



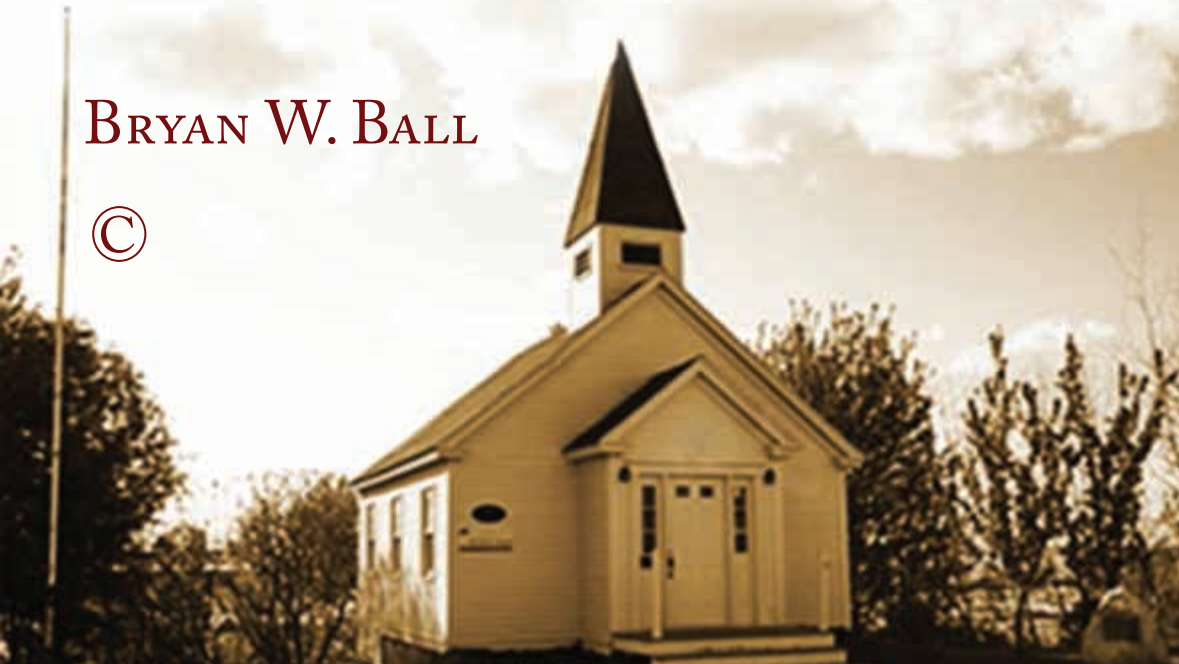
# The English Connection

*The Puritan Roots of Seventh-day Adventist Belief*

Second Edition

BRYAN W. BALL

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# The English Connection

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Seventh-day Adventist Belief

*Second Edition*

Bryan W. Ball



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*In memory of my father, Cecil William Richard Ball,  
for whom Milton represented the best in Puritan thought*

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when He ascended, and His Apostles after Him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who . . . took the virgin Truth, hewd her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, . . . went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do, till her Master's second coming; He shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection.

John Milton, *Areopagitica*

## Foreword to the Second Edition

It is thirty-three years since *The English Connection* first appeared in print, and I am pleased that after so long a time the publishers have decided to make it available again. I am also grateful for the opportunity to make a few comments about the book and its continuing relevance.

Since the early 1980s, the religious landscape in the Protestant world has changed dramatically. Anyone in doubt of that should read David Wells' articulate study of the changes that have transformed many Evangelical Churches in recent times, aptly entitled *No Place for Truth, Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* In that context, Seventh-day Adventism in some parts of the world is also struggling to maintain its original identity. Indeed, one could substitute the words 'Adventist' and 'Adventism' for 'Evangelical' and 'Evangelicalism' at many points in Professor Wells' book, and conclude that there are many uncomfortable parallels.

My own experience in several pastoral and administrative roles over the past half century tells me that many younger and newer Adventists, particularly in the Western world, do not fully understand what authentic Adventist identity really is, or why the historical context is in any way important. *The English Connection* was written in part to help clarify that identity, and to show the importance of understanding the past. It could therefore be argued that the book is even more relevant now than it was thirty plus years ago.

Of course, there are others beyond the ranks of the Adventist community who will be interested in this new edition, just as there were in the early 1980s. The prominent display mounted by Blackwell's bookshop in Oxford, England, to coincide with the publication of the first edition, is evidence of that wider interest. For two weeks or so it drew attention to *The English Connection* for all, academics and the general public alike, who might have been interested in the religious history and/or theology of seventeenth-century England. Thanks to the open-mindedness engendered by today's ecumenical spirit, something similar can be hoped for in this second edition.

All newcomers to *The English Connection* are therefore encouraged to read carefully the introduction to the original edition. There, both the purpose of the book and the desirability of seeing Adventism in the context of history are explained and emphasised. From an historical perspective, Adventism correctly claims to be directly descended from the Reformation, but there is more to it than that. The more immediate historical background that gave rise

to Adventism were the events of the English Reformation, Puritanism — an essentially English phenomenon — and the rise of English Nonconformity. From this rich tapestry of religious thought the Pilgrim Fathers emerged, taking with them to the New World much of what was later to coalesce into the nascent Adventist movement.

From time to time since then it has been asserted that Seventh-day Adventism is a nineteenth-century American sect, an offshoot from mainstream Christianity, or even a pseudo-Christian cult. These are seriously misleading charges, striking at the very heart of true Adventist identity and making a thorough understanding of Adventism's roots a matter of some significance. *The English Connection* argues the necessity of seeing Adventism as a thoroughly Protestant movement, with roots deep in the biblical Protestantism of seventeenth-century England, rather than a later by-product of radical millenarianism.

The purpose of this new edition, then, is identical with that of the original — to show that major beliefs of Adventism were widely understood and practised in England during the seventeenth century, specifically within the Puritan movement and among the theological descendants of Puritanism in English Nonconformity. That being the case, perhaps the original subtitle was a little too narrow — 'The Puritan and Nonconformist Roots of Adventism' might have been more accurate. The text, however, remains largely the same.

In the original introduction it was also noted that in 1981 the membership of the Adventist Church had passed the 3.5 million mark, with adherents in 189 countries. Rather boldly, perhaps, it was suggested then that Adventism was 'poised for a phenomenal expansion'. In retrospect, that suggestion looks to have been essentially accurate, or perhaps even an understatement. By mid-2013, world membership stood at 18 million plus, with an Adventist presence in more than 200 countries. This makes the Adventist Church the twelfth largest religious organisation in the world.

There are at least two important outcomes of such remarkable growth. In the first place, there are more potential readers for this second edition of *The English Connection* than there were in 1981, though many of them do not have English as a first language. More importantly, there are now millions more who need to understand the historical/theological roots from which Adventism arose, particularly those roots which in this book have been traced back to seventeenth-century England. Without such understanding, contemporary Adventists as well as others interested in the Church's origins will be seriously at risk of having only a superficial or distorted view of Adventist backgrounds.

The original edition contained twelve chapters, each tracing the historical and biblical backgrounds of one major Adventist belief. The content of these chapters remains essentially the same in this edition. One perceptive reviewer of the first edition noted the absence of any reference to a pre-advent

‘investigative judgement’, although there is a full chapter on the high priestly ministry of Christ. However, we should not expect to find reference to an ‘investigative judgement’ in Puritan and Nonconformist prophetic exegesis, since that particular interpretation did not arise until the mid-nineteenth century. That it is missing in this analysis of seventeenth-century biblical interpretation does not in the least invalidate the fact that the major essentials of Adventism were known and practised in England between 1600 and 1750, as this second edition of *The English Connection* continues to demonstrate. It will be seen once again that the links between contemporary Adventism and its historical and theological ancestors in English Puritanism and Nonconformity are as clear as ever.

Finally, a word is in order about the essentially unchanged original text. While the book has been reset and comes with a modern appearance, readers will notice the continuing use throughout of terms such as ‘man’ and ‘mankind’ in the way they were used generically in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is evident in several of the quotations cited. To replace this terminology with the gender inclusive language expected today would be to inject an unwarranted way of thinking and writing onto both the men and women of the time. They found this language in the King James Version, from which they drew their beliefs and which is the cited version throughout the book for that reason.

This second edition of *The English Connection* is available, then, to a new generation of Adventists, to a new generation of all who understand the significance of the seventeenth century to Protestant Nonconformity, and to a new generation of those who are interested specifically in Adventist origins and development. It comes with the hope that it will bring greater understanding and appreciation of Adventism’s rich biblical and historical ancestry to all who did not have access to the original edition in the early 1980s.

Bryan W. Ball

Martinsville  
N.S.W., Australia

April, 2014

## Introduction

To the modern mind, judging hastily and with animus irrelevant to the facts, the sixteenth-century Puritan may seem a morbid, introspective, inhibited moral bigot and religious zealot. To the common man of the time this was not so. . . . In spite of the restrictions placed upon their activities, they incessantly preached the Gospel and published books. Almost no one reads their writings now, but the people read them then, and no one can wisely ignore them who desires to understand what Puritanism was and what it came to mean.

William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, pp.5, 36

To neglect God's work in the past is to neglect his Word in the present, for throughout history God has raised up men and movements whose great work was to expound and apply that Word to their own generation, and by implication to ours also. Such men were the Puritans and such a movement was Puritanism.

Peter Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism*, p.11

It is not unreasonable to assume that William Ings and John Loughborough, when they arrived in England late in 1878 to proclaim Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, gave little thought to their Puritan forbears who, two hundred years or more previously, had advocated similar views. Ellen White's *Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* would number among the outstanding religious leaders of the past three Puritan divines, Richard Baxter, John Flavel, and Joseph Alleine. But *Great Controversy* had not yet been published, and there is little reason to think that Ings, Loughborough, or any early Seventh-day Adventist had undertaken a detailed study of Puritanism, or, indeed, that to any appreciable extent they had read English religious history in its broader aspects. The study of the Puritan era as a seed-bed for the religious and political ideas which later would profoundly affect the course of Western civilisation was yet in the future. Consequently this fascinating, and fundamental, background to the emergence of later Protestant denominations, Seventh-day Adventists among them, was to assume much greater significance in the years that followed the arrival of Ings and Loughborough and their first tentative attempts to establish Seventh-day Adventism in the land where most of its major tenets had appeared some two centuries earlier.

It will hardly be disputed that every religious movement has roots in the

soil of the past. That being so, the purpose of this book is to examine specific doctrines which flourished in England between the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century and which now, a hundred years after the first official representatives of the nascent Seventh-day Adventist Church began their work,<sup>1</sup> make it clear that, in its essentials, Seventh-day Adventist belief had been preached and practised in England during the Puritan era. This is not to quarrel with those who would point out that the Seventh-day Adventist movement as it now exists arose in North America during the first half of the nineteenth century. That is an indisputable historical fact, rooted in the Great Advent Awakening — itself by no means a uniquely American phenomenon — and linked to such specific events as the emergence of the name Seventh-day Adventist in 1860, and the official organisation of the Church in 1863. Neither is it to ignore other historical antecedents in the British Isles. Strands in the present doctrinal stance of Seventh-day Adventism appeared in the beliefs of the Celtic Church, as Dr. Leslie Hardinge's study, *The Celtic Church in Britain*, demonstrates. Emphases in the teachings of Wycliffe and Lollardism, and in Wesley, are also evident in the Adventist position. A careful analysis of all these, as well as of certain Continental movements, would be necessary to give a complete account of Adventism's theological background. We are only concerned here, however, to portray the characteristically Puritan historico-theological roots of those beliefs which coalesced in North America during the nineteenth century and which have, in the intervening years, if we may refer to a more recent study of Adventism, produced a religious movement unique in modern times.<sup>2</sup>

One notable feature of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is its rapid growth-rate on a world scale, and it is this which provides justification for a serious study of Adventist backgrounds. In 1981 membership of the Church passed the 3,500,000 mark, with adherents in 189 countries. Yet at the turn of the century total membership stood at merely 66,000, after more than half a century of determined evangelistic activity. The first million mark was attained in 1955, and this was doubled by 1970. While it took fifteen years to add a second million to the Church's world membership, it took only eight years to add the third million. Latest reports suggest that the Church's growth-rate is still increasing.<sup>3</sup> On the basis of these figures it seems that Adventism may be poised for a phenomenal expansion. This study is presented from the standpoint that, in order to understand completely the contemporary world-wide appeal of this biblically conservative Church, it is desirable to see it in the context of its theological ancestry and not merely as a late occurrence in the development of Christian thought. While the Puritan strain may not be the only hereditary line to trace back, it may in the end prove to be the dominant one.

Further justification for a study of this nature may be drawn from the character of Adventism *vis-à-vis* other religious movements which appeared in the nineteenth century. Misunderstanding has persisted at

this point, as no less a voice than that of David Edwards indicates when classifying Seventh-day Adventists, together with the Jehovah's Witness organisation,<sup>4</sup> as 'Churches for the disinherited', both teaching that at Christ's second coming 'only 144,000 persons will then be saved out of the human race'.<sup>5</sup> To maintain, after duly considering the evidence appearing in the first chapters of this study, that Adventism is deviant from basic Christianity, would be to misread or misunderstand that evidence. Puritanism was nothing if it was not thoroughly Protestant, and the links in Seventh-day Adventist theology with Puritan thought are so many and so fundamental that it is only remarkable that they have not previously been examined at length. This study in its entirety hopefully will demonstrate Adventism's essential affinity with historic, biblical Protestantism as opposed to any superficial relationship to nineteenth-century pseudo-Christian sectarianism.

Theologically, then, Seventh-day Adventism may be regarded from one standpoint as a synthesis of certain doctrines which re-appeared in the Reformation and which matured largely, if not entirely, in seventeenth-century English Puritanism. Some of those doctrines were common to Protestantism as a whole. Some, inevitably, were controversial in their day, and have remained so since. Some were professed at the time only by a minority. Some, such as the baptism of believers, have been debated again more recently and have been judged worthy of further consideration. Together these doctrines, perpetuated through the intervening centuries by various groups large and small, were to become the substance of Seventh-day Adventist belief. Of course, it is only fair to point out that many Puritans did not hold any of the doctrines which would later become distinctive tenets of Adventism, with the exception perhaps of belief in the literal second coming of Christ at the end of the age. For all that, the evidence is strong that Puritan religious thought, in its broadest sense, gave to the English-speaking world all the essentials of contemporary Adventist belief.

Given that this book attempts to trace those essentials in Puritan theology, it must at the same time be recognised that no claim is made that the mere existence of certain beliefs in the seventeenth century establishes their truthfulness. The presence of such doctrines within Puritanism authenticates them no more than the absence of other ideas then, or at any time in Christian history, of itself excludes them from the true body of faith. The validity of Puritanism's beliefs can only be assessed ultimately in the light of the approach used by Puritan expositors to the divine revelation in Scripture and in the light of the conclusions they reached. It is almost certainly true that Adventism would wish to be judged by the same criteria. Such assessments must be left until the evidence is before us. We merely wish to emphasise at this point that the existence of a particular belief at anytime in the past or present cannot of itself be taken as evidence of its authenticity.

The chapters that follow, therefore, examine certain beliefs which became

established in the religious thinking of Christians in seventeenth-century England. Some of them in their day were, as we have said, more widely accepted than others, many of them were of the very essence of Protestantism as such, and all of them are to be found indelibly recorded in the pages of innumerable works of theology and devotion which characterised the Puritan era as a whole. It might be argued that a more thorough presentation of official Adventist doctrine is desirable in a work which sets out to establish the affinity between it and its seventeenth-century antecedents. That approach has its attractions, but it would have necessitated a reduced and inevitably superficial treatment of the original source material. Access is readily available to the large annual output of books and periodicals from the Church's publishing programme for those who wish to compare current Adventist belief.<sup>6</sup> More to the point, of course, is that what appears here, albeit in the form and style of Puritan theologians, represents the Adventist position on the doctrines examined, at least as far as the present author understands it. Also, while it is recognised that final conclusions cannot be drawn from isolated references, the quotations which appear at the heads of chapters have been selected from representative Adventist authors and have been placed together with typical statements from Puritan spokesmen in order to illustrate succinctly the fundamental relationship which it is the main purpose of this book to demonstrate.

Since doctrinal statements and theological ideas in isolation tend to appear rather nebulous, even irrelevant to contemporary thought at times, it may be helpful to begin by calling to mind, if only briefly, some of the more prominent events and trends which marked the rise and growth of the English Puritan movement. This will provide a more meaningful factual background for the doctrinal viewpoints which will occupy the main part of the book. Those whose acquaintance with the historical context needs no refreshing may wish to pass over the section which follows, and turn immediately to the concluding section of the introduction, or to the first chapter.

Who precisely were Puritans? And what exactly was Puritanism? These are questions which are still debated by historians, and although the answers given vary according to viewpoint, one thing is beyond question. The word Puritan has been persistently misunderstood and misused. Even after the careful efforts of scholars to provide a more objective understanding of Puritanism, it is difficult to dissociate the term in the popular mind from Ben Jonson's *Zeal-of-the-Land-Busy*, or from the implications of John Pym's neat phrase 'that odious and factious name of Puritan'. The concept of narrowness, bigotry, even hypocrisy, is far from the true character of Puritanism, as those who are familiar with Puritan thought in its wholeness continue to point out. Inevitably, this jaundiced view owes something to the origin of the term, which it will not be amiss to recall. Like many names which have come to have a lasting religious significance,

Quaker and Methodist among them, the term Puritan arose as a derisive comment on the attitudes and actions of a small group in the Anglican Church during the latter part of the sixteenth century. It was initially applied to those within the Church of England who were dissatisfied with the extent to which the Reformation had been carried, and who wanted a more thorough-going reform of the national Church. Their chief concern appears to have been with the structure and liturgy of the Anglican Church and with the desire that it should be remodelled according to the Presbyterian pattern of the Reformed Church at Geneva. Few historians would now insist on such a narrow definition of Puritanism, although it is true that at this early stage the concern of the Puritan faction was less with Christian life and doctrine than it was with the organisation of the Church.

This early emphasis was soon to give way to something more fundamental, and as the sixteenth century ended and the seventeenth century began, it is clear that there existed in England a much wider body of opinion, both within and without the Anglican Church, whose chief concern was for purity of doctrine and holiness of life. A concern over the nature of the Church remained, as we shall have occasion to observe, but with this larger group it was not an end in itself, but rather a means for the recovery of true doctrine and the preservation of the true Christian life. As such, Puritanism came into its own early in the seventeenth century and continued with remarkable vigour through many vicissitudes for a hundred years or thereabouts, thereafter to be disseminated in various channels, of which some would persist until the present time. William Haller, whose *Rise of Puritanism* is indispensable for all who would truly understand the Puritan impetus, points out with discernment that Puritanism 'was nothing new or totally unrelated to the past but something old, deep-seated, and English, with roots reaching far back into mediaeval life'.<sup>7</sup> That comment must be allowed its due place in our thinking if we are to understand Puritanism in its essence, grasp its fundamentally English character, and sense its significance to the later development of religious thought in the Western world. Indeed, the main thesis of this present volume is that one of the later manifestations of the Puritan spirit is itself neither intrinsically new nor totally unrelated to the past, but that in its own nature it partakes of something that is old and deep-seated in the English religious tradition.

If a date is required for the formal beginnings of Puritanism, it will not be inappropriate to suggest 1570, when Thomas Cartwright, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge, was removed from his chair for advocating the abolition of the Episcopal system of government in the Church of England in favour of Presbyterianism. What may appear on the surface as a technical matter of little consequence was, in fact, a matter of some considerable significance at the time, particularly for those whose main court of appeal was the Bible. In Puritan eyes it was a question of whether the Anglican Church was willing to accept a more scriptural form of Church organisation,

or persist with a system which could not be supported from the Word of God and which savoured too strongly of Rome and Antichrist. Matters of worship and liturgy were also far from satisfactory to the Puritan mind, since they retained too many features of the Roman system. Again, it was a question of origin and authority. If Scripture supported such practices, let them be retained. If not, they should be rejected and replaced by practices more in harmony with the Bible. The debate over organisation and worship was to continue for a good many years into the future, and although it was always fraught with the question of national sovereignty, it would always come back in the end to the more basic question of authority.

These issues went back to the earliest days of the English Reformation. Henry VIII had finally broken with Rome in 1534, although many historians feel that this was essentially a political and personal move,<sup>8</sup> and that compared with what would transpire later, it scarcely affected the doctrine of the Church or the life of the individual believer. There were changes, of course, and research has shown that there were evidences of genuine reformation during Henry's reign and earlier. A.G. Dickens describes the work of Wycliffe and the Lollards as 'the abortive reformation', and demonstrates that Lollard influence persisted well into the sixteenth century. For all that, it is probably true that the formal reformation which took place in the reign of Henry VIII was largely political, and that the religious life of the age saw little practical improvement. The reigns of Edward VI and Mary were accompanied by more definite changes, with a move towards more thoroughgoing Protestantism under Edward and a violent return to Rome under Mary. By the time that Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558 the country was bewildered and torn. Some preferred the old way and wanted to retain the Catholic faith and its manner of worship. Others wanted reformation, and wanted it to be as thorough as that which had taken place at Geneva under John Calvin. Here, from the Puritan viewpoint, was a true Utopia, a practical demonstration of godly rule in action. Many, perhaps the majority, had no strong convictions, except that they be left in peace to live a life of their own choosing. Elizabeth's religious policy was to follow the *via media* between these two extremes, with the object of maintaining a united kingdom at the expense of returning to Rome or going on to a more thorough form of Protestantism. The Elizabethan Settlement, as it has come to be known, was her attempt to establish a national Church which would appeal to the majority of her subjects and keep in subjection the extremists on either wing.

It was with this compromise that Thomas Cartwright and his followers in 1570 showed their dissatisfaction. They had waited impatiently for ten years or more for the changes which they believed necessary. When it became clear that such changes were not going to materialise, they took matters into their own hands and began in earnest a war of words which manifested itself in sermons, tracts and other forms of literature calculated to demonstrate the strength of their arguments and the need for true reformation. Increasingly thereafter the call for reformation

in England was heard in pulpit and press. Although time revealed that it would not be until 1643, with the calling of the Westminster Assembly, that Presbyterianism would be seriously considered, albeit briefly, as an alternative to the Anglican Church, seeds had been sown which would take firm root and which would grow and bear fruit of a kind which even Cartwright could not have foreseen. Before the turn of the century, advocates of total separation from the Anglican Church had arisen, and little groups of Separatists met secretly for worship, or emigrated to Holland where they were able to meet freely to pursue their religion according to the dictates of conscience. By the time Elizabeth came to the end of her illustrious reign, the Puritan tide was well on its way in.

What had taken place under the Tudor monarchs in the sixteenth century, momentous as it undoubtedly was, served merely as a prelude to what would transpire under the Stuarts in the century which followed. Now the nation was to witness civil war, the execution of an archbishop and a king, a republican government, the Protectorate under Cromwell, the Restoration of the Monarchy, and severe religious persecution, all to some extent as a consequence of religious convictions, to say nothing at this stage of the nature of those convictions themselves. Not without reason may the seventeenth century be regarded as the most momentous in the history of England, and as seminal to the subsequent development of Western society as a whole. The accession of James I in 1603 was an event which Puritans had in general heralded with some expectation. In Scotland, James had presided over the establishment of a Presbyterian system, in theory at least, and many hoped that he would be favourably disposed to the Puritan cause in England. On his journey south to take residence in London, he was met by a large delegation of Puritan clergymen who petitioned him to press on at once with the re-organisation of the English Church. But, as Haller says, although James continued to champion Calvinistic theology,<sup>9</sup> 'he had had more than enough of Presbyterianism'.<sup>10</sup> Those who had clung to hopes of a Puritan breakthrough were soon to be disillusioned, and we are left with the unhappy record of James threatening to harry Puritans out of the land. From then until 1640 the Puritan impetus was driven to seek expression in less conspicuous ways. It did so through preaching, and notably through the production of a vast corpus of literature which grew in quantity, and generally in quality, as the seventeenth century continued to unfold. It is to this body of literature that we shall turn in the chapters which follow, and which, if nothing else, will surely convince us of the essentially spiritual and irenic nature of mainstream Puritan thought.

With the events which began in 1640, it seemed as though an avalanche had been precipitated which no man or group of men could contain. In that year, Parliament impeached the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, for high treason, and committed him to the Tower from which, five years later, he was led out and beheaded. A similar fate awaited Charles I, whose execution in 1649, following the verdict of a court constituted by the

Commons, was an event of unprecedented boldness. Charles had declared war on the Parliamentary armies in 1642, and for some six years civil conflict was waged up and down the land. It was a traumatic time for Englishmen. In 1643 a summoned body of Puritan divines, mostly Presbyterians by conviction, met at Westminster for the purpose of advising Parliament in the matter of reforming the Church. They produced the famous Westminster Confession of Faith and two catechisms, all of which in their own way influenced Puritan doctrine and devotion in succeeding years. Before they met for the last time in 1649, they also produced a Presbyterian directory for worship, which, though approved by Parliament, was never put into practice. That all this could transpire whilst Royalist and Parliamentary forces confronted each other on the battlefield is some indication of the religious nature of the age and of the undertones which ran through the conflict itself.

With the cessation of armed hostilities, the imprisonment of the king, and the demise of high churchmanship, the way was opened for a unique experience in English history. For twelve years from 1648, with no ruler claiming as his authority the divine right of kings, the government of the land proceeded by a succession of experiments, which Oliver Cromwell, to give him his due, attempted to guide for the good of the nation as a whole. From the broad Puritan position, the experiment reached its high-point in July 1653 when the Nominated Parliament met for the first time. It consisted solely of members appointed by Cromwell and his advisors for their religious convictions and evident godliness, 'saints' to use the contemporary word. It was known more generally as the 'Barbones' Parliament, after 'Praise-God' Barbones, one of its members. Cromwell addressed the new Parliament in significant terms as they began their work: 'Truly you are called by God to rule with Him, and for Him, . . . I confess I never looked to see such a day as this . . . when Jesus Christ should be so owned as He is, at this day'.<sup>11</sup> It was, they felt, the beginning of the long-awaited reign of the saints on earth, prior to the glorious coming of Christ and the promised millennium. But, alas, it was not to be. For reasons which it is not possible to examine here, the experiment ended in failure, the Nominated Parliament lasting less than six months and giving way to Cromwell's Protectorate, itself a form of government which, in principle, was less than ideal and which, in practice, proved less than popular. By 1660 most Englishmen were ready for Anglicanism and the monarchy to be restored and a return to stable government. Perhaps the greatest lesson which these years re-emphasise is that the kingdoms of this world are not to be confused with the kingdom of God. It was a lesson, nonetheless, that many at the time were unwilling, or unable, to learn.

Many of the specifically religious developments of these years were of equal significance to the subsequent growth of Protestantism in England and in America as they were to the Church in their own day. This is particularly true of the years between 1640 and 1660, which beyond

question were the high-water mark of pre-Restoration Puritanism. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, Puritanism, in both senses in which it has been defined, became a powerful and growing force in the religious life of the nation. The ecclesiastical Puritans, intent as always on reforming the structure of the national Church, pressed on with their aims until, as we have observed, they formed a majority in the Westminster Assembly called to advise Parliament on the reform of the Church. Only with the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660 did it finally become clear that there was not to be a Presbyterian Church in place of the Episcopal Anglican Church. The more spiritual Puritans, both inside the established Church and among the independent, separatist groups which sprang up throughout the land, while not ignoring the importance of correct discipline and order, were chiefly concerned to find the way of salvation for themselves and for their families, and to lead a godly life while on earth. Although prior to 1640, due to the repressive measures of Archbishops Bancroft and Laud, and the antipathy of James I and Charles I, both streams of the Puritan movement were held in check, Puritan preachers, as they were permitted, continued to make use of the pulpit and the press to propagate their ideas, so laying a foundation for the tumultuous years which lay just ahead.

Between 1640 and 1660 this outwardly stable situation changed almost beyond recognition, not only in the political arena but, more significantly for our purpose, in the realm of religion and religious activity. Ideas which had lain dormant for decades, or which had been discussed in secret, suddenly burst forth with amazing vitality. Mention must be made in this respect of the eschatological convictions which came to play such an important role in the religio-political events of the 1640s and the 1650s. From the earliest days of the English Reformation men had looked forward to the second coming of Christ and the kingdom of God on earth. An increasing interest, during the latter part of the sixteenth century, in the books of Daniel and Revelation, which grew to intensive study during the seventeenth century, provided new understanding and gave fresh hope for the future. That many of the interpretations were incorrect and many of the conclusions reached unfounded, particularly among the less qualified expositors, it is hardly necessary to point out. What is beyond doubt is that eschatological expectation ran high for much of the first half of the seventeenth century, reaching its zenith between 1640 and 1660, and affecting during those years not only the religious views of the population but also the political activity of men in high office. Combined with these hopes of a coming millennium and the kingdom of God were revived fears and convictions concerning the Papacy and the Antichrist. Few doctrines had been more calculated to propel Englishmen in the direction of Protestantism than those which identified the Papacy with the Antichrist, particularly at times when the sovereignty of the state was threatened by papal decrees and intrigue. With Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* ever before them, and with the reported Romanising tendencies of Laud and Charles I

realities with potentially serious consequences, it is not surprising that, in the years we are considering, those who studied Scripture carefully found justification for a renewed preoccupation with the dreaded Antichrist.

These years also saw the emergence of religious groups hitherto unheard of, many of which were to pass into obscurity almost as rapidly as they had arisen, but some of which, containing elements of a more enduring nature, were destined to influence the religious scene of later centuries. From the beginning of the seventeenth century the Independents had begun to withdraw from formal Anglican services, believing that Church membership should be limited to the regenerate, and to meet independently for worship, often in the parish church itself, but not according to its ritual. The Independents grew in strength as the century developed, and although never numerically as strong as the Presbyterian party, nonetheless counted among their adherents some of the most influential clergy of the day. These early years had also seen the beginnings of a movement towards complete separation from the national Church. Guided by bold spirits who saw an irreducible connection between Rome, the Church of England, and Antichrist, little groups of believers, impatient with the slow progress towards reform, sought to make a thorough break with the establishment by instituting a Church and pattern of worship totally divorced from that of the Church of England. These were the Separatists, and from them and their Independent brethren religious communions such as Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Baptists were to arise, reaching down to the twentieth century and out into the whole Christian world.

It is quite impossible, in the limited space available, to give an account which would be less than confused of the bewildering number of sects which mushroomed almost overnight from 1640 onwards, to say nothing of their equally bewildering beliefs. If we mention only the Fifth Monarchy Men, who were in their own day, and have since been recognised as, one of the extreme religio-political groups of the time, and say that judged by the views of some of the other sects their opinions were comparatively sane, we have said much. The beliefs of the Fifth Monarchists, who held that the four kingdoms of Daniel chapters 2 and 7 had been fulfilled in history, and that the kingdom of the stone, the fifth kingdom of prophecy, was about to be established on earth, and that they had been called by God to bring that kingdom into existence by political activism, even by the use of the sword, should that prove necessary, may seem bizarre, but, in comparison with groups such as Muggletonians, Behmenists, Ranters, Diggers and the Family of Love, their ideas were not extreme. The existence of these groups serves as a reminder of the new freedom which now prevailed, and which was equally appreciated and exploited by the wider and more sober body of Puritanism.

For our immediate purposes the most significant religious development after 1640 was, perhaps, in the area of literature. When William Laud succeeded to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 1633, he set himself the

task, among others, of rectifying the laxity which had crept into the regulations controlling printing and publishing, especially those concerning censorship. It was too late to prevent the dissemination of Puritan ideas by the press, but not too late to make a determined stand against anything which savoured of heresy or of an attack on the existing order. As one writer points out, Laud — like most of his contemporaries — did not distinguish words which merely expressed ideas from words which actually incited rebellion or violence. To Laud and his contemporaries words were words, whether spoken or written, and, if the need was such, should be punished for what they were.<sup>12</sup> It was this understanding, or lack of it, which prompted Laud to direct his keenest attention to the Puritan preachers and pamphleteers, who ever sought to go into print. As a consequence, the years immediately preceding 1640 are noticeably lacking in printed material other than strictly devotional works by established Puritan preachers, and similar works by Anglican authors. This should not be taken to suggest that prior to 1640 religious works were infrequently published. Any representative bibliography, including that which appears at the end of this book, will prove that this was not the case. It is intended to suggest that there was a prodigious increase in the output of literature of all kinds, and of Puritan literature in particular, after Laud's removal from the scene in 1640. That, too, will be evident from the publication dates in the bibliography.

With the accession of Charles II and the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, the course of English history took another sharp turn. From the Puritan viewpoint it was decidedly a turn for the worse. The heady days of Cromwell's England were now past, and Puritans were soon to learn the harsh realities of a system intolerant of nonconformity, to say nothing of open dissent. In 1662 Parliament passed the Act of Uniformity, which required all clergymen to take an oath of loyalty and non-resistance, and to declare their total assent to the Book of Common Prayer. It was a cruel dilemma for hundreds of clergymen throughout the land who had espoused Puritan ideals, particularly as the date for compliance was set to coincide with the anniversary of St. Bartholomew's Day. The outcome must have been predictable to the government, and is known in English religious history as the Great Ejection, when between 1,700 and 2,000 clergymen, many of them the cream of the nation's spiritual and intellectual leadership, refused to abjure their consciences and were summarily ejected from their livings. It is estimated that in London alone at least forty graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, including six doctors of Divinity, were removed from their pulpits and forced to eke out a living for themselves and their families as best they could, in common with their ejected brethren throughout the land. The sufferings of the ejected clergy have been variously described, but C.E. Whiting's brief account is probably as near the truth as any: 'Some lived on little more than brown bread and water, many had eight or ten pounds a year to maintain a family. . . . One went to plough six days a week and preached on the Lord's day'.<sup>13</sup> Even that was a privilege which was soon to be denied.

Further legislation against Puritan dissent quickly followed. Collectively known as the Clarendon Code, after the Earl of Clarendon, Charles II's Chancellor and chief minister, it included the Corporation Act, which effectually excluded from national or local public office all who refused to conform; the Conventicle Act, which prohibited all private meetings for worship which were attended by more than four persons beyond the immediate family; and the Five Mile Act, which prevented ejected clergy from living within five miles of a corporate town or any town in which they had preached in recent years. The Test Act of 1673 reaffirmed that every Nonconformist, whether dissenter or recusant, should be excluded from all public office, stipulating that those who wished to be considered eligible should receive the sacrament according to the Anglican form at his parish church. It is quite clear that the years between 1660 and 1690 brought the most severe restrictions upon the Puritan ministry and laity alike. These were the years of real hardship and active persecution, particularly between 1681 and 1687, and notably under the notorious Judge Jeffreys, following the accession of James II in 1685. According to one contemporary record, Jeffreys executed hundreds of Dissenters in Dorset and Somerset and sent hundreds more as convicts to the West Indies.<sup>14</sup> While it is true that these punishments were inflicted for rebellion rather than for religious belief for its own sake, and that not all who were involved in the rebellion were Dissenters, it is also true that many acted from religious motivation, and that the effects of Jeffreys' directives were felt most keenly among dissenting communities. Whole congregations were decimated, some reduced virtually to non-existence. Mercifully, circumstances compelled James to adopt a change in policy, and the Declaration of Indulgence of 1687, and also the Toleration Act of 1689, effectually brought to an end the various repressive measures which had been levelled against Puritan dissent in the preceding thirty years. Thenceforward, freedom of worship was guaranteed to Protestants who found themselves unable to conform to the doctrine, liturgy or constitution of the Anglican Church.

These latter years may be regarded as the time of Puritanism's maturity, and nowhere is this more evident than in the literature of that era. The bulk of Richard Baxter's enormous output belongs to this period. John Bunyan's immortal *Pilgrim's Progress*, and his scarcely less renowned *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, both came from these years. John Flavel's works of divinity and devotion, six volumes in all, warm and practical to the end, were the product of Puritanism's later years. And Joseph Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted*, which appeared in a modern edition as recently as 1964, was first published in 1672, selling 20,000 copies. So popular did this book prove to be that another edition in 1675 reached 50,000 copies, and numerous further editions continued to appear throughout the following two hundred and fifty years. Many of these writings, and many more besides them, we shall have occasion to

sample as our investigation of Puritan beliefs proceeds. Others have argued that together they hold the secrets of our nation's past greatness, the principles of a free society, the motivation for the Church's world mission and, some would add, the key to a revived Protestantism and a completed Reformation.

Some limitations are inevitable in a study of this nature. In this case, the approach has been to concentrate on the specific doctrines which crystallised in Puritanism and radical Dissent and later coalesced in the biblical teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Since those doctrines were based on Scripture, they can be fully understood only by allowing the Bible to speak with authority as it did in the seventeenth century. The emphasis has therefore been placed on the expository and exegetical reasons for those beliefs which the Bible engendered. This has often been at the expense of their historical and chronological development and of detailed biographical information concerning the men who advocated those beliefs. These omissions are readily acknowledged, and they will no doubt to some degree disappoint the academic purist. The nature of this study suggests, however, that it is more important to understand the doctrines themselves than the men who proclaimed them, and that in order to understand the men it is necessary first to understand the ideas which made them what they were.

Neither is it possible to offer an exhaustive treatment of the doctrines included here. To provide that would almost certainly require a separate volume for each doctrine, and, in any case, some of the areas examined have in fact received more extended treatment elsewhere, as, for example, in G.F. Nuttall's *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, E.F. Kevan's *The Grace of Law* and the present author's *A Great Expectation, Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660*. Some questions, therefore, will remain unanswered, and other questions will doubtless be raised. The purpose of the book is not to examine in exhaustive detail any of the beliefs which have been selected for consideration, but rather to establish their identity within Puritan thought, to assess the fundamental nature of such beliefs *vis-à-vis* the Bible, and to suggest that in them are to be found the roots of a contemporary Protestant body which, however theologically anachronistic it may appear to some, is nonetheless enjoying considerable popularity on a world-wide basis in the twentieth century.

Some reference to the specific historical links between seventeenth-century English Puritanism and the Adventism which arose in America in the nineteenth century might also be desirable. Again, the purpose of this study precludes anything but the briefest comment. That the essentials of Seventh-day Adventism did appear at various times and in various places in England during the seventeenth century cannot be disputed. Neither can the fact that two centuries passed before those beliefs came together in one body of faith in North America. That many of these doctrines were taken across the Atlantic by the early colonists is also a matter of historical fact.

John Cotton, the 'patriarch of New England', had emigrated in 1633, taking with him a firm belief in Christ's second coming and a keen interest in prophetic interpretation. Stephen Mumford arrived in Rhode Island in 1664, and shared with members of the Newport Baptist Church his belief in the perpetuity of the Decalogue and the seventh-day Sabbath brought from the Bell Lane Seventh Day Baptist Church in London. Cotton and Mumford are typical of many thousands of seventeenth-century Puritans who arrived as immigrants in the New World, bringing with them beliefs which, in the fullness of time, would give rise to a religious movement encircling the world.

All that remains to be said by way of introduction concerns procedure. The chapter titles are all phrases from the original source material, and it has not been felt necessary to give references for these in the same way that the text itself has been documented. All quotations have been modernised in spelling and punctuation, where that has been necessary, but always in a manner which retains the original meaning. Quotations from the Bible are from the Authorised (King James) Version of 1611, for it is that version which forms the fundamental link between Puritan and Adventist theology. Although the main title of the book specifically mentions England and Puritanism, the careful reader will occasionally note the appearance of characters from the other parts of what is presently the United Kingdom, and from camps not specifically Puritan. He or she will discover references, for example, to the great Irish Archbishop, James Ussher, and to the seventeenth-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes. It has been argued elsewhere that, from a theological viewpoint, Anglicanism in the seventeenth century differed little from Puritanism in basic doctrine,<sup>15</sup> and those who read Hobbes will find for themselves a fundamental affinity with Puritan theology. Such references, then, are calculated to strengthen the underlying thesis of the book, that in its essentials Seventh-day Adventist belief traces its ancestry through the religious thought which was widespread in the British Isles during the seventeenth century, and which was epitomised in Puritanism. If what follows contributes, in the present ecumenical climate, to a better understanding of that movement, and of the age from which it takes its fundamental character, the arduous tasks of research and writing will have been adequately rewarded.

# 1. The Sufficiency of Scripture

The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God' (II Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (1911) pp.v-vi

It were more than brutish madness to doubt of the certain truth and authority of the holy Scriptures which, no less, but much more than any other writings, for their authors are testified and confirmed to be the sacred Word of the ever-living God. Not only testified by the uniform witness of men in all ages, but also confirmed by such reasons taken out of the writings themselves, as do sufficiently argue the Spirit of God to be the Author of them.

James Ussher, *A Body of Divinitie* (1647) p.8

It was that renowned theologian of early Puritanism, William Perkins, who, in commenting on II Timothy 3:16-17, spoke of 'the sufficiency of scripture'.<sup>1</sup> A fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, from 1584 to 1595, and for much of that time preacher at Great St. Andrew's, a church frequented by the university fraternity, Perkins' influence in perpetuating the Puritan biblical emphasis with succeeding generations of English preachers is beyond question. His fame abroad as a writer was scarcely less than his reputation at home as a preacher and teacher. Many of his works were translated into various European languages, and most of them, particularly those published in English, were read long after his untimely death in 1602. We may be certain that what Perkins had to say concerning Scripture fairly represented the view of mainstream English Protestantism for at least a century to come. Some fifty years later, John Ball, who was deprived of his Staffordshire living and who more than once suffered imprisonment as a consequence of Puritan sympathies, declared plainly, 'the Word of God is the ground of all our faith, whereby we live, be directed, and upheld in all our trials'.<sup>2</sup> The influential Thomas Adams, for over thirty years vicar of Wingrave, Buckinghamshire, and chaplain to Sir Henry Montagu, the Lord Chief Justice and Lord High Treasurer of the realm, described Scripture as 'a perfect and absolute rule'.<sup>3</sup> It would not

be difficult to find in the literature of the time a hundred such restatements of the position that Perkins had earlier defended. Puritanism, as indeed Protestantism as a whole, held that the entire Bible, Old and New Testaments together, was 'sufficient to prescribe the true and perfect way to eternal life'.<sup>4</sup>

### *Authority*

The question underlying the European Reformation in general and the English Puritan movement in particular, as the preceding comments suggest, was that of authority. From what source did the Church and the individual believer receive the faith, and against what standard could that faith, once received, be measured? Who formulated doctrine, and who defined duty? The insistence within Puritanism on Scripture as the answer to these fundamental questions cannot be understood without reference to the centuries of tradition and prescribed religion from which the Church had so lately emerged. John Owen and Richard Baxter, perhaps the greatest of the Puritan theologians of the seventeenth century, both draw attention to that subordination of Scripture to tradition which had characterised mediaeval Catholicism. Owen's defence of the Bible, published in 1659 with the cumbersome title, *Of the Divine Originall, Authority, Self-evidencing Light, and Power of the Scriptures*, confessed that it had been written principally as a corrective to renewed attacks by Roman Catholic scholars on Scripture. Owen was particularly concerned to refute suggestions that the Bible was only a partial revelation of God's will (and hence, by implication, not wholly sufficient), and that Scripture was not valid unless accepted and interpreted by the Church.<sup>5</sup> No self-respecting Protestant theologian of the day could allow such claims to go unchallenged, and the gist of Owen's reply, conveyed in the title of his book, is that the authority of Scripture is above that of the Church, since in Scripture God speaks authoritatively and directly to the individual. Baxter similarly argued that the subjection of Christian belief to the authority of the Church rather than to Scripture was the most injurious of all doctrines emanating from Rome.<sup>6</sup> In making this assertion, Baxter clearly understood how crucial the question of authority was to the whole structure of belief, as well as to the freedom of the individual before God.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the case was stated most clearly by the learned James Ussher who, prior to his elevation to the archbishopric of Armagh in 1625, had for fourteen years held the chair of Divinity at Dublin. There is no doubt in this thoroughly Protestant mind about the place of Scripture:

The books of holy Scripture are so sufficient for the knowledge of Christian religion, that they do most plentifully contain all doctrine necessary to salvation. . . . It followeth that we need no unwritten verities, no traditions or inventions of men, no canons of councils, no sentences of Fathers, much less decrees of popes, to supply any supposed defect of the written Word, or to give us a more perfect direction in the worship of God and the way of life, than is already expressed in the canonical Scriptures.<sup>8</sup>

The 'doctrine necessary to salvation' of which Ussher here speaks, points to the dual nature of the authority held by Protestantism to reside in Scripture. It is an authority which extends equally to the formulation of doctrine by the Church and to the regulation of the life of the individual believer. The two cannot be separated. Those who become impatient with the doctrinal controversies which characterised Puritanism fail to understand this relationship and its significance in the eyes of Puritan theologians. Doctrine is important precisely because in the end it is concerned with salvation and with the individual. Sound doctrine is therefore to be pursued and false doctrine is to be avoided, and Scripture is to be the final court of appeal, the objective standard by which the faith of both Church and believer is to be measured. So Ussher adds, 'From them only [the Scriptures] all doctrine concerning our salvation must be drawn and derived'.<sup>9</sup> The Baptist pastor, Henry Denne, concurs: 'Wheresoever the Protestant confessions do go hand in hand with holy Scripture, we do rejoice to follow them'. On the other hand, if the Church, even the Protestant Church, has deviated from this authoritative rule, 'their example must not be our precedent'.<sup>10</sup> Quite clearly, most shades of opinion within the English Church of the seventeenth century agree that the Bible, as opposed to tradition and to creed, is the final source of authority.

It is at this point that Richard Baxter registers a note of disquiet. Baxter, learned, moderate and devout, and widely regarded as one of the most eminent divines of his age, was a prolific writer and an indefatigable preacher. Later generations have acknowledged his profound influence on the religious life of his own and succeeding generations. His *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* must be regarded as one of the most significant works of Puritanism, if not of Protestantism as a whole. Published first in 1650, and re-issued in numerous editions well into the nineteenth century, this book, written 'by a dying man to dying men', has exerted a lasting influence on countless thousands of readers. The *Saints' Rest* is an admirable example of Puritanism's concern with the salvation of the individual and with practical godliness rather than with institutional and creedal Christianity. Coming as it did a century or more after the beginnings of the English Reformation, it points out the danger, as real to established Protestantism as to established Catholicism, of assigning authority to the establishment rather than to Scripture. Baxter sees clearly the paradox of Protestantism's continuing protest against Rome's subjection of the authority of Scripture to that of the Church, while at the same time being guilty on a similar count. 'The Papists believe Scripture to be the word of God, because their Church saith so', he maintains. Yet Protestants have adopted a similar attitude to Scripture, 'because our Church or our leaders say so'.<sup>11</sup> Baxter's argument, of course, is that it is not sufficient for any Christian to accept the authority of the Bible merely on the basis that this may be the official position of the Church as a whole, or of that section of the Church to which he may have given his