

monarchy, and something of that sort was to be begun with Charles II.

III.1.f Charles II

The Rule of Charles II 1660-1685

Charles II had been raised in France and was in reality a professing Romanist who concealed it until his deathbed. He was fundamentally a weak character with little redeeming value, given to moral breeches and loose living. Through much of his career he would be subject to intriguing plots with the French and in most ways was actually inferior to his father as a national leader. The rebellion and execution of Charles I, however, had prepared the English to put up with a lot.

repressive acts

Steps of Repression

That many of the Puritans welcomed the king back is probably not so strange in the scope of English history. Most, including Baxter, were soon keenly disappointed as the king was determined to bring all religious forms into line and end dissent. The following parliamentary steps moved that way...and if you wonder why parliament changed its mind so frequently and so easily about many things, perhaps a study of the American Supreme Court decisions will help your understanding.

1660 saw the Declaration of Liberty. This act allowed the old order to reassert itself, episcopacy having been placed in a bad light by the parliament in the time of Charles I. It really gave liberty to the former sacerdotal systems and not to the general preaching of truth...some reformers saw the crack of the door opening to receive Romanism.

1662 found a new Act of Uniformity with the prescribed services and worship orders with a call for submission of all ecclesiastical gatherings on the uniform lines.

1664 brought in the first Conventical Act, the first of a series, incidentally, and this forbade any meeting for worship apart from a church or a duly appointed place of service. It permitted ministerial functions (including preaching) be only in the hands of duly recognized ministers.