

III. Puritan Age

THE PURITAN AGE (1570-1688)

Our title is a bit ambiguous. The dates are arbitrary although in the light of the continuing of the field, it is a reasonable arrangement. The starting point is the consolidation of protestantism in England and the terminus is the end of Catholic governmental influence as accomplished in the "Glorious Revolution". It is the key period in the development of "puritan theology" as respects the English-speaking world and the formative ages for the continental churches as they are forced in both doctrine and politics to a maturity that is not easy. The foundations of our own colonial period are laid in this age and it is one for considerable study on our part.

III. 1. Church
affairs in
England

Ecclesiastical Development in England

As noted earlier, the reformation in England was not a grass roots affair but one of political origin in the world of Henry VIII. Solid confirmation of this work came slowly and politics dominated the English picture for a long period of time. We continue our study by analyzing the growth of the English church from ruler to ruler.

The Elizabethan age (1558-1603)

III.1.a Elizabeth

One of the storied periods in English history, the Elizabethan age saw a great strengthening of the English church as well as a growth of English national power and international influence. It was an age of literary progress and an upturn in national morale.

When Elizabeth came to the throne there was near chaos in England. The strife of Mary's time, her ruinous marriage and persecutorial butchery, had worn down public morale. There was a near agrarian revolt and trade was in a terrible state of imbalance. English currency was deflated and untrustworthy and the military might had been dissipated through needless wars with France in particular. Much of this had been founded in the last years of Henry VIII and while there had been some alleviation in the time of Edward VI, the unsettled rule of the young king combined with the vengeful policies of Mary, had undone what little good had been accomplished in both the