee may not ceaſe.
O let thy bleſſed SACRIFICE be mine,
And ſanctifie this ALTAR to be thine.

¶ Easter-wings.

Lord, who createdſt man in wealth and ſtore,
Though foolishly he loſt the ſame,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Moſt poore:
With thee
O let me riſe
As larks, harmoniously,
And ſing this day thy victories:
Then ſhall the fall further the flight in me.

¶ Easter-

¶ Easter-wings.

My tender age in ſorrow did beginne:
And ſtill with ſickneſſes and ſhame
Thou didſt ſo punish ſinne,
That I became
Moſt thinne.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victorie:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction ſhall advance the flight in me.

¶ H. Ba-

Dissent and Nonconformism

- The Protestant Reformation in England (and Scotland) and official religion progressively became aligned in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- However, although Protestantism had prevailed in England since the 16th century, it was not homogeneous and despite the reformation of the Church of England, there was still some religious discord.
- Christians who wanted to leave the Church of England were called Dissenters and (later) Nonconformists.
- Their beliefs and outlooks are often described as closer to Calvinism than Lutheranism.
- They generally reproached the Church of England for not having completed its reformation and retaining Catholic leftovers in theology and organisation. For example, they resented the existence of bishops (episcopalianism).
- They advocated the separation of church and state (separatism) and the accomplishment of the Protestant reformation.
- They included such religious movements as Presbyterianism and Baptism. They are often loosely described as Puritans. Other nonconforming groups include the Quakers, some branches of Methodism and Wesleyanism, the Salvation Army (an Evangelical Church).
- During the first half of the 17th century, Puritans became a major political force in England, especially during the English Civil War (1642-1651) and the Commonwealth (Republican) regime (1649-1660) led by Cromwell, when they were a major force in Parliament.
- In the wake of the Glorious Revolution (1688-89), the Church of England became more open to Dissenters and there was more toleration of Dissenters who stayed outside the Church of England.

The Pilgrim's Progress (John Bunyan, 1678): a Christian allegory

The novel tells the journey of a man named Christian from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, carrying a heavy burden.

His travel takes him through places such as the Valley of Humiliation, the Valley of the Shadow of Death … and makes him meet such characters as Evangelist, Prudence, Charity, Ignorance…

The Pilgrim's Progress soon established its place as one of the most widespread works written in English, despite its Puritan connotations.

John Milton published the first version of his epic poem ***Paradise Lost*** in 1667.

It narrates Satan's rebellion, God's creation of the world, Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve, and the latter's expulsion from Eden.

Milton had been involved in the republican regime called the Commonwealth and led by Oliver Cromwell 1649-1660.

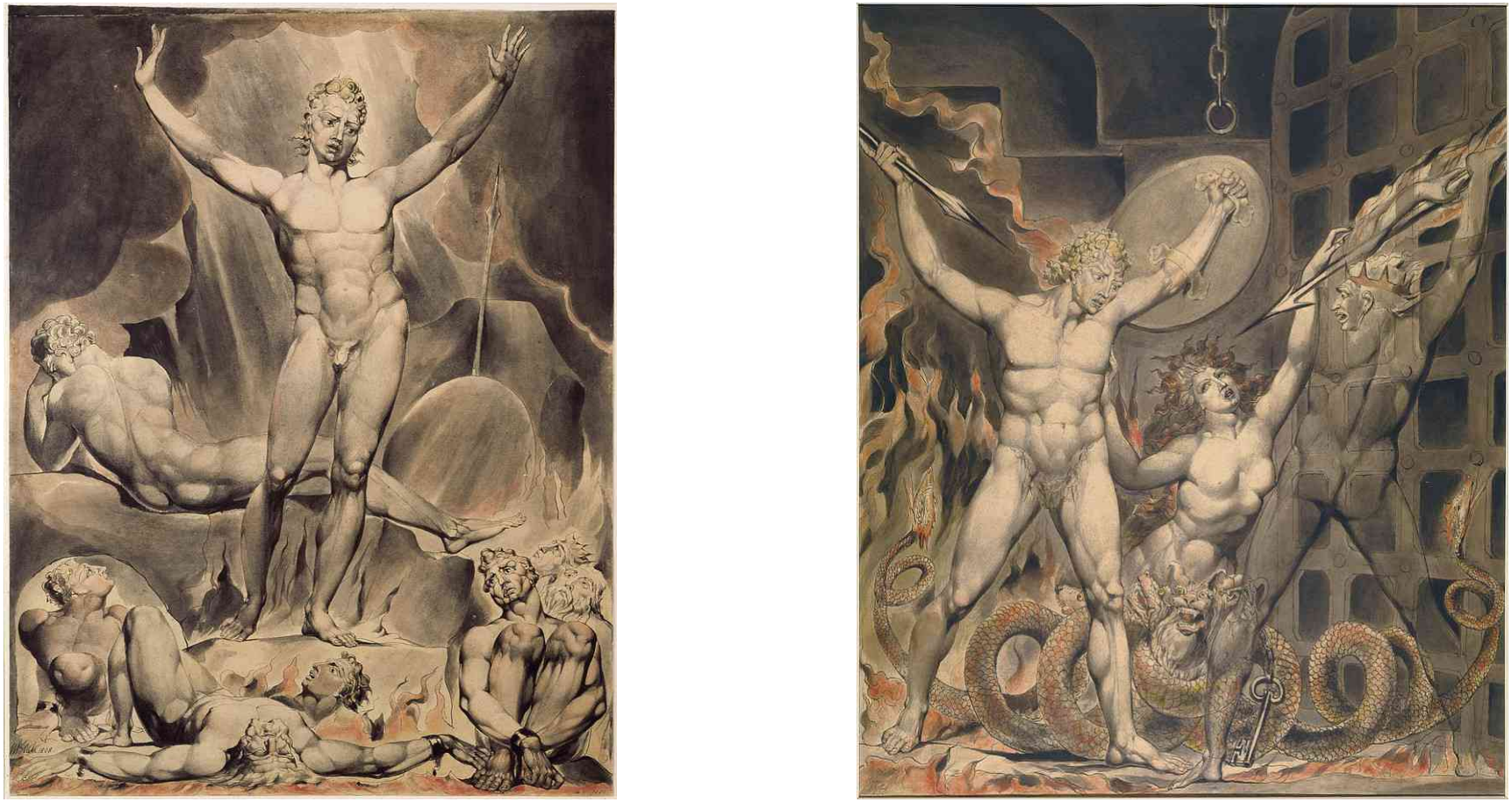
He was one of a few who did not embrace the Restoration and wrote *Paradise Lost* in a time of isolation and disappointment.

Paradise Lost has been read as a political allegory.

Satan is often perceived by readers to be the most interesting and fascinating of the poem:

"Me miserable! Which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep,
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven."

Paradise Lost has appealed to the Romantics and proved an endless source of inspiration for artists, from William Blake to Gustave Doré and others:



Satan rousing the rebellious angels (l.) and Satan, Sin and Death at the Gates of Hell (r.), Blake, 1808

A Tale of a Tub (Jonathan Swift, Anglo-Irish cleric and writer, written 1694-97, published 1704): an allegorical satire about triplets.

ONCE upon a time there was a man who had three sons by one wife and all at a birth, neither could the midwife tell certainly which was the eldest. Their father died while they were young, and upon his death-bed, calling the lads to him, spoke thus:—

"Sons, because I have purchased no estate, nor was born to any, I have long considered of some good legacies to bequeath you, and at last, with much care as well as expense, have provided each of you (here they are) a new coat. Now, you are to understand that these coats have two virtues contained in them; one is, that with good wearing they will last you fresh and sound as long as you live; the other is, that they will grow in the same proportion with your bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves, so as to be always fit. Here, let me see them on you before I die. So, very well! Pray, children, wear them clean and brush them often. You will find in my will (here it is) full instructions in every particular concerning the wearing and management of your coats, wherein you must be very exact to avoid the penalties I have appointed for every transgression or neglect, upon which your future fortunes will entirely depend. I have also commanded in my will that you should live together in one house like brethren and friends, for then you will be sure to thrive and not otherwise."

Here the story says this good father died, and the three sons went all together to seek their fortunes.

the brothers' coats	religion
their father's will	the Bible / God
Peter: decorates his coat	Saint Peter → the Roman Church beautified churches
Martin: alters his coat moderately	Martin Luther → the Church of England
Jack: rips his coat to restore its supposedly original condition reads the will literally	John Calvin, John of Leyden → nonconforming churches preaches austerity, purity to return to primitive Christianity Biblical literalism

Peter's claim to arbitrate as the eldest brother symbolises the RC church's rule by authority.

Jack's reckless behaviour symbolises enthusiasm and excess.

In contrast to his 'outer' brothers' excesses, Martin's middle birth and compromise choices symbolise Anglican moderation.

There have been two competing interpretations of the *Tale*:

→ Swift ridicules tyranny (Peter) and religious excess (Jack) and praises the *via media* of the C of E.

→ There is little to choose between the three brothers: Swift is critical of religion wholesale.

A 'tub' (*tonneau*) was a name colloquially given to a minister's pulpit.

Peter kicking his brothers out:
an allegory of the Protestant schism

The gallows, the theatre and the (Puritanical) pulpit (here represented as its colloquial metaphor: a tub):
the three ‘oratorial machines’ used by those ‘who desire to talk much without interruption’

Differences between Catholicism and Protestantism

A culture of images (the Catholic church forbade laypeople to read the Bible)

→ paintings (altarpieces), sculptures, crosses

→ decorated ("beautified") places of worship

→ topographical landmarks (trees, rocks, springs, etc, associated to hagiographical legends)

→ emphasis on the senses

free-standing cross in Balrath, Ireland

A reading-centred culture

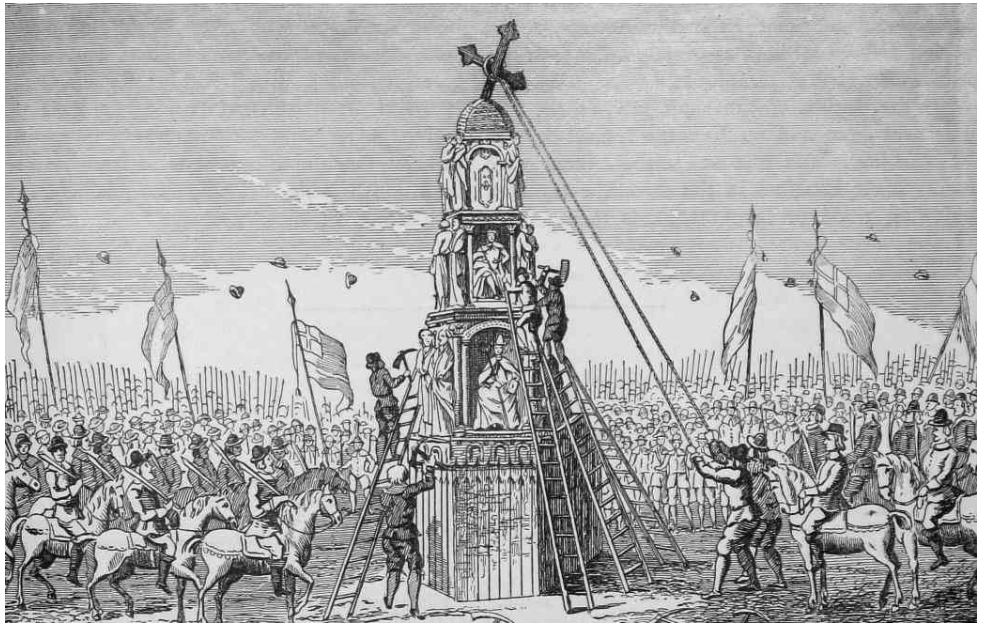
→ undecorated places of worship

→ emphasis on the Bible, considered as God's words (etymology of Gospel: God's spell)

→ link between the invention of printing and the Protestant reformation: both were seen as ways to convey God's saving words to everyone

→ translation of the Bible into the vernacular

→ emphasis on the intellect



Reformers pulling down a cross in London (Cheapside), 1643

the altar and choir of Canterbury Cathedral, now Anglican but built as a Roman Catholic place of worship

interior of Old Ship Church (1681), a Puritan meetinghouse in Hingham, Massachusetts

(Notice the absence of an altar.)

A culture that traces many of its roots to the Middle Ages

→ Catholicism places less emphasis on the Bible as a whole, and on the Old Testament in particular, than Protestantism does.

→ Many Catholics give their children the names of legendary saints.

A Bible-centred culture

→ Protestantism places more emphasis on the Bible as a whole, and on the Old Testament in particular, than Catholicism does.

→ Many Protestants choose their children's names from the Bible (compare the frequency in Catholic and Protestant countries of given names such as Adam, Aaron, David, Joshua, Sarah, Deborah, Rebecca...).

Recognition of the authority of tradition and institution → For Catholics, God manifests his will through his words (the Bible) but also in other ways which oral tradition preserves and transmits through the generations. → Ultimately, the Church (that is to say the clergy) alone is able to determine God's revelation.	**A belief in the authority of scripture over tradition and institution** → The Protestant Reformation grew out of a defiance towards: • traditions of doubtful origin with no scriptural basis (for example the worship of the Virgin Mary or the celebration of Christmas), • the Catholic Church as an institution. In their place, it vindicates: • the authority of scripture, • the individual's ability to understand God's will.
A culture of mediation → a clear distinction between laity and clergy → priesthood → no direct access to God (to his word, see above, or to salvation) for laypeople: • no direct access to God's words revealed in the Bible • no direct access to salvation, only accessible through sacraments • God is present in a Christian's life through the sacraments administered by an ordained priest (in particular, in the "real presence" of Christ's flesh in the Eucharist). • defiance of the Church towards mystics → *Is there more room for the supernatural in Catholicism or Protestantism?*	**A culture of "immediation":** → no fundamental separation between laity and clergy: → ministers are "experts", not priests: they do not make miracles happen → everyone has equal access to God: • no need for a priest to interpret the meaning of the Bible • everyone is responsible for his own salvation and the salvation of his community • There is no real (only symbolical) presence of God in the rite of the Eucharist… • but God can manifest himself to anyone when he chooses to (see the Protestant way of praying or reading the Bible for guidance).

A ritualistic culture

→ For the Catholic Church, salvation is obtained through reception of sacraments, participation in liturgy.

→ To receive the sacrament of communion, Catholics must first confess their sins orally to a priest, who then absolves them. *Protestants have often criticised this practise, which encourages Catholics to immorality by affording them an easy away out.*

A pietistic culture

→ For Protestants, rites cannot cause salvation, which depends instead on God's grace.

- For Lutherans, grace results from faith.
- A central tenet of Calvinism is human depravity, a consequence of original sin, which makes men unable to save themselves. Some will be saved, not because they are worthy of being saved, but only because God has chosen them: they are elects, and God's grace is irresistible.
- Because Calvinists believe in election and predestination, they do not try to gain grace but look for visible signs of it.
- Calvinists' relationship to morals and justice is highly variable: because their theology dissociates morals from grace, does not believe in human freedom, and posits that man's sin concerns him and God alone, some are tolerant. Others (Puritans, for example) are rigoristic.

Migration of Puritans to New England

- In the 17th century, many middle-class "Puritans" fled the strictures they faced in England by emigrating to the Netherlands and, mostly, the New World, where they founded New England (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont), whose original political and ideological structures were based on Calvinism → Puritan theocracy.
- Emigration to the New World and the founding of New England has for a long time been represented in a way which makes it a founding myth of the American nation. According to this myth, New England (and America) was founded by people (mainly English, some Scottish and Dutch) who wanted to break away from a corrupt, archaic monarchy and church and build a new society, a more "Republican" and "really" Protestant one. The landing of the Mayflower in America at a place they called Plymouth Rock in 1620 symbolises this.

The Landing of the Pilgrims (anonymous painting, 1820)

Puritanism is remembered in a mixed way in America:

On the one hand, the Pilgrims are revered for bequeathing on the American nation their ideal of spiritual accomplishment combined with church/state separation.

On the other, New England theocracy is seen as an epitome of superstitious fanaticism.

In **1692-93**, nineteen people were executed for witchcraft at Salem.

The **Salem witch trials** soon became infamous and discredited the theocacry.

Only a few years later, all the judges who had sentenced the convicts expressed regret, with one exception: John Hathorne (Salem, 1641–Salem, 1717).

The American writer **Nathaniel Hawthorne**
(real name Hathorne, Salem, 1804–Plymouth, 1864)
was his great-great-grandson.
Hawthorne changed his name to dissociate himself from his notorious forebear.
His novel ***The Scarlet Letter*** is set in early Boston. Its protagonist is a young married woman who is made by Puritan theocratical justice to wear the letter A on her breast to show that she is an adulteress, as long as she does not denounce her lover.
This premise illustrates the ambivalence of Puritan justice:
on the one hand, it claims not to punish sin but to make it visible;
on the other, this sanction may be seen as a harsh punishment.

In 1952, film director Elia Kazan "named names" to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC).

In response, playwright Arthur Miller used the Salem witch trials as an allegory of the post-world-war-two Communist witch hunt in ***The Crucible***, which premiered in New York in 1953.

In 1957, Miller was held in contempt and sentenced to a fine and a prison sentence when he refused to name names in a HUAC hearing.

Other North American colonies were intended for English religious minorities:

- Maryland for Catholics
- Pennsylvania (named after William Penn) for Quakers.

→ Religious diversity played a key role in North America since colonial times and became an essential theme in the foundation of the United States:

The first amendment to the United States Constitution (introduced in 1789, adopted in 1791) begins

‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the exercise thereof’.

Scotland

- The Christianisation of Scotland took place between the 5th and 7th centuries and is traditionally attributed to Irish missionaries. Its emblematic figure is St Columba.
- Like many other European countries, including England, Scotland saw the spread of Lutheran theology in the sixteenth century. In 1560, the Scottish Parliament abolished Catholicism. (Note that at the time the monarch was Mary I, a Catholic, who was also queen consort of France, where she was living. The regent was her mother, Mary of Guise, whose family were the spearhead[1] of French Catholicism.)
- The most influential Scottish reformer was John Knox. Under his influence, the Church of Scotland (the Kirk) was converted to a brand of Calvinism known as Presbyterianism.
- Although the Church of Scotland is the national church of Scotland, it is independent from the state and has no bishops, two key tenets of Calvinism.

1 spearhead: *fer de lance*

- After his accession in England, James VI appointed bishops and archbishops in Scotland, despite the Calvinism of the Kirk: 'No bishops, no king.'
- Charles I went further and tried to impose a Prayer Book based on the Book of Common Prayer in 1637.
- Scottish Presbyterians rebelled against the new liturgy and episcopalianism.

- They organised by signing covenants.
- The National Covenant was adopted by the Scottish Parliament in 1640.
- Covenanters raised an army → the Bishops' Wars

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner

(James Hogg, 1824)

Robert, a young Scotsman, is raised in a radical Calvinistic family (stepfather: reverend).

After his stepfather tells him that he is one of the elect, Robert encounters a mysterious, shape-shifting man (Gil-Martin) who encourages him to believe that he may do anything.

People are murdered.

Robert commits suicide.

Were the victims killed by Robert, who was misled by Gil-Martin?

Were they killed by Gil-Martin, assuming Robert's appearance?

Does Gil-Martin exist as a real character, or is he a figment of Robert's imagination, an allegory of the Kirk's flaws?

By borrowing from the resources of Gothic fiction such as the *Doppelgänger*,

by juxtaposing narratives without an overarching, authoritative point of view,

the novel raises questions about the theories of predestination and irresistible grace:

By preaching antinomianism, are radical Calvinists the devil's instruments (see the title) although, or because, they claim to be God's chosen people?

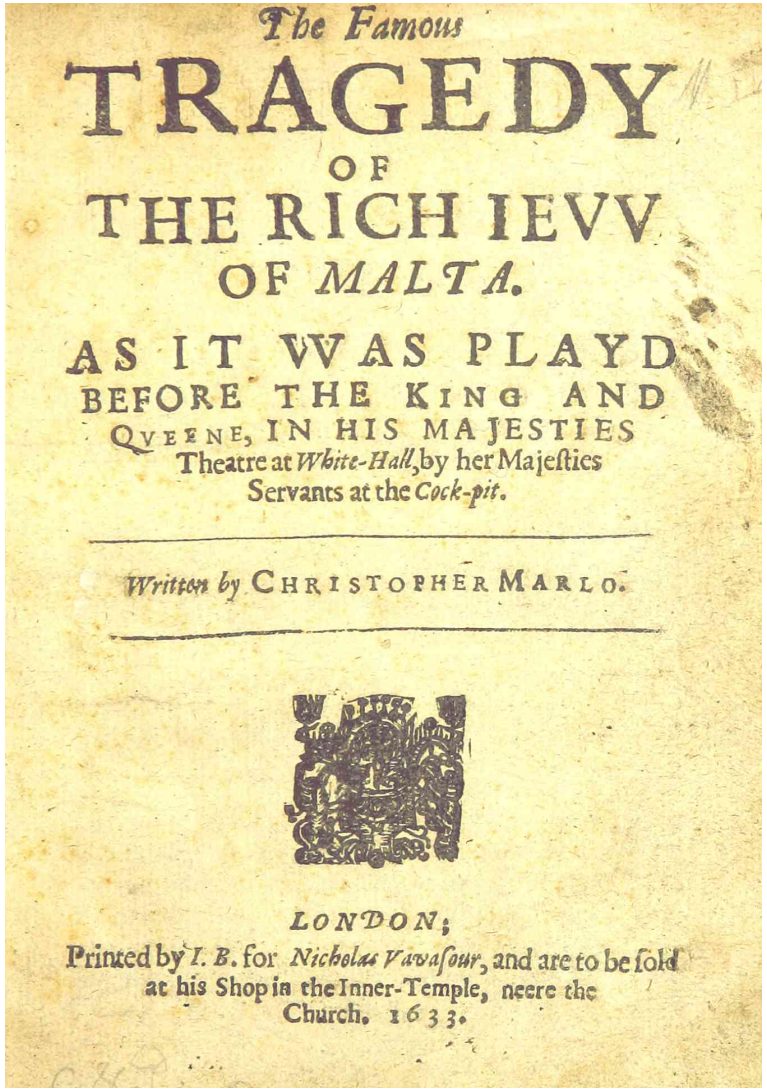
Ireland

- Christianity was introduced to Ireland in the 4th century. St Patrick (5th century) is traditionally credited for christianising Ireland.
- After the Norman (Plantagenet) attempts at conquest, Ireland was colonized by England in the 16th and 17th centuries, when Protestantism had become the dominant religion in Britain. Ireland was consequently settled and ruled by English and Scottish Protestants, while the vast majority of Irish natives were Catholics. From that time until the 19th century, Catholicism, while it was the religion of most Irish people, was repressed in Ireland.
- Since Irish independence (creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, of the Republic of Ireland in 1937), ties between the state and church were gradually severed. However, Article 44 of the Constitution states that "*The State acknowledges that the homage of public worship is due to Almighty God. It shall hold His Name in reverence, and shall respect and honour religion*". 84% of the population are Catholics, and Catholicism is still seen as the main defining factor of Irish ethnicity: the Republic of Ireland considers Irish Catholics from Northern Ireland citizens.

Jews in England

- There were few Jews in England until the Norman conquest.
- King Edward I expelled the Jews from England in 1290.
- Cromwell allowed Jews back in England in 1655.
- Jews were naturalized in 1753.

The Jew of Malta (c. 1590) and *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1597) were written three hundred years after the expulsion of Jews. In the eyes of the English, Jews were therefore exotic (see the titles), an object of speculation and fantasy, rather than real-life, everyday people.



The Famous

TRAGEDY

OF

THE RICH IEVV

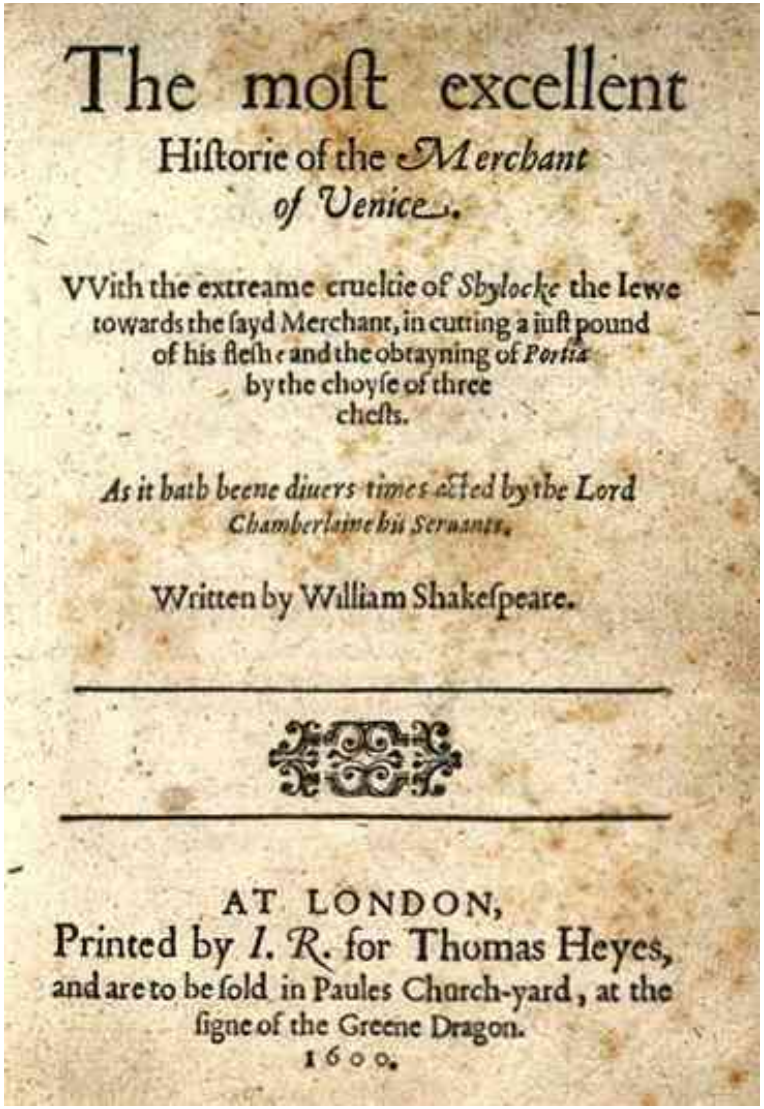
OF *MALTA.*

AS IT WAS PLAYD BEFORE THE KING AND QVEENE, IN HIS MAJESTIES Theatre at *White-Hall*, by her Majesties Servants at the *Cock-pit.*

Written by CHRISTOPHER MARLO.

LONDON;

Printed by *I. B.* for *Nicholas Vavasour*, and are to be sold at his Shop in the Inner-Temple, neere the Church. 1633.



The moſt excellent Hiſtorie of the *Merchant of Venice.*

VVith the extreame crueltie of *Shylocke* the Iewe towards the ſayd Merchant, in cutting a iuſt pound of his fleſh: and the obtayning of *Portia* by the choyſe of three cheſts.

As it hath beene diuers times acted by the Lord Chamberlaine his Seruants.

Written by William Shakeſpeare.

AT LONDON,

Printed by *I. R.* for Thomas Heyes, and are to be ſold in Paules Church-yard, at the ſigne of the Greene Dragon.

1600.

As late as 1876, George Eliot wrote a novel whose eponymous character, **Daniel Deronda**, questions the possibility of being both Jewish and English.

Between Elizabethan and Victorian times, representations of Judaism had shifted from the religious to the national.

Catholics in England after Reformation

From the late 18th century on, anti-Catholic measures were lifted progressively.

The English writer **George Eliot** (1819-1880) translated

- *The Life of Jesus* (David Friedrich Strauss)
- *The Essence of Christianity* (Ludwig Feuerbach)

showing her interest in a rational approach to religion

not taking religion as an authority on itself.

In the 1850s, she turned to fiction.

Her first three stories centred on the lives of Anglican clergymen, illustrating their crucial place in the sociology of England in the nineteenth century. They were collected in ***Scenes of Clerical Life***, an implicit nod to Balzac's realist aesthetics.

Silas Marner (the eponymous character of her third novel), a lonely weaver, adopts an orphaned girl. His belief that the girl's appearance is miraculous fosters the bond between them, which helps him become more fulfilled as a human being, and gives his adopted daughter the emotional environment that supports her development.

By turning from theory to fiction, Eliot used the philosophical ideas she had absorbed but took an oblique look at belief: instead of assessing its intrinsic value, she suspended judgement and analysed its causes and effects on human lives.

The spiritual crisis of the turn of the twentieth century

neo-Paganism

Eastern religions

Labour churches

In 1891, an English minister, John Trevor, founded a **Labour Church** in Manchester.

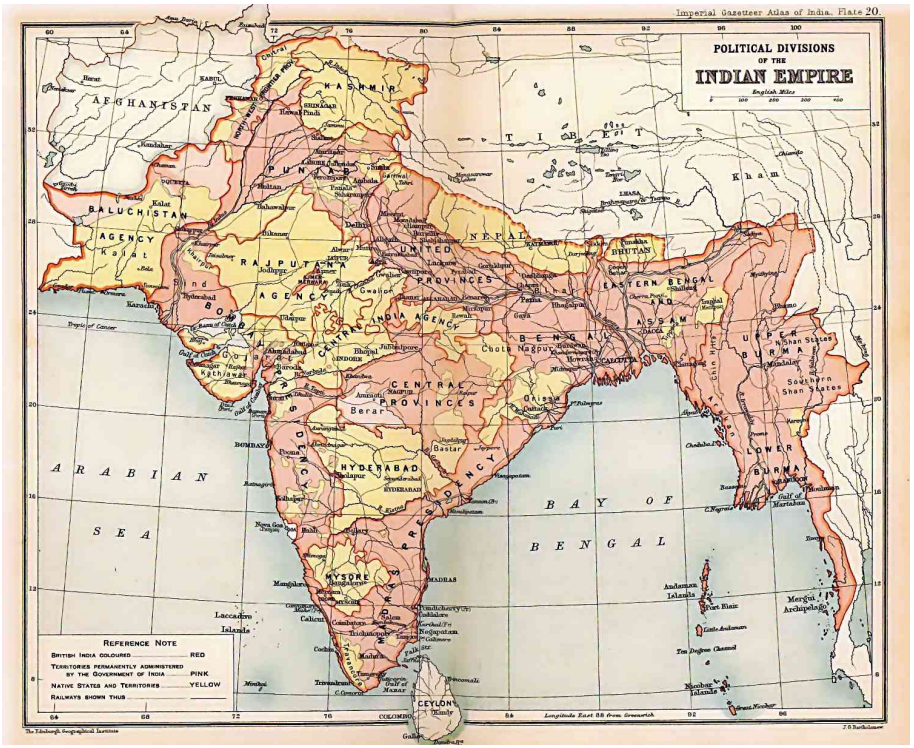
In the following years, other labour churches were created, mainly in industrial cities such as Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham or London.

Religion in British India and the birth of Pakistan

In the first half of the twentieth century, Muslim nationalists in British India founded the Pakistan movement, whose aim was the creation of a Muslim dominion in the regions of India where Muslims were the majority.

In 1933, Choudhry Rahmat Ali coined the name ‘Pakistan’.

As a result of Muslim nationalist leaders’ campaign, the independence of India was concomitant with partition, which took place at midnight on August 15, 1947.



Indian Independence and Partition

India was, therefore, partitioned into two nations: ***India*** in the center and ***Pakistan*** to the west and east. Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) became independent the following year.

East Pakistan seceded in 1971.

Burma and Ceylon became independent in 1948.

Independence and partition triggered the greatest refugee crisis in history.

India	Pakistan
→	←
>7m (Muslims)	>7m (Hindus, Sikhs)

The British writer Salman Rushdie was born on June 9, 1947 in Bombay in a Muslim family.

His second novel, *Midnight's Children* (1980), tells the story of twins born at midnight on August 15, 1947.

Their lives parallel the history of India and Pakistan.

Midnight's Children is seen as a classic example of magical realism as well as a classic of post-colonial literature.

Rushdie's fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), again uses magical realism to depict the fragmented lives and cultural identities of Indian Muslim expatriates.

The title refers to a controversial sequence of Quranic verses which mention three Indian goddesses: for Rushdie, a symbol of the links between religions and cultures in India, Pakistan, and between India and Pakistan.

(The novel was prohibited in India.

Iranian leader Ruhollah Khomeini called for the death of Rushdie and his publishers. In the following years, dozens of people died in attempts to assassinate Rushdie, his publishers and translators. In 2022, Rushdie was stabbed, losing sight in one eye and the use of one hand.)

Religion as a vehicle

Religion can be used as a vehicle for the expression of a group's identity and politics:

- Protestantism has been integrated in the self-definition of the English as an independent nation.
- Radical Protestantism (dissent / Puritanism / Calvinism) has been associated with THE British working class, and more particularly with craftsmen: "revivals" and other dissenting or Methodist gatherings used to be targeted as devious political meetings.
- In the United States, Christianity has been a vehicle for African Americans:
  - Traditional hymns (gospel songs) have expressed their plight and their fight, for instance "We Shall Overcome". The theme of Jewish exile, slavery and final release (Book of Exodus) was used as a metaphor for the history and condition of African Americans.
  - Ministers have been prominent in the civil rights movement: Martin Luther King (whose movement is called the Southern Christian Leadership Conference), Jesse Jackson...
  - Some African Americans disappointed in the "mainstream" civil rights movement converted to Islam and used their new religion in their political fight. Some of them, like Malcolm X or Muhammad Ali, joined the Nation of Islam (founded by Wallace D. Fard Muhammad in 1930 and led by Louis Farrakhan since 1975). Compared with the Christian civil rights movement, Black Muslims have tended to reject notions of equality and integration, emphasising the idea that there is too much difference and conflict between blacks and whites for them to live peacefully as equal members of one society: they advocated confrontation leading to separation of blacks from whites.

Deism

Tom Paine (1736/7-1809): *The Age of Reason* (1793-94)

Atheism

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)

William Godwin (1756-1836)

At age 18, while a student at Oxford University, the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley was rusticated when he was found out to have written the essay *On the Necessity of Atheism*.