

Westminster Confession

2. What is Continental Reformed?

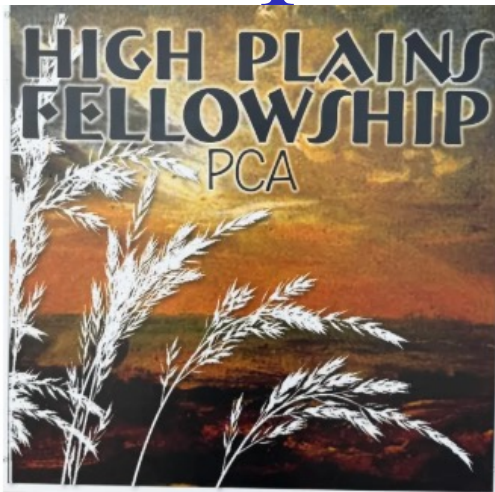
- How does the English Reformation Differ?

Bill Petro

your friendly neighborhood historian

Where to find Slides & Recordings:

billpetro.com/highplains



Church History: *Westminster Confession*

Presentations for the [High Plains Fellowship Church](#)

Fall 2025, by [Bill Petro](#)

Updated 11/22/25

 Signifies audio recording

• Signifies the author's articles for *further reading*

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>Click the link below for the PDF</u>
Nov 9	1. Westminster: <i>Why Are We a Confessional Church?</i>  Recording: Nov-9_Confessional • Touring: Westminster Abbey, London • Life of Martin Luther • History of the Council of Nicaea	Confessional
Nov 23	2. Continental Reformed: <i>Three Forms of Unity and the English Reformation</i>  Recording: Nov-23_Continental-Reformed • History of the King James Bible	Continental Reformed

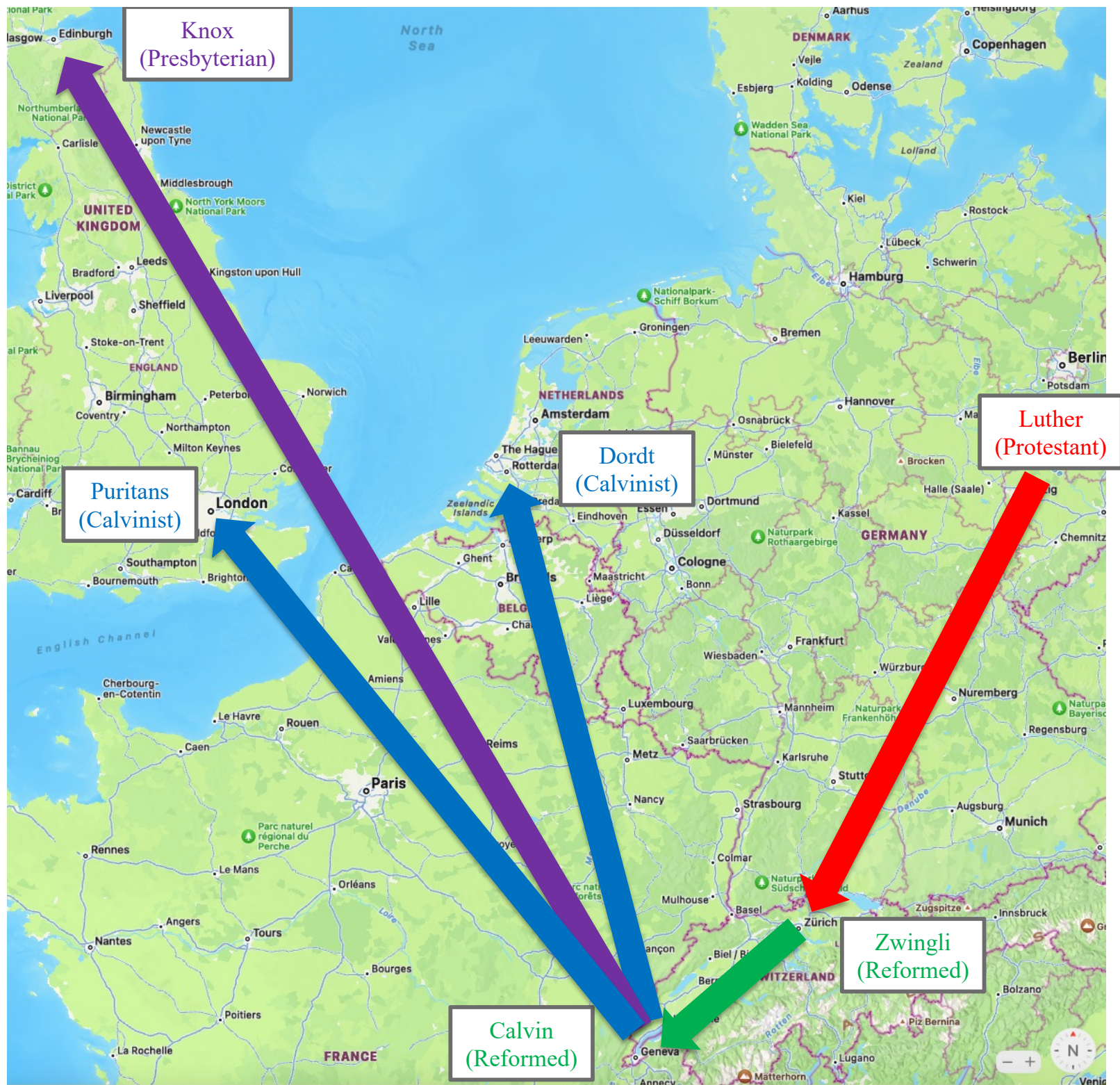
Review

- Creed “I believe”
- Catechism Q&A Learning
- Confession Summary of Bible

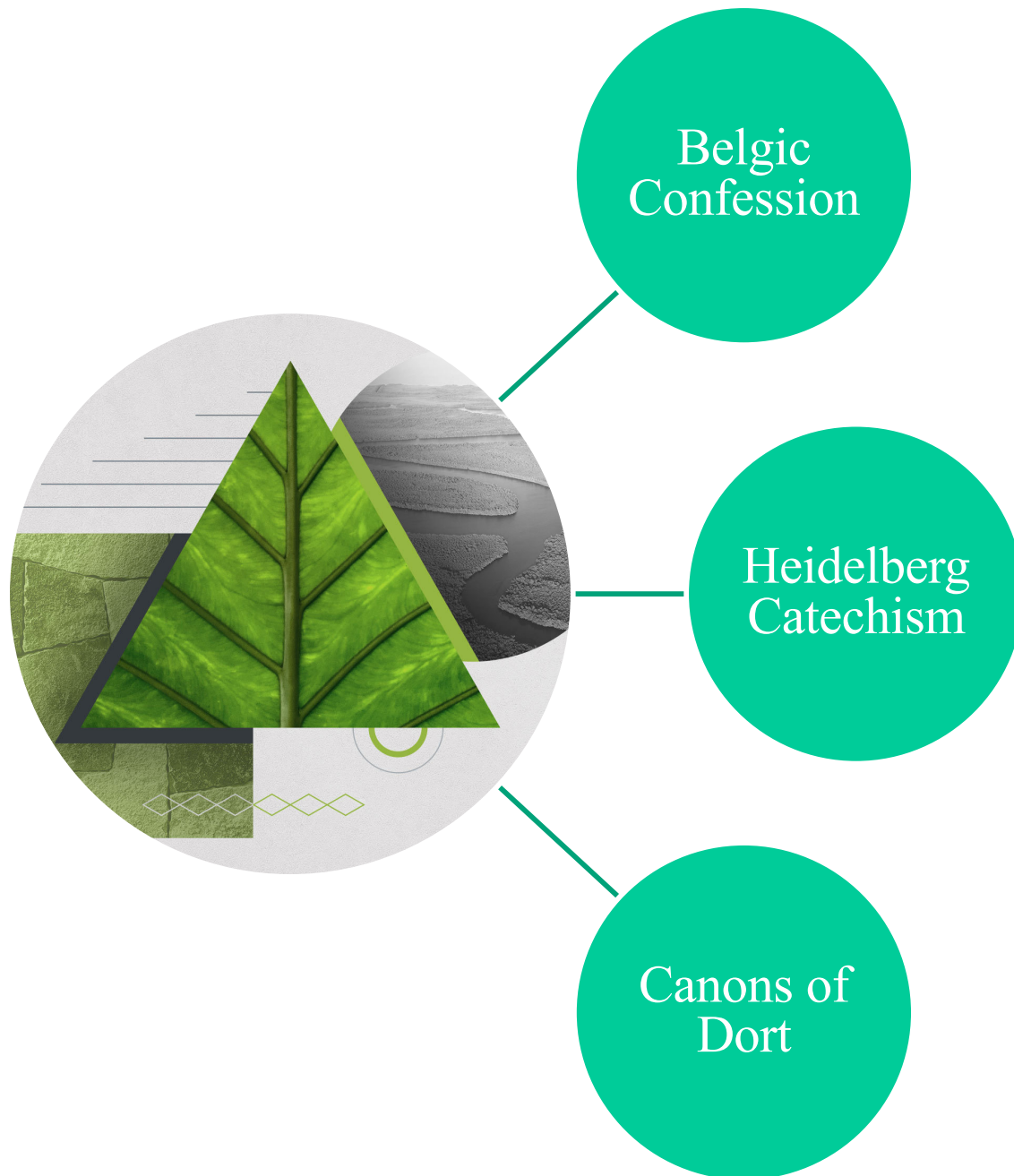
Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, you should be able to

- Describe the distinctives of the *Continental Reform* tradition with its **Three Forms of Unity**
- Contrast it with the *English Reformation*, the historical context of the **Westminster Assembly**.



Three Forms of Unity



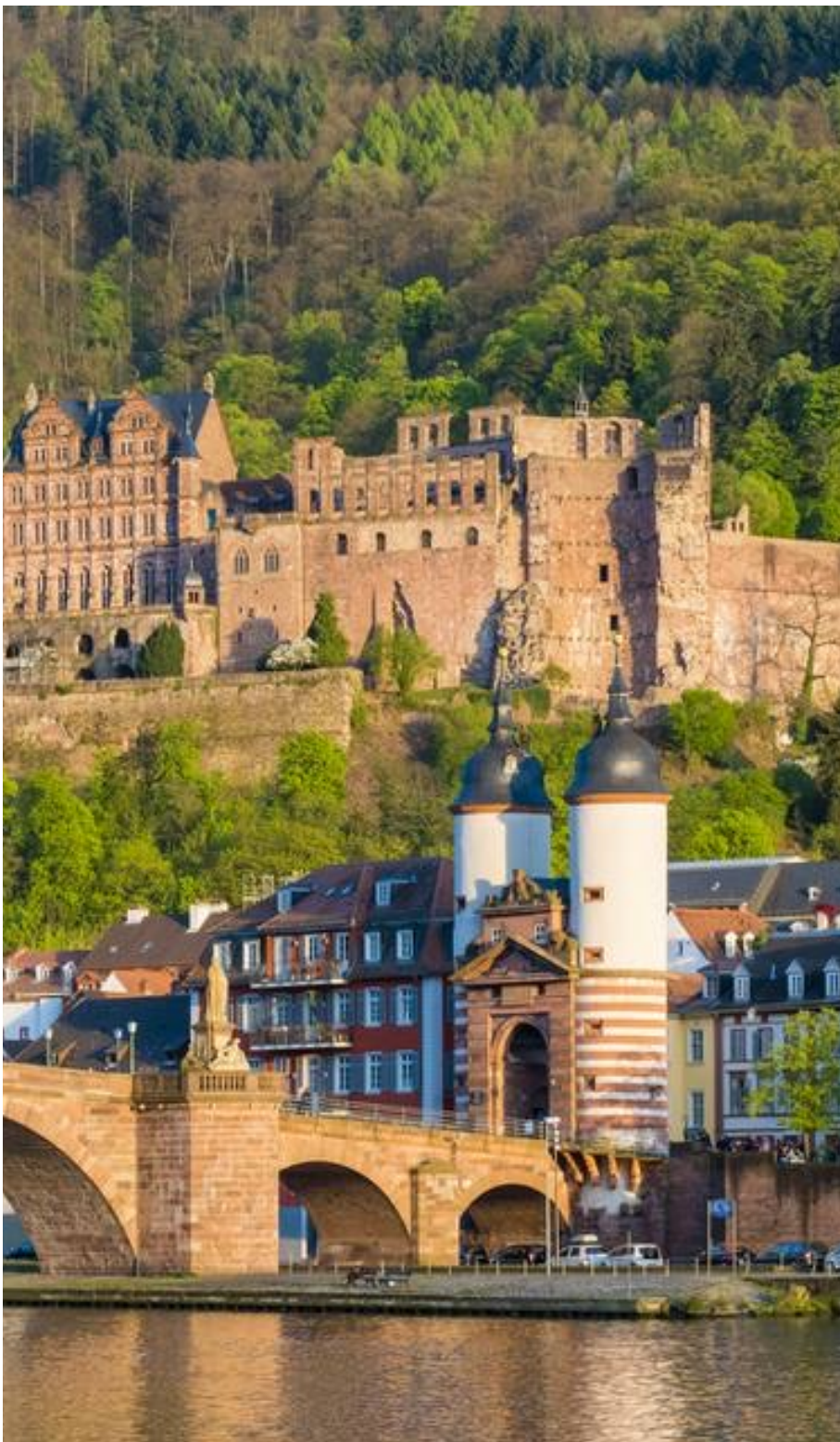


Belgic Confession

- 1561: **Guido de Brès**
- Area controlled by Spain, **Philip II** persecuted Protestants as revolutionaries
- *"We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth..."*
- Contrast: Roman Catholics and Anabaptists
- Based on the confession of the Reformed churches in France, written chiefly by John Calvin, published two years earlier.

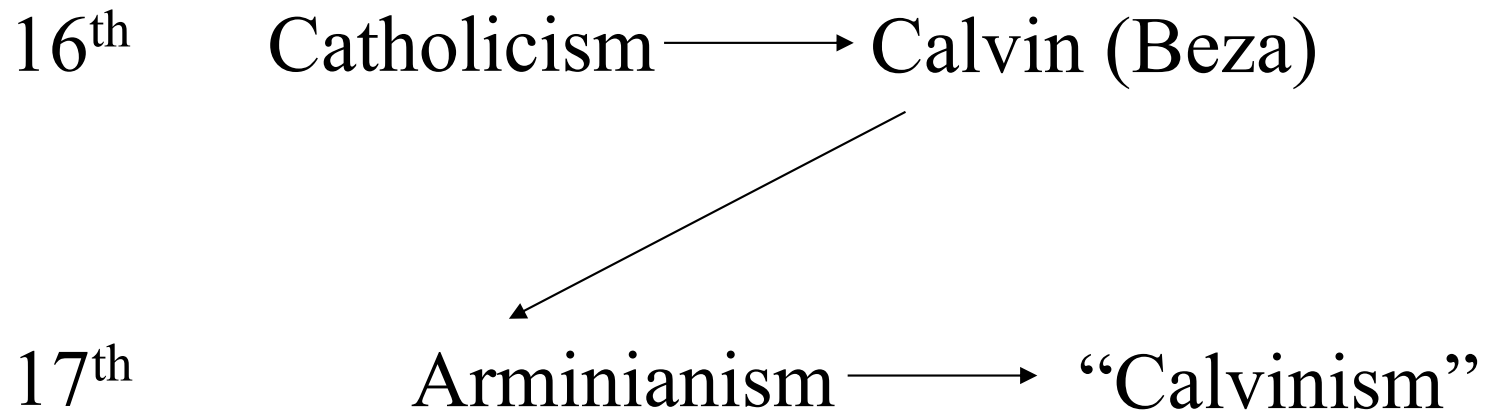
Heidelberg Catechism

- 1563: **Zacharias Ursinus**
- Commissioned by **Elector Frederick III**: unify Reformed teaching and oppose Catholic views
- Divided into *52 Lord's Days* with 129 questions.



- *Q: What is thine only comfort in life and in death?*
- *A: That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who... has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me... Wherefore by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.*

Theology: 16th & 17th centuries



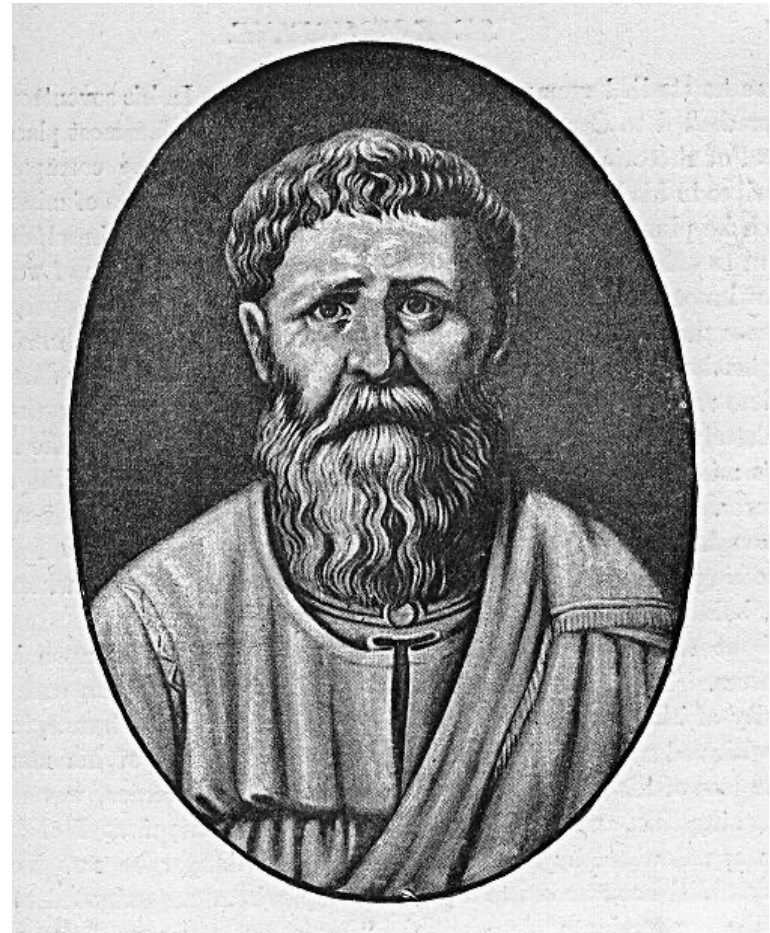
Jacobus Arminius

- a.k.a. **James Harmens**
- 1560-1609
- Studied under **Theodore Beza**
- Dutch theologian
- Professor: Leiden University
- Differed with Calvin/Beza on:
 - Unconditional election
 - Irresistible grace
 - Perseverance
 - Predestination



Augustine

- Church Father
- Hippo in Africa
- Pagan
- Milan
- *Confessions.*



Pelagius

- British Monk
- Popular teacher in Rome
- Contradicted Augustine
- Denied Original Sin



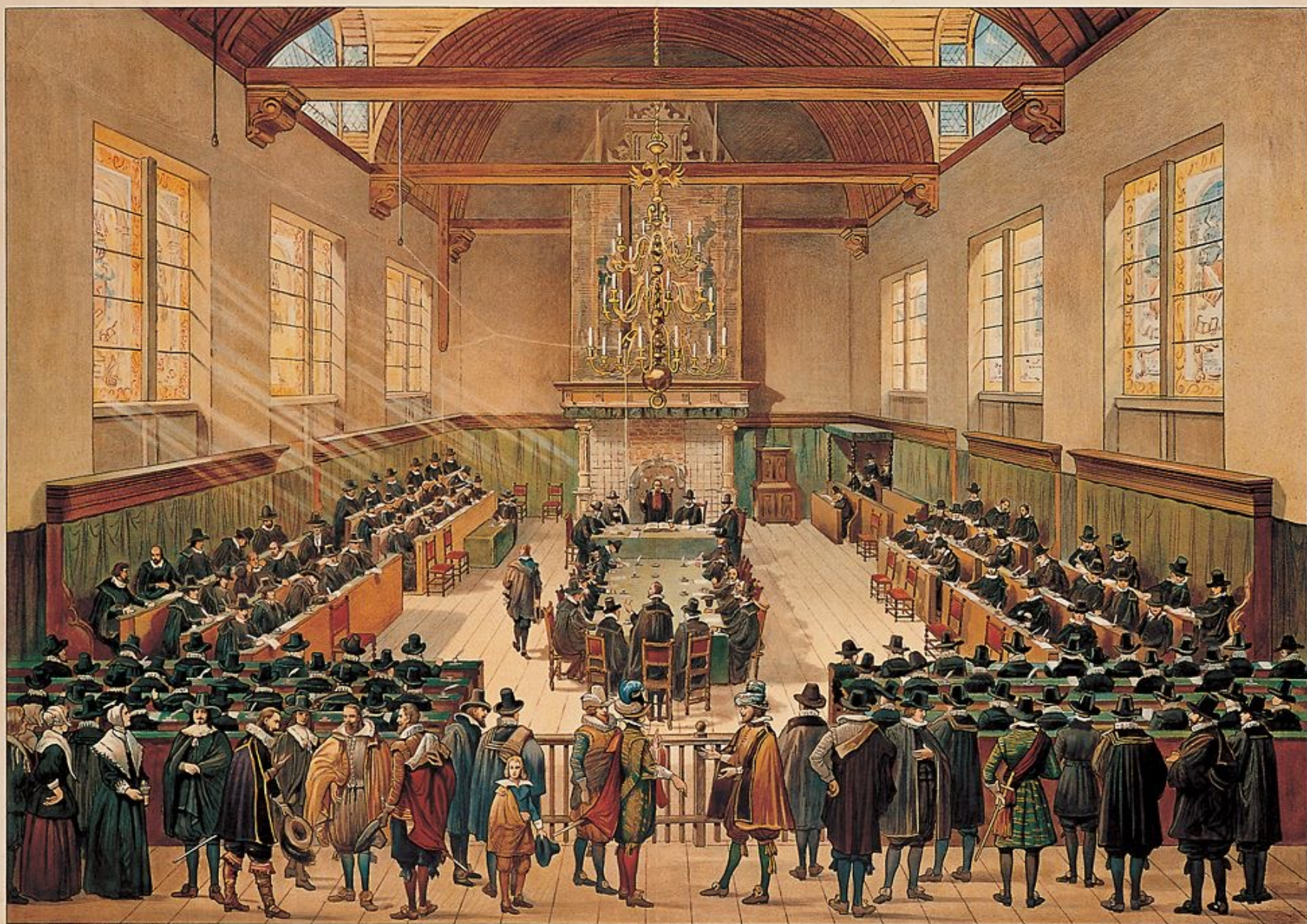
Augustine on Freedom of Choice



Pelagius and Augustine:

A Study in Contrast

	Pelagius	Augustine
Original Sin	Denied	Affirmed
Natural Will	Plenary Ability	Inability
Grace	Gracious, Not Necessary	Absolute Necessity
Predestination	Based on Knowledge (foresight)	Based on Love (foreknowledge)



J. W. DE JONGH EN H. WAGENVOORT,
SCHOLFFLATEN VOOR DE VADERLANDSCHE GESCHIEDENIS.

UITGAVE VAN J. B. WOLTER,
GRONDZEN, DEN HAAG.

Eene vergadering van de nationale Synode te Dordrecht.

1619.

Synod of Dort

- Dordrecht, Netherlands: 1618-1619
- Established the “Canons of Dort”
- Rejected the *5 Remonstrances*
- Affirmed *Reformed* doctrine
- 5 Points of “Calvinism”: (1905: T.U.L.I.P.)
- “Calvinism” vs. Calvin.

Canons of Dort:

5 Points of “Calvinism”

1. God *unconditionally elects*, from the foundations of time, some unto salvation
2. Christ’s Atonement was intended to be *efficacious* only for the elect
3. Man is so depraved that *divine grace* is necessary **and sufficient** to bring man unto faith
4. This grace can **not** be *resisted*
5. All who are truly regenerate will certainly *persevere*.

Man's Ability

Pre-Fall Man	Post-Fall Man	Reborn Man	Glorified Man
Able to sin Able to not sin	Able to sin <i>Unable to not sin</i>	Able to sin Able to not sin	Able to not sin <i>Unable to sin</i>

T.U.L.I.P.

- Total Depravity *inability*
- Unconditional Election *not man's*
- Limited Atonement *particular, efficient*
- Irresistible Grace *efficacious, surely*
- Perseverance of the Saints *security*

Mary Stuart

- *Mary Queen of Scots*
- **Henry VII's** Great grand-daughter
- Marries **Francis II** of France
- France claims Scotland
- Mary claims England
- Knox preaches against Mary
- Son: **James VI...**
- Spoiler alert:
= King **James I** of England.



Calvinism Jumps the Channel



Henry VIII

- Wife **Catherine**: Sonless
- *Annulment?*
- Pope refused
- New *Protestant*
Archbishop of Canterbury:
Thomas Cranmer
- Rome was no longer head
of the Church in *England*...



*Supreme Head of
Church of England*

6 Wives of Henry VIII



Mary

*Catherine
of Aragon*



Elizabeth

*Anne
Boleyn*



Edward

*Jane
Seymour*



*Anne
of Cleves*



*Kathryn
Howard*



*Katherine
Parr*



Henry VIII

Tudors



Edward VI



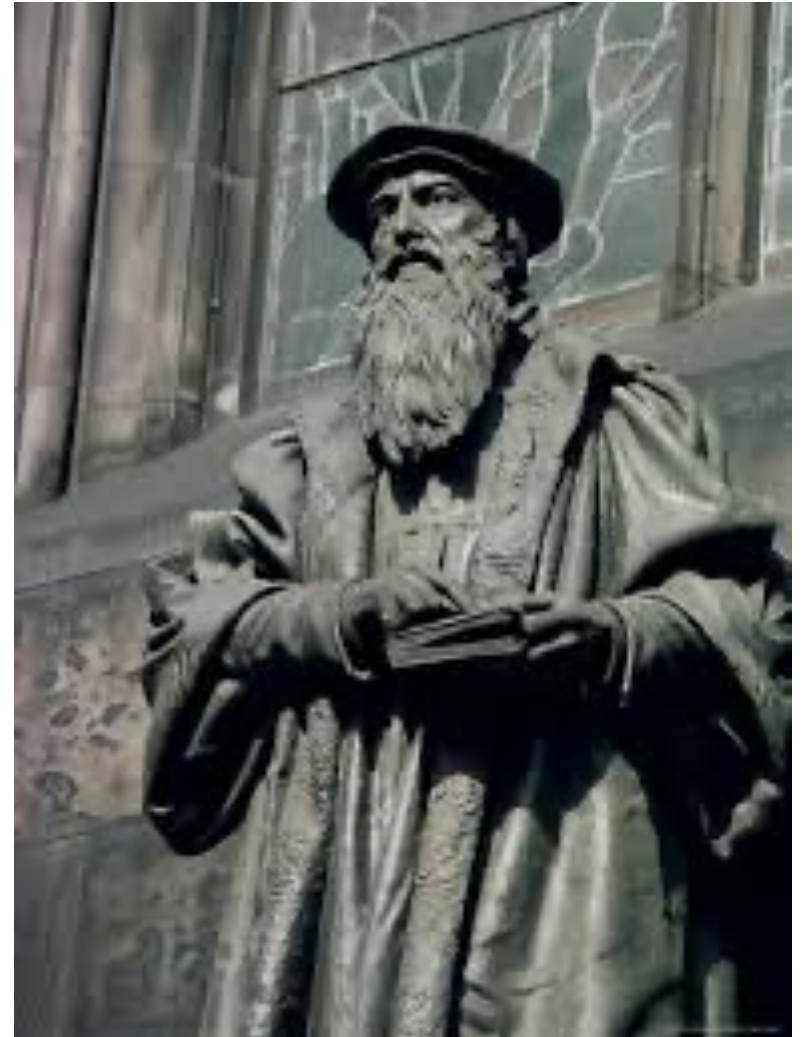
Mary I



Elizabeth I

John Knox

- “Thundering Scot”
- Universities of **Glasgow & St. Andrews**
- 1536: Priest/Bodyguard
- Wartime preacher/chaplain
- Galley slave
- Chaplain: **Edward VI**
- Exile in **Geneva, Frankfurt**
- Returns to **Edinburgh**



James I of England

- **James VI** of Scotland
- **Puritans** petitioned for change in church government
- Hampton Court Conference:
 - Refused most requests
 - Permitted a new Bible translation:
“*know God’s word w/o intermediaries*”
- Reissued *Book of Sport* –
angered the Puritans, some fled to America.



Charles I

- Absolute authority
- Forced *Book of Common Prayer* on Scots
- Appointed **Wm. Laud**:
A.B. of Canterbury
 - Arminian, pro-Catholic
 - Puritan Calvinists reacted
- Married **Henrietta Maria**
- He Abolished Parliament:
1629-1640
- Civil War: 1642-46
 - *Cavaliers* - Loyalists (Royalists)
 - *Roundheads* - Puritans (Parliamentarians)



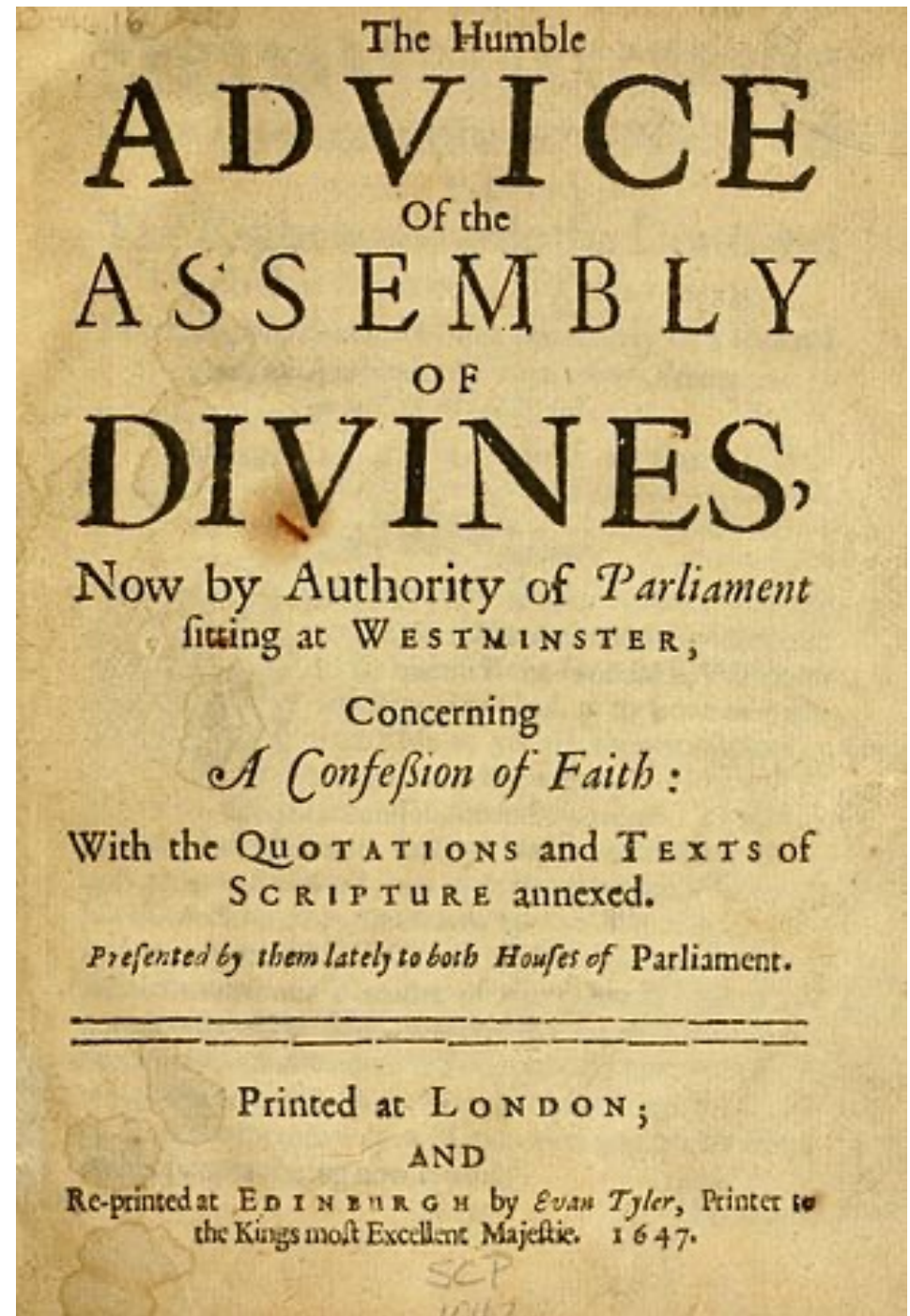
Puritan Grievances

- **Elizabeth:** Marian Exiles returned
- **James I:** a sympathetic Protestant?
- **Charles I:** married Henrietta *Maria*, Catholic
- Catholic lords given important posts
- Archbishop of Canterbury, **William Laud's**
“Roman practices”: Catholic liturgical ceremonies, clerical vestments, kneeling for Communion, sign of the Cross at baptism.

Westminster Confession

First published edition
of *Westminster
Confession of Faith*

“What is the chief end of man?”



Lady Chapel



aka: Henry VII Chapel



Oliver Cromwell

- Member of Parliament
- Head Parliamentary Army
- Lord Protector, Head of State
 - England
 - Scotland
 - Ireland



Summary

- Continental Reformed Three Forms of Unity
- Henry VIII Supreme Head of C.o.E.
- English Reformation Thomas Cranmer
Edward VI
Elizabeth I
Westminster Assembly