All members of the Church of England were nominally Protestants. From the polemics of reformers and myriad scraps of direct evidence of their beliefs, it appears that many—maybe most—of the poor laity were Protestant more by allegiance than by doctrine.

Most of the clergy and a majority of the most pious laypersons were Calvinists, at least until the later 1620s. *All Puritans were Calvinists, but not all Calvinists were Puritans.* Calvinist members of the Church who were not Puritans are sometimes called “creedal Calvinists” [Calvinists by belief only] or “conforming Calvinists.” These are unsatisfactory names, but each phrase has its uses in different contexts.

**Presbyterians** (in religion) were Puritans who wanted also to change the government of the Church, replacing the royal supremacy in practice with the rule of elders (presbyters), chosen from among the godly, lay and clerical. Their movement was initially suppressed in the 1580s by John Whitgift, the (Calvinist) Archbishop of Canterbury.

The **Separatists** were comprised of a few tiny congregations of Puritans and a handful of Anabaptists who refused conformity to the Church of England. All were Calvinists, except for the General Baptists (Arminian or Se-Baptists).