

George Fox, 1624-1691

Fox was the champion of inner light and mystical awareness of God. He followed these thoughts within the evangelical framework of his day and added to them an anti-clerical posture, an open view of priesthood, and a non-liturgical approach to worship. That his group became largely an upper middle class fellowship was ironic but may be connected with the fact that it had a strong work ethic. As Fox spoke of quaking in the presence of God, his movement was soon known as the Quakers and it became, in time, the backbone of the religious freedom later found in England and the colonies. Fox and his followers argued astutely for liberty of conscience and that in itself almost made them unique in their time. His work is best known through his wealthy disciple, William Penn, whose land grant from the king constituted the state of Pennsylvania and made the first "free-state-charter" in the colonies.

The Rule of James II, 1685-1688

III.1.g.

James II

Charles II died a Roman Catholic with an open admission at the time of his death. His brother James had been in Scotland and was more openly catholic. Nevertheless it followed that he would succeed to the throne and this implied great religious stress was coming. In 1685 the parliament brought forth a Declaration of Indulgence which allowed (or indulged) the acceptance of limited religious diversion...it was aimed at permitting Roman worship in the English churches. The Bishops of the church of England were required to sign their agreement with it and any who would not would be deprived of office. Seven bishops refused to sign, were arrested and brought to trial before Parliament. The nature of the time was such that they were tried...and acquitted! It amounted to a no-confidence vote in the king and he, reading the writing on the wall, abdicated quickly, fleeing to France where he lived in exile until his death in 1701. His removal is called the Glorious Revolution and marks the end of our period of study in England.

The Puritan Age in the New World

III.2

The New World

The new world, as we call it, represented a living legend to the Europe of the 17th century. The discoveries of Columbus, et al, had opened a new age of adventure which, to most of the continental rulers and their people, spelled money and possession. The