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Symposium on  
Puritanism and Progress

A CHALCEDON PUBLICATION

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## The Journal of Christian Reconstruction

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*Symposium on Puritanism and Progress*

Gary North, Editor

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A CHALCEDON MINISTRY

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# THE JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION

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This journal is dedicated to the fulfillment of the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 and 9:1—to subdue the earth to the glory of God. It is published by the Chalcedon Foundation, an independent Christian educational organization (see inside back cover). The perspective of the journal is that of orthodox Christianity. It affirms the verbal, plenary inspiration of the original manuscripts (autographs) of the Bible and the full divinity and full humanity of Jesus Christ—two natures in union (but without intermixture) in one person.

The editors are convinced that the Christian world is in need of a serious publication that bridges the gap between the newsletter-magazine and the scholarly academic journal. The editors are committed to Christian scholarship, but the journal is aimed at intelligent laymen, working pastors, and others who are interested in the reconstruction of all spheres of human existence in terms of the standards of the Old and New Testaments. It is not intended to be another outlet for professors to professors, but rather a forum for serious discussion within Christian circles.

The Marxists have been absolutely correct in their claim that theory must be united with practice, and for this reason they have been successful in their attempt to erode the foundations of the noncommunist world. The editors agree with the Marxists on this point, but instead of seeing in revolution the means of fusing theory and practice, we see the fusion in personal regeneration through God's grace in Jesus Christ and in the extension of God's kingdom. Good principles should be followed by good practice; eliminate either, and the movement falters. In the long run, it is the kingdom of God, not Marx's "kingdom of freedom," which shall reign triumphant. Christianity will emerge victorious, for only in Christ and His revelation can men find both the principles of conduct and the means of subduing the earth—the principles of Biblical law.

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# EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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*Gary North*

The idea of progress is a distinctly Hebrew-Christian concept. The belief that there was a unique beginning of time, has been a linear development of time, and will be a final judgment at the end of time, is biblical to the core. The pagan world has always held to some version of cyclical time, or as Mircea Eliade has called it, the myth of the eternal return. The centrality of this theme in pagan literature has provided Eliade with seemingly endless quantities of citations for his stream of books on comparative religion.<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Edelstein's book, *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity* (1967), hardly refutes the traditional view of ancient philosophy as being essentially pessimistic and cyclical. The most Edelstein proves is that a few of the Classical authors, such as the Roman, Pliny the Elder, told their followers not to lose hope, that things *might* continue to progress over time. His impressive command of the sources only reinforces the case for the Hebrew-Christian origins for the idea of linear, unidirectional human progress, since he could produce so few Classical sources that even vaguely hinted at the possibility of long-term linear development. The faith of Christians, especially after Augustine, in the irreversible nature of time, is one of the most important facts in human history.

This is not to say, however, that early Christianity as a whole was characterized by its defense of the idea of long-term earthly progress. One important tradition was that of the fourth-century church historian, Eusebius, whose writings were laudatory of Emperor Constantine,

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1. A partial listing of Eliade's books dealing with the idea of historical cycles and cosmic regeneration would include: *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1959); *Myth and Reality* (1963); *The Two and One* (1962); *The Sacred and the Profane* (1957); *The Forge and the Crucible: The Origins and Structures of Alchemy* (1956); *Rites and Symbols of Initiation* (1958), all published by Harper Torchbooks. See also, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958).

and who believed the Constantinian order was the beginning of the expansion of God's kingdom on earth. On the other hand, Augustine's pessimism concerning the fate of Rome led him to give up hope in linear development of earthly kingdoms. The progress we can expect is strictly spiritual; Christ's church will advance, while the kingdoms of men will rise and fall. Robert W. Hanning's book, *The Vision of History in Early Britain* (1966), contrasts these two eschatological traditions. The Eusebian position could {2} be called early postmillennialism, while Augustine's position is basically amillennial.

Luther's position was Augustinian and pessimistic concerning earthly affairs.<sup>2</sup> Calvin's was ambivalent, although Greg Bahnsen's discussion of Calvin's eschatology indicates that there were many passages in his writings that were unquestionably postmillennial.<sup>3</sup> The interpretation of Calvin as a strictly amillennial thinker, argued by Heinrich Quistorp, must be drastically qualified as a result of Bahnsen's work.<sup>4</sup>

The Puritans of the seventeenth century, especially those who came to New England, held to a "Eusebian" position, at least in the first generation (1630–60). They believed in historical progress. The call to spiritual and physical battle issued by Edward Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence of Sions Saviour in New England* (1654) was the battle cry of that first generation—confident in the coming external victory, constructing the "city on a hill" that all the world would see as the outpost of the New Heavens and the New Earth. The dynamic of history, meaning historical optimism, was supplied by postmillennial eschatology.

In an important essay on the debate between the Rev. John Cotton, the intellectual leader of the first generation in New England, and Roger Williams, the opponent of the New England civil government, Sacvan Bercovitch writes:

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2. George F. Hall, "Luther's Eschatology," *Augustana Quarterly* 23 (1944). Cf. T. F. Torrance, *Kingdom and Church* (London: S.P.C.K., 1956), chap. 2.

3. Greg L. Bahnsen, "The *Prima Facie* Acceptability of Postmillennialism," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 3, no. 2 (Winter 1976–77).

4. Heinrich Quistorp, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Last Things* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1955).

... Cotton, like Eusebius, thought himself part of a great collective endeavor. In this endeavor the New England theocrats attempted to join two seemingly incompatible doctrines: the national covenant, by which a group of men enter voluntarily into a pact with God, and the covenant of grace, by which God mysteriously determines to redeem certain individuals.... The national covenant emphasized the Lord's promise to Abraham, which materialized in the Israelite state; after the Hebrews' apostasy, the promise was renewed, this time *in aeternum*, by Christ to His church. The renewal antitypes the earlier agreement; historically, it establishes a developmental connection between two elect communities. Seen in this double aspect, the New World theocracy becomes a collection of saints whose public contract reflects the progress of human history and by the same token is mystically fore-ordained, like the covenant of grace.<sup>5</sup>

Believing in the possibility of earthly progress prior to the second coming of Christ at the final judgment, the Puritans had a perfect reason to devote {3} themselves, as individuals and as a holy commonwealth, to the reconstruction of all human institutions. In the area of charity, for example, the Puritan tradesmen and merchants of London began setting up schools, orphanages, poorhouses, hospitals, and numerous other charitable institutions. W. K. Jordan's multi-volume study of the outpouring of charity in England in the Puritan era stands as a lasting testimony to what the Puritans accomplished. Jordan was astounded at what he found—the sheer volume of giving.<sup>6</sup> The vision of Christian reconstruction was a motivating factor on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Puritans also possessed the tool of Christian reconstruction, a concept of biblical law. It was God's holy law which would provide them with the outline of the godly society, as well as the means for establishing it, they believed. The New England Puritans of the first generation were especially determined to rebuild human institutions in terms of Old Testament law. The optimism concerning the possibilities of progress on earth and the construction of a holy commonwealth

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5. Sacvan Bercovitch, "Typology in Puritan New England: The Williams-Cotton Controversy Reassessed," *American Quarterly* 19 (Summer 1967): 181–82.

6. W. K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480–1660* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1959). This is his summary volume of a multi-volume investigation. It was published in England simultaneously (George Allen & Unwin).

combined with their faith in a law-order that was in conformity to the mind of God and His creation to produce a culture that was highly favorable to social change.

Nevertheless, there was not complete agreement among all Puritans, not to mention the splintering sects in England, concerning the proper handling of natural law, revealed law, and human experience. The medieval rationalism of classical education in English universities colored the intellectual outlook of the Puritan divines. By the end of the seventeenth century, as Puritans began to abandon formal Protestant scholasticism, a new version of natural law, the mechanical-mathematical universe of Newtonian logic, was substituted for the older rationalism. This transition from “ancients to moderns” substituted new philosophical problems for the old ones. The dualism between nature and grace (autonomous reason and nonrational salvation) was steadily abandoned, only to leave Puritan thinkers facing a new dualism between nature and freedom (mechanical causation and autonomous personality).<sup>7</sup> That they did not see the threat of the new rationalism in 1700 is not surprising, but the substitution of Newtonian logic for medieval logic did not solve the pressing questions of the scope of biblical law and its applications in society.

The second generation in New England steadily abandoned both the optimistic eschatology of the first generation—shifting, more and more, from Eusebius to Augustine, or in some cases, to premillennial chiliasm—and the older generation’s confidence in the straightforward applicability of {4} biblical law. The version of biblical law imported by the first generation was deeply influenced by medieval scholastic categories, especially in the area of economics. When this medieval guild socialism proved unworkable in a series of experiments from 1630 to 1676, the second-generation preachers began to adopt more generalized criticisms of social developments in New England. Pietism began to replace the older reconstructionism of the earlier settlers, while social pessimism replaced the earlier optimism. The result was a shift in political and cultural power to the merchants and lawyers, who were the beneficiaries of the extraordinary economic growth that had been

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7. Cf. Herman Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1960), chap. 2.



produced by an ideology of expansion coupled with free (or inexpensive) land and relatively free trade. The old semi-medieval categories of social thought that the first generation had assumed were in conformity to the Old Testament's law-order could not contain the social change generated by Puritan concepts of thrift, hard work, and the subduing of the earth to the glory of God.

In England, the restoration of Charles II brought an end to the commonwealth experiment. The Puritan movement no longer could be directed along political lines. In 1688, the Glorious Revolution brought Parliament unchallenged power, and the strictly theological issues faded from the political scene. The secularization of culture began in earnest, with Arminianism (Locke) and deism coming into their own. The Puritan movement fragmented and turned inward. The vision of a Puritan holy commonwealth grew dim.

Puritanism nevertheless had left its mark on English and Western culture. The essay by **R. J. Rushdoony** shows how important the Puritan doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was for freeing the individual from both church and state hierarchies. It was the Puritan movement which developed this doctrine most fully in the seventeenth century, and the spiritual heirs of Puritanism took it several steps further. If grace is free, God is sovereign, and human conscience is free from priestly domination, then the role of the institutional church is *ministerial*, not sovereign. "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to His Word," states the Westminster Confession (chap. 20, sec. 2). This set free the priesthood. Rushdoony writes: "The new priesthood now had its priestly ordination papers in hand, the Bible, and the consequences in Britain were revolutionary." The same was true in America. This was the antithesis of the divine right of king or clergy.

It was this fear of church-state absolutism that led the colonial Americans to include the First Amendment in the Constitution—not to deny the relationship between Christian *religion* and state, but to limit the possibilities of an authoritarian ecclesiastical-state fusion. The First Amendment was a response to a religious demand, one which was Christian in character, {5} not deist. The order of political life, like all other life, would be imposed by the priests below, not the church-state

hierarchy above. The Great Awakening of the 1740s affirmed this doctrine a generation before the Constitution. Jonathan Edwards revived postmillennialism (though without returning to the idea of Old Testament law), and optimism returned to American preaching generally. “With the Great Awakening,” Rushdoony writes, “there was a growing break with civil religion. Both church and state still had to be Christian, but the key was no longer a powered establishment but a priestly people transforming institutions and society by their own regeneration and progressive sanctification.” Pietism and Neoplatonism, with their call to retreat from the evil world, eventually undermined eighteenth-century postmillennial evangelism and disarmed the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, “but not before that priesthood radically directed history.”

**Charles Dykes** takes up the question of science. Prior to the Reformation, science was burdened by medieval notions of logic, which meant Aristotelian or Platonic logic. The dualism of nature and grace separated the two realms, making it more difficult for scientists, especially experimental scientists, to pursue their work. Their work was seen as second-best, something of less value than an ecclesiastical calling. Protestantism changed all this forever. The spell of classical science, which had always been static, theoretical, and devoid of world-constructing vision, was broken by the Puritan challenge to Rome’s authority.

Puritans stressed the creation story. God is interested in this world, for He created it and sustains it. The study of His creation is the study of His providence. The totally sovereign God of Calvinism controls everything, which implies that there is an inescapable order in the creation. This order can be studied by man, who is made in God’s image. Whereas medieval Catholicism had tolerated science, the Puritans encouraged it. Dykes cites Robert Merton’s findings that a high percentage of the members of the late-seventeenth century’s Royal Society in Britain were Puritans or grew up in Puritan households.

The Puritan doctrine of the calling helped create an atmosphere favorable to scientific development. **E. L. Hebdon Taylor** calls attention to the importance of this doctrine for the development of scientific equipment, so important to modern experimental science. The calling gave new meaning and social prestige to manual workers, and these

men were instrumental, literally, in creating modern science. He, too, relies on Merton's work, and cites Merton's discovery that of the 92 foreign members elected to the Paris Academy between 1666 and 1883, 80 were Protestants. (Actually, it was first discovered by a French statistician, de Candolle, and Merton passes along his findings.)

The Puritans wanted to conquer the world. Law, including scientific {6} law, was understood to be a tool of conquest. This impulse broke down a centuries-long fatalism, Taylor argues. The earth may lawfully be developed by man for God's glory and the benefit of other men.

What undermined the Puritan impulse in science was a growing secularism. The autonomy of natural law reasserted itself in the late seventeenth century. Natural law, not the Bible, became the highest scientific court of appeal. This was tantamount to a depersonalization of the universe. It led to deism. Even the great educational reforms made by the Puritans were eventually secularized, as natural law—autonomous natural law—steadily replaced the idea of revelational law. But the foundations of modern science had been laid, not by defenders of natural law, but by those who came in the name of a personal law-giver.

The Puritans believed in the revealed word of God in His Bible. They also believed that His creation is orderly because it reveals His law-order. Men can therefore use reason and observation to create a coherent science of the external world. This scientific intellectual order serves as a tool of dominion. But what of the possibilities for success in this extension of God's kingdom? Did the Puritans have a dynamic for history? **James Payton** answers affirmatively. This dynamic outlook was based on their eschatology, what we today call postmillennialism. He then explores the sources of mid-seventeenth-century Puritan post-millennialism. First, there was the influence of Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr Vermigli, the two mid-sixteenth-century continental Calvinists who came to teach at Oxford and Cambridge. Second, there was the influence of the annotations of the Geneva Bible, which followed Bucer's exegesis of Romans 11. The Jews will be converted, and this will lead to an era of glorious triumph for all Christians. (This interpretation has been defended by such scholars as Charles Hodge, Robert Haldane, John Murray, and others who are in the "Old Princeton" Presbyterian tradition, to the dismay of amillennial Calvinists and the absolute horror of professional anti-semites who occasionally wind up

in Calvinistic churches—fortunately, a rare occurrence.) Third, the influence of William Perkins was an important factor in spreading the belief in eschatological optimism. Fourth, Thomas Brightman, Perkins’s contemporary, was widely read by Puritans in the early seventeenth century, and he was a postmillennialist. The Westminster divines (1646) and the writers of the Savoy Declaration a decade after the Westminster Assembly inserted postmillennial sections into their respective creedal formulations. The groundwork was established, by the mid-seventeenth century, for the efforts expended by the New England Puritans to create a holy commonwealth, the hoped-for first stage of an expanding earthly kingdom of God.

**Aletha Joy Gilsdorf’s** article surveys Puritan eschatology in New England in the first generation. It first appeared as chapter three of her Ph.D. {7} dissertation, “The Puritan Apocalypse: New England Eschatology in the Seventeenth Century,” written under Professor Edmund Morgan of Yale University in 1965. (The original chapter was titled, “The New England Way.”) What she demonstrates is that postmillennialism reigned almost supreme in early New England. Her carefully documented survey concludes with this observation (among several):

Thus from the very beginning, the bent of the colonists in Massachusetts Bay—unlike their brethren at Plymouth—was not to withdraw from the world but to reform it, to work within the institutional continuities of history rather than to deny them. The tremendous impulse toward purity which gave birth to New England was gratified only on the condition that the saints would not thereby cut themselves off from the historical church—manifested for them in the Church of England—or from the political power of the state. Yet, the Kingdom which they as God’s instruments were pledged to further was not temporal but spiritual. Somehow this world’s institutions had to be refashioned to conform to Christ’s spiritual Kingdom.... It is no wonder that most of their English contemporaries reacted to this intention with incredulity and charges of fanaticism, for the New England design was precisely to make visible that which they admitted was invisible.

She contrasts this view with Calvin’s, which is understandable, since in 1965 Dr. Bahnsen’s study of Calvin’s eschatology was not available, and the prevailing scholarship interpreted Calvin’s views as basically Augustinian. But her point is sound: the New England Puritans,

separated geographically from the mother country, could make the attempt to realize the postmillennial vision, in time and on earth.

What Dr. Gilsdorf shows in her essay is that the Puritan concern for the purity of the institutional church did not end with the institutional church. The early sections of her essay are devoted to a detailed exposition of the writings of Thomas Goodwin and John Cotton, specifically their expositions on the book of Revelation. She demonstrates the inseparable relationship between their understanding of the events of their day and the events foretold in Revelation. The purification of the institutional church was not understood by the Puritans as being an end in itself. This purification would, they believed, lead to a total transformation of the external culture around them. Purified theology and ecclesiastical practice would inevitably have implications for the success of the gospel in the world outside the institutional church.

Dr. Gilsdorf is a scholar. She is not a neo-Puritan, nor has she involved herself in the debates of the neo-Puritan movement. But she has dealt with a most important aspect of the neo-Puritan movement, namely, church purity. She shows that this concern for purity by the seventeenth-century Puritans was all-encompassing. Purity, in their view, could not be called to a halt at the exits of the church meeting houses. The optimistic vision {8} of New England Puritans involved the whole world, not simply a single human institution, despite its importance as God's monopoly of sacramental exclusiveness. This is the heart of the Puritan dynamic for history. They fully expected the extension of ecclesiastical purity to break the chains of anti-Christian culture just as surely as Samson burst the chains of his captors. Purity cannot be contained by the ungodly to one insignificant and supposedly shrinking aspect of society, meaning the institutional church. The Puritans, in short, were believers in comprehensive purification, not the narrow purification process of ecclesiastical reform alone.

Readers interested in following through on a study of the postmillennialism of English Puritans should consult Iain Murray's book, *The Puritan Hope* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1971), and J. A. de Jong's book, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions, 1640–1810* (Kampen, Holland: J. H. Kok, 1970). This was de Jong's doctoral dissertation at the Free University of Amsterdam, and we can all be grateful that the Free University

has the outrageous, preposterous requirement that doctoral recipients publish their dissertations, usually at their own expense. (J. H. Kok, the firm that publishes most of them, is the major beneficiary of such academic nonsense.) Once in a great while, a doctoral dissertation is worth reading, and this is one of those rare instances.

Chapter 2 of de Jong's book demonstrates how widely a mild post-millennialism suffused the Puritan movement from 1640 to 1670. He cites the eschatological writings of J. H. Alsted, the German Reformed theologian who had "an unusually great following in England in the crucial second quarter of the seventeenth century" (11), Thomas Brightman, Joseph Mede, Thomas Goodwin, John Owen, and the majority of Independents and Presbyterians, who held to at least a mild postmillennialism. John Owen, for example, "defined the kingdom of God as spiritual control of Christians which produced outward obedience and conformity to Christ." Furthermore, "In both England and America the mild hopes popularized by Owen and Cotton assumed a nationalistic dimension in conjunction with political and social developments. They were a new version of Elizabethan expectations." What was happening in New England, therefore, was only by degree more intensely theocratic and optimistic than developments in England, 1640–60.

My own contribution is an extension of the work I presented in the previous issue of the *Journal*.<sup>8</sup> When the first generation in New England began to look for economic rules, they looked to the inherited medieval framework. Medieval guild socialism was sporadically and indecisively imposed {9} on the economy, especially during times of rapid economic change, in the name of God's revealed law. This policy led to an increasing disenchantment with economic legislation generally, since the controls invariably disrupted the economy even further. Yet the old theological language was difficult to abandon, and the second generation struggled mightily to return to the earlier, purer ways of the fathers. Economic growth and social change on an unprecedented scale—the products of original Puritanism—could not be dealt with in terms of the canons of Protestant scholasticism. So a pessimism

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8. Gary North, "Medieval Economics in Puritan New England, 1630–1660," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 2 (Winter 1978–79): 153–93.

set in among the second generation, and the sermons became pietistic. The call for specific reforms in the economic sphere diminished, for Puritan preachers no longer knew what to do, specifically, about the economy, apart from prohibiting wigs (which always was ignored by everyone) and tavern frequenting. Their irrelevance in the area of economic theory was evident to everyone by the 1680s.

Simultaneously, the old postmillennialism was abandoned by most preachers—at least the majority of those who went into print on eschatological matters—leaving the Puritan system without a convincing dynamic for history. The churches could no longer command the respect that they once had in New England. With optimism gone, and faith in the inherited version of medieval economic law no longer taken seriously, the leadership of New England steadily shifted from pastors to lawyers, politicians, and merchants. A process of secularization hit New England, too.

This process of secularization must not be misunderstood. It was not that deism flooded New England. Deism never did flood the American colonies; it was, in the late eighteenth century, an intellectual position held by a tiny handful of educated religious skeptics. This secularization process was far more the product of the new faith in autonomous laws than anything else. The clergy were leaders in this movement. Cotton Mather, grandson of John Cotton, a premillennialist, a promoter of voluntary self-help societies, and the most widely published man in American colonial history, made the following statement in 1711: “The light of reason is the work of God; the law of reason is the law of God; the voice of reason is the voice of God.”<sup>9</sup> His book, *The Christian Philosopher* (1721), was a defense of the Newtonian science of astronomy, in which he cited experts on the fact that there is life on other planets and their satellites, and that the speed of light is anywhere between 9,000 miles per second and 130,000 miles per second.<sup>10</sup> With the clergy taking the lead in the rationalization of intellectual categories, it became difficult for them to defend a uniquely Christian reconstruction and development of social institutions. As Clifford K.

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9. Cited by Josephine K. Percy, “Introduction,” Cotton Mather, *The Christian Philosopher* (Gainesville, FL: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, [1721] 1968), v.

10. *Ibid.*, 20.

Shipton concludes, “The most striking social phenomena of these {10} years [1680–1740] is the decline of clerical authority and of the relative importance of religion in New England life.”<sup>11</sup> It was out of this decline that the Great Awakening emerged.

An anonymous critic supplies insight into the nature of some of the objections raised verbally by several “reprinting neo-Puritans,” though we hope not all of them. The commitment of the *Journal* to the social ethic of Puritanism, meaning the broad sweep of applied Puritan theology outside the sanctuary, has alienated at least one of those who claim to be devout followers of Puritan theology. The *Journal* has called attention to this neglected aspect of Puritan thought—neglected, at least, by the “reprinting neo-Puritans”—and has pointed to the continuing responsibility of contemporary Christians to follow through on the Puritan social heritage, not just in the pulpit, but outside the institutional church. Our critic has made it clear just how demonic he thinks the *Journal’s* perspective is.

**Judy Ishkanian** presents a well-rounded biography of Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the Puritan forces against the tyranny of the English church and state in the mid-seventeenth century. This two-decade period literally changed Western civilization, and it was Cromwell, above all, who was instrumental in changing it. His unquestioned commitment to Puritan theology presents a problem for neo-Puritans of today’s sanctuary, just as it did for Puritans of the sanctuary in his own day. He compelled them to take part in the central historical events of their day—a role not always relished by those seeking the protection of officially ordained social neutrality. He took Puritan theology outside the narrow confines of the institutional church, forcing men to choose sides. He chose to deal with inescapable social and political issues in terms of Puritan theology, and that theology, then as now, is a theology of social relevance. Ishkanian writes:

As the Civil War progressed, the Independents were to be found as well represented on the battlefields as the Presbyterians were in Parliament. However others might view the challenge of war, the Puritans did, with one heart, regard it as a signal from God that at last He was

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11. Clifford K. Shipton, “The New England Clergy of the ‘Glacial Age,’” *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* (1937), 46.



going to advance His kingdom on earth. The Lord was calling His own servants into battle to subdue and overcome the Antichrist, whom Puritans on both sides of the Atlantic believed was either Charles I or Archbishop Laud. At last, the great war of faith raging on the continent (the Thirty Years War), which they had viewed from afar for so many years, was coming to English soil. Whatever the commitment of others, there was no hesitation on the part of the Puritans, with Cromwell resolutely in their number, to answer the momentous opportunity that God was providing His own elect to bring righteous government to England.

Those who would have preferred to avoid such open choices in life {11} no doubt resented Cromwell. Certainly in our own day many of those who claim to be the representatives of the Puritan tradition have systematically neglected mentioning Cromwell, the choices he made, and the stands that he believed he was compelled to take. One might conclude that Cromwell never existed, or that men like John Owen never came to his defense, or that virtually the whole of the Puritan movement never backed him. This man of action had too many flaws, made too many mistakes, and took too many controversial stands to bring comfort to those who claim to be today's Puritans.

Ishkanian's study reveals Cromwell as a military genius. His cavalry tactics revolutionized warfare in his day. His ability to command men in battle time and again baffled his opponents, including "no-win" generals in Parliament's army. Those who have no taste for victory seldom make good commanders. Cromwell expected victory, planned for victory, and finally attained victory on the military battlefield.

A revolution is not a pleasant series of events. The issues of any era are never easy to sort out, and Cromwell made decisions in the face of shifting alliances and momentous problems that tenderhearted inheritors of his efforts may today blush about. Like other brilliant generals in history, his political leadership left much to be desired. Still, it was a time of chaos throughout Europe. He did not conduct the purges that the continent came to expect, and which are basic to the revolutions of secular humanism, from France in the 1790s to the Soviet, Chinese, and Cambodian bloodbaths in our century. He acted like a general, tolerating sometimes only limited opposition. But successful revolutions are seldom led by the fainthearted. They only write the histories once the dust is settled and the risks are over.

Oliver Cromwell lived in a century in which religious issues were clearly political issues, in which men went into battle believing that God was on their side. It was a century in which secular humanism, the dominant religion of our era, was unthinkable, when the cry of “religious neutrality” was as inconceivable as “ideological neutrality” is in our day. Rulers in the seventeenth century, like rulers in every era, did not know how to reconcile completely the need for freedom and the need for law and order. Every social order requires religious first principles to undergird it, and an attempt to suppress rival religious first principles sometimes necessitates the use of force if the law-order is not to disintegrate into anarchy. What those of Cromwell’s era recognized for the most part, and which Christians often refuse to recognize today, is that there can be no neutral law-order, and that any attempt to create one is a snare and a delusion, and plays directly into the incompetent, rebellious hands of the secular humanists, who come to us in the name of zero religion, zero respect for the God of history, and zero respect for biblical law. They are aided in {12} their efforts by those who claim allegiance to the God of history, but who reject the idea that such a God prescribes a unique law-order, the enforcement of which He commands throughout history.

What we need are reprints of Puritan sermons before Parliaments and armies. What we need are reprints of Puritan sermons preached in the heat of battle, in the very midst of the battlefields, both military and political. Such sermons exist in the archives. Without them, we will never understand Oliver Cromwell and his supporters, the Puritans.

If someone in the camp of the “reprinting neo-Puritans” should protest against our charge of “pietistic selectivity” in the choice of which Puritan works to reprint (and more important, *not* to reprint), he might be wise to consider an announcement that appeared in the book notices section of the May 1970 issue of the *Banner of Truth*. The Cornmarket Press proposed the publication of up to 1,000 volumes of Puritan sermons, tracts, and other materials, with the set to begin with the Fast Day sermons preached before Parliament, 1640–53. These sermons alone were expected to fill thirty-five volumes. Needless to say, there is a lot of material yet to be reprinted, not to mention absorbed and reconsidered, by those in the business of reprinting the works of the Puritans—*representative* Puritans. (The expenses, of course, are

horrendous; only one volume of the set promised by Cornmarket Press ever appeared. But let us not take seriously the lame reply of any “reprinting neo-Puritan,” who asks rhetorically: “But what else could we have published?” Lots, brother, *lots!*)

A study of Puritanism's history helps us to recognize a truth understood by Cromwell, a truth built into the creation itself: *it is God's law or chaos*. The line has been drawn by God. There are those in the camp of the faithful who have chosen to blindfold themselves in the hope that their blindfolds will erase this line and permit them to retreat in comfort to the sanctuary. It cannot work. Blindfolds only make men stumble. The line remains intact.

One of the lines which history has drawn is the line between Puritan social theory and its rivals. Cromwell and his followers realized that the affairs of life cannot be relegated to the hypothetical realm of the *adiaphora*, the “things indifferent” to religion. Modern Christianity has wound up baptizing a seemingly endless string of secular humanist fads in the name of “relevance” or “concern,” or “compassion.” To hold a position that almost anything secular humanists dream up for social and economic policy is somehow acceptable in the eyes of God—as acceptable as any other alternative—is to assert that almost nothing is fundamentally wrong with the world outside the institutional church. To believe, on the other hand, that something—indeed, practically everything—is wrong in society at large implies a belief that there are biblical alternatives that are morally correct and therefore socially mandatory. This, of course, is a categorical {13} denial of the tenets of Anabaptistic, pietistic antinomianism—an intellectual position unfortunately adopted by too many of those within the “reprinting neo-Puritan” movement. Some of the Calvinistic neo-Anabaptists have recognized the accuracy of the *Journal's* presentation of Puritanism's social heritage, and they have outspokenly abandoned that tradition. Furthermore, they have called on their socially antinomian brethren within the “reprinting neo-Puritan” movement to follow them in their rejection of that social heritage.<sup>12</sup>

These Calvinistic neo-Anabaptist critics have a point. They understand how central Cromwell was to the Puritan movement of the Civil War period in England. How, then, can modern neo-Puritans ignore Cromwell's contributions? One of them, contrary to the emphasis of

the neo-Anabaptists, was religious toleration for all churches except the Anglicans (because of their political threat to Puritan rule) and the Roman Catholics. As Michael Boland pointed out in his 1961 *Banner of Truth* essay: “He was unflinchingly opposed to religious persecution and has justly been acclaimed as the champion of liberty of conscience.” And Boland accurately assesses the political alternative against which Cromwell and the Puritans revolted: “Episcopalian tyranny.”<sup>13</sup> Those who call themselves neo-Puritans should not flinch from an enthusiastic support of Cromwell’s heritage. They should be willing to affirm with Boland:

We who love the name and the religion of the Puritans should thank the God of history that at such a time he raised up, in Cromwell, a man of transparent spirituality and practical wisdom. Had he not done so, the wrath of man would almost certainly have wrought political anarchy and religious strife. Such an outcome would have left an ineradicable blot against the name of Puritanism and the Gospel.<sup>14</sup>

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12. See, for example, John Zens, “More of Cromwell, Less of Gurnall,” *Baptist Reformation Review* 8 (1st quarter, 1979). Address: P.O. Box 40161, Nashville, TN 37024. Mr. Zens and his colleagues have revived one aspect of the Anabaptist movement, namely, a refusal to get involved in social and political issues by advocating the enforcement of biblical law by the civil government. They neglect the more familiar heritage of anabaptism, namely, the revolutionary movements that swept over Europe in the name of a new antinomian (and then tyrannical) kingdom of God on earth. To see where Anabaptist principles can lead, once men decide that it is impossible to remain neutral in a world in which all social, economic, and political policies are inevitably enacted in terms of religious principles, take a look at the pro-socialist, pro-liberation theology Anabaptist journal, the *Other Side*, especially the issues dealing with “economic exploitation”: Jan.–Feb. 1976 and March–April 1976. Address: P.O. Box 158, Savannah, OH 44874. Modern Anabaptists cannot stay neutral forever in social and political affairs. *Their refusal to baptize anything is ultimately a willingness to baptize everything*, but eventually they must pick and choose which social policies they wind up baptizing. Where they are not guided by biblical law, they baptize the policies drawn up by secular humanists.

13. Michael Boland, “Oliver Cromwell—The Puritan,” *Banner of Truth*, no. 23 (February 1961): 25.

14. *Ibid.*, 29.

**1.**  
**SYMPOSIUM ON**  
**PURITANISM**  
**AND PROGRESS**

# THE PURITAN DOCTRINE OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

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*Rousas John Rushdoony*

Despite a large number of important studies, the importance of the Puritans, and the Puritan premises in history, are far from adequately explored, or likely to be, because the Puritan story is as yet a far from finished one. While Augustinian and Calvinistic, the Puritans differed markedly from continental Reformed churches and were thus, while Reformed, not to be identified with the Reformed cause as a whole. They were clearly a separate movement, although having deep roots in Calvinism. Again, while Puritanism was not only a Protestant movement but a major force therein, its medieval and catholic roots were also strong. Its temper was hostile to the centralism of both Rome and Protestantism and more akin to feudalism and decentralization. American federalism is a descendant of medieval feudalism. Although not many have agreed (or pursued the subject), Thomas Cuming Hall saw Puritanism as a continuation of the work of John Wyclif and the Lollards.<sup>15</sup> If true, this means that the pre-Reformation roots of Puritanism are deeper than normally held to be.

To understand Puritanism, it is important to recognize the role of a key doctrine in shaping the Puritan mentality. It should be noted that Puritan doctrines agreed in the essentials of soteriology (salvation) and theology with Calvin and Luther. It was a difference of emphasis which produced differing results in the Christian life. Thus, Luther wrote, of the priesthood of all believers, in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*:

As many of us as have been baptized are all priests without distinction.... For thus it is written in I Peter ii, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and a priestly kingdom." Therefore we are all priests, as many of us as are Christians. But the priests, as we call them, are

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15. Thomas Cuming Hall, *The Religious Background of American Culture*

ministers chosen from among us, who do all that they do in our name. And the priesthood is nothing but a ministry, as we learn from I Corinthians iv, "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."<sup>16</sup>

Luther indeed has a central role in the formulation of this doctrine, but, in the practical realm, Lutherans are about as docile in relation to their clergy as Catholics are. Calvin also set forth this same doctrine clearly and {15} strongly, but with about the same results. Some Reformed churches are almost as "priest-ridden" as their Catholic neighbors. Clearly, we have a problem here: a great Biblical doctrine is revived, but its practical consequences are none too great. Great differences mark Rome from Geneva and Wittenberg, but the priestly role of the laity is not one of them. This does not mean that the doctrine was without consequence. The priestly role of the believer as head of his household gained strong emphasis in both Lutheran and Calvinist circles, but *not* within the church as an *institution*. The reason appears in Calvin's reference to the doctrine in the *Institutes*:

For we, who are polluted in ourselves, being "made priests" (Rev. 1:6) in him, offer ourselves and all our services to God, and enter boldly into the heavenly sanctuary, so that the sacrifices of prayers and praise, which proceed from us, are "acceptable," and "a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2) in the Divine presence. This is included in the declaration of Christ, "For their sakes I sanctify myself"; (John 17:19) for being arrayed in his holiness, he having dedicated us, together with himself, to the Father, we, who are otherwise offensive in his sight, become acceptable to him, as pure, unpolluted, and holy. This is the meaning of the "anointing of the Most Holy," (Dan. 9:24) which is mentioned in Daniel. For we must observe the contrast between this unction and that shadowy unction which was then in use; as though the angel had said that the shadows would be dissipated, and that there would be a real priesthood in the person of Christ. So much the more detestable is the invention of those, who, not content with the priesthood of Christ, have presumed to take upon themselves the office of sacrificing him; which is daily attempted among the Papists, where the mass is considered as an immolation of Christ.<sup>17</sup>

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*A Compend of Luther's Theology*

*Institutes of the Christian Religion*

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The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was of central importance to the Reformers in attacking the validity of Rome's doctrine of the priesthood. The *only* earthly priesthood after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension is the priesthood of all believers; the church is led by a ministry, but it is a *congregation of royal priests*. The practical import for the institutional church or Christian synagogue of that congregational priesthood was not explored. Furthermore, the relationship of that priesthood to the soteriology of the Reformation was not explored. This link Puritanism has made. If grace is sovereign and free, then what happens to the church, its authority, and its traditions? If grace is sovereign, how then can priest, prelate, or king lord it over man? We should not forget the connections, in 1381, of the Peasants Revolt with Lollardy. Then or later the slogan was born,

Who was then the gentleman? {16}

The Lollards had stressed strong personal devotions, the study of and meditation on the Bible, and a high standard of sexual morality. They refused to leave such things as doctrine to a priestly class. Thomas Hoccleve wrote against this Lollard perspective thus:

Hit is unkyndly for a knight  
That shuld a kynges castel kepe  
To babble the Bibel day and night  
In restyng time when he shuld slepe.<sup>18</sup>

Lollardy threatened society with a break-up of the old order. If knights and commoners became Bible readers and babblers, then what would happen to authority? Lollardy was seen as a disruptive force, and, later, Puritanism was viewed similarly. True, many Puritans feared their own doctrine. New England's Puritan hierarchy wanted the people to be a silent democracy within church and state alike, but, in spite of their inconsistency at this point, they did see the saints, in civil and ecclesiastical government, as a royal priesthood and democracy.

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18. Gervase Mathew, *The Court of Richard II* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), 149.



Cyril Eastwood has very ably summarized the “three great principles” of Puritanism which “have their origin in the doctrine of the Priesthood of all Believers.” These three principles are:

- (a) That God’s free grace, mediated by the soul’s faith in Christ, is the essential root of human salvation.
- (b) That God’s will, revealed in His written Word and interpreted by His living Spirit, is the supreme law for human conduct both in the sphere of the Church and the world.
- (c) That the conscience must be free from merely human dictation and above all, from the enslaving rule of the priest.<sup>19</sup>

Note that Eastwood sees *the* source of these doctrines in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. If God is sovereign, then man is not, and authority in church and state is ministerial, not sovereign. If God is sovereign, then grace is free and sovereign grace, and kings, priests, knights, and gentlemen give way to God’s royal priesthood. Then, too, the governing principle is not in man but in God and in God’s law-word. Accordingly, no man can bind the conscience, because God alone is the lord of the conscience.

Thus, both liberty *and* conscience are to be defined, as are all things, by God and His word. The Westminster Confession of Faith, in chapter 20, “Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience,” declares, in words clearly reflecting the Puritan faith:

1. The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the {17} gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God and their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law; but under the New Testament the liberty of Christians is further enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected; and to greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller commu-

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19. Cyril Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers: An Examination of the Doctrine from the Reformation to the Present Day* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, [1960] 1962), 141.

nications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

3. They who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, do practice any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

4. And because the power which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretense of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as, either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church, and by the power of the Civil Magistrate.

This amazing statement is all the more impressive when we realize that, even as Luther was upset by the Peasants' Revolt, so too the Westminster divines were deeply concerned over the rising spirit of resistance, civil disobedience, and civil conflict. Section 4 of chapter 20 reflects this concern. Thus, on May 1, 1646, Daniel Cawdry preached to his fellow divines on 1 Timothy 1:19. He spoke with grief of the divisions and dissensions in the Church of England: "It is a sad observation that the professing part of the Church of England has been like a fair looking glass, all of one piece, only one image to be seen in it; but now, look at it, all {18} in pieces." There was an irresponsible demand for liberty on all sides, and

the common bait that catcheth is Antinomianism; the Anabaptist asks for liberty from the magistrate, from any superior ecclesiastical power, from the Sabbath; the Brownist seeks liberty from classes (i.e., presbyteries), from superior power, and wants everyone to have a vote (in the congregation); the Seeker, who has lost all his religion, claims a toleration of all religion, and calls it liberty of conscience.<sup>20</sup>

In spite of their fears of irresponsible liberty, or antinomian freedom, the divines all the same set forth the radical demands and freedom of man's conscience when informed by God's word and Spirit. We cannot understand the role of conscience in the Westminster theology apart from its doctrine of Scripture. It is popular now with the skeptics to call the Westminster Standards, and especially its view of infallibility, scholastic. Such a statement says nothing about the Westminster Standards and much about the person making it. The Westminster Standards placed God and His inscriptured word above man and his institutions, so that church and state were now alike under God and His word. Such a doctrine of the infallible and governing law-word of God *requires* liberty of conscience. Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer had chosen Scripture over the church. The logical step was now taken: "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word..."

Thus, the Westminster Confession did not talk about the priesthood of all believers; instead, it set free that priesthood in terms of its charter, the Bible, faithfully interpreted in terms of itself and the Spirit of God. The new priesthood now had its priestly ordination papers in hand, the Bible, and the consequences in Britain were revolutionary. Later, in America, the new priesthood found greater freedom to realize itself, especially after the adoption of the U.S. Constitution. The multitude of differing churches on the American scene is a product of this doctrine, as is the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Moreover, the Westminster Assembly's stand on liberty of conscience made it very clear that it was anti-liberty when things are contrary to the word of God, "to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty or conscience;

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20. S. W. Carruthers, *The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1943), 71–72.

and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.”

Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye, in their introduction to John Cotton's *The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven* (1644), wrote:

In those former darker times, this golden ball was thrown up by the clergy (so called) alone to run for among themselves.... This {19} royal donation, bestowed by Christ upon his Church, was taken up and placed in so high thrones of bishops, popes, general councils, &c... in so great a remoteness from the people that the least right or interest therein was not so much as suspected to belong to them. But ... it hath now in these our days been brought so near unto the people, that they also have begun to plead and sue for a portion and legacy bequeathed them in it. The Saints (in these knowing times) finding that the key of knowledge hath so far opened their hearts that they see with their own eyes into the substantial of godliness, and that, through the instruction and guidance of their teachers, they are enabled to understand for themselves such other things as they are to join in the practice of, they do therefore further (many of them) begin more to suspect that some share in the key of power should likewise appertain unto them.<sup>21</sup>

These are startling words, against the backdrop of continental royal absolutism and the divine right of kings in politics, and the power of the clergy in churches. That whole world of power and authority is seen as already a part of the past, as “former darker times.” The priesthood of all believers even refers to “the clergy (so called)”! “The key of power” is now to be shared by the priesthood of all believers.

In the American Colonies, the Puritan clergy held strongly to the doctrine, but were still fearful of the people's priesthood. With the Great Awakening, Isaac Backus, the real and effective founder of the Baptist movement in America, made the doctrine basic to the Baptist churches. He held that “the common people claim as good a right to judge and act for themselves in matters of religion as civil rulers or the learned clergy.”<sup>22</sup> The key to the Baptist position for Backus was the

21. A. S. P. Woodhouse, ed., *Puritanism and Liberty, Being the Army Debates (1647–49) from the Clarke Manuscripts with Supplementary Documents* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1938), 293.

22. William G. McLoughlin, ed., *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism, Pamphlets, 1754, 1789* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), 37.

priesthood of all believers. “If we cannot know certainly that the Bible is true without understanding of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin ... then, alas, we are in a woeful case indeed.” Men would then be the prey of the cunning of learned priests and Arminians. “It is the privilege of God’s people to have the divine Spirit given to them to seal his truth in their hearts.”<sup>23</sup>

Significantly, Backus looked at the Westminster Standards for support; that Confession’s view of Scripture and the Spirit made possible his view of the priesthood of all believers:

For though I have heard many (both ministers and others) assert that without the knowledge of the original tongues a man could not know whether he preached truth or falsehood, yet I shall not only assert, but prove, that every saint now has the same way to know the truth {20} and certainty of God’s Word that his people had of old, without which all the learning in this world will never bring any man to know certainly the truth of the Scriptures.

Christ told his disciples that *the Spirit of Truth would guide them into all truth, John xvi, 13...* The way that the *Thessalonians knew and received the Gospel not as the word of man but (as it is in truth) the Word of God was by its coming to them in power, and in the HOLY GHOST, and in much assurance, 1 Thess. 2:13 and 1:5; 1 Cor. 2:2, 4, 11–14.*

This is the only way by which God’s people in every age have known the truth and certainty of his Word which hath been given in to by Protestants in general both at home and abroad since the Reformation. The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, after mentioning sundry arguments that may induce us to believe the Scriptures, say, “Yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts,” chap. 1, sect. 5.<sup>24</sup>

Scripture, Backus pointed out, declares that believers are kings as well as priests.<sup>25</sup> In *A Fish Caught in his Own Net* (Boston, 1768), Backus pressed home the implications of this faith:

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23. *Ibid.*, 30, 103–4.

24. *Ibid.*, 102–3. From “A Discourse Showing the Nature and Necessity of an Internal Call to Preach the Everlasting Gospel,” Boston, 1754.

25. *Ibid.*, 156.

Now if each saint is *complete* in him which is the *Head* of all *wisdom* and *power*, then they have no need of *philosophers* to see for them, nor of *princes* to give them *power* to act for God, but they freely *confess* with their *mouths* what they believe in their *hearts*, and so their *hearts* are *comforted*, *being knit together in love*, and are *built up together as they have been taught*. And as those saints had received the substance of what was shadowed forth in *circumcision*, and had declared in their *baptism* that they were *dead* to the *body of sin* and to the worship of the worldly sanctuary, the apostle says, Whereof if ye be *dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world*, why as though *living in the world* are ye subject to ordinances after the *commandments and doctrines of men*. Which things indeed have a *show of wisdom and humility*.<sup>26</sup>

Does such a doctrine lead to disorders? On the contrary, Backus held, it is the denial of the priesthood of all believers which leads to what in the sight of God are the true disorders, a trust in the wisdom of men and the suppression of God's working through His word and Spirit:

Thus the Son of God plainly held forth the right which common people ever have to judge both of the *doctrine* and *conduct of teachers*, and the *meeke he will guide in judgment* while those who receive not the *love of truth* but have *pleasure in unrighteousness* are constantly exposed to be given over to *strong delusions*. This being the *order* of Christ's kingdom, hence see what a *disorder* it makes when common {21} Christians are denied the free liberty of examining their teachers and of acting according to their judgments in the affair; and also that 'tis a great *disorder* to condemn and reproach any teachers, only because they are not owned by *rulers* or *learned ministers*, for by this very rule our glorious Lord was condemned as a *deceiver* and his followers stigmatized as *ignorant, cursed people* by men who were as famous in the world's esteem, for *learning, devotion, and order*, as any in our day (John vii, 47–49). Nor is the *disorder* less on the other hand when any under a pretence of *special teachings* and *divine influence* crowd their improvements upon those who are not edified thereby, and plead their right to do so because they see further than others who they say can't discern where they are, though (it may be) serious Christians *do see* them at the same time conduct in a *flesh-pleasing* way and even not providing things *honest in the sight of men*.<sup>27</sup>

26. *Ibid.*, 273.

27. *Ibid.*, 281.

Prior to the adoption of the U.S. Constitution and the First Amendment, there had been very real fears for the future of an independent Christianity in America. Bridenbaugh has shown that fear of the establishment of the Church of England as the colonial state church, with an American bishop, was a factor leading to American independence.<sup>28</sup>

It is surprising, therefore, that the religious sentiment concerning the new republic has been so greatly misunderstood. The new federal government, from Washington through Buchanan, had very limited powers. A minor bureaucrat in Washington, D.C., today exercises more power than presidents once did. Federal, state, and county governments only rarely touched the life of the people. Hatch believes that somehow theology moved in a few years from the church to the civil order, and the result was a belief in what he calls a civil millennialism.<sup>29</sup> His thesis is a popular one, and a substantial body of writings castigate “America’s civil religion.”<sup>30</sup>

There are, however, certain serious weaknesses in this argument. Let us take Hatch as an example, because his thesis is heavily documented with source materials, unlike others. Hatch sees a shift from a theological to a political or civil perspective which led eschatology to shift to the concept of a “civil millennialism.” Hatch’s knowledge of the sources is excellent; his appraisal of them is another matter. A key problem is that millennialism can mean a variety of things. It can mean not only postmillennialism, premillennialism, and amillennialism, but also a variety of other concepts which can include everything from the English seventeenth-century Fifth Monarchy {22} men to Mormonism and Seventh-day Adventism. The millennialism Hatch is concerned with is the revised postmillennialism of Jonathan Edwards and his successors. He is not as extravagant as some, who have tried to see as *one* such very different and even hostile concepts as postmillennialism, civil religion, manifest destiny, continentalism, imperialism, America’s

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28. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre, Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689–1775* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

29. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause, of Liberty, Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977).

30. See Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, eds., *America’s Civil Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1944).

mission, and the like. Some clarification of these concepts is possible in Merk's study.<sup>31</sup> Tuveson and Cherry give us confusion.<sup>32</sup>

For Hatch, Edwards's postmillennialism supposedly underwent a change in the hands of his successors to become civil millennialism. Let us remember, however, that Edwards, in *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England*, has a section on "The latter-day glory, is probably to begin in America" (part 2, sec. 2). Indeed, Cherry used portions of this to place Edwards in the whole tradition of civil millenarians, whereas Hatch exempts him, because the method for Edwards was for him exclusively revivalism. Let us see first what Edwards had to say:

It is not unlikely that this work of God's Spirit, so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or, at least, a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which, in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind.... And there are many things that make it probable that this work will begin in *America*....

It is agreeable to God's manner, when he accomplishes any glorious work in the world, in order to introduce a new and more excellent state of his church, to begin where no foundation had been already laid, that the power of God might be the more conspicuous; that the work might appear to be entirely God's, and be more manifestly a creation out of nothing; agreeable to Hos. 1:10. "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." When God is about to turn the earth into a paradise, he does not begin his work where there is some good growth already, but in the wilderness, where nothing grows, and nothing is to be seen but dry sand and barren rocks; that the light may shine out of darkness, the world be replenished from emptiness, and the earth watered by springs from a drougthy desert; agreeable to many prophecies of Scripture, as Isa. 32:15.

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31. Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

32. See Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), and *Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background of the Idea of Progress* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1972). See also Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of America's Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971).



“Until the Spirit be poured from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field.” And chap. 41:18–19. “I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and {23} oil-tree: I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together.” And chap. 43:20. “I will give water in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.” And many other parallel scriptures might be mentioned. Now as, when God is about to do some great work for his church, his manner is to begin at the lower end; so, when he is about to renew the whole habitable earth, it is probable that he will begin in this utmost, meanest, youngest, and weakest part of it, where the church of God has been planted last of all; and so the first shall be last, and the last first; and that will be fulfilled in an eminent manner in Isa. 24:19. “From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous.”<sup>33</sup>

Revivalism and evangelism were indeed basic to what Edwards saw as the means to this fulfillment, and revivalism and evangelism remained as basic to the American scene. But we fail to understand the particular importance of evangelism to America if we think of it apart from the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. The Great Awakening, in fact, aroused more than a little hostility and distress because the laity now began to make religion their concern. They judged their pastors, civil authorities, and professors in terms of the requirement that *every man* manifest grace and the workings of the Lord in his life. No longer was it the duty of the laity merely to listen silently and obey: they were now an aggressive priesthood. There were indeed disorders, but there was now a nonecclesiastical Christianity abroad. Insubordination motivated by religion, once the exception, now became commonplace. The famous episode of David Brainerd’s expulsion from Yale is illustrative of this. When Brainerd was asked his opinion of a tutor, Whittesley, Brainerd replied, “He has no more grace than this chair.” When Brainerd declined to retract his statement, he was expelled. The point of the Great Awakening was that the Holy Spirit was now at work among the people of God. This had repercussions in every area of life. This meant that the people now were God’s instruments in church and

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33. *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, [1834] 1974), 381–82.

state: it meant “power to the people,” republicanism, and a strong stress on the necessity of virtue on the part of the people. As Samuel Cooper declared in a sermon of 1780, cited by Hatch, “Virtue is the spirit of a Republic; for where all power is derived from the people, all depends on their good disposition.”<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, what these Christian leaders, whom Hatch accuses of civil millenarianism, celebrated in America was not America as such, or the state, but the *freedom* from the state control of religion common to Europe, the freedom of the Christian man *from* church and state into his priesthood in every realm. The fear of a state church establishment imposed by the crown gave way to the freedom for Christianity spelled out by the First {24} Amendment. The First Amendment was adopted in response to a *religious* demand: there was a fear of any church-state connection.<sup>35</sup> Whereas in Europe the church-state connection was strong, and the priestly role of the believer nonexistent, minor, or suppressed, in the new United States it was now free to manifest itself. This fact alone was commonly seen as a major step towards Christ’s kingdom. Because of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, the hope of society was seen not in an established order imposed from above, but as an order created by the priests below. Presbyterian Samuel Miller, in *Christianity the Grand Source, and the Surest Basis, of Political Liberty* (1793), declared:

The truth is, that political liberty does not rest, solely, on the form of government, under which a nation may happen to live.... Human laws are too imperfect themselves, to secure completely this inestimable blessing. It must have its seat in the hearts and dispositions of those individuals which compose the body politic; and it is with the hearts and dispositions of men that Christianity is conversant. When, therefore, that *perfect law of liberty*, which this holy religion includes, prevails and governs in the minds of all, their freedom rests upon a basis more solid and immoveable, than human wisdom can devise.<sup>36</sup>

Men who had recently feared the imposition of bishops and an English establishment were thus rejoicing that the new civil order represented

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34. Hatch, *Sacred Cause*, 105.

35. See Robert Allen Rutland, *The Birth of the Bill of Rights, 1776–1791* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 127.

36. *Ibid.*, 110n.

an *absence* rather than a power, and because now true revival could do its work. John Murray, in *Nehemiah, or the Struggle for Liberty Never in Vain* (1779), saw the glorious future in terms of the rule of God's law, or Biblical law, in the state, and the rule of faith and obedience in the hearts of the people. In brief, he stated the classic position of postmillennialism, no new doctrine as Hatch seems to think. Murray declared:

... the security of the body is the government's charge—that can never be had where the reins are laid on the neck of men's lusts, and immoralities are under no public restraint—the system of laws that affixes no penalty to theft, adultery, murder, and the like enormities, is, justly regarded as designedly opening the widest door for undoing the State: nor is it easy to say why those should be punished whilst blasphemy and profaning the name of God—whilst public mockery of his word, his day and his worship, enjoy the sanction of a public license; and for ought that appears, may plead the shelter of legal establishment. It is hard to investigate any ingredient in the acts restrained more truly pernicious, than is the whole nature of those that go free, unless we conclude that the first table of God's law is not as binding and authoritative as the second—or that obedience to the one exculpates the breacher of the other, or that killing the body is a greater crime than {25} destroying the soul; or in a word, that every member may be ruined and the community safe.<sup>37</sup>

Because Christianity sets forth a sovereign God who claims jurisdiction over every area of life, including the civil, it is necessary for the believer to assert the sovereign crown rights of Christ the King over church, state, and every other realm. The so-called civil millenarians were simply Christians rejoicing in a great step forward in the history of the faith as they saw it, the freedom of the church and state from controls of either one by the other, and the freedom of the Christian man to discharge his priestly, royal, and prophetic offices.

Not surprisingly, one of the consequences of the new republic was the rapid growth of two groups, the Methodists and the Baptists, both of whom in those days placed great stress on the priestly role of the laity. Methodism then had a strongly lay basis; as Bishop William T. Watkins observed in 1947, "For Methodism there was no rabble."<sup>38</sup> Even more, the Baptists became *the* American church. While Baptists

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37. *Ibid.*, 115f.

can be criticized for their neglect of the doctrine of the covenant and like matters, it must be recognized that, in their development of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, they have been uniquely a representation of a key aspect of the Reformation.

Moreover, in every area of life, this priestly power has been manifested. The characteristic American initiative in education (especially now in the Christian school movement), in economics, science, inventiveness, farming, and in other areas has roots in the Great Awakening and the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

Revivalism and evangelism are American phenomena to a great degree, although not lacking in Britain also, and now elsewhere, as a result of missionary influences. Both for Rome and Geneva, and certainly for Wittenberg, Reformation and counter-Reformation were *civil* concerns; we can indeed speak of civil religion and civil millenarianism when we describe Europe's old order. The future of Christianity and of civil government was seen as requiring the imposition from above of a particular form of civil religion.

With the Great Awakening, there was a growing break with civil religion. Both church and state still had to be Christian, but the key was no longer a powered establishment but a priestly people transforming institutions and society by their own regeneration and progressive sanctification. Earlier, Pietism had called for withdrawal from an evil world. Pietism and Neoplatonism were later to infect and disarm the Puritan concepts of {26} the priesthood of all believers and postmillennialism, but not before that priesthood had radically directed history.

The postmillennial faith was the natural and theological counterpart of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Premillennialism looks to a supernatural deliverance or rapture out of history. Amillennialism had its origin in Augustine, who, influenced by Neoplatonism and Manichaeism, could see "no City of God in a temporal sense."<sup>39</sup> Man's only hope was in a fortress church, and hence amillennialism moves to build up a power-church to hold out against an evil world.

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38. Charles W. Ferguson, *Organizing to Beat the Devil: Methodists and the Making of America* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 93.

39. Franklin L. Baumer, *Modern European Thought, Continuity and Change in Ideas, 1600–1950* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 120.

Postmillennialism sees a necessary and a required triumph of the kingdom of God in history by means of God's regenerating power, and by His law applied and made the life of man by a royal and a priestly people. It should therefore not surprise us that both postmillennialism and the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers were brought into central focus by Jonathan Edwards, the Great Awakening, and subsequent Christian leaders. They were merely different aspects of a common faith. The decline of one led to the decline of the other.

Puritanism indeed represented a new development in the history of Christianity. More conservative in some respects than any other movement, its emphasis on the priesthood of all believers created a great, new, and radical impetus in history, especially in Britain and America, and, through them, in all the world. For this reason, the Puritan history is not only an unfinished one, but also a reviving one.

# MEDIEVAL SPECULATION, PURITANISM, AND MODERN SCIENCE

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*Charles Dykes*

Men who have assurance that they are to inherit heaven have a way of presently taking possession of the earth.—William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, 162.

The seventeenth century, a great watershed in Western history, marks the dawn of the distinctively modern world. New concepts and institutions arose in many areas. In the economic order, modern rationalized capitalism—as opposed to the older “adventure” capitalism (to use Max Weber’s distinctions)—became firmly established in northwestern Europe. In politics, the national state emerged triumphant over the feudal decentralized structure in many places. But among the events of this epochal era—Whitehead’s so-called “age of genius”—none was more dramatic and consequential than the rise of modern science.

“The seventeenth century,” notes G. R. Cragg, “witnessed a major revolution in the intellectual outlook of Western Europe. Few areas of thought remained untouched; in none was the change so dramatic as in the world of science, and nowhere was the transformation more remarkable than in England.”<sup>40</sup> As the year 1600 approached, English scientists trailed their counterparts on the Continent; by the year 1700 they led all Europe in scientific progress.

A fascinating debate among scholars in recent years concerns the role Protestantism played in the rise and development of modern science. Some argue it was absolutely essential; others contend it was of no positive consequence—that, in fact, Christian faith had to be overcome before modern science could flourish.

But what explains the unequaled scientific transformation of England in the seventeenth century? In order to suggest an answer to this question, we will present a brief delineation of certain salient

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40. *Freedom and Authority* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 36.

events in the history of science which bring us to the England of 1600–1700; and second, we will review some of the crucial philosophical and theological presuppositions held by thinkers from the ancient pagans down to the early moderns. From these we will attempt to indicate the basis for our conviction that the {28} general worldview of Christianity was essential to provide the intellectual foundation from which modern science could emerge. We will contend, moreover, that the Reformation made an important contribution to the presuppositional context so basic to the growth of experimental science. And finally, we will survey briefly the role of the Puritans in the progress of scientific endeavor.

By way of introduction, let us consider some insights of Stanley Jaki. He writes: "... in a world history that had witnessed at least half a dozen great cultures, science had as many stillbirths. Only once, in the period of 1250–1650, did man's scientific quest muster enough zest to grow into an enterprise with built in vitality."<sup>41</sup> Jaki tells us why this was so:

Great cultures, where the scientific enterprise came to a standstill, invariably failed to formulate the notion of physical law, or the law of nature. Theirs was a theology with no belief in a personal, rational, absolutely transcendent Lawgiver, or Creator. Their cosmology reflected a pantheistic and animistic view of nature caught in the treadmill of perennial, inexorable returns.<sup>42</sup>

This was true of the pagans and Greeks with their cyclic view of history.<sup>43</sup> The contrast with the Christian view, especially after the time of Augustine, is radical indeed. "The Christian," observes Roland Bainton, "could never say of Christ what Aristotle said of Plato: that in another age there might be another Plato... 'Once and for all Christ died unto sin.' 'Once and for all He entered into the holy place.' 'Once and for all we are sanctified by the offering of His body.'"<sup>44</sup> As August-

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41. Stanley Jaki, *Science and Creation: From Eternal Cycles to an Oscillating Universe* (New York: Science History Publications, 1974), viii.

42. *Ibid.*

43. Robert Nisbet, *Social Change and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 35–36. Nisbet argues that the Greek idea was a theory of developmentalism, but admits: "No doubt there were Greeks and Romans who did indeed believe in recurrent cycles of the specific history of events of an Attica or Rome..."

44. *Early and Medieval Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), 8.

ine declared, “For once Christ died for our sins; and rising from the dead, he died no more.”

That there are specific theological reasons for the stillbirths of science can be illustrated by considering China. Writing about 150 years ago, Yu-Lan Fung admitted “it was a state of mind that prevented science from taking roots in Chinese soil up to very recent times.”<sup>45</sup> The Chinese were obsessed with a cyclic view of the world and were addicted to astrology,<sup>46</sup> but ultimate failure turned on their answer to this question: was the world made by God, or is the world itself a god? They gave the wrong answer.

The Chinese held to a conception of an organismic universe, and to the workings of chance spontaneity: this was part of the reason they never formulated a truly scientific concept of physical law. Joseph Needham, one {29} of the outstanding scholars of Chinese culture, has commented: “It was not that there was no order in nature for the Chinese, but rather that it was not an order ordained by a rational personal being, and hence there was no conviction that rational personal beings would be able to spell out in their lesser earthly languages the divine code of laws which he had decreed aforetime.”<sup>47</sup> Jaki remarks, with reference to Needham, “a Marxist interpreter of science, it must have been a frustrating pill to acknowledge the crucial role played by faith in a personal Creator in the rise of modern science.”<sup>48</sup>

Many of the same chains of darkness that gripped the Chinese also bound the Arabs. They made some advances: Islamic medicine, and in particular, the treatment of eye diseases, was well developed for its day,<sup>49</sup> but Islamic science only “made notable contributions to those parts of science which had ... little or nothing to do with the laws of the physical world at large.”<sup>50</sup> Like the Chinese, the Arabs held to an organ-

45. Jaki, 25.

46. *Ibid.*, 36.

47. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge University Press), vol. 2, 581, cited in Jaki, 42.

48. Jaki, 42.

49. Averroes, the great advocate of the Aristotelian philosophy among the Arabs, was a leading ophthalmologist of his time.

50. Jaki, 195.



istic world picture; their thinking was dominated by mysticism and astrology. Throughout the Middle Ages and into modern times, Islamic thinkers tried to combine the teaching of the Koran with belief in God as Creator, Pythagorean number mysticism, the doctrine of world-soul, and the hierarchical ordering of the universe. This differs in essence little if any from an emanationist, pantheistic conception of the world.

Let us turn aside now to consider a few of the more significant ideas and events in the history of scientific thought which led to the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century. We begin by noting that the idea that the sun is the center of the universe was not original to Copernicus. Aristarches (ca. 310–230 BC), the most inspired astronomer of the ancient world, had taught eighteen hundred years before Copernicus that the earth and other planets revolve in circles about a stationary sun; and he understood the moon revolves around the earth. Few people paid any attention.

Some historians of science maintain that the first truly great scientific achievement of the human race was the development of the calendar. As commerce, agriculture, and the bureaucratic state advanced among the ancients, the need for a more predictable and uniform calendar, free from local variations and other irregularities, grew strong. Pursuant to this, Hammurabi (ca. 1800 BC) ordered that a common calendar be devised and made operative throughout his empire. The task was assigned the Babylonian astronomers, whose chief business (in common with their contemporary {30} star-gazers) was astrology. This commingling of rudimentary astronomy with astrological lore was encouraged by the Babylonian state, which believed the celestial bodies were gods who influenced not only weather, tides, and health, but also the fortunes of the state.

Another significant event in antiquity was the development of numbers and mathematics. A primary theme of Greek philosophy was the power of reason: the derivative idea grew up among them that mathematical axioms constituted the true principle of things; out of this came the classical ideal of abstract mathematics. Thus the Greeks conceived of mathematics as a system of general, abstract propositions whose connecting link was logic.

The Greeks, however, were almost totally uninterested in employing mathematics to solve practical problems. Only in geometry did the Greeks excel; it was the Egyptians who devised arithmetical operations of division, addition, and subtraction, as well as the decimal system. (Curiously, the Egyptians never learned to multiply, nor did they contrive a symbol for zero.)<sup>51</sup>

The major premise of Pythagoras (ca. 580–500 BC) and his school was that “number is everything.” For the first time numbers were used to express basic relationships that had been observed in nature.<sup>52</sup> Plato (429–348 BC) in the *Timaeus* described the world in geometrical terms, declaring that when things are reduced to their simplest form, number evolves as the basic constituent of the universe—e.g., bodies are made up of surfaces, surfaces of lines, lines of points or numbers. Two thousand years later this Platonic view of mathematics, which presupposed that the world of nature was a mere approximation to the world of pure mathematics, had to be overthrown before modern science could emerge. The insight of R. G. Collingwood is of enormous significance: “The possibility of an applied mathematics is an expression, in terms of natural science, of the Christian belief that nature is the creation of an omnipotent God.”<sup>53</sup>

Mathematics came to Western Europe during the Middle Ages through the intermediation of the Arabs. The latter had built on the mathematics of the ancients, combining some Hindu innovations with several of their own. {31}

Prior to the eleventh century, medieval Europe seems not to have had a mathematician who was not a Moor, a Greek, or a Jew. But the

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51. Morris Kline, *Mathematics in Western Culture* (Oxford University Press, 1953).

52. Cf. Carl B. Boyer, *The History of the Calculus and Its Conceptual Development* (New York: Dover Publications, 1949), 1. “The Pythagoreans and Plato noted that the conclusions they reached deductively agreed to a remarkable extent with the results of observation and inductive inference. Unable to account otherwise for this agreement, they were led to regard mathematics as the study of ultimate, eternal reality, immanent in nature and the universe, rather than as a branch of logic or a tool of science and technology.”

53. *An Essay on Metaphysics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 253. According to Galileo, “the book of nature is a book written by the hand of God in the language of mathematics.”

priests of the medieval church finally became interested in mathematics for practical reasons: as custodians now of the calendar, they needed to learn mathematics (and astronomy).

Despite its admixture with astrology, in learning to fix the year as the interval between successive repetitions of an astronomical event, ancient astronomy developed two basic scientific tools, observation and measurement. But seminal thinkers like Plato gravely undercut these simple anticipations of modern scientific method. For Plato, science and mathematics were purely intellectual activities, completely divorced from the observable world.<sup>54</sup>

Aristotle used the method of observation in his biological studies, but completely ignored it in astronomy and physics. Like Plato, Aristotle thought that nature was a living organism, and that the heavenly bodies possessed life and initiative.<sup>55</sup> He believed the heavens were composed of a different kind of matter from that on earth. Following Empedocles, he thought that all earthly things were made of four elements: water, air, fire, and earth; to accommodate his matter-theory of difference between the composition of celestial and terrestrial, he conceived a fifth element, the “quintessence”; everything composed of it possessed eternal unchangeability.

Another field where Aristotle’s teaching long held the minds of scientific thinkers in bondage was his theory of motion. In Aristotelian theory, the celestial bodies all moved in perfectly circular orbits, each moving at the same uniform speed throughout its orbit. True, astronomers had great difficulty reconciling these ideas with the planetary movements they observed; that they tried so hard for so long is indicative of the immense prestige of Aristotle.

Concerning motion, Aristotle taught that every material object has a motion of its own corresponding to the materials of which it is composed. All terrestrial elements move in straight lines (either up or down); the motion of the celestial bodies, being composed of the quintessential element, is circular and eternal; terrestrial motion, being rectilinear, is therefore violent and unnatural by contrast.

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54. Cf. *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 208.

55. Stephen Toulmin and June Goodfield, *The Architecture of Matter* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), 87.

The continued movement of a projectile in flight, Aristotle assumed, can be attributed to its being pushed onward by the continuous force of onrushing air—i.e., moving forward the projectile displaces the air immediately in its path, which then rushes round behind to prevent a vacuum from forming. This explanation was logical—and dead wrong—but it {32} points to the reason for the appeal of Aristotelian physics, which “was not its superficial agreement with observations, but that it could ... be deduced from a few basic postulates.”<sup>56</sup>

The Aristotelian cosmology posited a spherical universe which continually rotated in a circle; at its center was the immovable earth, also spherical. Since the universe was divine, it must be spherical, the sphere being the perfect figure. It rotates necessarily in a circle; circular motion, having neither beginning nor end, is eternal. The earth, the center of the universe—in common with the center of all rotating bodies—is at rest.

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) attempted to Christianize the philosophy of Aristotle, including his cosmology. In literature this medieval picture of the universe was most graphically painted in the *Divine Comedy* of Dante (1265–1321). C. S. Lewis, in his last book, *The Discarded Image*, brilliantly describes this cosmology: at the center is the spherical earth, with the earth surrounded by a series of transparent globes, one above the other. A luminous body is fixed in each of these spheres—i.e., a planet. Beyond is the realm of the stars, and beyond them, the First Mover, itself invisible. The First Mover, moved by its love of God, imparts to all the inner spheres.

Medieval man believed in three hierarchies of angels, each hierarchy composed of three different kinds. These angels “were allotted different functions, and were associated with different parts of the cosmos: three grades operated in the outermost empyrean, three on the earth itself, and three in the intervening region.”<sup>57</sup> Beyond the outermost sphere was Heaven—the abode of God and all the elect.

The astronomy of the Middle Ages was Ptolemaic. Ptolemy (AD 85–165), while holding to the physics of Aristotle, thought physics irrele-

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56. Jaki, 208.

57. Stephen Toulmin and June Goodfield, *The Fabric of the Heavens* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), 162–63.

vant to astronomy, so confined himself to mathematics. His system would reign supreme until the seventeenth century.

There were several thinkers during the Middle Ages who attacked the Aristotelian notion that the earth is fixed, immovable. For example, while Nicole Oresme (1323–1382), bishop of Lisceaux, did not ultimately accept the rotation of the earth, his arguments were damaging to Aristotle and Ptolemy, and many of his ideas were taken over by Copernicus and Galileo.

Copernicus (1473–1543) can best be described as a Ptolemaic revisionist: he was unhappy with the Ptolemaic system because of its complexity. He was following the Pythagorean idea that the ultimate truth about the universe must consist of simple and elegant geometrical relations. Ptolemy's astronomy, Copernicus concluded, with its many circles and epicycles, was much too complicated to be true. {33}

In 1512 Copernicus set forth the seven principles of his theory of the universe. Two of these principles are: that all planets circle the sun; and that the sun is stationary, its apparent motion caused by the rotation of the earth. Copernicus, still under the spell of Aristotle, could not conceive of noncircular motion by the planets, however. When his new world system was published in 1543, it contained thirty-four circles—Ptolemy's had contained about eighty—so complexity was reduced, not eliminated.

Kepler (1571–1630), devoted to the theory of Copernicus, was the first scientist to use mathematical methods to study the laws of planetary motion. By 1618 he had published the three laws that were to become the cardinal principles of modern astronomy. Two of these are: that the planets revolve around the sun in ellipses with the sun at one focus of the ellipse; and that each planet moves at a variable speed. From the eighty circles and constant speed of Ptolemy, and the thirty-four circles of Copernicus, now with Kepler we have seven ellipses and variable speed. Gone was the geocentric universe; gone were the logically necessary circles of Aristotle.

Archimedes of Syracuse (287–212 BC) is often called the father of the science of mechanics, in which he made pioneering studies. Around AD 500, a Monophysite theologian and critic of Aristotelian physics, John Philoponos, studied motion and devised an impetus theory. His ideas were picked up by the Parisian school of physicists in the

fourteenth century, chiefly Jean Buridan (ca. 1295–1358) and Nicole Oresme. Building on their ideas (though he failed to acknowledge this), Galileo (1564–1642) began his investigations into mechanics.

While attending Mass one day, Galileo became intrigued with a swinging chandelier. This gave him the idea for a crude pendulum, using only a stone attached to a string; from this he discovered that the length of time required for one swing depended only upon the length of the string, not upon the weight of the stone. The pendulum, he reckoned, was merely a special case of a freely falling body. In addition, Galileo measured the time required for objects of differing weight to roll down an inclined plane. From these experiments, he concluded that objects of different weight fall with the same acceleration in a vacuum, and that this applies to all bodies throughout the terrestrial realm. Galileo was given to speculate that this might apply to the celestial realm as well.

Aristotle had taught that a body would stop moving when the net force on it was zero; Galileo concluded that if all the forces acting upon a body balance out to zero, the body will nevertheless continue to move, and move uniformly. Galileo's theory in essence is: it is as "natural" for a body to move uniformly as it is for it to remain at rest.

Clearly, the contention of Galileo that motion was as "natural" as rest contradicted Aristotle; and soon this insight was to radically change man's thinking about physical causation and the nature of the universe. For if {34} it is as "natural" for a body in motion to continue moving on earth as it is in the heavens, the conclusion follows that there is no basic difference between the two realms.

Around 1611, Kepler worked out his theory of lenses. Though little noted at the time, it was of enormous importance, because it produced a different attitude in the scientist toward his instruments. It was the telescope and careful observations of Tycho Brahe that Kepler built his astronomical theories on; and it was Galileo's telescope that brought him into confrontation with the Roman Church.

On the night of 7 January 1609, Galileo directed his telescope at Jupiter, and saw close to the planet three little moons. "These 'Medicean planets' (as he named them in honor of the Medici, the ruling house of Florence) made it impossible any longer to argue that all the

bodies in the planetary system must be revolving around a single center. A major objection to the Copernican view was overcome.”<sup>58</sup>

The reaction of the ecclesiastical and academic world to this discovery was swift and violent. The Aristotelians declared that what Galileo saw through his telescope were optical illusions; some claimed it was the instrument of Satan. How, they asked, could Jupiter suddenly acquire a bevy of moons? Had not Aristotle explained that the heavens were immutable?

The Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmology, having reigned a thousand years, was in its death throes; the hierarchical concept of the universe, conceived by Aristotle and Christianized by St. Thomas, was finally shattered by the telescope. Neither the gates of God’s Empyrean Heaven nor the celestial beings responsible for moving the planets in their orbits could be seen. The telescope, moreover, helped to destroy the categorization of matter into higher and lower forms: the jagged, mountainous surface of the moon was obviously composed of the same matter as exists on earth. So much for Aristotle’s “quintessence.”

In affirming the Copernican view, Galileo had set himself against the Aristotelian teaching of the church. In 1616 the Inquisition moved in, and Galileo was advised to abandon his Copernican opinions. After publication of his *Dialogues on the Two Principal World Systems*, Galileo was tried and found guilty in 1633; under house arrest thereafter, he died in 1642, the year Newton was born.<sup>59</sup> {35}

Aquinas had Christianized Aristotle so well that when the authority of Aristotle in the area of astronomy and physics was called into question, many Christian theologians thought biblical truth was being denied. So completely had Aristotle and medieval Christian theology been harmonized in the Thomistic synthesis that the threatened overthrow of Aristotelian cosmology seemed to many theologians to be a rejection of biblical revelation as well. Hence the move against Galileo:

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58. *Ibid.*, 196.

59. Cf. George Salmon, *The Infallibility of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1959), 229–52. Giorgio de Santillana, *The Crime of Galileo* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). Jerome J. Langford, *Galileo, Science and the Church*, rev. ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1971). It was not until 1835 that Rome removed the works of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo from the index of prohibited books.

the Aristotelian theologians realized that if the Copernican doctrines were sanctioned, this would seriously damage their own authority as guardians of orthodoxy by proving false what they had taught was true. The real issue in the trial of Galileo was not the truth of Holy Scripture, but rather the truth of Aristotle and the authority of the Aristotelian theologians.

The medieval church had also followed the matter-theory of Aristotle; it was not until the seventeenth century that men would suspect that here too he was wrong. Throughout the Middle Ages, what chemistry there was, was alchemy. Its foundation premises were as follows: (1) all matter is composed of a mixture of earth, air, water, and fire in varying ratios; (2) gold is the noblest and purest of metals; (3) any metal can be changed into another by a process called transmutation—changing the proportion of the four basic elements. The alchemists believed a base metal could be transmuted into gold by using an elusive substance called the Philosopher's Stone.

During the sixteenth century the leadership of alchemy passed from Islam to Europe. Paracelsus (1493–1541), a Swiss physician, turned his followers somewhat from their obsession with gold to the study of medicines: his approach served as a bridge between alchemy and chemistry as an exact science in its later development.

When Robert Boyle in 1661 published *The Sceptical Chemist*, he swept away the Greek idea that chemistry, like geometry, could be developed logically from self-evident principles. With Boyle, the idea that theoretical conceptions must give way to experimental discoveries found a champion among the chemists. And he attacked the accepted belief that there were only a small number of chemical elements.<sup>60</sup>

Such is the bare outline of the progress of the exact sciences by the middle of the seventeenth century. We have seen that while the Greeks made a few positive contributions, for the greater part their influence was negative; it was necessary for their teaching to be thoroughly discredited before experimental science could emerge. Neoplatonism cannot be considered here, but its doctrines were even more antiscientific than Aristotelianism. For what is called modern science represented a

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60. Marie Boas, *Robert Boyle and Seventeenth-Century Chemistry* (Cambridge University Press, 1958).



radical shift {36} in perspective: no longer was the attempt made to explain all nature by a single theory; rather, men now concentrated on limited objectives. Each of the scientific disciplines began to look for relations in nature that could be observed as “cause” and “effect,” finally choosing only those “effects” which could be measured or estimated. And the model of the world was transformed from living organism to great machine, ruled by inexorable natural laws whose workings were open to understanding by the mind of man. Whatever its flaws, this picture was closer to the biblical view: behind the concept of the world as a living organism was the assumption that the world had been generated; the mechanistic image had behind it the belief that the world had been created by an omnipotent Lawgiver.

Before sketching the general pattern of the biblical presuppositions that emerged in opposition to the maze of Greek-pagan conjectures prior to the Scientific Revolution, we need to be reminded of just a few of the distinctives of the biblical teaching regarding nature. First of all, there is a radical contrast between the Greek-pagan deification of nature, and the biblical depiction of nature as the creation of God out of nothing. Only the personal God is divine: He has not to reckon with eternal forms; nor, being omnipotent, can He be opposed by any matter. For the pagans, nature was a god to be worshipped and feared; in the biblical perspective nature is the handiwork of a transcendent Creator, who purposed that man should admire, study, and control His creation.

While their thinking continued to be infected somewhat with certain ideas of Greek-pagan teaching, the biblical view of nature began to transform the thought patterns of the early Christians as they moved across the Greco-Roman world. Clement of Alexandria powerfully charged the pagan educators: “Let none of you worship the sun; rather let him yearn for the maker of the sun. Let no one deify the universe; rather let him seek after the creator of the universe.”<sup>61</sup> In *The City of God*, Augustine declared that both the material universe and human history have their origin in the sovereign creative work of God. Not surprisingly, those who followed Augustine had a sense of purpose, their life had a meaning, and they were able to discern intelligible pat-

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61. Jaki, 168.

terns in nature. Contrast this with Marcus Aurelius: “His universe was at the mercy of the blind forces of the cosmic treadmill. Humans in that universe were as many momentary bubbles appearing and dissolving with a cyclic necessity over the dark expanse of an unfathomable sea of cosmic and individual destinies.”<sup>62</sup>

Coming to the fourteenth century, we clearly see in such men as Jean Buridan the vast gulf separating the Aristotelian and Christian world-views. Over against Aristotle’s denial that the heavens could decay, Buridan declared {37} the Creator has the ability, if He chooses, to destroy the world. Buridan’s contemporary, Nicole Oresme, denied the heavens were eternal, asserting instead that the heavens have a beginning in God’s creation.<sup>63</sup>

During the Renaissance, such teachers as Marsilio Ficino, leader of the Neoplatonic academy of Florence, sought to demonstrate that Platonism and Christianity carried the same message. This attempt was, of course, absurd, and consequently unsuccessful. But another fifteenth-century scholar, Nicholas of Cusa, moved by the Christian worldview, denied that the earth was motionless, and suggested all cosmic bodies are basically similar. While Nicholas sometimes spoke favorably about Plato and Neoplatonism, “he did so with an eye on the doctrine of Creation.”<sup>64</sup> Other Christian thinkers of the later Middle Ages often admired Plato and Aristotle, but their biblical perspective kept them from falling into a humanistic apriorism and immanentism. As Kepler, who all his life was attracted to astrology, was later to put it: “Christian religion has put up some fences around false speculation.”

The Reformation of the sixteenth century was many things, but fundamentally it was the rediscovery of the gospel. Many voices were clamoring for the reformation of the church—i.e., administrative or moral reform. (By moral, they had in mind such things as restrictions to prevent the priests from sleeping around, or to preclude them from administering the sacraments while drunk.) But the Reformation that came was, at its most basic level, doctrinal, with far-reaching conse-

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62. *Ibid.*, 184.

63. Cf. Nicholas H. Steneck, *Science and Creation in the Middle Ages* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1976).

64. Jaki, 255.

quences for many areas of life and thought. One of those areas was science.

In recent years, historians of science have begun to wonder why modern science had its specific beginnings in the latter part of the sixteenth century. While they notice that the Reformation triumphed in the very geographic regions where modern science later was to attain its greatest development, the historians usually deny the Reformation had any positive contribution in this regard. Typical is Alan G. R. Smith, who writes:

... in the 1530s Martin Luther made a contemptuous reference to Copernicus as “the new astrologer who wants to prove that the earth moves and goes round...” Calvin also joined in the condemnation in his *Commentary on Genesis*, where he cited the opening verse of the ninety-third Psalm, “the world also is stablished that it cannot be moved,” and asked, “who will venture to place the authority of Copernicus above that of the Holy Spirit?”<sup>65</sup>

(Against this, R. Hooykaas has pointed out in “several periodicals concerned with the history of science that the ‘quotation’ from Calvin is {38} imaginary and that Calvin never mentioned Copernicus; but the legend dies hard.”)<sup>66</sup>

The conceptual edifice to be destroyed in the late sixteenth century was the Aristotelian-medieval universe moved by pantheistic, organismic purposiveness. While men like Galileo were little affected by the Reformation, they were guided in their work by the Christian worldview, and, in particular, the doctrine of God as Creator and omnipotent Lawgiver. The Protestant worldview, especially that flowing from the Calvinistic Reformation, was destined to separate still more sharply the biblical from other ideas of nature, and to complete the demolition of the medieval Aristotelian-Scholastic synthesis.

In a paper first published in 1962, Thomas F. Torrance asked: “Why was it then that modern empirical science had to wait until the beginning of the seventeenth century for its real advance?”<sup>67</sup> Torrance argues forthrightly that the Reformation and the change it wrought in

65. *Science and Society in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 97.

66. *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 121.

the intellectual sphere made this advance possible. The foundation was a change in the doctrine of God: the change from the “Stoic-Latin view of God”—that God is unfeeling, uncaring and distant—“to an essentially biblical view of God as the living, active Creator and Redeemer.”<sup>68</sup> Under the teaching of the Reformers,

men learned to think differently of God and of his relation to creation as something utterly distinct from him while yet dependent upon his will for its being and ultimate order, and therefore learned to think differently of the nature of nature and of the creaturely nature of its order.<sup>69</sup>

The Reformers, moreover, swept away the Thomistic dichotomy between nature and grace. Torrance contends this “gave new significance to the world as the object of divine attention, and therefore as the object of human attention in obedience to the divine.”<sup>70</sup> This was crucial to the development of modern science: men had looked away from the world, believing purpose and meaning came only through contemplation of the divine. The Reformation restored the biblical perspective, stimulating thereby an interest in God’s handiwork.

Torrance also discusses the contribution of the Reformation to scientific objectivity.

It is this masterful objectivity, with its distinction between unwarranted {39} presupposition and proper entailment arising out of the nature of the object, that is one of the great contributions of the Reformation to the modern world, for out of it came the spirit and procedure so characteristic of modern science.<sup>71</sup>

The Reformation made many other highly significant and essential contributions to modern scientific development, but we must hasten on to the seventeenth century, and to the English Puritans.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, two books appeared—John W. Draper’s *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science*

67. “The Influence of Reformed Theology on the Development of Scientific Method,” reprinted in T. F. Torrance, *Theology of Reconstruction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 62–75.

68. *Ibid.*, 62.

69. *Ibid.*, 63.

70. *Ibid.*, 65.

71. *Ibid.*, 67.

and A. D. White's *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*—which announced, on the basis of positivistic presuppositions, that the relation between Christianity and science had always been one of conflict and opposition. This is today the received opinion, and the humanistic mind of our age regards any suggestion of a positive association of the two as incredible. It must, therefore, have been with considerable amazement that the intelligentsia greeted a series of studies by Robert K. Merton which appeared in *Osiris* in 1938,<sup>72</sup> wherein the writer argued that Puritanism made a powerful contribution to the legitimacy of science as an emerging social institution. Merton insisted, however, that his thesis did not “presuppose that only Puritanism could have served that function. *As it happened*, Puritanism provided major (not exclusive) support in that historical time and place.”<sup>73</sup>

Merton attempted to explain the extraordinary advances of seventeenth-century science by correlating its particular objectives and underlying values with other aspects of society. What he evolved are two theses which overlap at certain points. The first stresses the attempt of the Baconians, by learning the techniques of contemporary craftsmen, to make science applicable to vital problems of the day—e.g., navigation, deforestation, and land drainage. The second identifies Puritanism as the source of the singular values and objectives of the first thesis.

Critics usually point out that the Merton thesis is an extension of the Weber thesis, and Merton indeed acknowledges his debt to Weber. But Merton denies that he began his studies with the prior assumption that Puritanism was of positive value for modern science. He simply set out to make sense of scientific development in seventeenth-century England, guided by a general sociological hypothesis which assumed that “various institutions in the society are variously interdependent so that what happens in the economic or religious realm is apt to have perceptible connections with some of what happens in the realm of science, and conversely.” It {40} was during “the course of reading the letters, diaries, memoirs and papers of seventeenth-century men of

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72. Reprinted in 1970, with a new preface by the author, as *Science, Technology & Society in Seventeenth Century England* (New York: Howard Gertig).

73. *Ibid.*, xviii.

science” that Merton “slowly noted the frequent religious commitments of scientists in this time, and even more, what seemed to be their Puritan orientation.”<sup>74</sup>

Merton is anxious that a main presupposition of his thesis be understood:

The substantial and persistent development of science occurs only in societies of a certain kind, which provide both cultural and material conditions for that development.... Before it became widely accepted as a value in its own right, science was required to justify itself to men in terms of values other than that of knowledge itself.<sup>75</sup>

The achievement of these conditions, as Merton understands it, was largely accomplished by the Puritans.

In order to show how Puritanism achieved the legitimation of science, Merton studied various aspects of the Puritan perspective and character. The glorification of God, he notes, was the be-all and end-all of the Puritan; and secondarily, the well-being of his fellow man. There was “the tendency to laud the faculty of reason,” which is “praiseworthy because man, chosen of God, alone possesses it,” and because “it enables man more fully to glorify God by aiding him to appreciate His works.”<sup>76</sup>

Merton accentuates the Puritan concern with utility and practicability. He quotes Richard Baxter: “Knowledge is to be valued according to its usefulness,” and then observes: “Puritanism tends ever more and more to emphasize the value of reshaping this world.”<sup>77</sup> A distinction is made between the pre-Reformation and post-Reformation type of religious personality—the former, Merton (following Spranger) classifies as “transcendent mystic”; the latter, “immanent mystic.”

The first finds rest only in a super-sensuous world. For such a being science is without value since it does not answer the ultimate questions; all his energies are concentrated on preparing his soul for inner vision. The immanent mystic ... applies his religious beliefs in a totally different fashion. Life and action become positively valued precisely because they are indications of God.<sup>78</sup>

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74. *Ibid.*, xvii.

75. *Ibid.*, xix.

76. *Ibid.*, 66.

77. *Ibid.*, 72–73.

The Puritans are, in this view, “immanent mystics.”

“Puritanism,” according to Merton, “differed from Catholicism, which had gradually come to tolerate science, in demanding, not merely condoning, its pursuit.”<sup>79</sup> The Puritans held that “the study of nature enables a fuller appreciation of His works and thus leads us to admire and praise the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God manifested in His creation.”<sup>80</sup> {41}

Not unexpectedly, Merton’s thesis has been the target of severe criticism in the years since its publication. These attacks intensified after Christopher Hill argued in the British journal, *Past and Present*, as well as in his book, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (1965), that Puritanism and modern scientific ideas developed together in opposition to the scientific obscurantism of the Anglicanism of the seventeenth century.<sup>81</sup> Alternative theories to explain English scientific development were offered; for example, B. J. Shapiro argued that “religious moderation was far more intimately connected than Puritanism with the English scientific movement of that period.”<sup>82</sup> And while Theodore K. Rabb admits: “Nobody can ignore the links between the reformed religion and scientific advance. The heavy preponderance of Protestants among scientists after the 1640s is inescapable,” he nonetheless insists that the Merton thesis “can no longer be adduced as the final word on the subject.”<sup>83</sup>

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78. *Ibid.*, 74.

79. *Ibid.*, 87.

80. *Ibid.*, 102.

81. Cf. *Past and Present*: C. Hill, “Puritanism, Capitalism and the Scientific Revolution,” no. 29 (December 1964); “Science, Religion and Society in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” no. 32 (December 1965); H. F. Kearney, “Puritanism, Capitalism and the Scientific Revolution,” no. 28 (July 1964); T. K. Rabb, “Religion and the Rise of Modern Science,” no. 31 (July 1965); “Science, Religion and Society in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” no. 33 (April 1966); B. J. Shapiro, “Latitudinarianism and Science in 17th-Century England,” no. 41 (July 1968). Kearney, Rabb, and Shapiro are concerned to refute Hill, but Merton also catches a good part of the flak.

82. “Latitudinarianism and Science in 17th-Century England,” *Past and Present*, no. 40 (July 1968): 16.

Perhaps the basic weakness of the Merton thesis, aside from questions of methodology, is that it sometimes seems to equate all men and ideas which are non-Catholic and non-Laudian (Anglican-Arminian) with Puritanism. The most striking illustration of this is in the section where Merton discusses the Puritan contribution to science in early America. Concerning the men of science of this period, and the lists of the Royal Society, Merton says one finds “a preponderance of Puritans among the colonists elected Fellows...”<sup>84</sup> One of those he cites is Benjamin Franklin!

On the other hand, critics of the Merton thesis like Shapiro tend to equate Puritanism with the most savage form of religious fanaticism whose inevitable concomitant is extreme intolerance of any view which differs from one’s own. That such a view is the wildest kind of caricature can easily be demonstrated, but such an image readily commends itself to the modern humanist, for whom Puritanism is anathema. This is not to say all the criticisms are false: some indeed are needed correctives; religious moderates like John Wilkins and Robert Boyle were not, strictly speaking, {42} Puritans—though we would vigorously dissent from Shapiro’s identification of religious moderation in these men with latitudinarianism. The point is that the narrow definition of “Puritan” is just as false and misleading as the wider view. While we agree with Hooykaas that “the relationship between Puritanism and science was close,”<sup>85</sup> the confusions alluded to above make it imperative that we clarify what we mean when we speak of “Puritanism.”

The Puritan movement had from its beginning in the early days of the reign of Queen Elizabeth two closely related, though distinguishable, objectives. The one was concerned to carry reform of polity, worship, and discipline in the Anglican Church beyond the limits established by the Elizabethan Settlement; the other had reference to the all-consuming passion of the Puritan to preach and apply the Word of God. Of these two, the latter is by far the more important. We wholly agree with William Haller:

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83. “Religion and the Rise of Modern Science,” *Past and Present*, no. 31 (July 1965): 111–12.

84. Merton, 122.

85. Hooykaas, 135.



The disagreements that rendered Puritans into presbyterians, independents, separatists and baptists were in the long run not so significant as the qualities of character, of mind and of imagination, which kept them all alike Puritan.... *It was a new way of life, overrunning all the divisions which from time to time seamed its surface....*<sup>86</sup>

In reviewing the confusion of scholars over the definition of Puritanism, David Little—after insisting that “Puritanism was, indeed, a distinct system of meaning and values with an indomitable logic that shook the very foundations of Elizabethan and Stuart society”—comments with no little irony:

If certain modern scholars have trouble recognizing it as such, contemporaries were hardly so undiscerning. One would not have found Elizabeth, James, or Charles, Whitgift, Bancroft, or Laud questioning the distinctiveness and singular vitality of Puritanism. They all felt its threat and knew its power.<sup>87</sup>

So Puritanism was fundamentally “a new way of life, a distinct system of meaning and values with an indomitable logic.” The thought-forms of the Puritans very clearly derive from the theology of Calvin. According to Little, “the remarkable coherence between Calvinism and Puritanism is more readily apparent in the light of their common antagonism to certain presuppositions that both Renaissance and Anglican thinkers seem to share.”<sup>88</sup> When we read the gospel accounts of the first advent {43} of Christ, there presses upon us a profound awareness that a new order has appeared in the world. In the teaching of Calvin, we see this new order rediscovered and vigorously asserted against his Catholic and humanist contemporaries. With the Puritans—standing as they did on the foundation of the whole Word of God alone as ultimate authority over every sphere of life—we see afresh and with incomparable dynamism, the new order of Christ proclaimed against its adversaries.

Powerfully opposed in their efforts at ecclesiastical reform by Elizabeth, James, and Charles I, the Puritans concentrated their efforts in

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86. *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, [1938] 1957), 17–18 (emphasis added).

87. *Religion, Order and Law* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1969), 82.

88. *Ibid.*, 33.

other directions. "If they could not change the system," Cragg observes, "they would change the men within it." Cragg continues:

This kind of change was a contagion, passed from preacher to hearer in ever-widening circles.... They were fully occupied in the task of creating the new man. This, as it proved, had revolutionary consequences far beyond anything that could have been foreseen.<sup>89</sup>

Merton pointed out that "among the original list of members of the Royal Society in 1663, forty-two of the sixty-eight for whom information pertaining to religious leanings is available, were clearly Puritan."<sup>90</sup> While these figures have been subjected to the most searching criticism, they have emerged substantially intact. This indication of the preponderance of Puritans among English scientists in the seventeenth century is all the more striking when consideration is given to the fact that the Puritans were never more than about four percent of the population.<sup>91</sup>

What were some of the specifics making for the unusual affinity of the Puritans for the new science? We will enumerate in cursory fashion a few things: each of these should be developed in much greater detail. The preeminent element, to our mind, was the Puritan view of the *absolute authority of the Bible*. As Christopher Hill puts it, "You could brave the King of England if you were obeying the orders of the King of Kings." The Puritan was convinced he was to "think nothing, conceive nothing, know and resolve nothing" until given warrant to do so by Holy Scripture. His presuppositions about nature, and his boldness to pursue its investigation, derived from the same source. It kept him, moreover, from an unfounded dependence on reason. While using reason, he believed it was safe only when controlled by faith. According to John Preston, "A man hath reason to guide him, and he hath grace to guide reason."

Following from the emphasis on the authority of Scripture, was the doctrine of *God as Creator and omnipotent Lawgiver*. "The conviction in immutable law is as pronounced in the doctrine of predestination as in scientific investigation,"<sup>92</sup> as Merton has seen. Since God was under-

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89. Cragg, 138.

90. Merton, 114.

91. Little, 259.

stood {44} as the One who created all things after the counsel of His own will, and who rules over all by means of His law, the Puritans, developing the insights of the Calvinistic Reformation, believed these laws as they relate to nature can be—indeed, must be!—found out. The greatest naturalist of the seventeenth century, the Puritan John Ray, “argued that because the Almighty created man able to study nature, He intended that man ought to study nature. The pursuit of natural philosophy is a religious duty.”<sup>93</sup> Ray, with his profound sense of providence, was typical of the Puritans described by Owen Chadwick: “Such men were impregnated with Biblical texts; conscious of the imminent hand of God upon every act and moment; denying the possibility of chance....”

The great emphasis of the Puritans on *vocation and calling* was based on the conviction that the Christian must live his life in terms of God’s law in order to glorify and enjoy Him. One Puritan (Norden) declared that the best way to execute the positive demands of the eighth commandment was to be in a calling that is “lawful, agreeable to the Word of God, honest or necessary for the use and society of men....”

The intense vigor with which a Puritan pursued his calling was closely related to his doctrine of *work*. This is illustrated perfectly by a letter from John Ray to James Petiver:

I am glad your business increases so as to require more attendance, and take up more of your time, which cannot be better employed than in the works of your proper callings. What time you have to spare you will do well to spend, as you are doing, in the inquisition and contemplation of the works of God and nature.<sup>94</sup>

Another Puritan, William Perkins, considered the lazy and slothful the very incarnation of evil. Giving alms to such was, he believed, the severest infringement of God’s law.

The Puritan’s work was purposeful and goal-oriented. The *post-millennial eschatology* of the first generation gave them an indomitable confidence that through the faithful proclamation and exposition of

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92. Merton, 109.

93. Richard S. Westfall, *Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973), 46.

94. Merton, 86n9.

the Word and its application to the whole of life, the world would be conquered and transformed for Christ. This Puritan idea of progress—as opposed to the secular version that came later—was based on Deuteronomy 8, which teaches that obedience to the law of God brings spiritual and material blessings.<sup>95</sup>

The postmillennial vision of a victorious Christian future was a powerful spur to scientific and technological advance. Simply compare it with the {45} psychology of premillennialism—“you don’t polish brass on a sinking ship!” That such an interest—assuming it is biblical—can yield positive results is clearly incredible to the modern humanist. Consider some comments on Sir Isaac Newton’s commentary on the book of Revelation. Newton, whose Arian Christology set him apart from the Puritans, was yet an intensely religious man. The incredulous Cesare Lombroso declared: “Newton himself can scarcely be said to have been sane when he demeaned his intellect to the interpretation of the Apocalypse.”<sup>96</sup>

We set out to answer the question, “What explains the unequalled scientific transformation of England in the seventeenth century?” Our answer is that Puritanism created a spiritual climate in England uniquely favorable to the pursuit and development of experimental science, as well as the personal qualities, objectives, and values so essential to progress. The Puritans were the heirs of the Reformers and, as such, carried many of their insights to their logical conclusion. That is, they restored the biblical perspective.

In conclusion, let us briefly consider the faith and work of the greatest of Puritan scientists, John Ray (1627–1705). A man of transcendent ability, Ray believed in the harmony of Christianity and science. When he published the *Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation*, he prefaced it with words from Psalm 104:24: “How manifold are thy works, O Lord. In wisdom hast thou made them all.” For Ray, nature was the vast library of creation, and there he found a limitless store of divinity. He believed the most glorious calling of man was to study and

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95. Cf. Gary North, “Magic, Envy, and Economic Underdevelopment,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 153.

96. Merton, 106n62.

enjoy the works of God as manifested in nature, and thereby to honor the wisdom and goodness of the Creator.

Ray, in words of power and beauty, has given us the Puritan vision of nature as the creation of an infinitely wonderful God:

You ask what is the use of butterflies. I reply to adorn the world and delight the eyes of men, to brighten the countryside like so many golden Jewels. To contemplate their exquisite beauty and variety is to experience the truest pleasure. To gaze inquiringly at such elegance of color and form devised by the ingenuity of nature and painted by her artist's pencil, is to acknowledge and adore the imprint of the art of God.<sup>97</sup>

Would to God that there would be a restoration of this vision of nature in our generation, and again the men of science would speak of the “wonderful works of the Creator”!

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97. Quoted in Westfall, 46.

# THE ROLE OF PURITAN-CALVINISM IN THE RISE OF MODERN SCIENCE

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*E. L. Hebden Taylor*

## *The Role of Paradigms and Ground Motives in the History of Science*

Before we begin our examination of the role played by Puritan-Calvinism in the rise of modern science, it is first necessary to consider the role played by paradigms and ground motives in the history of science. Older historians of science such as Sir William C. Dampier in his book, *A History of Science*, have tended to view the history of science as a *cumulative* process concerned with obtaining a true view of the nature of reality, especially in its physical and biological aspects.<sup>98</sup> More recently this view of the history of science has been challenged by Thomas S. Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. In the first edition of his book, published in 1962, Kuhn broke new ground in providing us with new insights into the nature of modern science, its origin and development.

Kuhn sees science at any given point in time as dominated by a specific *paradigm* or model which he defines as the “universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners,”<sup>99</sup> and later in his book he elaborates upon this definition by stating that “paradigms provide scientists not only with a map but also with some of the directions essential for map-making. In learning a paradigm the scientist acquires theory, methods, and standards together.... Therefore, when paradigms change, there are usually significant shifts in the criteria determining the legitimacy both of problems and of proposed solutions.”<sup>100</sup> *Normal*

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98. Sir William C. Dampier, *A History of Science and Its Relations with Philosophy & Religion* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1946).

99. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1962] 1970), preface, x.

science is a period of accumulating scientific knowledge in which scientists work on, and expand, the reigning paradigm, e.g., Newtonian mechanics and physics. Inevitably, however, such work spawns *anomalies*, or things that cannot be explained within the existing paradigm or model. If these anomalies increase, a *crisis* stage is reached, which ultimately may end in a scientific *revolution* in which the reigning paradigm or model is overthrown and a new one takes its place {47} at the center of science, e.g., Einstein's relativity theory in physics supplanting Newton's model. Thus a new reigning paradigm is born, and the stage is set for the cycle to repeat itself. It is during the period of revolution that great changes in scientific status take place. Such a view of "scientific revolutions" clearly places Kuhn at odds with the lay and textbook conception of scientific progress and development, which suggests that *such progress in scientific knowledge is cumulative*.

The key concept in Kuhn's model of scientific revolutions is clearly his concept of a paradigm. Unfortunately, his concept of a paradigm is elusive. According to M. Masterman in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Kuhn uses the term in at least twenty-one different ways.<sup>101</sup> In response to those who criticized his vagueness about the concept of a paradigm in his first edition, Kuhn offered a very narrow definition of a paradigm in the epilogue to the second edition of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.<sup>102</sup> There he equates paradigms with exemplars, or "the concrete puzzle solutions which when employed as models or examples, can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science."<sup>103</sup>

There is another reason for this narrow definition of a paradigm. As Kuhn himself notes, his original work was criticized for its "subjectivity and irrationality." The thrust of the first edition pointed in the direction of a very broad definition of a paradigm encompassing the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community.<sup>104</sup> By 1970 Kuhn viewed this defini-

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100. *Ibid.*, 108.

101. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1970] 1974), essay by M. Masterman.

102. T. S. Kuhn, *Structure*, 1970 ed., 175.

103. *Ibid.*

tion as an “inappropriate” use in the term *paradigm*, primarily because it makes science appear to be irrational. In his retreat from a broad to a narrow definition of a paradigm we may note in passing that Kuhn reveals himself as still in the grip of an autonomous reasoned-based view of what constitutes truth. To save man’s autonomous reason he cannot now admit to the part played by religious presuppositions or what Herman Dooyeweerd has called religious ground motives in *The Twilight of Western Thought*<sup>105</sup> and in *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*.<sup>106</sup> Kuhn in fact seems to admit that science is noncognitive, that is to say, it cannot lead us to any ultimate truth at all. He wrote in the first edition of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*: {48}

In the sciences there need not be progress of another sort. We may, to be more precise, have to relinquish the notion, explicit or implicit, that changes of paradigm carry scientists and those who learn from them closer and closer to the truth.... We are all deeply accustomed to seeing science as the one enterprise that draws constantly nearer to some goal set by nature in advance.

But need there be any such goal? Can we not account for both science’s existence and its success in terms of evolution from the community’s state of knowledge at any given time? Does it really help to imagine that there is some one full, objective, true account of nature and that the proper measure of scientific achievement is the extent to which it brings us closer to that ultimate goal? If we can learn to substitute evolution-from-what-we-do-know for evolution-toward-what-we-wish-to-know, a number of vexing problems may vanish in the process.<sup>107</sup>

In *The Unity of Creation*, Russell Maatman criticizes Kuhn’s irrationalistic view of science for ignoring the “existence of an overarching paradigm, the coherent power of God.” Maatman writes of Kuhn’s views as follows:

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104. *Ibid.*

105. Herman Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1960), 27–61.

106. Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1957), 169–207.

107. Kuhn, *Structure*, 1962 ed., 169–70.



Kuhn's emphasis on paradigms as the umbrella under which physical scientists work suggests—although it is obviously an idea that he would not accept—that we might take his changing paradigms to have meaning only as they exist under one unchanging, overarching paradigm. This overarching paradigm, like his paradigms, is a mental construct, but it is not one that changes, for our unchanging mental construct is the certain knowledge that all men possess, although some have suppressed it, the knowledge that there is a single, coherent power that ultimately causes all that we observe.... There is no paradigm change *unless* the new paradigm shows us more clearly that the overarching paradigm is valid. For a new paradigm, by definition, must show that more of our observations can be brought together. We conclude, therefore, that Kuhn's paradigm theory, insofar as it deals with the nature of scientific revolutions which bring about the acceptance of new paradigms, cannot be true if the central principle is not true.... The trend toward better paradigms can only be accounted for by the existence of an unchanging, overarching paradigm. Therefore, the knowledge of the existence of such a paradigm must not be suppressed.<sup>108</sup>

According to Herman Dooyeweerd, underlying every human system of thought, belief, value, and science may be found after close investigation a religious ground motive, which determines not only man's view of the truth but even controls the methods he uses to attain it. The inner problematics of paradigm changes in the history of modern science are not due to the nature of God's creation law structures, but they are due to the conflict between varying religious ground motives. {49}

Man's relationship to the truth about God's creation will ultimately be determined by his obedient or disobedient response to God's Word. As Harry Cook, a professor of biology at Dordt College, well said in his review of the first edition of Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*:

We must differ with Kuhn's extremely subjectivistic conclusion, no matter how much we approve of his belligerence against the predominant spirit of the scientific community.... the formulation of natural laws is not a matter of survival of the fittest, the fittest being the formulation which leads to most progress. Rather, it is the Word which was from the beginning, through which everything was made

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108. Russell Maatman, *The Unity of Creation* (Sioux Center, IA: Dordt College Press, 1978), 123–25. Dr. Maatman is professor of chemistry at Dordt College. Cf. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science* (Craig Press, 1967), 85ff.

(John 1:1–14), which originated and upholds reality. It is the business of the scientist to investigate this structure which holds for reality, and he should attempt to formulate laws or theories which reflect this structure. Then formulations, while often in error, and always influenced by the “paradigm” of the investigator, should still be seen as man-made attempts to reflect the creating, upholding, structuring Word.

When we accept that it is this Word which structures reality, it is not surprising that Kuhn, and also Conant, have to back away from their position, to account for the constancy which confronts them as they, or others, investigate reality.<sup>109</sup>

Science in all its aspects is the product of human cultural formation, and the *direction* which it takes will ultimately depend upon whether it makes the Word of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures *the key to knowledge* or whether it takes the autonomous human reason as its ultimate point of reference.<sup>110</sup> Basic then to the cultural forming activities of men and of the type of science they build is a commitment to some god or absolutization of man’s own devising or to the God of the Bible. This commitment, whether openly avowed or only implicitly recognized, is what Dooyeweerd means by a religious ground motive.

Dooyeweerd has distinguished four such basic ground motives: that of Form and Matter, which dominated pagan classical Greek philosophy and science; that of Nature and Grace, which underlay the medieval synthesis of Christian and Graeco-Roman science and philosophy; that of Nature and Freedom, which has shaped the philosophies and sciences of modern times; and finally the biblical ground motive of creation, fall, and redemption which lies at the root of a radical and integrally scriptural philosophy and science.

The nature-freedom ground motive has been defined by Dooyeweerd as the ground motive governing the development of modern Western post-Christian civilization. It is the motive of “Nature,” or *of men’s faith in {50} science as their only ground of certainty and salvation*, and

109. Harry Cook, review of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, by T. S. Kuhn, in *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 25, no. 1 (1973): 34–38.

110. Gary North, *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1976), 3–24, essay by North on “The Epistemological Crisis of American Universities.”

of “Freedom,” or the ideal of the free autonomous personality. While the watchword of the Reformation was *solī Deo gloria*, and man’s liberty and salvation were defined in terms of his willing obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, the new secular humanistic nature-freedom ground motive proclaimed the independence of man from the God of the Bible and the sovereignty of the human reason and of the new scientific methods brought about by the discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton.<sup>111</sup> Man now came to regard himself as independent of the God of the Bible and absolute in himself. He was henceforth to be considered the only ruler of his destiny and that of the world. He was now regarded as creative of the world in which he was placed, not, of course, in any originating sense, but in the sense that his mind or “rational will” would impress its character upon the universe and give it its distinctive character, especially in the realms of intellectual, scientific, and political activity. The biblical revelation of the creation of man in God’s holy image was now subverted into the idea of the creation of God in the idealized image of man. Henceforth, unbelieving Western men and women will be subject to none but themselves. They sought to become autonomous and to become the source of their own light, making their own reason and science the final reference point for man’s understanding of his own nature and destiny.<sup>112</sup>

This nature-freedom ground motive has provided the dialectical framework in which not only modern Western society itself has developed in modern times but also modern secular humanistic science. No cultural realm has escaped the impact of this ground motive, including the realm of scientific discovery and pursuit. Scientific work is looked upon as the means by which man can literally remake his world and himself. To use a Latin phrase, *scientia ancilla vitam captandi*, that is, *science is to be used to capture or dominate human life*.

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111. T. S. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), and R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945).

112. Cornelius Van Til, *In Defense of the Faith: A Survey of Christian Epistemology* (Den Dulk Foundation, 1969), vols. 1 and 2; also Robert L. Reymond, *The Justification of Knowledge* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), and R. L. Reymond’s pamphlet, *A Christian View of Science* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1964).

After quoting from both Kuhn's and Conant's works, Harry Cook points out that the writings of these men "illustrate a dialectical tension between Freedom and Nature (or Freedom and Determinism, as it is often called), which seems unresolvable."<sup>113</sup> As a Christian biologist and philosopher of science, Cook rightly teaches that only the motive of "Creation-Fall-Redemption in the communion of the Holy Spirit" can "avoid the dialectic {51} tensions which inevitably arise on the other ground motives he [Dooyeweerd] has identified."<sup>114</sup>

In the light of our discussion of the part played by both paradigms and ground motives in the history of science, we shall now proceed to examine the origins of the so-called "Scientific Revolution" of the seventeenth century and of the role played by Puritan Calvinists in its development. Most secular historians of this scientific revolution have, by and large, tended to ignore the great contribution made by Puritan Calvinist scientists, and by the leaders of the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

### *The Contribution of the Reformation to the Rise of Modern Science*

Philosophers of science such as A. N. Whitehead in *Science and the Modern World*<sup>115</sup> and Herbert Butterfield in *The Origins of Modern Science*<sup>116</sup> have tended to emphasize the role of *genius* most strongly in their interpretation of the origins of the scientific revolution which took place during the later years of the sixteenth century and the seventeenth century. The Renaissance rather than the Reformation is the decisive analogy by which to interpret the rise of modern science. It is of course true that both Whitehead and Butterfield go out of their way to treat the Middle Ages sympathetically. Whitehead maintained that without the long training of logical thought which Europe had obtained during the Middle Ages, modern science as we know it today

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113. Cook, review, *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 25:38.

114. *Ibid.*

115. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946).

116. Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of Modern Science: 1300–1800* (London: Bell, 1949).

would have been impossible. He argued that faith in the regularity of nature, without which there could be no empirical science, could not have arisen apart from the antecedent faith of medieval Christendom in the rationality of God. Belief in the uniformity of nature must have arisen, he writes, “from the medieval insistence on the rationality of God, conceived as with the personal energy of Jehovah and with the rationality of a Greek philosopher. Every detail was supervised and ordered: the search into nature could only result in the vindication of the faith in rationality.”<sup>117</sup>

Herbert Butterfield devoted a chapter of his book, *The Origins of Modern Science*, to an appraisal of the significance of medieval dynamics. But for both writers, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are preeminent. Whitehead describes the seventeenth century as the “century of genius.” Butterfield uses phrases such as “an epic adventure” and “a great episode in human experience.” In their interpretation, the scientific revolution seems to have taken the place of the Renaissance, but it is essentially a secular {52} humanist movement of the same kind, one in which the *imaginative leaps of particular individuals* are more important than any social, economic, philosophic, or religious factor or trend.

Whitehead’s view of the part played by medieval science ignores the fact that it was based on a Roman Catholic scholastic conception of nature in terms of self-existent autonomous beings and of reality as consisting of a great impersonal chain of being moving towards predetermined ends. Arthur O. Lovejoy attributes to the Greek philosopher Plato the philosophic genesis of the idea of “The Great Chain of Being.”<sup>118</sup>

According to Edwin A. Burt, in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, medieval science was *teleological* in nature and was concerned to establish a series of basic rational principles, from which it sought to deduce all things, because most medieval thinkers had supposed, following the example of Aristotle, that only *ultimate principles* and *final causes* had any real or significant existence.

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117. Whitehead, *Science*, 15–16.

118. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper, [1936] 1960), 45ff.

Burt writes of medieval science in comparison with modern science thus:

For the dominant trend in medieval thought, man occupied a more significant and determinative place in the universe than the realm of physical nature, while for the main current of modern thought, nature holds a more independent, more determinative, and more permanent place than man. It will be helpful to analyse this contrast more specifically. For the Middle Ages man was in every sense the centre of the universe. The whole world of nature was believed to be teleologically subordinate to him and his eternal destiny. Toward this conviction the two great movements which had become united in the medieval synthesis, Greek philosophy and Judeo-Christian theology, had irresistibly led. The prevailing worldview of the period was marked by a deep and persistent assurance that man, with his hopes and ideals, was the all-important, even controlling fact in the universe.

This view underlay medieval physics. The entire world of nature was held not only to exist for man's sake, but to be likewise immediately present and fully intelligible to his mind. Hence the categories in terms of which it was interpreted were not those of time, space, mass, energy, and the like; but substance, essence, matter, form, quality, quantity—categories developed in the attempt to throw into scientific form the facts and relations observed in man's unaided sense-experience of the world and the main uses which he made it serve. Man was believed to be active in his acquisition of knowledge—nature passive. When he observed a distant object, something proceeded from his eye to that object rather than from the object to his eye. And, of course, that which was real about objects was that which could be immediately perceived about them by human senses. Things that appeared different *were* different substances, such as ice, water and steam. The famous puzzle of the water hot to one hand and cold to the other was a genuine difficulty to medieval physics, because for it heat and cold were {53} distinct substances. How then could the same water possess both heat and cold?<sup>119</sup>

*One of the great tragedies of church history is that the Roman Catholic Church resisted the rise of modern science in the mistaken belief it was defending the teachings of the Bible rather than the medieval synthesis of Aristotle and the Bible. At the same time we agree with Dampier that*

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119. Edwin Arthur Burt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949), 4–5. Cf. A. C. Crombie, *Augustine to Galileo* (London: Mercury Books, W. Heinemann Ltd., 1961), vols. 1 and 2.

Bruno was burned at the stake in 1600 “and was condemned by the Inquisition, not so much for his science, as for his philosophy and his zeal for religious reform.”<sup>120</sup> Dampier also points out that the Papacy silenced Galileo upon the instigation of the academic world of the time, which was chiefly Aristotelian.<sup>121</sup>

Of the evil consequences of such synthesizing, Alan Richardson writes in *The Bible in the Age of Science*:

So well had Aquinas succeeded in Christianizing Aristotle that when the authority of Aristotle in the sphere of astronomy or physics was called in question, it seemed as though Christian truth itself was being impiously assailed. So completely had Aristotle and the Bible been harmonized in the mediaeval synthesis of natural and revealed theology that the overthrow of Aristotelian philosophy by the rise of modern science seemed to the Aristotelian philosophers, though not to the new scientists themselves, to involve the rejection of the biblical revelation as well.... *The worldview which the new scientific movement had to destroy before it could come to maturity was that based on Aristotle and Ptolemy; it was not derived from the Bible, and, in the event, the Bible has continued to exercise authority over the minds of men long after Aristotle has been deposed.*<sup>122</sup>

Both Stanford Reid in *Christianity and Scholarship* and R. Hooykaas in *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science* have argued with some justification that it was mainly due to the Protestant Reformers’ rejection of the authority of Aristotle in natural and social science, and their return to the biblical doctrines of the creation of the world by Almighty God, and of the cultural mandate given to man to have dominion over the world, and of man’s calling to be God’s prophet, priest, and king in the creation, that modern science was born.

In Calvin’s view of nature, according to Stanford Reid, the biblical doctrine of creation holds pride of place. The classical Greek *deification of nature* now gave place in Calvin’s thought to the *secularization of nature*. The God who has revealed Himself in the Bible is no immanent principle {54} of being or even a divine demiurge, as the Greeks had

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120. Dampier, *History*, 124.

121. *Ibid.*

122. Alan Richardson, *The Bible in the Age of Science* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 11–12 (emphasis added).

supposed, but a *personal* ruler who created the universe out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) according to His sovereign will. Matter as well as design and form are equally God's creatures; neither can exist one moment apart from His divine will. Neither form nor substance, universals nor particulars, can be co-eternal with God. Instead, there are two levels of reality, the eternal and the temporal. Calvin insisted that temporal reality forms one vast system, not of substantial forms superimposed upon an eternally preexisting and recalcitrant matter, as Plato had supposed, but of *phenomena and laws*. The order of nature for Calvin forms one grand machine which manifests God's wisdom, goodness, and power.<sup>123</sup>

Writing of the tremendous historical significance of this Reformed return to the biblical conception of nature as the creation of God, R. Hooykaas, then of the Free University of Amsterdam, said in the *Free University Quarterly*:

Modern science arose when the consequences of the biblical conception of reality were fully accepted. In the late 16th and 17th centuries science was led out of the blind alley into which it had got itself through the philosophy of Antiquity and the Middle Ages. New horizons were opened. The picture of the world as an organism was replaced by that of the world as a mechanism. It was not self-generated but made; it is not self-supporting but it needs maintenance.<sup>124</sup>

No early modern scientist has better expressed this mechanistic-mathematical view of nature than Galileo. In his polemical work, *The Assayer*, Galileo wrote:

Philosophy is written in this great book, the universe, which stands continually open to our gaze. But the book cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and read the letters in which it is composed. It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangle, circles, and other geometric figures without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it; without these, one wanders about in a dark labyrinth.<sup>125</sup>

Marjorie Grene comments upon this statement of Galileo in her *Approaches to a Philosophical Biology* as follows:

123. W. Stanford Reid, *Christianity and Scholarship* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1966), 55–77.

124. R. Hooykaas, *Free University Quarterly* 8 (October 1961): 259.



So authoritative is the place of mathematical physics in our conception of scientific knowledge that we take this pronouncement as the enunciation, trail-blazing in its time, of what is now a truism. Applied mathematics is the paradigm case of science, science the paradigm {55} case of knowledge; *of course* someday all we know or can know will be statable in strict mathematical form.<sup>126</sup>

According to this new mechanistic view of nature, the truths of nature consist in mathematical facts; *what is real and intelligible in nature is that which is measurable and quantitative*. Qualitative distinctions, like those between colors and sounds, and so forth, have no place in the new mechanistic picture of the world. Such secondary qualities are merely modifications produced by us by the operation of determinate natural bodies on our sense-organs. Without this *geometrization* of physics and astronomy, modern science as we know it would have been impossible. Of this new view of nature Hooykaas points out:

Whereas a living organism suggests the idea of an immanent final cause (the maintenance of the life of the individual), a machine finds its reason for being in the plan of its maker and outside of itself. A world organism has been *generated*; a world mechanism has been *fabricated*. That is why the latter fits in more suitably with a biblical view of the world.<sup>127</sup>

Michael B. Foster has suggested that this return to the biblical view of nature as God's creation was indispensable to the development of modern science. Only a view of the natural order which takes seriously the *freedom of God in creation* can give rise to the realization that the *contingent regularities of nature must be investigated by direct observa-*

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125. Quoted by Marjorie Grene in *Approaches to a Philosophical Biology* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 10. Grene then goes on to refute this mechanistic view of reality in a discussion of the views of the German biologist, Adolf Portmann.

126. *Ibid.*, 10–11.

127. R. Hooykaas, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 15. He goes on to write, "So seventeenth century mechanistic philosophy was not a new compromise of Christianity, this time with ancient materialism instead of ancient organicism or idealism, but rather a step towards the Christianization and emancipation of natural science. Neither the de-deification of the world by the materialists, nor the rationalization of the world by the idealists, has been able to find the right pattern for science. Evidently, the mechanization of the world picture (a radical de-deification in the biblical sense) was necessary to do this" (15).

*tion of the facts by experiment.* It cannot be apprehended by an aristocratic intelligence which expects to find itself at home in a hierarchical rational order. It cannot be without significance that modern science as we know it today did in fact arise in the homelands of the Reformation, which acknowledged that God alone is the sovereign Creator of heaven and earth, nor that the most ardent and dedicated pioneers of the new scientific movement, men such as Petrus Ramus, Palissy, Ambrose Pare, Sir Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle, and John Ray, were all devoted students of God's Word.<sup>128</sup> {56}

### *The Reformation Recovery of the Cultural Mandate and the Calling*

The rediscovery of God's sovereignty over His creation at the time of the Reformation not only resulted in the recovery of the biblical idea of nature as contingent upon God's Eternal Decrees, but also led to the rediscovery of God's world in its true dimensions. The *contingency of nature* was no longer viewed as a defect, as it had been in the eyes of the Renaissance Platonists, but rather an addition, by which creation is more than a mere artifact. The world has been created in accordance with God's laws and structuring for it, and therefore we can find *order* in it. Man, being made in God's image, can understand something of it but not completely or exhaustively. Man cannot read *all* the Creator's thoughts after Him. Nature is not fully perspicuous to man's reason; man, being made only in the *image* of God, cannot fully understand all God's works in creation, any more than an image reflected in the mirror is the real object of which it is only the reflection. Such an attitude encouraged Calvinist scientists to be humble in the presence of God's wonders in creation, even as they sought to unveil its mysteries.

With this new interest in the Father's world came the insistence that man has the responsibility laid upon him by the cultural mandate and his vocation to be God's "prophet, priest, and king," to develop the hidden potentialities of God's creation by means of his culture and science.

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128. Michael B. Foster, "The Christian Doctrine of Creation" and "The Rise of Modern Science," in *Mind*, n.s., 18 and 44 (1934–1936): 439ff., and 45: 1ff. For a good discussion of Foster's argument consult E. L. Mascall, *Christian Theology and Natural Science* (London: Longmans, 1956).

Man's culture and science were thus understood by Calvinist scientists to be the result of a divinely imposed task. *Culture and science became in Calvinist-Puritan eyes just as true vocations as the sacred ministry of Christ's church.*

Neither Calvin nor those who came after him held any brief for mere learning as such. Man's knowledge and abilities must be applied to good use. They held upon the biblical grounds of the Great Cultural Mandate, or Dominion Charter, as Nigel Lee has called it in *The Central Significance of Culture*,<sup>129</sup> that God has placed man upon this earth to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it and have dominion" over it (Gen. 1:28). Thus, man should employ the good gifts of God for the benefit of human need and, as Francis Bacon called it, "the improvement of man's estate." This *utilitarian approach* is found not only in the writings of John Calvin but in Zanchi, Palissy, Pare, Ramus, Isaac Beeckman, Francis Bacon, and, as we shall see, in the writings of the seventeenth-century English Puritans such as John Wilkins, Ray, and Boyle. Due to this recovery of the biblical doctrine of the cultural mandate, Calvinists no longer saw the world as something evil from which man should flee, as the medieval Roman Catholic monks had tended to do. Rather, they believed that God has placed man in this world to develop its potentialities {57} to the best of his ability, that he might thereby better glorify God and better serve his fellow men. *It is not only the scientist's business to think God's thoughts after Him, but it is also his duty to reveal the value of scientific discovery for human life.*

As part of his great cultural mandate, the Calvinist scientists also believed that man is called to serve God in whatever sphere or station of life he finds himself. *From this great Reformation doctrine of the calling, there has been derived the moral and spiritual dynamic which helped to bring about, first, the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, and then the industrial revolution of the eighteenth.* By endowing common labor with Christian dignity and worth, Luther and Calvin gave the workers of Reformed lands a sense of their dignity and importance.

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129. Francis Nigel Lee, *The Central Significance of Culture* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), 1–20.

As an example of what this meant in practice, we may cite the example of Isaac Beeckman, who was born of Huguenot parents in Middelburg, Holland. His father, Abraham Beeckman, was a manufacturer of candles and water conduits for breweries, aqueducts, etc. With his younger brother Jacob, Isaac went to Leyden University to study theology. In the meantime, he also found occasion to return for some months to Rotterdam to learn mathematics and nautics. Isaac returned to Middelburg in 1601. Instead of going out preaching, he became an apprentice in his father's business and afterwards settled on his own account as a chandler at Zierikzee in 1611. According to Hooykaas, Dr. Beeckman founded a Mechanical College in Rotterdam whose members were Beeckman himself, together with a silk-dyer, a merchant, a millwright, a shipwright, a carpenter, a physician, a mathematician, and a surgeon.<sup>130</sup>

A generation earlier, Gresham College in London, known as "a hotbed of Puritanism," was founded as a similar meeting place for the learned and the mechanics. Of this Puritan influence upon the rise of modern science Christopher Hill writes in *The Century of Revolution: 1603–1714*:

Puritan ways of thought had influence far outside the circle of religious ideas. Puritan divines insisted on the duty of actively serving God, mankind, the Commonwealth, by working faithfully in one's calling.... The Puritan doctrine of the calling ceased to maintain "degree" and became its opposite, a doctrine of individualism.

Calvinism liberated those who believed themselves to be the elect from a sense of sin, of helplessness; it encouraged effort, industry, study, a sense of purpose. It prepared the way for modern science. Historians have noted the Protestant origins of many of the early scientists. The Puritan preachers insisted that the universe was law-abiding. The Reverend George Hakewill published in 1627 *An Apologie or Declaration of the Power and Providence of God in the Government of the World*. This raised the standard of the Moderns against the Ancients, and argued that scientific observation was more {58} important than traditional authority. It was man's duty to study the universe and find out its laws. This would help to restore the human mind to the primitive vigour which it had enjoyed before the Fall.... Bacon called men to study the world about them, the activities of craftsmen rather than the

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130. Hooykaas, *Religion*, 91.

speculations of philosophers. He referred specifically to the new industries—dyeing, glass-making, gunpowder, paper-making, agriculture—as proper objects of scientific investigation. He pleaded for a restoration of “the commerce of the mind with things.” “The empire of man over things depends wholly on the arts and sciences. For we cannot command nature except by obeying her.” ... Even Bacon’s method had forward-looking implications. “My way of discovering sciences goes far to level men’s wits”; it depended on the cooperative activity of many researchers. The end of knowledge was “the relief of man’s estate,” “to subdue and overcome the necessities and miseries of humanity,” “to endow the condition and life of man with new powers and works.” Learning and power were identical. *Acceptance of this novel doctrine constituted the greatest intellectual revolution of the century.*<sup>131</sup>

From the practical experience of life which these practical men of science as well as craftsmen gained, there grew an increasing number of inventions and technical discoveries. It was a Dutch optician, Johann Lippersheim, who in 1605 invented the telescope and thus suggested to Galileo the means he needed for making astronomical observations. In 1590 the optician Zacharias Jansen invented the compound microscope. The former invention increased the scope of man’s knowledge of the macrocosm while the latter has greatly expanded his knowledge of the microcosm: between these two inventions, man’s naive conceptions of space were completely upset.<sup>132</sup> *By uniting the logic of science with its experimental practice by means of their doctrine of the calling, the leaders of the Reformation perhaps rendered their greatest contribution to the advancement of modern science.*

The material potentialities of the new scientific attitude towards the world might have waited in vain for their fulfillment, as Benjamin Farrington has shown to be the case with ancient Greek science,<sup>133</sup> had it not been for Martin Luther’s recovery of the biblical doctrine that

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131. Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution: 1603–1714* (New York: Norton Library, W. W. Norton & Co., 1966), 92–94 (emphasis added).

132. Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (London: Routledge and Sons, 1947), 126.

133. Benjamin Farrington, *Greek Science*, vol. 1 (London: Pelican Books, 1949), 141–49.

man serves God just as much at his workbench as on his knees in God's house on the Lord's Day.

Edgar Zilsel has indeed found the key to the rise of modern science in this *alliance* between the *thinker* and the *manual* workers during early modern times; a conjunction which was made possible only by the Protestant {59} doctrine of the calling. In his article, "The Sociological Roots of Science," Zilsel pointed out that:

The university scholars and the humanistic literati of the Renaissance were exceedingly proud of their social rank. Both disdained uneducated people. They avoided the vernacular and wrote and spoke Latin only. Further, they were attached to the upper classes, sharing the social prejudices of the nobility and the rich merchants and bankers and despising manual labor. Both, therefore, adopted the ancient distinction between liberal and mechanical arts: only professions which did not require manual work were considered by them, their patrons, and their public to be worthy of well-bred men.

The social antithesis of mechanical and liberal arts, of hands and tongue, influenced all intellectual and professional activity in the Renaissance. The university-trained medical doctors contented themselves more or less with commenting on the medical writings of antiquity; the surgeons who did manual work such as operating and dissecting belonged with the barbers and had a social position similar to that of midwives. Literati were much more highly esteemed than were artists. In the fourteenth century the latter were not separated from whitewashers and stone-dressers, and, like all craftsmen, were organized in guilds....

These superior craftsmen made contacts with learned astronomers, medical doctors, and humanists. They were told by their learned friends of Archimedes, Euclid, and Vitruvius; their inventive spirit, however, originated in their own professional work. The surgeons and some artists dissected, the surveyors and navigators measured, the artist-engineers and instrument makers were perfectly used to experimentation and measurement, and their quantitative thumb rules are the forerunners of the physical laws of modern science. The occult qualities and substantial forms of the scholastics, the verbosity of the humanists were of no use to them. All these superior artisans had already developed considerable theoretical knowledge in the fields of mechanics, acoustics, chemistry, metallurgy, descriptive geometry, and anatomy. But, since they had not learned how to proceed systematically, their achievements form a collection of isolated discoveries. Leonardo, for example, deals sometimes quite wrongly

with mechanical problems which, as his diaries reveal, he himself had solved correctly years before. The superior craftsmen, therefore, cannot be called scientists themselves, but they were the immediate predecessors of science. Of course, they were not regarded as respectable scholars by contemporary public opinion. The two components of scientific method were still separated before 1600—methodical training of intellect was preserved for upper-class learned people, for university scholars, and for humanists; experimentation and observation were left to more or less plebeian workers....

As long as this separation persisted, as long as scholars did not think of using the disdained methods of manual workers, science in the modern meaning was impossible. About 1550, however, with the advance of technology, a few learned authors began to be interested {60} in the mechanical arts, which had become economically so important, and composed Latin and vernacular works on the geographical discoveries, navigation and cartography, mining and metallurgy, surveying, mechanics and gunnery. Eventually the social barrier between the two components of the scientific method broke down, and the methods of the superior craftsmen were adopted by academically trained scholars: real science was born. This was achieved about 1600 with William Gilbert (1540–1603), Galileo (1564–1642), and Francis Bacon (1561–1626).... On the whole, the rise of the methods of the manual workers to the ranks of the academically trained scholars at the end of the sixteenth century is the decisive event in the genesis of science.<sup>134</sup>

While agreeing with Zinsel's analysis, I would point out that *he has completely ignored the Reformation doctrine of the calling, which alone provided the psychological and philosophical motivation or knot tying the two components of modern science together*, nor does he link Gilbert's and Bacon's contributions to the development of science to their Calvinist-Puritan presuppositions. *The doctrine of the calling provided the religious sanction for both manual and experimental work.* Of the significance of this union of theory and practice in scientific work, Hooykaas writes:

It goes without saying that this co-operation of artificers and scholars led to a rapid development and refinement of the experimental method. Manual skill and acute methodical thinking now went

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134. E. Zinsel, "The Sociological Roots of Science," *American Journal of Sociology* (1941–1942): 544–60.

together. Experimental work could become respectable once the mechanician's labour became accepted as honourable. The social emancipation of the artisan class, especially in typical burgher societies such as Nürnberg, Antwerp, London and Amsterdam, developed alongside a religious emancipation, which furthered an ethics of labour in which every calling, and not only that of a priest, was considered as "divine."

Undoubtedly, the general familiarity with the Bible in Reformation circles stimulated this conception. The sixteenth century Puritan theologian William Perkins considered a manual trade, performed to the glory of God and the benefit of mankind, to be as blessed before God as that of a magistrate or a minister of religion. Hugh Latimer told his audience that nobody should disdain to follow Christ, the carpenter, in a "common calling," as all occupations were blessed by His example.... The wedding service of the Netherlands' Reformed Churches speaks of the "divine calling" of the husband. It was recognized that it was not manual work as such, but its toilsome nature, which was the penalty for sin. Technological improvements were sometimes considered as part of a Christian restoration, precisely because they lessened the burdensome character of manual labour.<sup>135</sup>

The sixteenth-century medical writer, Richard Bostocke, held the view {61} that the reform of religion had been indispensable to the reform of medicine, and that Copernicus and Paracelsus had restored the sciences just as Calvin and Luther had restored religion. Referring to the new iatrochemistry, Bostocke wrote that Paracelsus "was not the author and inventor of this arte as the followers of the Ethnicks physicke doe imagine, ... no more than Wickliffe, Luther ... Swinglius, Calvin, etc., were the authors and inventors of the Gospell and religion in Christes Church when they restored it to his puritie, according to God's word."<sup>136</sup>

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135. Hooykaas, *Religion*, 92.

136. Quoted by S. F. Mason in "The Scientific Revolution and the Protestant Reformation," in *The Annals of Science* (Philadelphia, 1953). Cf. S. F. Mason, *Main Currents in Scientific Thought* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1956).



### The Religious Origins of Modern Scientists

It might be argued by secular humanist historians and sociologists that these Calvinist-Puritan attitudes and values did not directly contribute to the rise of modern science, and that if they had any effect at all, it was fortuitous. In reply to this argument, I refer the reader to a study made by Alphonse de Candolle, *Historie des sciences et des savants* in 1885, which has since been enlarged to include a study of the religious origins of American scientists by R. H. Knapp and H. B. Goodrich in their book, *Origins of American Scientists*. Both works leave little doubt that statistics show that “scientists have been drawn disproportionately from American Protestant stock.”<sup>137</sup>

During the nineteenth century, when statistics came into vogue, de Candolle, who came of a Huguenot family of French scientists, pointed out that of the ninety-two foreign members elected to the Paris Academy of Sciences from 1666 to 1883, there were only eighteen Roman Catholics as against eighty Protestants. But as Candolle himself suggested, this comparison is not conclusive, since it omits French scientists who may have been Catholic. To correct this error, he took the list of foreign members of the Royal Society of London at two periods when there were more French scientists included than at any other time: 1829 and 1869. In the former year, the total number of Protestant and Catholic scientists (who were foreign members of the Society) was about equal, while in 1869 the number of Protestant scientists actually exceeded that of the Catholics. But, outside the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, there were in that year in Europe as a whole 139.5 million Roman Catholics and only 44 million Protestants. In other words, though in the general population there were more than three times as many Roman Catholics as Protestants, there were actually more Protestant than Roman Catholic scientists.<sup>138</sup> {62}

Nor should we forget that even in the nineteenth century, when the antireligious bias of many American and European scientists was in its heyday, a large proportion of the outstanding natural scientists of that

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137. R. H. Knapp and H. B. Goodrich, *Origins of American Scientists* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 274.

138. A. de Candolle, *Historie des sciences et des savants* (Geneva-Basel, 1885), 329–30.

century were firm believers in the God of the Bible. According to Marxist historian of science, J. G. Crowther, in *The Social Relations of Science*, the four most eminent British physicists of the nineteenth century were Davy, Faraday, Joule, and Clark Maxwell, all of whom were devout Christians.<sup>139</sup>

### *The Relation of Calvinist-Puritanism and 17th-Century English Science*

Max Weber's suggestion of a relation between Calvinism and modern science, made specifically in connection with the Calvinist Puritans of seventeenth-century England, was taken up by Robert K. Merton, an outstanding American sociologist, and put to a careful empirical test.

In his famous paper first published under the title, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England* in 1938, and now reprinted with the title "Puritanism, Pietism and Science," in *Social Theory and Social Structure*,<sup>140</sup> Merton specifically claims that modern science is an outgrowth of the life-and-world views contained in early Protestantism and especially in Calvinist-Puritanism. Max Weber saw capitalism coming from Calvinism; Merton sees science as yet another contribution of ascetic Protestantism and its ethic. He summarizes the character of his argument with the following statement at the beginning of his essay:

It is the thesis of this study that the Puritan ethic, as an ideal-typical expression of the value-attitudes basic to ascetic Protestantism generally, so canalized the interests of the seventeenth-century Englishmen as to constitute one important *element* in the enhanced cultivation of science. The deep-rooted religious *interests* of the day demanded in their forceful implications the systematic, rational, and empirical study of Nature for the glorification of God in His works and for the control of the corrupt world.<sup>141</sup>

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139. J. G. Crowther, *The Social Relations of Science* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), 25–45.

140. Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1967). Cf. R. K. Merton, *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

141. Merton, *Social Theory*, 574–75.

Merton isolated several facets of the Puritan ethic and practice that stimulated interest in science. He surveyed the attitudes of the contemporary scientists and concluded that these seventeenth-century scientists were indeed functioning as innovators. While they still held to the ethical values and religious goals of Calvinist-Puritan doctrine, they were engaged in a modification of the means whereby such goals were to be attained. Specifically, they were in the process of *turning to nature itself* rather than {63} to theological inspiration or speculation as a means of attaining Calvinist-Puritan goals. Merton examined the set of religious beliefs and attitudes which constituted seventeenth-century Calvinist Puritanism, beliefs expressed in theological writings, in sermons, and in books of moral guidance for the layman. *It was this set of beliefs which in Merton's view made the difference in the propensity to scientific activity.* What were some of these beliefs and goals?

First among the goals was the *endeavor to serve and glorify God by means of scientific activity, experiment, and research.* If Puritanism instilled in man the desire to glorify God in all His works, and if Puritanism had some bearing on the development of early modern science, then the seventeenth-century English scientist would evaluate his work in terms of the extent to which it worked toward the greater glorification of God in such scientific research. This, claims Merton, is what did in fact happen. Seventeenth-century English scientists not only prefaced their works as being dedicated to the greater glory of God, but saw the true ends of scientific endeavor as being directed toward the glorification of the Creator. Merton writes of this religious sanction for scientific work amongst seventeenth-century English scientists as follows:

Even a cursory examination of these writings suffices to disclose one outstanding fact: certain elements of the Protestant ethic had pervaded the realm of scientific endeavour and had left their indelible stamp upon the attitudes of scientists toward their work.... Thus, in Boyle's highly commended apologia for science it is maintained that the study of Nature is to the greater glory of God and the Good of Man. This is the motif which recurs in constant measure.... Earlier in the century, this keynote had been sounded in the resonant eloquence of that "veritable apostle of the learned societies," Francis Bacon.... As one would expect from the son of a "learned, eloquent, and religious woman, full of puritanic fervour" who was admittedly influenced by his mother's attitudes, he speaks in the *Advancement of Learning* of the

true end of scientific activity as the “glory of the Creator and the relief of man’s estate.” Since, as is quite clear from many official and private documents, the Baconian teachings constituted the basic principles on which the Royal Society was patterned, it is not strange that the same sentiment is expressed in the charter of the Society.

In his last will and testament, Boyle [the founder of modern chemistry] echoes the same attitude, petitioning the Fellows of the Society in this wise: “Wishing them also a happy success in their laudable attempts, to discover the true Nature of the Works of God; and praying that they and all other Searchers into Physical Truths, may cordially refer their Attainments to the Glory of the Great Author of Nature, and to the Comfort of Mankind.” John Wilkins proclaimed the experimental study of Nature to be a most effective means of begetting in men a veneration for God. Francis Willoughby was prevailed upon to publish his works—which he had deemed unworthy of publication—only when Ray insisted that it was a means of glorifying God. Ray’s {64} *Wisdom of God* ... is a panegyric of those who glorify Him by studying His works.<sup>142</sup>

This motivation for early modern English scientific research has been confirmed independently of Merton by the researches of R. Hooykaas in *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science*, where he writes:

The central theme of Reformed theology was “the glory of God.” Kepler wrote in 1598 that the astronomers, as priests of God to the book of nature, ought to keep in their minds not the glory of their own intellect, but the glory of God above everything else.... The same conception of the Two Books [of Scripture and Nature] and their parallelism is found in the work of Francis Bacon.<sup>143</sup>

The Calvinist-Puritan ethic in England was also strongly *utilitarian*—that is to say, it emphasized social welfare. The early modern Calvinist scientists were as eager to indicate the social merit and worth of their work as they were to make it an effort dedicated to God’s glory. Moreover, scientific studies promoted discipline, hard work, and serious rather than idle tongues, all good Calvinist-Puritan values. Mere abstract thinking about the world, such as Plato and Aristotle had advocated as the ideal of the scientific theorist, the Calvinists roundly rejected. Instead, they demanded that the value of science for the

142. *Ibid.*, 575–77.

143. Hooykaas, *Religion*, 105.

improvement of man's estate be shown. *Under the Lord's direct orders, man has been given the tremendous task of developing a material and social culture which would manifest the goodness and love of God, thus providing man with the material conditions for living the Christian life.* By virtue of this religious motive, the Calvinist-Puritans, instead of running away from human culture in the interests of saving their own precious souls, sought to conquer it in the power of the Holy Spirit for Christ's sake.

Such an approach to man's social and material environment provided another religious sanction and psychological motivation for the emergence of the modern scientific attitude towards life. *It broke down the centuries-old fatalism which had been content to accept man's lot upon this earth as decreed by Fate.* The Calvinist-Puritans thus rejected the medieval idea of ascetic withdrawal from the world as being unbiblical and un-Christian. *At the same time they also rejected the Renaissance humanist ideal of man using God's gifts in the creation merely for the satisfaction of his own selfish wants and pleasure.* Instead, the Calvinist-Puritans insisted that man has the duty and responsibility to apply the results of his scientific research for the benefit of meeting human needs. This meant use in moderation and in accordance with the standards of righteousness, sobriety, and love for one's neighbor which God demands of His people. {65}

Of this religious motivation for scientific work, Abraham Kuyper has written in *Lectures on Calvinism*:

... Calvinism puts an end once and for all to contempt for the world, neglect of temporal and undervaluation of cosmical things. Cosmical life has regained its worth not at the expense of things eternal, but by virtue of its capacity as God's handiwork and as a revelation of God's attributes.... It is deserving of notice that our best Calvinistic Confessions speak of two means whereby we know God, viz., the Scriptures and Nature. And still more remarkable it is that Calvin, instead of simply treating Nature as an accessorial item as so many Theologians were inclined to do, was accustomed to compare the Scriptures to a pair of spectacles, enabling us to decipher again the divine Thoughts, written by God's Hand in the book of Nature, which had become obliterated in consequence of the curse. *Thus vanished every dread possibility that he who occupied himself with nature was wasting his capacities in pursuit of vain and idle things.* It was perceived, on the contrary, that for God's sake, our attention may not be withdrawn

from the life of nature and creation; the study of the body regained its place of honor beside the study of the soul; and the social organization of mankind on earth was again looked upon as being as well worthy an object of human science as the congregation of the perfect saints in heaven. This also explains the close relation existing between Calvinism and Humanism. In as far as Humanism endeavored to substitute life in this world for the eternal, every Calvinist opposed the Humanist. But in as much as the Humanist contented himself with a plea for a proper acknowledgment of secular life, the Calvinist was his ally.<sup>144</sup>

There was, then, a congruence between some of the basic tenets of Calvinist-Puritan thought and practice and those of the early men of science. For this reason, no Calvinist today need have any fear of modern science, as his own spiritual forebears were mainly responsible for bringing it into existence. *Calvinist values provided the religious sanction and motivation for truly experimental science.* The scientists could feel justified in their scientific work in the belief that such activity was meaningful, not only to the scientist as an individual but also in a much greater context—science was an entry into the works of the Creator Himself and a means of service in the kingdom of God as well as the kingdom of Man. *There was a greater purpose to a scientific formulation than the mere statement of an empirical regularity or scientific hypothesis.*

In the third place, the Calvinist-Puritans in England as on the Continent placed a *high value on human reason* because God had chosen man alone to possess it and because it restrains laziness and idolatry. The Puritans {66} did not esteem the empirical world for its own sake but rather as the stage on which rational, orderly activity—so useful for science—was approved by God. *The congeniality of these religious views for scientific activity is obvious.* Of this Puritan stress on the importance of reason, Robert K. Merton writes as follows:

The exaltation of the faculty of reason in the Puritan ethos—based partly on the conception of rationality as a curbing device of the passions—inevitably led to a sympathetic attitude toward those activities

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144. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, [1898] 1961), 119–21 (emphasis added). Cf. Abraham Kuyper's further exposition of his views on science in his *Principles of Sacred Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 56–210.

which demand the constant application of rigorous reasoning. But again, in contrast to medieval rationalism, reason is deemed subservient and auxiliary to empiricism. Sprat is quick to indicate the pre-eminent adequacy of science in this respect. It is on this point probably that Puritanism and the scientific temper are in the most salient agreement, for the combination of *rationalism and empiricism* which is so pronounced in the Puritan ethic forms the essence of the spirit of modern science. Puritanism was suffused with the rationalism of Neoplatonism, derived largely through an appropriate modification of Augustine's teachings. But it did not stop there. Associated with the designated necessity of dealing successfully with the practical affairs of life within this world—a derivation from the peculiar twist afforded largely by the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and *certitudo salutis* through successful worldly activity—was an emphasis upon empiricism. These two currents brought to convergence through the logic of an inherently consistent system of values were so associated with the other values of the time as to prepare the way for the acceptance of a similar coalescence in natural science. *Empiricism and rationalism were canonized, beatified, so to speak.* It may very well be that the Puritan ethos did not directly influence the method of science and that this was simply a parallel development in the internal history of science, but it is evident that through the psychological compulsion toward certain modes of thought and conduct this value-complex made an empirically-founded science commendable rather than, as in the medieval period, reprehensible or at best acceptable on sufferance. This could not but have directed some talents into scientific fields which otherwise would have engaged in more highly esteemed professions.<sup>145</sup>

Christopher Hill in *The Century of Revolutions: 1603–1714* confirms Merton's thesis of the contribution made by Calvinist-Puritans, especially during the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell, when they held power. While discussing the relationship between "Religion and Ideas, 1640–1660," Hill writes of the period as an "intoxicating era of free discussion and free speculation," and even speaks of "The Victory of Science" as follows:

In this atmosphere Baconian science came into its own. Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, though published in 1628, obtained no prominence until after 1640. The two sides in the Civil {67} War, Miss Nicolson tells us, correspond to the two camps in

145. Merton, *Social Theory*, 579 (emphasis added).

astronomy. But by the sixteen-fifties the ideas of Ptolemy were dead, though those of Copernicus and Tycho Brahe still strove for the succession. "The late times of the civil war," wrote Bishop Sprat later, "... brought this advantage with them, that they stirred up men's minds from long ease, ... and made them active, industrious and inquisitive." This led to "an universal desire and appetite after knowledge." Royalists were purged from Oxford, and a group of Baconians, the nucleus of the later Royal Society, moved into the university behind the Parliamentary armies. Wilkins, Cromwell's brother-in-law, became Warden of Wadham; Goddard, Cromwell's physician, Warden of Merton; Wallis, who had decoded Royalist cyphers during the Civil War, Professor of Geometry; Petty, Commonwealth surveyor of Ireland, Professor of Anatomy. For the first time in its history (and the last until very recent years) Oxford became a leading center of scientific activity. These scholars, who valued "no knowledge but as it hath a tendency to use," attracted to Oxford men later to become famous, like Christopher Wren, Thomas Sydenham, Thomas Sprat, Robert Boyle, Robert Hooke, John Locke. Even Clarendon had to admit that revolutionary Oxford "yielded a harvest of extraordinary good and sound knowledge in all parts of learning"

From 1650 "self-conscious science began to determine the main direction of technology." Robert Boyle disposed of the medieval theories of the alchemists, and founded the modern science of chemistry. Whereas before 1640 Bacon's had been a voice crying in the wilderness, by 1660 his was the dominant intellectual influence. To this, given freedom of discussion, Puritanism had continued to contribute. The quest for personal religious *experience*, to which so many Puritan diaries and spiritual autobiographies are dedicated, is closely akin to the experimental spirit in science.<sup>146</sup>

### *Merton's Empirical Testing of His Hypothesis*

The fact that Calvinist-Puritan thought thus emphasized the religious values of working unto "the glory of God," utilitarianism, empiricism, and rationality might have led, says Merton, only to a fortuitous relationship to the rise of modern experimental science. Merton therefore suggested that a significant empirical test would be to determine whether or not Puritan-Calvinists, in the early days of scientific discovery, were more often found within the ranks of scientists than we

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146. Hill, *Century*, 179–80.



would expect on the basis of their representation in the total population of England during the seventeenth century.

To determine this, Merton investigated the first-generation membership of the Royal Society, an “invisible college” of scientists, in its early formative years. He made a detailed and quantitative study of scientific activity in England, using chiefly the papers in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society as his evidence. On the basis of his research Merton {68} was able to demonstrate that the number of Calvinist-Puritans who were active in science and the extent of their contributions toward it were disproportionately greater than those of other religious groups and particularly of the Roman Catholics. Of this investigation of the Royal Society, which he carried out not only by examining its own journal but also statistical analyses of 6,000 biographies in the *Dictionary of National Biography* of those who comprised the intellectual elite of seventeenth-century England, Merton reports:

The inception of this group is found in the occasional meetings of devotees of science in 1645 and following. Among the leading spirits were John Wilkins, John Wallis, and soon afterwards Robert Boyle and Sir William Petty, upon all of whom religious forces seem to have had a singularly strong influence.

Wilkins, later an Anglican bishop, was raised at the home of his maternal grandfather, John Dod, an outstanding Nonconformist theologian.... Wilkins' influence as Warden of Wadham College was profound: under it came Ward, Rooke, Wren, Sprat and Walter Pope ... all of whom were original members of the Royal Society....

It is hardly a fortuitous circumstance that the leading figures of this nuclear group of the Royal Society were divines or eminently religious men.... It is quite clearly true that the originative spirits of the Society were markedly influenced by Puritan conceptions.

Dean Dorothy Stimson ... has independently arrived at this same conclusion. She points out that of the ten men who constituted the “invisible college,” in 1645, only one, Scarbrough, was clearly non-Puritan. About two of the others there is some uncertainty, though Merret had a Puritan training. The others were all definitely Puritan. Moreover, among the original list of members of the Society of 1663, forty-two of the sixty-eight concerning whom information about their religious orientation is available were clearly Puritan. Considering that the Puritans constituted a relatively small minority in the English population, the fact that they constituted sixty-two percent of the ini-

tial membership of the Society becomes even more striking. Dean Stimson concludes: “that experimental science spread as rapidly as it did in seventeenth-century England seems to me to be in part at least because the moderate Puritans encouraged it.”<sup>147</sup>

Merton then points out that this relationship between Calvinist-Puritanism and modern science was not only evidenced among the members of the Royal Society. It was also found in the new types of schools and colleges which the Puritans founded in England and America.

Of this relationship between Puritan centers of higher education in grammar schools and colleges and seventeenth-century English-American science, Merton writes:

The emphasis of the Puritans upon utilitarianism and empiricism was {69} likewise manifested in the type of education which they introduced and fostered. The “formal grammar grind” of the schools was criticized by them as much as the formalism of the Church.

Prominent among the Puritans who so consistently sought to introduce the new realistic, utilitarian, and empirical education into England was Samuel Hartlib. He formed the connecting link between the various Protestant educators in England and in Europe.... it was Hartlib who was instrumental in broadcasting the educational ideas of Comenius and in bringing him to England.

The Bohemian Reformist, John Amos Comenius, was one of the most influential educators of this period. Basic to the system of education which he promulgated were the norms of utilitarianism and empiricism: values which could only lead to an emphasis upon the study of science and technology....

But the marked emphasis placed by the Puritans upon science and technology may perhaps best be appreciated by a comparison between the Puritan academies and the universities. The latter, even after they had introduced scientific subjects, continued to give an essentially classical education.... The academies, in contrast, held that a truly liberal education was one which was “in touch with life” and which should therefore include as many utilitarian subjects as possible. As Dr. [Irene] Parker [in *Dissenting Academies in England*] puts it:

“... the difference between the two educational systems is seen not so much in the introduction into the academies of “modern” subjects and methods as in the fact that among the Nonconformists there was a

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147. Merton, *Social Theory*, 583–85.

totally different system at work from that found in the universities. The spirit animating the Dissenters was that which had moved Ramus and Comenius in France and Germany and which in England had actuated Bacon and later Hartlib and his circle.”

This comparison of the Puritan academies in England and Protestant educational developments on the Continent is well warranted. The Protestant academies in France devoted much more attention to scientific and utilitarian subjects than did the Catholic institutions. When the Catholics took over many of the Protestant academies, the study of science was considerably diminished. Moreover, ... even in the predominantly Catholic France, much of the scientific work was being done by Protestants. Protestant exiles from France included a large number of important scientists and inventors.<sup>148</sup>

This emphasis of Calvinist-Puritans upon a scientific education may help to explain the disproportionate representation of Protestants within the ranks of scientists which has continued from the seventeenth century. Merton adduces statistical evidence to indicate that this disproportionate participation in science by Protestants as against Catholics holds right up to modern times for the European continent, as well as for Great Britain and the United States. {70}

*One of the consequences or latent functions of Calvinist-Puritanism in seventeenth-century England, then, was to set the stage for the development of rational and empirical science.* Merton summarizes his argument by making four main observations. First, the relationships between the emerging natural science and religion were indirect and probably unintended. Second, science, once the ideological orientation and religious sanctions for its original emergence was set, then acquired a degree of functional autonomy. It acquired a character of its own, which eventually would lead to the point where science would appear to be completely removed from religious modes of thought. Third, Merton suggests that the process of the institutional modification of Christian thought and the development of new secular institutional forms may have been so subtle as to occur below the threshold of awareness of many of those involved in it. Fourth, the more dramatic conflict between science and religion—particularly during the nine-

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148. *Ibid.*, 585–87.

teenth century—has possibly obscured the more significant relationship which exists between the two.

Merton was explicitly aware that his study followed in the path of Max Weber. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber had been concerned with the influence of ascetic Protestant thought upon the development of modern capitalism. But he had also suggested, in a very sketchy manner, that ascetic Protestantism, that is Calvinist-Puritanism, might be shown to have had a similar influence on the development of science.<sup>149</sup> Merton elaborated what Weber had left implicit and backed up his thesis with empirical evidence to prove his thesis.

### *A Reformational-Biblical Critique of Merton's Thesis*

But what exactly has Merton proved? He has proved that seveneenth-century Calvinist-Puritanism contributed greatly to the development of a *secular humanist* rather than a *reformational-biblical* modern science. He admits as much in the following words: “The fact that science today is largely if not completely divorced from religious sanctions is itself of interest as an example of the process of secularization.”<sup>150</sup>

But how and in what ways did such a secularization of modern science and of modern men's conception of the universe take place? Were there elements in the Calvinist-Puritan ethos and goals, as these related to scientific activities and values, which contained within themselves the seeds of their own decay? Had the Calvinists really succeeded in bringing about {71} the reformation of science as they had in the reformation of religion, as Thomas Sprat claimed when he noted “the agreement that is between the present design of the Royal Society, and that of our Church in its beginning. They both may lay equal claim to the

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149. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner, 1958). Weber concluded his 1904-05 essay by describing one of “the next tasks” as that of “searching out the significance of ascetic rationalism, which has only been touched in the foregoing sketch ... for the development of philosophical and scientific empiricism, and for ... technical development” (182–83).

150. Merton, *Social Theory*, 579.

word Reformation; the one having compassed it in Religion, the other purposing it in Philosophy.”<sup>151</sup>

Was this new philosophy of nature and of science as reformational and as biblical as it claimed? If so, why did it succumb so easily and so quickly to the apostate spirits of first Platonism in the seventeenth century, then Deism in the eighteenth century, and finally idealism-romanticism and scientific materialism in the nineteenth century? Was there not a fatal flaw in the Calvinist-Puritan theory and practice of natural science which doomed it from its very beginnings? Merton hints at some answers to our questions in the following passage:

The beginnings of such secularization [of science], faintly perceptible in the latter Middle Ages, are manifest in the Puritan ethos. It was in this system of values that reason and experience were first markedly considered as independent means of ascertaining even religious truths. *Faith which is unquestioning and not “rationally weighed,” says Baxter, is not faith but a dream or fancy or opinion. In effect, this grants to science a power which may ultimately limit that of theology.*

Thus, once these processes are clearly understood, it is not surprising or inconsistent that Luther particularly ... execrated the cosmology of Copernicus and that Calvin frowned upon the acceptance of many scientific discoveries of his day, while the religious ethic which stemmed from these leaders invited the pursuit of natural science.<sup>152</sup>

Time does not permit us in the rest of this article to deal at any great length with the reasons for the secularization of Calvinist-Puritan economics, politics, and science in their intimate interdependency. However, let us suggest a few factors which may have been responsible.

In the first place some of the Calvinist-Puritans succumbed to the old medieval nature-grace religious ground motive, while others surrendered the biblical religious ground motive of creation, fall, and redemption to the new modern nature-freedom religious ground motive which grew out of the Renaissance. *In either case a disastrous dualism was introduced into the Christian life.* Calvinist-Puritans who returned to the nature-grace ground motive now continued to divide up human life into the realms of the sacred and the secular, looking to the Bible for guidance about religious matters and to their natural rea-

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151. Mason, “Scientific Revolution,” 64.

152. Merton, *Social Theory*, 579–80 (emphasis added).

son and natural law for guidance about the economic, political, and scientific matters, often involving a return to Aristotelianism. Calvinist-Puritans who surrendered to the modern nature-freedom religious ground motive also looked to their natural reason {72} and the natural laws of the universe for a basis of their secular activities. *Both camps, in short, chose to be guided by the autonomy of the natural reason and the "inner light," at least as far as the mundane activities of life were concerned. The issue facing both groups was ultimately one of God's sovereignty and will or of man's autonomy and rational will.* In theory, both types of Calvinist-Puritans in the late seventeenth century no doubt still accepted the sovereignty of God over their lives. In actual economic, political, and scientific practice, however, they had come to adopt the traditional appeal to reason.

*In short, they made human reason and the appeal to experience and natural law, rather than the Word of God, the ordering principle of their scientific activities and criterion of truth.* Having received little guidance from Calvin and Luther in just how to develop a biblically oriented scientific research and methodology, these later Calvinist-Puritans perforce had to turn to *secular humanist models and paradigms*. Hence the enthusiasm with which many of the Calvinist-Puritan scientists received Galileo's doctrine that nature may best be explained in terms of the analogy of a great machine rather than in terms of a great organism. But the trouble with the mechanistic picture of the world is that it is no more biblical than the classical Greek analogy of nature being thought of as a huge organism.<sup>153</sup> *In fact the mechanistic picture of the world positively invited a deistic explanation of the world.* Having built his vast machine, the Creator then simply left it to run by itself, a conclusion the deists of the eighteenth century were only too happy to draw. In spite of Hooykaas's acceptance of the mechanistic analogy, it should be pointed out that according to God's revelation in the Bible, nature is thought of neither as an organism nor as a machine, but as *the Lord's creation continually dependent upon Him* for every moment of its

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153. Thorlief Boman, "History and Nature," in *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek* (London: SCM Press, 1960), 168–75. Cf. Robert E. D. Clark, "Creation's Critics," chap. 2 of *The Universe: Plan or Accident* (London: Paternoster Press, 1949); and Gordon H. Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1964).

existence (Jer. 10:13; Ps. 65:9; 104:27; 145:15; 147:8–9, 16–18; Isa. 28:23–29). H. Wheeler Robinson points out in *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament*:

No doubt this continued maintenance of Nature is effected through established ordinances and inherent energies.... But these ordinances and energies are nowhere conceived as in any sense rivals of God, or limitations on His will; they remain wholly dependent upon His constant support.<sup>154</sup>

Sir Edmund Whittaker, the British historian and philosopher of science, also supports this biblical view, in *The Beginning and End of the World*: {73}

It is necessary to guard against the deistic conception of a God who having constructed the world, left all subsequent happenings to be determined by invariable scientific laws, much as a watchmaker might construct a watch and leave it to run by its own mechanism.<sup>155</sup>

Taking hold of whatever there was available in the scientific heritage of the Western world, the Calvinist-Puritans of the seventeenth century helped to construct a *secular humanist* rather than a *specifically biblical-Christian* paradigm or model of God's creation, not realizing that in so doing, they had helped to secularize science by making man's rational will rather than God's Word the ultimate court of appeal and key to knowledge. *Nowhere was this more evident than the constant appeal made by Puritans to Natural Law.*

In his article published in the *Princeton Theological Review*, titled "The Reformation and Natural Law," in 1909, the German scholar August Lang discussed the part played by this appeal to natural law by Protestant thinkers in the secularization not only of modern econom-

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154. H. Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 24.

155. Sir Edmund Whittaker, *The Beginning and the End of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942), 64. Cf. Whittaker's *Space and Spirit* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1946), in which he criticizes Newtonian mechanistic determinism in physics in the light of the new evidence from quantum physics. For a similar critique of scientific materialism also consult Karl Heim's *The Transformation of the Scientific World View* (London: SCM Press, 1953) and C. A. Coulson, *Science and Christian Belief* (Oxford University Press, 1954), and Marjorie Grene's *Approaches to a Philosophical Biology* (already cited in this article).

ics and politics but also of modern science. In his article Lang examined the relation between the Reformation and Natural Law. He pointed out that “natural law was one of the principal historical factors in the formation of the modern spirit ... it became also the starting point for natural theology,” the broad religious basis of the religion of the English Deists and Cambridge Platonists as well as of the European movement of thought known as the “Enlightenment.”<sup>156</sup>

How, Lang asked, “could this natural law spring up on the ground of the Reformation, take such deep root and put forth such wide-spreading branches?” Later in his article Lang asked the more specific question, “How did it happen that it was precisely Calvinists who first among the men of evangelical faith, and so early as the sixteenth century, not merely developed Natural Law theoretically, but at the same time as political publicists, made it a weapon in the conflicts of the time?”<sup>157</sup>

Lang answered his own question as follows:

The Reformation at its very beginning found itself in the presence of problems and exigencies of indefinite range, first of all conflicts of {74} purely religious and theological character—doctrinal, liturgical and constitutional conflicts....

Much more dangerous however was the second adjustment, which lay more on the periphery of religious truth and yet was no less necessary—namely the adjustment to the general ethical, political, and social problems of the age, to science and art. The adjustment, I say, was unavoidable, for if Protestantism, over against the Medieval Catholic world, involves a new worldview, then there must of necessity be a Protestant science of politics, a Protestant philosophy and science, a Protestant art, etc.... For such an adjustment, however, in the very nature of things, time is required; it cannot be accomplished by one man or by one generation.... Calvin had inspired in his disciples that energy of piety which abhors all halfway measures, which boldly endeavours to make all the affairs of life subject to Christ, the Head and Lord.... But what was needed, viz., firm principles about the relation of the Reformation to the forces of modern emerging culture—to the state, science and art—this was lacking, and how could it be

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156. August Lang, “The Reformation and Natural Law,” in *Calvin and the Reformation* (New York: Revell, 1909), 72ff.

157. *Ibid.*, 57ff.



attained all at once in the midst of all the unrest of the time? Regarded in this way, we believe the appearance of natural law doctrine becomes comprehensible<sup>158</sup>

Lang then examined the development of a Protestant doctrine of the state in terms of this natural law doctrine, arguing that in the absence of any clear evangelical-biblical view of the state, Protestants had “recourse to the political theory taught in the traditional jurisprudence, without heeding the fact that that theory had an origin foreign to the Reformation, and involved tendencies and consequences which would lead away from the Reformation.”<sup>159</sup>

According to Lang a similar accommodation or adjustment took place in other cultural spheres, especially education and science. He writes:

Unless all indications are deceptive, the progress of events was similar in the case of other cultural questions. The desire for knowledge, the desire for activity, which was experienced by the individual after he had been liberated through the Reformation, plunged itself into all the problems of the spiritual life of man, became absorbed in the traditional manner of their treatment, and was all too quickly satisfied with solutions which were not in agreement with the fundamental ethical and religious factors of the practical religious life of the Reformation. The reaction did not remain absent. The evangelical life of faith became shallower instead of deepening itself and developing in all directions.... If it is true that the religious spirit of the Reformation in passing through Deism, was moving on a downward path, the reason for its deterioration was that the adjustment between the Reformation and culture was neither brought to a satisfactory conclusion nor even earnestly enough attempted.<sup>160</sup> {75}

As a result of this uncritical acceptance of contemporary conceptions of the universe put forward by secular humanist scientists, and because of their failure to redefine the basic postulates of modern science in terms of the biblical view of creation, Calvinist-Puritans in the seventeenth century found themselves unable to withstand the onrush of the new secular humanist conceptions of nature and science which

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158. *Ibid.*, 94ff.

159. *Ibid.*, 92.

160. *Ibid.*, 83.

emerged in the writings of thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Spinoza.

For a brilliant study of the effects of the mechanization of the scientific picture of the world which took place during the seventeenth and succeeding centuries, the reader is recommended to read Floyd W. Matson's book, *The Broken Image: Man, Science and Society*, a work which has not received the attention it deserves. Matson describes the consequences of this mechanization of the scientific picture of the world as this affected man's understanding of his place in the cosmos. The "broken image" as used by Matson refers to man's understanding of himself, which was fractured by the adoption of classical, Newtonian physics, the "mechanist view" of reality, as this became the model for the interpretation of the biological, social, and behavioral sciences.<sup>161</sup>

In his book, *The European Mind: 1680–1715*, Paul Hazard also shows the effects of natural law thinking upon the development of Western thought, of which he writes: "Natural law was the offspring of a philosophy which rejected the supernatural and the divine, *and substituted, for the acts and purposes of a personal God, an immanent order of Nature.*"<sup>162</sup>

In their joint book, *The Puritans*, Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson write of the influence of natural law doctrine in America as follows:

The Newtonian triumph established the concept of a necessary and inviolable system of law which God Himself cannot break even though he created it. All deists were followers of Newton, and there are deistic tendencies perceptible in Puritan writings, though the more central orthodoxy strove to reconcile God's sovereign freedom and the reign of law. Perhaps the New England orthodox rationalism is most clearly seen in Cotton Mather's *The Christian Philosopher...* Mather therein attempts to show how divine order manifests itself throughout the phenomenal universe; he sees God as a creating force in the world of nature as well as a Divine Original for man's spirit and mind.... He quoted erudite sources at second hand, but the resulting

161. Floyd W. Matson, *The Broken Image: Man, Science and Society* (New York: George Braziller, 1964). Cf. E. J. Dijksterhuis, *The Mechanization of the World Picture* (Oxford University Press, 1961).

162. Paul Hazard, *The European Mind: 1680–1715* (London: Pelican, 1964), 310 (emphasis added).

compendium is enriched by observations of his own which enunciate the deistic principle that God's benevolence is manifested in a well-ordered beauty of Nature, apparent to man through his Reason. Such a point of view marks the beginning in America of the "enlightenment" which, first {76} expounded by Franklin, Paine, and Jefferson, later flowered in Emerson and Thoreau. But Mather did not abandon his essentially Puritan view that Jehovah is a jealous God who can set all law aside to intervene directly in man's affairs. If he realized the anti-nomy, he took no step to resolve it. <sup>163</sup>

### *The Part Played by Puritan Academies, Schools, and Universities in the Secularization of Modern Education and Science*

What part did the Puritan academies, schools, colleges, and universities play in the secularization of education and modern science? The answer is, a great deal, although perhaps unwittingly. The Puritans in England and America had inherited, quite involuntarily, the classical-humanist system of education in vogue during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and this eventually came to be the first principle of education in Puritan Calvinist circles as it had been in the case of Lutheran higher educational institutions established by Melanchthon in Germany.

The curriculum taught in America's first common day schools and colleges was a sorry synthesis of biblical and classical elements. In his contribution, "Religion and Education," in *Religious Perspectives in American Culture*, Will Herberg points this out:

But from the beginning, in America, secularizing tendencies made themselves felt. Even Puritan orthodoxy was not quite single-minded in its educational outlook, for the Puritans were not only the apostles of the Reformation, but also the heirs of medieval scholasticism and the humanistic Renaissance. Harvard's first curriculum, drawn up in 1642, plainly shows the influence of four different, and sometimes divergent traditions: (1) the liberal arts tradition of the medieval cathedral schools and universities; (2) the philosophical renaissance of thirteenth-century Aristotelianism; (3) the classical-humanist "revival of letters" in the Renaissance; and (4) the Reformation conviction that the fundamental purpose of all human enterprises, including educa-

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163. Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, *The Puritans*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), intro. to chap. 9, "Science," 733.

tion, was to promote the Christian faith and advance the Christian life. In other colonies, but also before long in New England, the notion of “useful knowledge,” often understood in very practical vocational terms, emerged to modify quite drastically the original religious idea informing education.... As the eighteenth century wore on, the secularization of educational purpose and program became increasingly evident, though the external religious framework remained virtually intact.<sup>164</sup> {77}

This tendency to synthesize Christianity and humanism may be found at work in nearly all varieties of Puritanism. They built an educational system of materials inherited from their Calvinistic forebears as well as from the philosophical schools of their age. These schools of thought relied upon the classics, ancient morality, and a pagan conception of *self-realization* as man’s chief purpose in life; in short, upon a whole system of non-Christian thought, since man’s chief purpose in life is “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” In the introduction to *The Puritans*, Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson write of this Puritan synthesis as follows:

There is another body of assumptions, besides those underlying the Puritan philosophy of religion and of religious learning, which Puritans shared in common with Anglicans and even with Catholics. They were the heirs not only of medieval Christianity and of the Reformation, but also of the Renaissance—they were humanists.... That a Puritan writer could be no less devoted to classical literature than his opponent, in spite of his theology, is demonstrated most conspicuously by John Milton. The miraculous fusion of Puritanism and Hellenism which he achieved is unique only in his grandeur of expression; the same combination of religious dogma with the classics, of Protestant theology and ancient morality, was the aim of the curriculum at Harvard College....<sup>165</sup>

Likewise, M. M. Knappen also writes of this Puritan educational system in *Tudor Puritanism*:

There is no denying that the Puritans had a zeal for learning, but it was not according to knowledge. In spite of all their devotion to this

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164. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison, *Religious Perspectives in American Culture*, vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), chap. by Will Herberg, “Religion and Education in America,” 14.

165. Miller and Johnson, *Puritans*, vol. 1, 20.

cause, they never produced anything like a logical Puritan curriculum. They glorified the Bible, but they never worked out a course of study for which the one book would be the basis. The chief end of man was to glorify God, but Puritan students spent most of their time reading heathen authors. Though they represented a cause quite different from Renaissance humanism, they progressed little beyond Erasmus on the grammar-school level, and scarcely reached humanistic standards in the universities.... In the schools where Puritan influence was strongest, Cicero and Ovid, Demosthenes and Homer continued to dominate the course of study ... there is nowhere to be found the genuine Christian curriculum which readers of popular expositions of Calvin's "thoroughgoing logic" might be led to expect....

On the university level also there was a surprising lack of innovation.... Aristotle continued to dominate the curriculum, as he had done for generations before the Reformation ... it seems clear that his works of natural, moral, and mental philosophy, taken either straight or paraphrased in some scholastic manual, constituted the basic prescription for the B.A. well into the Stuart period.... Where room was found in the curriculum for the newer learning, even in the most Puritan of colleges it remained classical and humanistic, after the grammar-school pattern....

The suggestion, therefore, that Puritanism was particularly hospitable to pure learning or scientific inquiry can only be made in the same sense {78} that the Weberian thesis of its relation to modern capitalism can be maintained. It made the negative contribution of furnishing a less effective barrier than Catholicism, and some of the enthusiasms it generated could be redirected to educational ends when the original objectives lost their attraction.<sup>166</sup>

It may well be asked at this point, did not the Reformation return to the Bible as the ordering principle of life? Was there never a reformation in education, learning, and science as there had been in the institutional church?

In order to answer this crucial question, we must investigate the development of the Reformation, particularly with respect to education and learning. Both Calvin and Luther were fully aware of the importance of reclaiming all areas of life for Jesus Christ, but unfortunately their immediate successors were not. The second generation of

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166. M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 473-78.

Reformers, especially Philip Melanchthon, were mainly responsible for the organization of Protestant higher education. It fell to Melanchthon, who had come out of the biblical humanist movement, to organize the program of higher education for the universities that had become Protestant. Melanchthon, however, lacked sensitivity in philosophical and structural matters. *He lacked a sense of the structure of God's creation. He felt this lack and therefore did what most people do who feel this way; he became an eclectic.* This means that he took a little bit from all kinds of philosophical viewpoints—a little bit from Plato, a smidgen from Aristotle, a snuff from the Stoics, and a substantial part of the gospel—and joined them together in a synthesis representative of all movements. *But he did this without regard to an integrating or ordering principle, that is, a central principle which alone could put order into the curriculum and provide unity of thought to any of the systems of thought from which he took parts. This is where the Protestant Reformation went astray, at least as far as the development of a Christian curriculum and a Christian science was concerned.* For man's thinking is systematic, that is to say, any thinking that has any value. There must be some central principle which integrates and organizes our experience and our thinking if we are to make sense of the so-called facts of God's creation around us. It is not detailed thought which gives meaning and direction to our thinking. As Cornelius Van Til and his disciple R. J. Rushdoony have both been at pains to point out, individual "facts" by themselves can have no meaning. Meaning is in thoughts and "facts" only when those thoughts and facts are organized, integrated, and structured by some central principle.<sup>167</sup> {79}

So it came about, through the work of Melanchthon and others, that the Protestant Reformation, though it believed that one should live by the Light of the powerful Word of God revealed in the Bible, took in the whole tradition of thinking about God's creation which we know as the classical Graeco-Roman mind.

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167. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1955), and R. J. Rushdoony, *By What Standard?* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1959). See also Rushdoony's excellent book, *The Mythology of Science* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1967), especially his chapter on "Paradigms and Facts," 85–93.

The new program of education was then not really new at all, since it was structured by the Graeco-Roman mind, just as the education and learning of the medieval schools and universities had been. That is to say, it was dominated by a whole body of concepts and ideas which were not biblical in origin but classical humanist. Therefore, the structuration of the education and science at the new Protestant universities and grammar schools was not a biblical structuration in terms of the ordering principle of God's Word, but a Graeco-Roman one in terms of the directing principle of man's autonomous reason and of the *a priori* of the natural law.<sup>168</sup>

Of this secularization of Protestant and Calvinist-Puritan science and learning, Herman Dooyeweerd sadly wrote in the *International Reformed Bulletin* for July 1966:

The Reformation could offer no other credentials than the claim to be an inner reformation in a truly biblical sense of the doctrine of the church, of society, indeed all of life. It was not only a theological and ecclesiastical movement. In calling for a return to the pure spirit of the Holy Scriptures, it summoned forth the driving power of the central biblical ground motive (of creation, fall and redemption by Jesus Christ) in its integral and radical meaning, in which it embraces all the spheres of terrestrial life. In the domain of science, the Reformation had, by the grace of God, a great opportunity to effect a basic reform of university instruction in the countries which had aligned themselves with it.

Quite unfortunately the Reformation did not take hold of this opportunity. The magnificent program of Melancthon for the reform of education was not at all inspired by the biblical spirit. On the contrary, it had a humanistic philological spirit, which was accommodated to Lutheran doctrine and which gave birth to a new scholastic philosophy. The latter, in turn, prepared the way for the humanistic secularization at the time of the Enlightenment. In the Calvinistic universities Theodore Beza restored Aristotelianism as the true philosophy, adapting it to Reformed theology.

This Protestant reform of scientific knowledge cut a miserable figure when it again took up the dualistic maxim: "For faith one must go to Jerusalem; for wisdom one must go to Athens." It was equally discouraging to see in the seventeenth century the celebrated Reformed

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168. Robert Lee Carvill, ed., *To Prod the "Slumbering Giant"* (Toronto: Wedge, 1972), especially essays by J. C. Vander Stelt and John Van Dyk.

{80} theologian, Voetius, protesting as a champion of Aristotelianism against the innovations of Descartes. The truly biblical spirit which had inspired John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was conquered by the scholastic spirit of accommodation, which had been imbibed from the anti-biblical motive of nature and grace. *It was the driving force of this dialectical motive, the heritage of Roman Catholicism, which stunted the force of the Reformation and which for more than two centuries eliminated the possibility of a serious adversary to the secularization of science.*

This secularization was accomplished entirely under the religious influence of modern humanism. It is true that humanism categorically affirmed that the process of secularization was nothing more than a logical outworking of the genius of science itself! That was, however, a very uncritical dogma.... *There has never existed a science that was not founded on presuppositions of a religious nature, nor will one ever exist.* This is to say in effect that every science presupposes a certain theoretical view of reality which involves an idea of the mutual relationships which exist between its various aspects, and that this idea, on its own part, is intrinsically dominated by a central religious motive of thought.... Modern humanism, which after the Renaissance more and more dominated the conception of science, itself has a central religious motive, which since Immanuel Kant has been called the motive of nature and freedom....

This disastrous process (of the secularization of science) was directed by anti-biblical religious motives, and neither Roman Catholicism nor Protestantism can absolve itself of its share of responsibility for the development of this secular scientific spirit. They are both responsible for this secularization in so far as they have forgotten the integral and radical nature of the biblical motive and because they have followed the Scholastic motive of nature and grace....

*There are only two ways open, that of Scholastic accommodation, which by reason of its dialectical unfolding results in secularization, or that of the spirit of the Reformation, which requires the inward, radical reformation of scientific thought by the driving power of the biblical motive....* Let us remember the words of our Savior, "No man can serve two masters." And let us pray to God that He will send faithful workmen into the harvest field, which is the entire earth, and which therefore includes also the domain of scientific knowledge.<sup>169</sup>

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169. Herman Dooyeweerd, "The Secularization of Science," *International Reformed Bulletin*, no. 26 (July 1966): 11–17 (emphasis added).



To that prayer of a great and good Christian philosopher of the world under God's law let us all repeat a hearty Amen.

### ***Conclusion: The Need for the Reformation of Modern Science***

What lessons can we twentieth-century Christians learn from the seventeenth-century Calvinist-Puritan involvement in the rise of modern science? Standing on their shoulders it is all too easy and simplistic to {81} criticize their weaknesses while failing to recognize their great achievements. Amongst these achievements we must include: (1) the Calvinist-Puritan emphasis on conducting scientific research to the glory of God and for the benefit of mankind; (2) their obedience to the Cultural Mandate and a recovery of the biblical doctrine of the calling; (3) the Calvinist-Puritan vision of the power of science to improve "man's estate" and elimination of sickness, famine, and misery. We can applaud Francis Bacon for writing the following passage:

If therefore there be any humility towards the Creator, any reverence for or disposition to magnify His works, any charity for man and anxiety to relieve his sorrows and necessities, any love of truth in nature, any desire for the purification of the understanding, we must entreat men again and again to discard these preposterous philosophies, which have led experience captive and triumphed over the works of God, and to approach with humility and veneration to unroll the Volume of Creation. May God, the Founder, Preserver and Renewer of the Universe, in His love and compassion to men, protect the work of modern science, both in its ascent to His glory, and in its descent to the good of Man.<sup>170</sup>

Thus we can follow the example of seventeenth-century Calvinist-Puritan scientists where they remained faithful to the biblical view of creation. But we must reject their teaching when this went astray from the biblical map of the world. *For this reason we must reject their over-emphasis upon rationality and their acceptance of the mechanistic picture of the creation.* Such a mechanistic picture of the world inevitably led to scientific determinism and the reduction of reality to mathematical equations and physical entities. It led to the scientific notion that whatever cannot be weighed or measured is not real. Such scientific

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170. Quoted by R. Hooykaas, in "A New Responsibility in a Scientific Age," *Free University Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (October 1961): 9ff.

determinism and reductionism rejects the view of creation as being open to God's intervention in either the past or the present. *As Christians we must always be aware of the miraculous in creation.* No modern Calvinist natural scientist has expressed this sense of miracle in God's works better than Johann H. Diemer in *Nature and Miracle*, wherein he speaks of the "absolute miracles of creation, providence and re-creation."

Diemer then explains in his book what this means as follows:

Within these miracles lie all the signs of the miraculous which appear in the course of time in various parts of the cosmos. Thus life phenomena have indeed a miraculous character. But their miraculous character does not lie in the breaking away from the laws of matter. It lies in their designed order, whereby the material processes are meaningfully directed in the service of the life processes that are in turn directed by a higher law, and finally by the law of the coming {82} of the kingdom of Christ. No single lower law can be loosened from this highest law.

A miracle is not a breaking away from the lower law. It is a higher law which upholds the lower and directs it beyond itself to a higher purpose.

The miracles of creation, providence, and re-creation are absolute. In the signs and wonders, however, there is a greater and a lesser. The miracle of creation reveals itself more in the structure of plants than in the structure of material nature and still more in the structure of the animal world. It is even greater in the structure of the human race in body, soul and spirit. But it is in the structure of the body of Christ, of the church, and of the Kingdom of God that the miracle of creation is revealed most resplendently.

In the same way, the miracle of providence is revealed more in the designed relationship of organic and psychic living phenomena with the world of matter, where physical-chemical processes serve the development of life, than in the relationship of matter and space. It is even greater in the orderly interrelatedness of the human spirit with all of lower nature, whereby man's spirit can guide and direct natural events according to higher laws. Greatest of all the signs and wonders of providence is the designed interrelationship of the Word of God with all that is created. In this relationship the Word directs the temporal events in accordance with the law of the Kingdom.

Finally, we see the miracle of re-creation manifest itself to a larger degree in the regeneration in the plant and animal worlds than in the

configuration of crystals. An even greater sign of re-creation is the cure and restoration of human bodies. But the miracle of re-creation reveals itself most mightily in man's conversion, the radical release from and cure of the sin-sickness of the soul.<sup>171</sup>

Coming from the pen of a Dutch biologist murdered during World War II by the Nazis, such words beautifully express the religious fullness of meaning of the whole creation as it arises out of Jesus Christ the Logos, the divine Word and Power upholding all creation. In other words, Christians today must recover the *sacramental idea* of the creation to replace the *mechanistic* analogy of the universe being like a great machine. Such a sacramental conception of the creation has been ably expounded by William Temple in his Gifford Lectures, *Nature, Man and God*, and by L. S. Thornton in *The Incarnate Lord*, and in his trilogy, *The Form of the Servant*.<sup>172</sup> {83}

In his book Temple tells us that he was concerned to find a conception of the relation of spirit to matter which neither affirmed the supremacy of the one over the other nor denied the existence of spirit in the name of a false materialism nor rejected the existence of matter in the name of a false idealism or spirituality. *Such a conception he found in the sacramental view of creation.* He explains his reason for so doing as follows:

... Within the sacramental scheme or order, the outward and visible sign is a necessary means for conveyance of the inward and spiritual grace.... In many forms of religion, and conspicuously in the most extensive tradition of Christianity, prominence is given to rites in which the spiritual and the material are intimately intertwined. That proves nothing; but for those who on other grounds expect to find in religion guidance for the ultimate interpretation of reality it is suggestive.

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171. J. H. Diemer, *Nature and Miracle* (Toronto: Wedge, 1977), 34–35. Cf. C. S. Lewis, *Miracles* (London: G. Bles, Centenary Press, 1946), especially the chapter on “Nature and Supernature,” 33–42.

172. William Temple, “The Sacramental Universe,” in *Nature, Man and God* (London: Macmillan, 1949), chap. 19, 473–95, and L. S. Thornton, *The Incarnate Lord* (London: Dacre Press, 1928). Cf. A. A. Bowman, *The Sacramental Universe* (Oxford, 1939), and G. C. Berkouwer, *General Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), “The Nature Psalms,” 117–36. L. S. Thornton, *The Form of the Servant* (London: Dacre Press, 1951, 1953, 1956).

Further, among those traditions which give most prominence to sacraments in the ordering of religious practice, the sacramental rite is regarded as effectual *ex opere operato*....

There is here an assertion—not indeed of identity, as that word is commonly understood—but of the unity of matter and spirit which is even more suggestive than the intimate relationship between them which is asserted by all use of sacraments whatsoever. But those who have clung to this conception as an interpretation of sacramental experience as an element of worship have seldom used it as a *clue to the general interpretation of the universe*. It is precisely this that we desire to suggest, always bearing in mind the constant and irreducible difference between man's utilisation of existent matter and God's creation of matter *ab initio*.<sup>173</sup>

Temple then went on to discuss the implications of this Christian sacramental conception of God's creation for a Christian map of the world. He pointed out that in the Christian sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion it is none other than God Himself who imparts His grace to the soul of man. But how can God, who is infinite Spirit, mediate Himself to us by a material rite *ex opere operato*? Temple answered:

... The finite spirit can impart his thought through a physical, even an inorganic, medium; he cannot so impart himself. *But the divine spirit can so impart Himself, because He is the omnipresent. All things are present to Him, and are what they are by His creative will. In and through all of them He is accessible; there is therefore no contradiction in the supposition that in and through certain physical elements, by methods which He has chosen because of their appropriateness to our psychophysical nature, He renders Himself in a peculiar degree accessible to those who seek Him through such media.*<sup>174</sup>

Temple warned of two dangers with which Christians may be confronted. {84} On the one hand there are those who from the *scientific* side insist that all physical phenomena shall be accounted for in physical categories alone, and that reference to spirit or purpose shall be excluded from physical inquiry. The result is that "spirit is made to appear an alien sojourner in this material world." On the other hand, from the religious side there is constant pressure to keep the spiritual

173. Temple, in *ibid.*, 482–83 (emphasis added).

174. *Ibid.*, 485 (emphasis added).

free from what is felt to be the contamination of the material world, which is regarded as in some way gross and unworthy. Neither view can be acceptable to the Christian in the view of Temple, who writes:

In either case the unity of man's life is broken; the material world with all man's economic activity, becomes a happy hunting-ground for uncurbed acquisitiveness, and religion becomes a refined occupation for the leisure of the mystical. *It is in the sacramental view of the universe, both of its material and of its spiritual elements, that there is given hope of making human both politics and economics and of making effectual both faith and love.*<sup>175</sup>

Earlier in the lecture on "The Sacramental Universe," Temple made perhaps one of the most profound remarks of his amazing career when he said:

It may safely be said that one ground for the hope of Christianity that it may make good its claim to be the true faith lies in the fact that it is the most avowedly materialist of all the great religions. It affords an expectation that it may be able to control the material, precisely because it does not ignore it or deny it, but roundly asserts alike the reality of matter and its subordination. Its own most central saying is: "The Word was made flesh," where the last term was, no doubt chosen because of its specially materialistic associations. By the very nature of its central doctrine Christianity is committed to a belief in the ultimate significance of the historical process, and in the reality of matter and its place in the divine scheme.<sup>176</sup>

*The sacramental paradigm of the universe both avoids the pitfalls of the mechanistic and the evolutionary organic model while it includes within its own view the good elements of each.* The mechanistic paradigm unwittingly witnesses to the great fact that the world is under God's law and word and that men and women are His creatures and subject to finite-hood and limitation. The organic paradigm witnesses to the life energies with which the Creator has endowed His creation. The creation is alive and throbbing with the activities of God the Holy Spirit. The whole creation exists by the will of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and hence all other entities within it are only truly intelligible and explicable by reference to the One Blessed and Holy Trinity.

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175. *Ibid.*, 486.

176. *Ibid.*, 478.

Christ is “Lord {85} over all things,” as the Greek church fathers loved to put it.<sup>177</sup> The whole universe is the expression of His will and design: Hence nature is “the moving image of eternity.” Such a sacramental conception of the universe also helps us to realize what Russell Maatman has aptly termed “the unity of creation.” He writes of this idea as follows:

The understanding that there is but a single power that causes all events is common to all men, and therefore the most basic fact of physical science, the existence of but a single power, guarantees that all men, Christians and non-Christians, can do science. The existence of only a single power also proves that we need not look for non-order: Non-order is not possible with God, who does not contradict Himself. Finally, Christ is King just because He has created and because all things are brought together in Him. Christ is king of all creation, not just of some part which might be labeled “spiritual.”<sup>178</sup>

Once we begin to think and act in terms of this Christian sacramental conception of the universe, we shall be motivated to develop a truly biblically founded science, not in any fundamentalistic or biblicistic sense, but in the sense of using the Word of God in the Bible as *the key* to all human knowledge about God’s creation and about who we are: As Diemer eloquently concluded, in *Nature and Miracle*:

A christian science will come into being only when it begins by radically banishing all philosophical ideas which are not scriptural. A christian science will come into being when it makes Revelation its starting-point. It will take concepts such as miracle, totality, design, purposefulness, potentiality, freedom of the will, and the like and test them against its own fundamental motive (*grondmotief*) of creation, fall, and re-creation. These concepts, which at present are found in the literature more and more, may possibly be accepted but never without testing them. In most cases these concepts have been detached from the miracle of creation, providence, and re-creation and therefore also from the root of all things, from the central absolute miracle of Revelation: Jesus Christ, for whom, through whom, and to whom are all things.<sup>179</sup>

177. For a good discussion of the thought of the Greek Church Fathers, the reader should consult John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974), and Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London: James Clark & Co. Ltd., 1957).

178. Maatman, *Unity*, 84.

May the Lord of heaven and earth by His Holy Spirit help all evangelical and Reformed scholars to become busy with the task of reclaiming the realms of modern education and science for the Lord Jesus Christ, so that His name may be glorified in all our Christian schools, colleges, laboratories, and universities and that Christian scientists by means of their research may witness to the wonders, miracles, and beauty of the Lord's marvelous creation. {86}

The reformation of modern natural and social science will require the concerted efforts of every available evangelical and Reformed scholar throughout the world. I plead with my fellow Christian scholars not to allow theological differences to stand in the way of achieving this great task of bringing modern science into subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. Upon the successful outcome of this venture will depend nothing less than the survival of all Christians' right and opportunity to worship God on His day and serve Him in their various occupations during the other six days of the week. The time is getting short. Nicholas N. Kittrie warns us in *The Right to Be Different: Deviance and Enforced Therapy* of the growing threat posed to our freedoms by the application of behavioristic science based upon the mechanistic view of the world in controlling human conduct not only in the Soviet Union, but also here in the United States and Canada.<sup>180</sup> Kittrie ably documents what C. S. Lewis warned us of in his lecture, *The Abolition of Man*,<sup>181</sup> as well as in his novel, *That Hideous Strength*. Only the reformation of science in terms of the sacramental conception of the universe will save us from such a fate.

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179. Diemer, *Nature*, 35.

180. Nicholas N. Kittrie, *The Right to Be Different: Deviance and Enforced Therapy* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977).

181. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (London: G. Bles, 1947); now obtainable from the Christian Studies Center, 314 South Goodlett St., Memphis, TN 38117. For an account of what has been done in reforming biology the reader should consult my *Evolution and the Reformation of Biology* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1967), in which I describe the biological thought of Herman Dooyeweerd and of J. J. Duyvene de Wit, late professor of zoology at the University of Bloemfontein, South Africa. Both scholars reject both the mechanist and vitalist view of the living cell. For a further description of this new Christian biology the reader should also consult T. Wolfe's *A Key to Dooyeweerd* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1977).

# THE EMERGENCE OF POSTMILLENNIALISM IN ENGLISH PURITANISM

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*James R. Payton Jr.*

In the century between 1550 and 1650, an explicitly optimistic eschatology developed among the English Puritans. The study and analysis of this phenomenon, with which this paper will be concerned, are complicated by two factors. First, of those who wrote systematic theologies during this period, almost no one, whether on the continent of Europe or in England, included a separate locus dealing with the doctrine of the last things.<sup>182</sup> Treatments of eschatological matters might appear in sections dealing with the doctrines of God, of Christ, of salvation, or of the church. In addition, the Puritans' eschatological opinions must often be ferreted out of unexpected places in commentaries, sermons, and occasional correspondence. Because of this, one must rely upon the researches of others to a greater degree than is often otherwise the case in historical investigations.<sup>183</sup> Secondly, simply because their expectations for the future were in process of development during this period, the use of contemporary eschatological designations such as "premillennial" or "postmillennial" might seem to be an attempt to bring order where the Puritans had little or none. However, that would be an exaggeration of the situation. Although their eschatological view-

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182. Dr. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., in his April 24, 1979, inaugural lecture as professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, entitled, "The Usefulness of the Cross," noted that separate loci on eschatology were very rare in treatments of systematic theology prior to the early nineteenth century. One of the few exceptions near the period with which this paper is concerned was Francis Turretin's *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae* (Geneva, 1688).

183. Especially helpful in this regard are Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971), and the work edited by Peter Toon, *Puritans, the Millennium, and the Future of Israel* (London: James Clarke & Company Ltd., 1970), to both of which I am indebted.



points were rarely thoroughly integrated, systematic presentations, the Puritans nonetheless gave clear indications as to what they expected in the future. The majority of them favored an eschatological outlook which has come to be known as postmillennialism, as this paper will proceed to show.

### *The Continental Reformers' Influence*

The foundations of the Puritans' optimistic eschatology were laid by the continental Reformers. It was not, however, to Luther that the Puritans {88} looked in this regard, for Luther presents a pessimistic outlook on what the church can yet expect to experience. Having undergone strife with Anabaptists and those whom he called "sacramentarians," Luther reflected on the progress of the gospel and the church during his ministry as follows:

At the outset of the preaching of the Gospel there were very many to whom our doctrine was appealing and who had a sincere desire and respectful attitude toward us; and powerful deeds and the fruit of faith followed upon the preaching of the Gospel. What is happening now? Suddenly there arise fanatical spirits, Anabaptists, and Sacramentarians; and in a short time they subvert everything that we had been building for such a long time and with so much sweat.... The devil is the author of this wickedness...<sup>184</sup>

This problem, to Luther, was not merely a disappointing interval which would nonetheless give way to a happy ending: those who had fallen from their pristine purity in doctrine would "never stop falling, erring, and seducing others ad infinitum."<sup>185</sup>

For the Saxon Reformer, the multiplication of such "sects" was a "sign of the times," a harbinger of the grievous days into which the world was headed:

Luther... states that after the fall of the Antichrist [the pope] the world will live freely and assert that there is no God. The world will become so epicurean that public preaching will be silenced and the Gospel will be contained within private houses as it was with the apostles before the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>186</sup>

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184. Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* (chaps. 1–4, 1535), trans. Jaroslav Pelikan, in *Luther's Works*, vol. 26 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 221.

185. *Ibid.*, 176.

The only prospect for the beleaguered church would be the return of her Lord for the judgment at the Last Day—a history-ending event to which she would look with ever-increasing desire. Before then, however, the church would see nothing but increasing trouble. Such an outlook hardly fosters optimism for the course of the gospel in history.

In the writings of the earliest leaders of the Reformed branch of Protestantism, on the other hand, one finds a certain degree of optimism with regard to the future of the church and the gospel. Calvin, indeed, seems in agreement with Luther's pessimistic outlook in a sermon preached in 1558, in which he declares:

Let us reckon with this fact, that the world will never be so entirely converted to God that there will not be a majority possessed by Satan and remaining stupidly in his power, who would rather perish than accept the blessing that is offered to us.... And thus let us take note {89} that the number of believers is small. But yet we must not be led astray by that. Rather we ought to realize that God is bringing to pass what He declared with His mouth.... When the Prophet cries: *Who shall believe our report?* ... he presupposes that they will be few in number, and that when the Gospel is proclaimed everywhere, if we take note of how many it has profited, we will find very few who have a living root and who have humbled and reformed themselves, who change their life, who renounce themselves that they may dedicate themselves wholly to God; we shall see, I say, that their number will be small.<sup>187</sup>

Nevertheless, Calvin seems to express a very different sentiment at the close of that sermon when he says the following:

Let us all come with a true humility to embrace this Redeemer who is offered to us; and let us be so mortified within ourselves that we may be raised up in the majesty given to Him, to be partakers in the life He has won for us: *And that He may grant this grace, not only to us, but to all peoples and nations of the earth....*<sup>188</sup>

What is true in the microcosm of this sermon is likewise true of the macrocosm of the Calvin corpus: he is not totally unconcerned with

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186. John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963), 252.

187. John Calvin, *Sermons on Isaiah's Prophecy of the Death and Passion of Christ*, trans. T. H. L. Parker (London: James Clarke & Company Ltd., 1956), 42–43.

188. *Ibid.*, 44 (emphasis added).

eschatology, but he does not attempt to present a unified, coherent eschatology, either.

Calvin nonetheless found encouragement and comfort in the face of that which caused Luther such grief. In 1541, after the failure of the Colloquy of Regensburg to achieve ecclesiastical reunion, he stated:

Our chief consolation is... that this is the cause of God and that He will take it in hand and bring it to a happy issue. Even though all the rulers of the earth were to unite for the maintenance of our Gospel... still we must not make that the basis of our hope. So, in the same way, whatever resistance we see offered today by almost all the world ... to the progress of the truth, we must... not doubt that our Lord will finally break through all the undertakings of men and make a passage for His word.... Let us hope boldly, then, even more than we can understand; He will surpass our thoughts and our hope!<sup>189</sup>

Although kings and confessions might fail to unite in the gospel, Calvin was sure that the sovereign King of all nations would overcome.

This emphasis on Christ's kingship, which pervades Calvin's teaching (without, however, becoming an integrating principle for his eschatological outlook), was that in the great Genevan Reformer upon which the English Puritans seized. With it as the integrating principle for their eschatology, they came to an explicitly optimistic viewpoint:<sup>190</sup> {90}

If Calvin did not consciously focus attention upon unfulfilled prophecy he certainly laid foundations in regard to the understanding of the mediatorial reign of Christ which governed Puritan thought in this area. The success of the Gospel for which they yearned was bound up with their trust in Christ.... If what was predicted seemed impossible, the remedy was to contemplate more closely the authority and glory which now belongs to the Head of the Church.<sup>191</sup>

Calvin's emphasis upon the majesty and omnipotence of the sovereign Lord of history thus traced out the general blueprint for the eschatological edifice which the Puritans subsequently erected.

Calvin was not the only Reformed leader whose outlook helped to foster eschatological optimism in subsequent generations, however. Martin Bucer (1491–1551), who had exercised formative influence on

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189. John Calvin, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 5 (1866), 684.

190. Peter Toon, "The Latter-Day Glory," in Toon, *Puritans*, 26.

191. Murray, *Puritan Hope*, 90.

the young Calvin, played a considerable role in the drama of the Puritans' eschatological development.<sup>192</sup> "His eschatology was less quietistic and more dynamic, leaving more room for the renewal of this world and for the realization of the will of God in history, than that of Luther."<sup>193</sup> He asserted, on the basis of Romans 11, that the nation of the Jews was yet to be converted within history, and that their return to their true Lord would entail blessing for the entire world.<sup>194</sup> Peter Martyr Vermigli (1500–1562), who was converted in Italy through the reading of some of Bucer's works, came to agree with his spiritual father that Romans 11 taught a future national conversion of the Jews, which would be attended by the fulfillment of many other prophetic words not yet seen in their fullness in history.<sup>195</sup>

As will be seen below, the English Puritans adopted and elaborated upon the understanding Bucer and Vermigli shared of Romans 11, a passage which became very important for the eschatological outlook which the Puritans ultimately came to espouse. To continue the architectural metaphor, Romans 11 became the cornerstone of the structure of their eschatological expectation.

### *The Geneva Bible*

The elements of eschatological hope found among the early leaders of the Reformed faith developed into a complete viewpoint among the English {91} Puritans. That development was stimulated by an attempt to destroy everything the Reformers had attempted to do.

Bucer and Vermigli were both appointed to professorships in England, at Cambridge and Oxford, respectively, in the late 1540s. With these two respected leaders instructing the coming leaders of the

192. I have tried to demonstrate this in my unpublished Th.M. thesis, "The Influence of Martin Bucer upon the Development of Puritan Postmillennialism" (Westminster Theological Seminary, 1975).

193. Johannes Van den Berg, *Constrained by Jesus' Love* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1956), 10. To date, no one has published a thorough study of Bucer's eschatology.

194. Bucer expressed this view in his 1536 Commentary on Romans, but intimations of it appear in his Commentary on the Psalms (1529, 1532).

195. Vermigli taught this in his 1558 Commentary on Romans, written in Latin and translated into English and published in 1568.

English church, the future must have seemed unusually bright, especially since the young monarch, Edward VI (1537–1553), had shown himself far more inclined to serious reform of the church than had his father, Henry VIII. However, when the sickly Edward died, his half-sister Mary (1516–1558), who was still loyal to Rome, came to the throne. She lost no time displaying her antipathy to the reform movement, and many of the Protestant leaders went into voluntary exile on the Continent. The opposition of “Bloody Mary” actually served to strengthen their theological convictions as well as give them the opportunity to produce a powerful weapon used to attack the influence of Rome and anything which smacked of that influence. That weapon, which became as well a tool for the erection of an optimistic eschatology, was the Geneva Bible.

### **Its Impact upon England**

Many of the English exiles went to Geneva, where they came directly under the influence of Calvin, the great leader of the Reformed movement in Europe. In the 1550s, Geneva was a center of biblical scholarship, and those who now suffered exile for the faith of the Scriptures naturally turned their hearts to that place where much was being done to further the cause of evangelical truth. New editions of the Greek New Testament, the Hebrew Old Testament, and the Vulgate appeared from Genevan presses, as well as translations of the Bible into Italian, Spanish, and French. In that environment, it is hardly surprising that the leaders of the English community set about translating the Scriptures into their native tongue. In 1560, their efforts were crowned with the publication of that version which came to be known as the Geneva Bible.<sup>196</sup>

This Bible exerted great influence on the piety and theological development of England in subsequent generations. It ran through some two hundred editions between 1560 and 1644, and it was during that century that the English people emerged from biblical illiteracy to become a nation thoroughly conversant with the Scriptures.<sup>197</sup>

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196. Lloyd E. Berry, intro., *The Geneva Bible—A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 7.

197. Lewis Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, I (London: The Olive Tree, 1966), 14.

Although other versions were available in England, it was preeminently the Geneva Bible which was read and studied.

A number of reasons account for this. First, the Geneva Bible, unlike {92} its predecessors, was published in a portable size rather than only in large, unwieldy volumes. Secondly, it progressed beyond previous English translations by dividing the books not only into chapters, but the chapters into verses. Further, this version included illustrative woodcuts, maps, indices of names and subjects, and calculations of the years from Adam to Christ as well as dates of the early church from Paul's conversion onwards. On each page concise summaries indicated the contents of the page, and at the beginning of each book and chapter a description of the argument contained in it appeared. The most significant reason for the Geneva Bible's popularity, however, was its marginal notes,<sup>198</sup> the purpose of which the translators themselves explained:

Considering how hard a thing it is to understand the holy Scriptures, and what errors, sects and heresies grow daily for lack of the true knowledge thereof, and how many are discouraged (as they pretend) because they cannot attain to the true and simple meaning of the same, we have also endeavored both by the diligent reading of the best commentaries, and also by the conference with godly and learned brethren, to gather brief annotations upon all the hard places, as well for the understanding of such words as are obscure, and for the declaration of the text, as for the application of the same as may most appertain to God's glory and the edification of his Church.<sup>199</sup>

The annotations were later attacked by some Anglican leaders, and they were directly opposed by King James I<sup>200</sup> as factious, but in a later

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198. Berry, *Geneva Bible*, 12–15.

199. "To our Beloved in the Lord" (the reader's preface), iiiib, *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Contained in the Old and New Testament. Translated according to the Hebrew and Greek, and conferred with the best translations in diverse languages* (Geneva: Rowland Hall, 1560). Both here and in subsequent references to the Geneva Bible the spelling has been modernized.

200. Berry, *Geneva Bible*, 15, reports the direction King James gave to those who would eventually translate the Bible version which he authorized: "...he gave this caveat ... that no marginal notes should be added, having found in them which are annexed to the *Geneva* translation ... some notes very partial, untrue, seditious, and savoring too much of dangerous, and traitorous conceits" (spelling modernized).

age Bishop Westcott described them in a more sober manner as “pure and vigorous in style, and, if slightly tinged with Calvinistic doctrine, yet on the whole neither unjust nor illiberal.”<sup>201</sup> The men who translated and annotated this version were, although “neither unjust nor illiberal,” zealous and thoroughgoing Protestants of Reformed stripe, and those who followed in their paths were known in England as Puritans. Significantly, the Geneva Bible came to be looked upon as “the Puritan Bible,”<sup>202</sup> both by the Puritans and by their opponents. This version was never officially authorized in {93} England, but “it was only the opposition of those who disliked the Puritans which prevented it...”<sup>203</sup> Its reception and use by so many of the laity and the clergy amounted to a popular authorization, however, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that many Englishmen were probably either brought to a Puritan position or were confirmed in it by their diligent study of this Bible and its marginal notes. An Anglican clergyman of a later period supported this idea when he stated:

This country was overrun by Puritanism in the reign of Elizabeth. This Puritan spirit was fostered and encouraged by the Calvinistic notes which appeared in the margins of the Geneva Bible. Its use will at least go far to account for the almost uniformly Calvinistic tone of all English Divinity during the time of Elizabeth and James I. This was the system of doctrine adopted by quite all the reformers of Elizabeth’s reign.<sup>204</sup>

The widespread acceptance and use of the Geneva Bible in England<sup>205</sup> makes a study of its theological perspectives an important

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201. B. F. Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible* (London: Macmillan & Company, 1872), 93.

202. This is the title W. J. Heaton gives to his study of the Geneva Bible (London: Francis Griffiths, 1913).

203. Lupton, *History*, 19.

204. The Rev. N. Pocock, as quoted in Charles Eason, *The Geneva Bible—Notes on Its Production and Distribution* (Dublin: Eason & Son Ltd., 1937), 1

205. The popularity of this version was not confined to England: it became the most widely used translation in the rest of the English-speaking world, as well. In Scotland, the Geneva Bible was set apart as the version to be read in the churches, and in the American colonies, it was the favorite version in Virginia and appears to have enjoyed exclusive use in the Plymouth plantation (Berry, *Geneva Bible*, 20–22).

part of the attempt to understand and appreciate the whole theological development of English Puritanism, including its eschatological outlook. Surprisingly, no such study has appeared, and it would certainly be beyond the scope of this paper. It is nevertheless possible for us to note the fact that one of the main elements of optimism in the thought of the early Reformed leaders found its way into the marginal notes of the Geneva Bible, and that the viewpoint espoused in those notes became the cornerstone of the eschatological edifice of English Puritanism.

### **Its Annotations at Romans 11**

In the 1560 edition of the Geneva Bible, the marginal comments at Romans 11 express the translators' expectation that the nation of the Jews would yet be converted in history and that their conversion, in conjunction with the "fullness" of the Gentiles, would mean great blessing for the world at large. When Paul stated in 11:26 that "all Israel shall be saved," the annotators commented, "He showeth that the time shall come that the whole nation of the Jews though not every one particularly shall be joined to the Church of Christ." The comment on the apostle's declaration in 11:15 that the Jews' reception into the church would be "life from the dead" said that "the Jews *now* remain, as it were, in death for lack of {94} the gospel: but when both they and the Gentiles shall embrace Christ, the world shall be restored to a new life."<sup>206</sup> What is startling about this note is that it does not represent the viewpoint of their distinguished host in Geneva, for Calvin did not expect a future conversion of Israel. Rather, the understanding expressed in the notes was almost certainly borrowed from Martin Bucer, with whose whole theological position, in general, and 1536 Commentary on Romans, in particular, several of the translators of the Geneva Bible were well acquainted.<sup>207</sup>

In later editions of the Geneva Bible, these annotations were further expanded and came to express, even more forthrightly, a sure confi-

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206. Emphasis added.

207. Peter Toon suggested that the source may have been Theodore Beza (*Puritans*, 6), and Iain Murray argued that it was probably Vermigli (*Puritan Hope*, 42). In my Th.M. thesis (see note 192), however, I have shown that the source was, rather, almost certainly Martin Bucer (65–72).



dence in a tremendously fruitful future for the gospel, the church, and the world. For these expansions, the views of Theodore Beza (1519–1609), expressed in the various versions of the New Testament which he published in 1565 and in subsequent years, were formative:

In 1576 the Puritan Lawrence Tomson ... brought out an edition of the Genevan New Testament. Although there were some revisions in the text, mainly from Beza's later work, the substantial changes were in the marginal notes, which were based on those of Beza.... In 1587 a quarto edition of the Geneva Bible was brought out with Tomson's New Testament and notes substituted for those in the 1560 edition, and from this time on some editions had the Tomson and some the original notes.<sup>208</sup>

At Romans 11, the Beza-Tomson New Testament augmented the previous notes by asserting that the expected conversion of Israel was an event clearly predicted by the Old Testament prophets.<sup>209</sup> It should hardly be surprising that “life from the dead,” the promised result of the Jews’ future conversion, also came to be viewed from the perspective of the prophetic descriptions of the universal, glorious work of God in the latter days.

The early Puritan leaders used the Geneva Bible, since it was obviously superior to the other available English versions and because its marginal notes expressed outlooks with which they agreed. Although other means of arriving at a common understanding of Romans 11 must not be discounted, the Geneva Bible certainly exercised considerable influence on the consensus which emerged among the English Puritans that Paul had prophesied, in accordance with other passages of Scripture, a glorious future for the gospel. {95}

### *The Influence of William Perkins*

Some of those who had labored in the translation and annotation of the Geneva Bible, having returned to England subsequent to Elizabeth I's accession (in 1558), grew dissatisfied with certain aspects of official policy and outlook within the English church—among them were Miles Coverdale, William Whittingham, William Cole, and Thomas

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208. Berry, *Geneva Bible*, 15.

209. Toon, *Puritans*, 24.

Sampson. Their opposition became known and they thus became the nucleus of the Puritan party that subsequently developed.<sup>210</sup> Their leadership within the incipient movement, coupled with their eschatological expectations as expressed in the “Puritan Bible,” ensured that the early Puritan movement would be disposed to eschatological optimism.

Several of the leading Puritans of the next generations clearly and forthrightly expressed their agreement with the exegesis of Romans 11 found in the Geneva Bible’s annotations. William Perkins (1558–1602), Richard Sibbes (1577–1635), Thomas Brightman (1562–1607), Elnathan Parr (?–1632?), John Cotton (1584–1652), Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680), and John Owen (1616–1683), in addition to a multitude of lesser lights, all expected Israel’s future conversion and attendant blessing. The figure who towered over the rest, as regards the influence he exercised on Puritan thought, was William Perkins.

Perkins was the dominant theological influence in Puritanism for forty years beyond his death.<sup>211</sup> The most influential Calvinist of his day,<sup>212</sup> Perkins was one of the select few whose works were so profound, yet simple, so powerful, yet winsome, that those who read them were almost inevitably moved, no matter what their station in life or their educational background. Perkins’s works were so well received that they were translated into French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish,<sup>213</sup> and Latin, going through numerous editions, both in England and abroad.<sup>214</sup> Of the above-mentioned leaders of Puritanism, Parr, Sibbes, Cotton, and Goodwin either were students of Perkins or else studied under those at Cambridge who carried on Perkins’s influence in the years immediately following his retirement from his duties at Cambridge in 1595.<sup>215</sup> Thus, these other Puritan stalwarts imbibed the

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210. Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism* (Swengel, PA: Reiner Publications, 1973), 13.

211. Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1965), 216.

212. Thomas F. Merrill, intro., *William Perkins, 1558–1602*, ed. Thomas F. Merrill (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1966), ix.

213. Hill, *Puritanism*.

214. August Lang, *Puritanismus und Pietismus* (Neukirchen: Erziehungsverein, 1941), 108–9.

teachings of Perkins and passed them on to those who came under their {96} tutelage. Consequently, Perkins's eschatological views were doubtlessly very influential upon those of very many other Puritans.

In a treatise specifically concerned with certain eschatological questions, written in 1587 but not published until several years later, Perkins expressed his views at an early stage in his own teaching career. In the work he engages in dialogue a person who believed that the return of Christ would occur in 1588. Perkins first distanced himself from his companion's attempt to set the approximate date for that event and then proceeded to argue that certain of the "signs" of Christ's coming had not been fulfilled. Their fulfillments, according to Perkins, would precede, not attend, the Lord's return.<sup>216</sup> Two of the signs Perkins then went on to list as yet awaiting fulfillment were the proclamation of the gospel to every nation (which he noted was being more and more accomplished every day) and the conversion of the Jews (which had not taken place and would require a substantial amount of time).<sup>217</sup>

Perkins's expectation for the future did not change, for in his *Commentary on Galatians*, published early in the seventeenth century, he spoke again of Israel's future conversion. In commenting on the covenantal promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, he said, "The Lord saith, *All the nations shall be blessed in Abraham*. Hence I gather that the nation of the Jews shall be called, and converted to the participation of this blessing; when, and how, God Knows; but that it shall be done before the end of the world we know."<sup>218</sup>

By means of the Geneva Bible's influence and William Perkins's dominance, this understanding of national Israel's future and that of the church of which she would become a part became a commonplace among the English Puritans.<sup>219</sup>

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215. Hill, *Puritanism*, 216–17.

216. William Perkins, *A Fruitful Dialogue Concerning the End of the World*, in *Works*, vol. 3 (printed for W. Welbie, 1613), 467–70 (spelling modernized).

217. *Ibid.*, 470.

218. Quoted in Murray, *Puritan Hope*, 42.

219. *Ibid.*, 43.

### *The Puritans' Optimistic Eschatology*

The Puritans were, of course, too careful in theological and exegetical matters to base any firmly held conviction upon a single verse or short passage from Scripture when that verse or passage could be explained in another manner. The Beza-Tomson notes on Romans 11 affirmed and the Puritans agreed that not only Romans 11, but many other passages of Scripture as well, taught a future conversion of the people of Israel. Romans 11 may have afforded the clearest statement of that which they believed, but they found the concept taught in many other places in the Bible. From the {97} New Testament, they looked upon the following passages as supporting their teaching:

Matthew 23:38–39— “Behold, your habitation shall be left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth til that ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.”

Luke 21:24— “And they shall fall on the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden underfoot of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

2 Corinthians 3:15–16— “But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is laid over their hearts. Nevertheless when their heart shall be turned to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.”

In the Old Testament, the Puritans found a spate of passages speaking of Israel being turned to the Lord, of nations falling before Him in worship, and of the great blessings upon the entire earth which would surely come as a result of God's bestowing His riches of grace upon multitudes of peoples who would turn unto Him.<sup>220</sup> Among these Old Testament references, one cited very often was Isaiah 11:9, which promised, “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” By viewing such prophecies as forerunners of the teaching of Paul in Romans 11, teaching further confirmed by other New Testament passages, the Puritans believed they had a very solid basis for holding to an optimistic view of the future of the gospel and of the church in the world, all because of the sure blessing of their sover-

220. Among the ones used by the Puritans were Job 8:7; Psalm 2:8; 22:27; 67:2, 5; 72:7–8; 86:9; Isaiah 2:2–4; 11:7–9; 22:12–14; 24:21; 26:11; 45:22; 49:6; 60:9, 17–18; Ezekiel 38:8; 40:3; 45:8; Zephaniah 2:11; Haggai 2:7; Zechariah 4:10; and Malachi 1:11.

eign God. Therefore, a closer examination of two very influential expositions of Romans 11 is necessary.

### *The Puritan Exegesis of Romans 11*

In exegeting Romans 11, Thomas Brightman, who was a contemporary of William Perkins, pressed beyond previous English expositions of the chapter by arguing that the “fullness” of the Gentiles (v. 25) converted before the conversion of the nation of Israel (v. 26) did not preclude the idea of a further ingathering of Gentiles, since Paul had already argued that “life from the dead” would accrue to the church and the world at large because of the Jews’ entrance into the Body of Christ.<sup>221</sup> Brightman thus left the length of time between the full entrance of the majority of Israel and the end of the world at Christ’s return an open question. In so doing, at the very least, he paved the way down which an eschatology could travel which posited a lengthy period of time subsequent to the conversion of the Jewish nation, before the return of Christ. As will be seen below, Brightman himself traversed that path. {98}

Although Brightman’s exposition was influential among the English Puritans, the Commentary on Romans published by Elnathan Parr in 1620 became the most popular Puritan treatment of that epistle.<sup>222</sup> In it he strictly defended the exegesis of the 11th chapter which foresaw a future national conversion of Israel, but he also addressed himself explicitly to the question which had arisen among the Puritans regarding what might transpire between the conversion of the Jews and the end of the age.

Parr divided the 11th chapter into two parts: the “principal matter,” he said, with which the apostle is concerned is treated in verses 1–32, and the conclusion is given in verses 33–36. Within the main argument of verses 1–32, Parr distinguished the apostle’s arguments that the rejection of the Jews is not total (vv. 1–11) and that it is not final (vv. 12–33).<sup>223</sup> In commenting on the “fullness of the Gentiles” (v. 25) to be brought into the church, Parr emphasized that this would, of course, take place through the proclamation of the gospel, “whereby many of

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221. Murray, *Puritan Hope*, 46.

222. *Ibid.*

all nations shall be converted to God.”<sup>224</sup> Israel would come into the church (v. 26) by the same manner, according to Parr: they would be “converted by the preaching of the Gospel.”<sup>225</sup>

Parr had to answer a question which had been raised by the Reformers of the sixteenth century and could consequently modify one’s understanding of what Paul taught in the chapter and any eschatological hopes built thereupon. He distanced himself in his answer, from that of Calvin and that of Melancthon, when he strongly objected to interpreting “all Israel” (v. 26) as referring to the sum total of the elect of both the Jews and the Gentiles (the “spiritual Israel” concept). For Parr, that interpretation did not do justice to Paul’s description of what he was saying as a “mystery” (v. 25). His telling objection was, “Paul saith that he would not have the Gentiles ignorant; of what? That all the elect should be saved? Whoever doubted it? But of the Calling of the Jews there was a doubt. He calls it a secret or mystery; but that all the elect should be saved is no secret.”<sup>226</sup>

To the question regarding the proximity of the end of the age, Parr could not give a definite answer from Romans 11. He said, “The end of this world shall not be till the Jews are called, and how long after that none yet can tell.”<sup>227</sup> This did not mean, however, that Parr thought Paul had not given perspectives on the question within the chapter—only that the {99} chapter did not specifically deal with the final events of history. He asserted that “life from the dead” (v. 15) certainly spoke of the fulfillment in history of the many prophetic declarations regarding the blessings of God upon the nations bowing before Him.<sup>228</sup> In expositing that phrase, Parr noted that it could not have reference to the resurrection at Christ’s return, for Paul was dealing in the context with the mercy proclaimed in the gospel and experienced in its recep-

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223. Elnathan Parr, *A Short View of the Epistle to the Romans, in Workes of that faithfull and painefull preacher, Mr. Elnathan Parr*, 3rd ed. (London: G. P. for Samuel Man, 1633), 149.

224. *Ibid.*, 197 (spelling here and in subsequent references modernized).

225. *Ibid.*

226. *Ibid.*

227. *Ibid.*, 199.

228. *Ibid.*, 177.

tion. To assert that Paul spoke, then, of the resurrection was for Parr impossible to maintain, since the resurrection of the dead at Christ's second coming "is the time of revealing judgment, not of preaching mercy."<sup>229</sup> Since it would be "absurd"<sup>230</sup> to think of a further proclamation of the gospel in some period subsequent to the return of the Lord for judgment, "life from the dead" had to speak of what would occur in history prior to the second coming. He noted that others had backed away from affirming such a viewpoint, since they "would deny that ever there shall be a more glorious face of the Church than is now at this present: *this can be by no means admitted*."<sup>231</sup> What was inadmissible for Parr was not only the exegesis, but especially the idea that the church would not see better days before the return of her Lord. Those better days were exactly what Paul had prophesied, according to Parr, when he spoke of "life from the dead."

The expositions of Brightman and Parr exercised great influence among the Puritans of England, for both men were recognized leaders and authorities.<sup>232</sup> To be sure, no Puritan would agree with every point of interpretation of every other Puritan, but they were in real agreement on their basic comprehension of Romans 11 and the eschatological expectation to be derived from it.<sup>233</sup> Puritan expositions of Romans 11 held at least the following five factors in common:

1. The salvation now possessed by a remnant of believing Jews is yet to be enjoyed by far larger numbers of that race.
2. At the time when Paul wrote, this was not to be expected until a considerable number of the Gentiles had been evangelized and their evangelization would thus hasten the day of Israel's calling....
3. In the economy of salvation there is an interaction appointed by God between Jew and Gentile; gospel blessing came to the world by Israel's fall, yet a greater blessing will result from her conversion.

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229. *Ibid.*, 176.

230. *Ibid.*

231. *Ibid.* (emphasis added).

232. Murray, *Puritan Hope*, 45–46.

233. A fuller treatment of Puritan expositions of Romans 11 can be found in *ibid.*, 61–76.

4. Nothing is told us in Romans 11 of the duration of time between the calling of the Jews and the end of history.... {100}
5. The quotations from Isaiah and Jeremiah [in vv. 26–27], confirming Paul’s teaching, indicate that the *full* extent of gospel blessings predicted by the Prophets is yet to be realized.<sup>234</sup>

An optimistic eschatology was, thus, the viewpoint of the English Puritans. Convinced as they were that the Antichrist had been revealed (as the pope in Rome), that God had been at work in history (as could be seen in the Reformation of the sixteenth century) and that He would certainly continue to be, encouraged as they were that their spreading movement was a harbinger of better things to come, both in England and in the world, the Puritans did not build their hopes for the future upon their exegesis of events they were experiencing. Rather, the cornerstone of their eschatological edifice of sure hope was their common understanding of Romans 11, to which the elements just mentioned played a confirmatory role. The English Puritans expected Israel to be converted after a great multitude of the other nations of the world had embraced the gospel. By means of Israel’s turning to her Lord, still others from among the nations would confess Him as their Lord, as well. Upon all this, the Ruler of the nations and Savior of the church would pour out nearly unimaginable blessing, so that an era would surely come, within history, the like of which had never before been experienced.

### *Premillennial or Postmillennial?*

This optimistic eschatology could be structured in either of two ways:<sup>235</sup> one could opt either for what would today be called “premillennialism” (with the return of Christ being the cause of Israel’s conver-

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234. *Ibid.*, 76.

235. Within Reformed circles in recent years, a variety of eschatology has arisen which calls itself “optimistic” amillennialism. A glaring difference exists between this type of “optimism,” however, and that of the Puritans. For “optimistic” amillennialism, the optimism consists in a hope that the gospel will yet enjoy great success before the return of Christ, but the proponents of this eschatological viewpoint admit that they are not convinced that such will be the case from scriptural arguments. The Puritans’ optimism arose from their conviction that Scripture promised that such advance would take place.



sion as the beginning of the period of blessing) or for “postmillennialism” (with the return of the Lord coming after the period of blessing upon the world). As a matter of fact, both views, in their embryonic forms, found supporters within English Puritanism, but one clearly predominated over the other, and it consequently developed more fully.

Thomas Brightman was a leader within the latter school of thought. In his *Commentary on Revelation*, published in Latin in 1609 and in English translation in 1615, he asserted that the Jews would be won to their true Messiah by the preaching of the gospel, that the Gentiles would further be drawn by that same gospel, that there would follow a great increase in {101} the understanding of the Scriptures, and that this would all usher in the “latter-day glory” of the church. This period of glory he called the “Kingdom of Christ” because then Christ’s Word in the Scriptures would increasingly become the scepter used in the government of the nations of earth.<sup>236</sup> According to Brightman, such submission and its consequent blessing would be the fulfillment of many biblical prophecies which yet awaited their historical accomplishment:

Now shall the end of all the prophets come, when all the enemies shall be utterly and at once abolished, and when there shall be one sheep-fold made upon earth, of all the Elect both Jewes and Gentiles under one shepherd Jesus Christ. It is certain that this Kingdom of Christ that is thus begun, shall be eternall, and shall never be broken off againe, and discontinued....<sup>237</sup>

The fulfillment of these prophecies would take place during the “Kingdom of Christ,” an extended period subsequent to the conversion of the nation of Israel, at the close of which Christ would return.<sup>238</sup>

Clearly, Brightman’s is an early but relatively well-developed form of postmillennialism. In his opinion, Scripture taught a “latter-day glory” for the church within history, and that not only in Romans 11, but also in the Apocalypse. In this matter, Brightman was a leader to many other English Puritans.<sup>239</sup>

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236. James A. De Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1970), 21–22.

237. Quoted in *ibid.*, 19.

238. Toon, *Puritans, the Millennium, and the Future of Israel*, 31.

The leader and primary authority in the premillennial school of English Puritan eschatology was Joseph Mede (1586–1638). In his study of the Apocalypse (published in Latin in 1627, enlarged in 1632, and published in English translation in 1642) he posited a future millennial reign of the saints upon earth, in which the church would indeed know great security and blessing. How this reign would be inaugurated, however, was a matter upon which Mede differed from Brightman. For Mede, both the conversion of the Jews and the initial erection of the kingdom would be accomplished by a visible appearance of Christ.<sup>240</sup>

Mede supported this idea by a detailed comparison he developed between the conversion of Paul and the future conversion of Israel, in which the experience of Paul became normative for that of his fellow Israelites.<sup>241</sup> The third of the ten points of similarity which Mede set forth said, “The Jews not to be converted unto Christ by such means as were the rest of the {102} Nations, by the Ministry of Preachers sent unto them; but by the Revelation of Christ Jesus in his glory from Heaven...”<sup>242</sup> He elaborated upon this point in his fifth comparison, which declared, “The Jews, together with their miraculous Calling, shall be illuminated also with the knowledge of the Mysteries of the Christian Faith, without any Instructors from them or conference with them...”<sup>243</sup> Thus, according to Mede, the Jews would see Christ in a visible appearance, would be converted individually and nationally by that sight, and would be brought by that vision to a reception of the whole of the Christian faith, all without any influence of the Gentiles. In fact, as his eighth point of similarity indicated, Mede expected the Jews, not the Gentiles, to be the evangelizing force in the erection of the kingdom.<sup>244</sup> “Till the Calling of the Jews, the general Conversion of the Gentiles not to be expected; but the receiving of Israel shall be the

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239. *Ibid.*, 31–32.

240. R. G. Clouse, “The Rebirth of Millenarianism,” in *ibid.*, 56–60.

241. Joseph Mede, “The Mystery of S. Paul’s Conversion: or, The Type of the Calling of the Jews,” in *The Works of the Pious and Profoundly-Learned Joseph Mede*, 4th ed. (London, 1677), bk. 5, 891–92.

242. *Ibid.*, 891.

243. *Ibid.*

riches of the world, in that by their restitution the whole world shall come unto Christ.”<sup>245</sup>

Both Brightman and Mede influenced English Puritan eschatology, but not as many Puritans sympathized with Mede.<sup>246</sup> This is hardly surprising, for Mede’s position is in conflict with the history of Puritan interpretation of Romans, in that he denied Israel would come to Christ through the proclamation of the gospel. Further, his position doubtlessly appeared to many Puritans inconsonant with the very bases of their whole theological approach, since they affirmed the sovereignty of Christ as King and the mighty power He exercised through the Holy Spirit unto the conversion of the entire number of His elect. Thus, Mede’s position would appear to sully the emphasis on the mediatorial kingship of Christ, as well as that on covenant theology.

In the framework of covenant theology, espoused by the English Puritans, God the Father exalted Christ to His right hand and gave Him the Holy Spirit to pour forth upon the church. Through the Spirit’s power, the church proclaimed the gospel of Christ. Since it is the gospel which is the “power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16) for both Jew and Gentile, a gospel which cannot be heard “without a preacher” (Rom. 10:14), it is only by the gospel that any could be drawn to Christ. Since, further, Christ as King now rules over all the nations and disposes all for the good {103} of His church (Eph. 1:22), and the Holy Spirit who applies the redemption of Christ does so only by means of that gospel, to expect any other means or to rely upon anything else than the Spirit-accompanied proclamation of the gospel for the ingathering of either Jews or Gentiles would amount to abandonment of covenant theology!

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244. Mede’s position is thus substantially different from that of many contemporary premillennialists, in that the erection of the kingdom is not accomplished by an abiding physical presence of Christ in His regal splendor and power.

245. Mede, “Mystery,” 892.

246. Clouse notes that Mede exercised influence on some Presbyterian Puritans and several Independent Puritans (“Rebirth,” 62). B. S. Capp suggests that the Fifth Monarchy Men may have their eschatological roots in the writings of Mede, as well, in “Extreme Millenarianism,” in Toon, *Puritans, the Millennium, and the Future of Israel*, 66.

Thomas Brightman, on the other hand, stood in the line of Perkins and the Geneva Bible in expecting the Jews' conversion to take place through the proclamation of the gospel, and Elnathan Parr, in the most popular Puritan exposition of Romans, espoused the same position. Consequently, Brightman's position proved much more attractive than that of Mede, and the majority of the Puritans embraced a postmillennial eschatology. Whether they followed Brightman in every detail of his expectations—comparatively few of them did<sup>247</sup>—or merely adopted the basic outlines of the eschatology he set forth, most English Puritans came to hold to postmillennial opinions in the 1630s and 1640s. They had learned from Calvin to find comfort and confidence in Christ's mediatorial kingship, they structured their theology in a covenantal framework, and a postmillennial viewpoint best fit with these two emphases. Nearly every Puritan expected Israel's conversion and a subsequent period of extensive and intensive blessing for the church and the world. Most of them expected this to occur before the return of Christ, and the way in which it would eventuate was no great theological problem:

The kingdom of Christ would spread and triumph through the powerful operations of the Holy Spirit.... Their whole Calvinistic theology of the gospel, with its emphasis on the power given to Christ as Mediator for the sure ingathering of the vast number of his elect, and on the person of the Holy Spirit as the One by whom the dead are quickened, dovetails in here. They rejected altogether a naturalistic view of inevitable progress in history ... but asserted that the sovereign purpose of God in the gospel, as indicated by the promises of Scripture yet unfulfilled, points to the sure hope of great outpourings of the Spirit in the future.<sup>248</sup>

### *Confessional Status*

It is hardly surprising that the eschatological viewpoint espoused by the majority of the Puritans found expression in their confessional documents. Concerned as they were at the time of the Westminster

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247. Brightman held, for example, to a continuing special significance of the land of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem, an idea uncongenial to many, but not to all, of his fellow Puritans.

248. Murray, *Puritan Hope*, 51.

Assembly for a unified church in England which would profess emphases the Puritans had elicited from Scripture, they would be cautious about structuring confessional statements in such a manner that other Puritans would immediately {104} feel excluded. Consequently, one should not expect to find in the Westminster standards an explicit disavowal of premillennialism. Nevertheless, with the help of the above historical background, one can easily discern a basically postmillennial approach.

In *The Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, issued by the Westminster divines and approved and established by Parliament in early 1645, the minister is encouraged to lead the congregation in praying for “the propagation of the gospel and kingdom of Christ to all nations; for the conversion of the Jews, the fullness of the Gentiles, the fall of Antichrist, and the hastening of the second coming of our Lord...”<sup>249</sup> The inclusion of the prayer for the hastening of Christ’s return could readily be countenanced by premillennialists then, indeed, but it was not inconsonant with the postmillennialism to which the majority of the Puritans held: none of them would pray for a delay of that return, and all of them would have affirmed that any prayer must be guided by understanding of what Scripture taught. Consequently, such prayers would not preclude a postmillennial viewpoint, and it can be readily seen that both eschatological positions could be reconciled with the suggested petitions. More significantly, however, the means emphasized in the prayer for conversion of Jew and Gentile was the propagation of the gospel. This is, as we have seen, one of the main strands of traditional Puritan thought that had been in evidence since the time of the 1560 Geneva Bible, had been explicitly affirmed by Perkins, Brightman, and Parr, and had flown directly into explicitly postmillennial eschatology among the English Puritans.

In *The Larger Catechism*, Question 191 asks what is requested in the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer. The answer in part is, “we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propa-

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249. *The Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, the Shorter Catechism, the Directory for Publick Worship, the Form of Presbyterial Church Government*, with references to the proofs from the Scriptures (London: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd., 1969), 141–42.

gated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in....”<sup>250</sup> Again, premillennial viewpoints are not explicitly excluded, but the views of Mede and his followers found no clear support, whereas postmillennial eschatology did: it is again the gospel by means of which Jews and Gentiles are to come to Christ, not a visible appearance of the Redeemer.

All of this is very significant, for William Twisse (ca. 1578–1646), who had served as prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly, was a strong and forthright premillennialist. He had written commendatory prefaces to two of Mede’s eschatological works, including his study on the Apocalypse, {105} in both of which he affirmed his agreement with Mede.<sup>251</sup> Although certain others among those who took part in the deliberations at Westminster likewise favored premillennialism, that viewpoint is much less easily discerned in the productions of the assembly than one might expect. Rather, the most straightforward understanding of the eschatological outlook of the Westminster Assembly’s documents, seen in their historical perspective, is postmillennialism:

The document is silent ... on all those points which set premillennialism off from other, milder versions of millennialism. Rather, in the context of the views current then, Westminster’s formulation must be seen as a deliberate choice of mild, unsystematized postmillennial expectations.<sup>252</sup>

Ten years after Parliament adopted the Westminster documents, the Independent churches adopted the Savoy Confession of Faith. By this time, the desired unity of faith and ecclesiastical organization had

250. *Ibid.*, 109.

251. Clouse, “Rebirth,” 62.

252. De Jong, *As the Waters*, 38n11. It ought to be pointed out at this point that the Westminster standards, given their historical context, do not advocate that view of eschatology which has subsequently arisen and appears to be flourishing in Reformed theology called “amillennialism.” To be sure, an amillennialist might be able to interpret the statements in the Directory and the Larger Catechism in the same manner as he usually would the mention of “Israel” in Romans 11:26, as a reference to the “spiritual Israel” of the entire body of the elect (either of all nations or of all physical Jews converted in the whole of history). Nevertheless, the very inclusion of the terms, “Jew” and “Gentile,” ought to strike the typical amillennialist as unusual, at the very least.

become a chimera, and the Puritans of the Independent party were less reticent than their predecessors in the Westminster deliberations had been to declare their eschatological position with utter clarity. By and large, the Savoy document is the Westminster Confession of Faith with certain relatively minor modifications suited to portraying various Independent distinctives.<sup>253</sup> This document is quite explicit in its advocacy of a basic postmillennial outlook, as can be seen from the last section of its twenty-sixth chapter, “Of the Church,” which states:

As the Lord in his care and love towards his Church, hath in his infinite wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love him, and his own Glory: so according to his promise, we expect that *in the later days*, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the Kingdom of his dear Son broken, the Churches of Christ being enlarged and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy *in this world* a more quiet, peacable and glorious condition than they have enjoyed.<sup>254</sup> {106}

### Conclusion

It has been our purpose in this paper to trace the development of English Puritanism’s optimistic eschatology. In broad strokes, we have accomplished that, noting a gradual but sure progression from Calvin’s emphasis on the sovereign King of all nations and Bucer’s exegesis of Romans 11 to confessional declarations espousing the simple postmillennialism held by the majority of English Puritans during the 1630s and 1640s.

It has not been part of our purpose to assess how this eschatology affected the Puritans’ views of society, economics, or political endeavor. That the Puritans drew connections between their eschatological outlook and their expectations for these other areas can scarcely be doubted by anyone familiar with the Puritan mind. An attempt to sketch out such influences, however, would have unduly enlarged the scope of this already generalizing study. An examination of the interre-

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253. For a helpful, concise discussion of the differences between the Westminster and Savoy documents, see Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism*, 77–84.

254. *The Savoy Confession of Faith*, in *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, ed. Williston Walker (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), 396 (emphasis added).

relationships would certainly be a valuable contribution, both to historical research and to the attempt to advise contemporary heirs of the Puritans how to integrate their own eschatological expectations with the various areas of their life, that of the church, and that of the nation. It is certainly to be hoped that others will undertake such studies.

In the meantime, however, let it be noted that the English Puritans expected progress to be made by the gospel and the church throughout the whole world—progress which would lead to the fulfillment of many more prophetic declarations *in history* than had been seen to that point. They entertained no doubt that the Word of their covenant Lord, the sovereign King of all nations and of history, demanded of them that optimistic eschatology we know as postmillennialism.



# PURITY AND PROGRESS: NEW ENGLAND'S FIRST GENERATION

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*Aletha Joy Gilsdorf*

[The essay's subheads have been added by the editor]

The times required reformation. At the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, a Protestant England had conceded this. Antichrist had to be repudiated; the man of sin had to be struck down once and for all. The fruition of God's plan for the redemption of His elect demanded it. But what was anti-Christian and what was not? Men searched the Word of God and, striving to recreate a primitive purity, created controversy. Nearly all were agreed that a sufficient reformation of doctrine had been achieved by the Elizabethan settlement. The controversy was over other matters—specifically the ordinances of worship and church government. Did the Scriptures justify the wearing of vestments, the use of set prayers in God's worship? Who was to exercise the power of church discipline, particularly the ordinance of excommunication—the pastors of each congregation or the bishops? And what was the proper relationship between church and state? Should those who governed the church be granted civil authority too, as were the bishops?

Some insisted that all these problems had been rightly solved at the beginning of good Queen Bess's reign. The established Anglican Church did not conserve anti-Christian corruptions but godly traditions sanctified by age—old usage. But other men—Puritans—were convinced that a more complete reformation was necessary. In particular they demanded a purer discipline in the churches—one under the control of godly ministers who would be denied magisterial powers and thus freed from the temptations of politics. As all men knew, the degeneracy of the Church of Rome had come about because the pope had greedily engrossed great temporal as well as spiritual power. Christians must be wary of believing that “this honour is given unto us, either to trouble the civile State, or els to intermingle Church-governe-

ment with civile.”<sup>255</sup> Still other men, Separatists, insisted that only a total departure from the institutions of Antichrist would suffice to fulfill the requirements of the times. The visible church should properly be constituted of believers only—men prepared to acknowledge {108} the regiment of Christ by voluntarily placing themselves under the discipline of His church. Only congregations thus created could be sure of having left the ways of the beast completely behind. Another group, perhaps even fewer in number than the Separatists, felt that this kind of congregational reform could and should take place within the Church of England. This they believed was necessary to preserve the continuity of the church throughout history.

All of these different opinions on the amount of reformation required by the exigencies of the times did agree in one respect, namely, that the most strenuous of efforts to purify the church necessarily had to be limited to externals. Worship could be pared to the bare bones of sermons and sacraments; censures and admonitions could be used to exclude the obviously profane and profligate from communion; churches could be covenanted out of godly professors. But in every case it was beyond the power of men to create a church that was as pure in substance as it was in form. No church on earth could require its members to be absolutely regenerate. God alone knew the constituency of His elect; and until the second coming of the Son of Man, the earthly church and the heavenly church would never be identical.

In time one of these groups—by far the most conservative—gained ascendancy in the English church and began to entrench the kind of reform that stretched only as far as doctrine. With a king on the throne whose sympathies were anything but Puritan, the hope for further reformation seemed dim indeed. A handful of Puritans—those who believed the Church of England should be purified from within along congregational lines—decided to try their method in America. There, to the consternation of their colleagues at home, they came to the conclusion that a virtually pure church *could* be created in this world simply by excluding all but the visibly regenerate from membership.

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255. Thomas Brightman, *The Revelation of S. John Illustrated with an Analysis and Scholions*, 3rd ed. (Leyden, 1616), 19.

Assuming as a calculated risk that a certain number of hypocrites would slip through their rigid screening process, they were still prepared to maintain that they could discern the workings of grace or the lack thereof within the hearts of other men. In Massachusetts the invisible church was about to solidify before the skeptical eyes of the world.

The obvious question, of course, is why they suddenly became convinced that a visibly regenerate church membership was both necessary and possible in the campaign against Antichrist. There was no precedent for their decision in English reform. In fact, when they first arrived, they were apparently committed at most to no more than churches composed of professing believers—men and women whose godly conversation and affirmation of a “historical faith” distinguished them from obviously profane and obstinate sinners. During the first few years of the colony’s existence, church membership required no confession of saving grace. Of course, {109} the people who came to Massachusetts were highly familiar with the process by which a man acquired such grace. Their ministers in England had been educating them in the mysterious operations of the Spirit upon human minds and hearts for at least a generation. By 1630 the answer to that burning question of the Reformation, “How can I know whether I am saved?” had been scaled down to a last, irreducible nubbin of uncertainty by Puritan preachers. But while the New England Way was inconceivable without such knowledge, by itself, it was no warrant for insisting upon a regenerate church membership. Nobody in England up to this time—for all their preoccupation with the process of regeneration—had felt called upon to advocate such a step.

In New England the innovation seems to have been introduced by John Cotton, a highly respected leader of Congregationalist reform in the old country. Cotton, who had been associated with the Massachusetts venture from its inception, did not actually arrive in the colony until 1633, whereupon the newly founded churches—apparently under the influence of his preaching—soon began to require evidence of regeneration before admitting new members. But the most interesting thing about Cotton’s innovation is that only three years before he had held an entirely different view of church membership. In 1630 he certainly would not have denied admittance to people whose only qualifications were an understanding of church doctrine and a good

conversation.<sup>256</sup> Sometime between 1630 and 1633 Cotton had come to the conclusion that saving faith, which he considered the essence of the invisible church, should also be made the essential ingredient of the earthly church.

Cotton's reasons for changing his mind will probably never be known. He himself attributed the change to a further study of the Scriptures—which passages he did not specify—that convinced him participation in the covenant of grace was the *sine qua non* of church membership. "The Covenant of Grace doth make a People, a joynd People with God, and therefore a church of God."<sup>257</sup> The aspiration toward purity in a man or in a nation, in other words, was genuine only if it sprang from a principle of grace. Mere rigidity in externals was not a manifestation of grace but of a false and legal righteousness. "When men have received ease from God, and then are straightlaced towards their Brethren, then doth the Lord revoke his Pardon. So that Reformation is no assurance that God hath made an everlasting Covenant with us. And mind you further, All the Graces that you have laid hold upon, have sprung from your own Righteousness."<sup>258</sup> If men in this reforming age wished to remake the church on earth, they {110} must perforce begin with the pure in heart—the visible saints. Indeed, it might well be that the next step in the divine plan to defeat Antichrist would be just such a manifestation of Christ's kingdom in visibly regenerate churches. If reformation proceeded by degrees from one age to the next toward ultimate consummation and if this were truly the last age—as the existence of Antichrist implied—then it stood to reason that the purification of forms already achieved should logically be followed by a purification of the substance of the church.

### *Thomas Goodwin*

Whether or not Cotton actually reasoned in this way during the three years before he came to America, we shall probably never know. But there is evidence that by 1639 he was specifically associating the

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256. Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1963), 64–112.

257. John Cotton, *A Sermon Preached ... at Salem, 1636* (Boston, 1713), 21.

258. *Ibid.*, 31.

idea of a visibly regenerate church with the second coming. In that year he preached a long series of sermons expounding Revelation, some of which were taken down in shorthand and eventually published in London. The series, however, is not complete; and before we examine Cotton's writings in greater detail, therefore, it might be useful to look at an exposition on Revelation written by another important advocate of the New England Way—Thomas Goodwin. Goodwin was a Puritan clergyman who became a leader of congregational reform—or Independency, as it was called—during the Civil Wars and the Interregnum. Outside of America, he was probably the foremost theologian of the New England Way. His analysis of the Apocalypse, which like Cotton's was written in 1639, is of particular interest for our problem since he was converted to Independency by Cotton in 1633, just before the latter sailed to New England.

In Goodwin's eyes the book of Revelation was a coherent, logical, and tightly constructed piece of work, comparable in fact to a well-written play. God, revealing the story of His kingdom within history, had done so as skillfully as the greatest playwright. In St. John's vision—just as in ordinary plays—the stage was set, a chorus provided to give judgment and approbation (“the custom in comedies of old”), and a prologue read. The history of the kingdom thus began with a description of the church—the stage upon which the true meaning of man's sojourn on earth would become apparent. The chorus was provided by its members, who throughout the ages “upon any great or solemn occasion [gave] their *plaudite* or acclamation of glory unto God.”<sup>259</sup> All of this was represented to St. John in the vision of the throne, the four beasts, and the twenty-four elders described in the fourth chapter of Revelation. Like his predecessors, Goodwin too regarded this chapter as depicting the church *sub specie aeternitatis*. It was “a representation of the church (wherein God hath his throne) {111} of men on earth, universal in all ages; set forth according to the form or pattern of institution of a church, into which all saints on earth should be moulded.”<sup>260</sup> Naturally this universal pattern was a simple

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259. Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, ed. John C. Miller, 12 vols. (Edinburgh, 1861–66), vol. 3, 1.

260. *Ibid.*, 2.

one. In the ideal church there were but two components—the congregation and its officers. The elders represented the brethren who held “the radical power,” while the four beasts were the officers who, “though nearest the throne, yet are mentioned after the elders; for though their place be nearer, yet they are but the church’s servants.”<sup>261</sup> Once the stage was set, the prologue showed how Christ had taken upon Himself the work of redemption of the elect, having the power and providence not only to know but to execute the decrees of God for all time. Finally, after the prologue had been read, “God’s design and project upon the world” began to unfold, and the drama of the church in the world—from Christ’s ascension to His return—was played out for the edification of all ages.

Goodwin saw the church’s story in much the same way that his predecessors had seen it. Essentially it was a tale of gradual decline from primitive godliness to the depths of anti-Christian corruption and equally gradual ascent into the light of the Reformation. Above all, it was a description of the execution of Christ’s government in history, “*first*, in putting down all opposite rule and power that stand in his way ... and, *secondly*, in a visible taking the kingdom to himself and his saints, which makes the fifth monarchy.”<sup>262</sup> The rough outline of the story went like this. Upon His ascension to heaven, Christ had found the Roman Empire—the fourth monarchy—spread throughout the world. Everywhere He was to seat His kingdom and church, He found the dominion of Satan. Hence He began the conquest of the world by preaching the gospel and within three hundred years had subjected the empire to Himself by converting it and its rulers to Christianity. But in revenge for previous persecutions against His saints, Christ brought down Rome’s imperial power and divided the empire into two parts by means of the wars of the Goths in the west and those of the Saracens in the east. The western empire was divided again into ten kingdoms, all of which consented to give their power to the pope, who thus restored the Roman monarchy to its full glory. In both east and west during this period of dissolution, Christ had sealed up 144,000 saints—men who

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261. *Ibid.*, 4.

262. *Ibid.*, 27.

had opposed, however unsuccessfully, the rising tide of corruption and degeneracy.

But now, with the pope on one hand and the Turk on the other, "Christ [had] a new business of it yet, to come unto his kingdom, and as difficult as ever."<sup>263</sup> Therefore, He brought forth seven vials—containing the seven last plagues—to dispatch the pope and the Turk and wholly root them out. With the appearance of these vials, the world entered into its last age— {112} the time in which Christ would bring His earthly kingdom to perfection through the total destruction of His enemies. Here the Apocalypse told the story of the church "both in respect of the progress of its separation further and further off from Rome, and so of its increase of light, purity, and reformation; as likewise in respect of persecutions and judgments upon it, and its restitution and deliverance again from under them."<sup>264</sup>

The first vial had been poured out upon Antichrist by the Waldensians, who about the year 1100 had erected true churches and preached a doctrine of both law and gospel. Their persecution and consequent dispersal throughout Europe had been the means of furthering the spread of truth and light. From their descendants, Wyclif, Huss, and Jerome of Prague had learned that the pope was Antichrist and had been inspired to advocate reforms in the church. Their work had marked the pouring out of the second vial. The third one was embodied in the preaching of Luther. He had shown beyond a doubt that separation from Rome was mandatory for God's saints and had thus prepared the way for the fourth vial, which was the present period of "glorious peace and sunshine of the gospel." After the grievous persecutions of earlier ages, the church was now enjoying a time of harvest during which the elect were being converted and gathered in by the preaching of the gospel. Most important of all, "this preaching of the gospel, that hath reaped this corn, hath been authorized by the chief magistrates, and by kingly power, even whole kingdoms professing.... Jesus Christ, the Son of man, is visibly set in the throne, ruling by Christian magistrates, they using their power for him."<sup>265</sup> But after har-

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263. *Ibid.*, 28.

264. *Ibid.*, 80.

265. *Ibid.*, 89.

vest comes vintage, and the vintage which even now was following the harvest of the elect was one of vengeance. God was cutting down the wild grapes in His vineyard and casting them into the winepress of His wrath:

And these grapes are those carnal Protestants and professors of religion, who together with the elect, have enjoyed the heat of this fair long summer, and hung like to grapes in the sun, but retaining their sourness, have been ripened indeed, but only for wrath and vengeance. And lo, how this sharp sickle hath gone up and down in Germany for well-nigh these twenty years, being such a winepress of fierce wrath, and such a treading down to an overflowing of blood and misery, as hath scarce been paralleled in any age! For it is the vengeance of the temple, not so much destroyed, as defiled and dishonoured by their mixture; which as much provokes God unto wrath as the persecution of his temple would have done.<sup>266</sup>

All of this—both harvest and vintage—was contained within the fourth vial. There were three yet to go, and these three would encompass the final destruction of the powers of darkness. The fifth, which would strike at the seat of Babylon (i.e., Rome), Goodwin thought was just beginning. {113}

It would be completed about 1666 and would be followed by the destruction of the Turks (the sixth vial). Then the remnants of the forces of the pope and Turk would unite with all the evil kings of the world and fight against the Christians and Jews—who would have been converted in 1650—until “Christ himself comes and makes but one work of it, with his own hand from heaven destroying them.”<sup>267</sup> This victory would initiate the millennial reign of Christ, and Goodwin predicted that it would take place in 1700.

This, then, was the outline of the story of the church from Christ’s ascension to the end of time. But the part of it which most interested Goodwin was the part that applied to his own age. “The main thing I aimed at, both in my first studying this book, and also in this my exposition of it, was to search into such passages therein as did concern and fall upon the last days, especially the present times of the church; and to inquire and find out under which of these constellations our own

266. *Ibid.*

267. *Ibid.*, 28.



times do fall, and what is certainly yet to come.”<sup>268</sup> And to the end that he might properly present his findings concerning the last days, Goodwin devoted over half of his book to a detailed analysis of the period from “the Church’s separation from Popery” to the appearance of New Jerusalem. The whole of this period Goodwin divided into three “re-formations,” each corresponding to certain vials and each described in a separate chapter of Revelation. The first of these was the “separation of the church from Antichrist in several degrees”—the reformation of doctrine and worship already accomplished by the first reformers. It corresponded to the first four vials and, as we have seen, brought the church up to Goodwin’s time. The second reformation was just beginning with the end of the fourth and the start of the fifth vials. It was to be a purification of the membership of the church. Finally, the last reformation—which would bring history to a close—was to be a “reformation personal, of the saints themselves in it, as then with might and main preparing and adorning themselves for the marriage of the Lamb, which then they shall evidently see approaching, now when the whore is cast off and burnt; and there you may see them getting all the fine linen they can—that is, of holiness and growth in grace, ‘the righteousness of the saints.’”<sup>269</sup>

Before this glorious third reformation could be consummated, however, the membership of the church had to be purified from its present “profane mixture.” The second reformation, in other words, was the work *now* required of the saints in God’s plan for the church, and Goodwin took care to expound the chapter in which it was described—chapter 11—at length. This chapter, more than any other in Revelation, Goodwin felt exactly represented “the present face, the affairs, stirrings and alterations now {114} a-working in the churches of Europe.”<sup>270</sup> In this part of his vision, St. John is commanded by an angel to measure the temple, the altar, and the worshippers which appear before him, expressly omitting the outer court of the Gentiles. Goodwin interpreted this act as a representation of the “face of the church” in the age “wherein Antichrist’s reign is drawing near its end”—“(this age, as I

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268. *Ibid.*, 78.

269. *Ibid.*, 82.

270. *Ibid.*, 124.

take it).<sup>271</sup> The temple, of course, was the church, and St. John's measurement of it the reformation that would make it "more answerable to the pattern in the mount." Omitting to measure the outer court meant that the church was to be purified of its profane mixture of carnal and unregenerate professors. For even though true churches had already been set up during the first reformation—by virtue of the elect hidden within them—they were yet defiled by the presence of this outer court "into which all sorts came." They were, therefore, more outward courts than inward temples, and their promiscuous mixture of regenerate men with carnal professors permitted great corruptions both in church fellowship and in church worship. Hence it was the duty of the saints to carry reformation one step further by purging the visible church of its unregenerate members.

And observe the glorious wisdom that is in God's proceeding herein, as the reason of it. For God intending to have a church most holy unto himself, under the seventh trumpet, in which "the ark shall be seen"...and his manner being to carry on his church unto perfection by degrees,—he doth therefore, about the midst of that time, between the first reformation long since made and that seventh trumpet, in an age or so foregoing it, set his builders to work (whom John here represents) to endeavour to erect a new frame, and a reformation of that reformation; and to take the reed, and measure over anew both temple, altar, and worshippers, and to cast out that outward court of worshippers, with those corruptions of theirs which hindered that thorough reformation; and so to contract his temple into a narrower compass, as the proportion of the inner temple to the outward was, yet purer and more refined, he delighting more in truth, and purity of worship, than in magnitude or multitude of sacrificers and worshippers: and so to make himself a church that shall consist of priests, and an inward temple separated from that outward court, into which the true worshippers are called up from the other, which before lay common to both.<sup>272</sup>

Goodwin was careful to point out that by the inner temple he did not mean the invisible communion of God's elect, which existed apart from any visible church. The imagery of the inner temple and the outer court was not a type of the old distinction between the visible and invisible

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271. *Ibid.*, 122.

272. *Ibid.*, 128.

churches. The temple, in fact, represented “churches or congregations of public worshippers considered as such; church-fellowship, as you call it.”<sup>273</sup> {115} The altar represented the ordinances of worship, and the worshippers, of course, were the saints. The act of measuring was simply:

By the word exactly putting a difference between them that fear God and them that fear him not; measuring out who fear him by marks, signs, and spots upon his people, (as in Deuteronomy God speaks,) which the word gives. And this distinguishing and putting a difference between men and men, the word calls excluding or leaving them out. Which, accordingly, to make way for the right constitution of churches, in discerning the true matter of them, hath been the chief work of the godly ministers in England in this last age; who, though they wanted the ordinance of excommunication in their churches, yet in lieu of it they had excommunicating gifts, and were forced, because of that profane mixture in churches, to spend most of their ministry in distinguishing men, by giving signs and marks of men's natural and regenerate estates, and convincing and discovering carnal men to themselves and others: which God in providence ordained, to make way for the erection of more pure churches. For by this light was set up in godly men's hearts a spirit to discern between the clean and the unclean; and so to hew and set apart the materials for this temple, as the stones for Solomon's were.<sup>274</sup>

But in spite of his emphasis on the necessity of constructing churches out of pure (i.e., regenerate) members, Goodwin did not believe the church would become absolutely pure before the advent of the New Jerusalem. Until that time there would always be hypocrites in the church—despite the most stringent requirements for admissions. “For though their second reformation, and the reed thereof, keeps out men civil and profane, whom John here represents, may judge visibly so to be; yet many a hypocrite, that maketh a lie, may scape and crowd into this inward temple still, whilst the judgment of men, who often err, applies the reed. But into the other temple to come, under the new Jerusalem, shall none of these enter.”<sup>275</sup> In the meantime, a church that denied entrance to the unregenerate to the best of its knowledge would

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273. *Ibid.*, 129.

274. *Ibid.*, 130–31.

275. *Ibid.*, 128.

be the most adequate means of protecting the saints from the degeneracy which was an inevitable concomitant of the world's old age. "To get into this temple is the greatest preservative to keep the saints from the overgrowing corruptions and defilements of these Gentiles [i.e., carnal Protestants]; and it may unto many prove a protection and sanctuary from their power, as to those churches in New England it may be hoped it shall. 'God will create a defense upon his glory.' And, however, they shall hereby be reserved for that resurrection which afterward is to come."<sup>276</sup>

Goodwin did not doubt that this second reformation would take place in the midst of degeneracy and corruption. In fact, it seemed likely that its *raison d'être* was to line up those who could be trusted in the coming {116} fight against the forces of Satan, and in Goodwin's judgment—being "not swayed unto it through affection only"—the purest professors were to be found in his own land. England, therefore, must hasten to prepare for its leading role in the coming struggle by erecting the kind of churches the New Englanders already had founded. Only in this manner could the challenge of these perilous times be met. On this note, Goodwin ended his exposition of the Apocalypse:

But, however, let an indefinite warning that these things are approaching, and we within reach of them, suffice for to move us to prepare for them, which is the only use of knowing them.... [For] we are to consider that we live now in the extremity of times, when motions and alterations, being so near the centre, become quickest and speediest; and we are at the verge, and, as it were, within the whirl of that great mystery of Christ's kingdom, which will, as a gulf, swallow up all time; and so, the nearer we are unto it, the greater and more sudden changes will Christ make, now hastening to make a full end of all.<sup>277</sup>

### *John Cotton*

If Goodwin believed that England should prepare for a leading role in the tumultuous days ahead, John Cotton was willing to give his native land more than a little credit for reformation already accomplished. In one of the three published parts of his sermons on the

276. *Ibid.*, 130.

277. *Ibid.*, 204.

Apocalypse, *The Powring Out of the Seven Vials*, he assigned England a major role in bringing about the reforms which any day now would complete the destruction of Antichrist. These reforms he thought were the antitypes of the seven vials described in Revelation—just as had Goodwin. Unlike Goodwin though, he did not think that the vials could be correlated with the appearance of the Waldensians five centuries ago.<sup>278</sup> Instead Cotton believed the first vial had been poured out as recently as the reigns of Henry, Edward, and Mary, when English martyrs had announced the theme of reformation. These men and women had been “such as did convince [men] of the Damnable estate of a Catholike, and taught them, that by their Religion they could go not beyond a Reprobate; ... that all their Religion was but the worship of God after the devises of men, even Will-worship, such as they were led into by the Man of Sinne.”<sup>279</sup> Their work was reinforced soon after by “*Chemnitius*, and *Junius*, *Chamier*, *Whitaker*, and *Reynolds*, *Perkins* and *Ames*, and the rest of the holy saints of God, that have poured out this [second] {117} viall of Gods wrath, that is, by their doctrine and writings from the word have poured out such clear conviction, and refutation of [Catholic] doctrine and worship.”<sup>280</sup> Thus, just as corruption had crept into the church by degrees, the vials of God’s wrath were progressively discovering the “pollution in Religion.”

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278. Cotton did, however, believe that reformation had begun with the Waldensians and had continued and spread throughout Europe until it had openly broken forth with Luther. He merely did not think these events could be correlated with the seven vials. See his *An Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of Revelation*.

279. John Cotton, *The Powring Out of the Seven Vials* (London, 1642), “The First Viall,” 4–5.

280. *Ibid.*, “The Second Viall,” 20. The men referred to by Cotton are Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586), German theologian known for his work against the Council of Trent; Franciscus Junius (1545–1602), French Reformed theologian who wrote against Bellarmine; Daniel Chamier (1565–1621), French Reformed preacher who presided over the synod which added an article to the Reformed confession of faith declaring the pope to be Antichrist; William Whitaker (1548–1595), English theologian who wrote against Bellarmine; John Reynolds (1549–1607), Puritan divine, author of several works against Catholics; William Perkins (1558–1602), English theologian greatly revered by New England Puritans; and William Ames (1576–1633), another English theologian who profoundly influenced New England Puritanism.

Queen Elizabeth—with the aid of Parliament—had been responsible for the third vial. This one, which turned rivers and fountains to blood, had been “effectually accomplished” when a law was passed in 1581 requiring that any Jesuits or Catholic priest found within the realm be judged guilty of high treason. In this manner, the “rivers and fountains” of Catholic propaganda had—quite literally—been turned into blood.<sup>281</sup> The angel who declared the righteousness of the Lord in visiting this plague upon Catholicism Cotton thought was none other than William Cecil. His book, *Justitia Britanniae*, had made it clear that what had been decreed in Parliament was just according to the law of God and the true principles of “the Christian State Policie.” The Netherlands had followed England’s example in 1586, and together these laws had “raised all Christendome in combustion, the wars of eighty eight, the Spanish invasion had special respect to this, and had not the Lord borne witnesse to his people and their Law, in defeating the intendments of their enemies, against both the Nations, it might have been the ruine of them both.”<sup>282</sup>

Cotton gave his listeners a choice when it came to the fourth vial. It could be taken either as the defeat of Austria by Sweden, or the breaking of the pope’s civil supremacy by Queen Elizabeth when she defied his bull of excommunication. Since then, as everyone knew, his power had greatly decreased—even in Catholic nations. The fifth vial, which was supposed to be poured out upon the seat of the beast, Cotton did not interpret as a visitation threatened against Rome. Rather, since the seat of the beast really existed in the papal and episcopal forms of church government, this prediction would be fulfilled in an attack upon these corruptions. Indeed, the first drops of this vial had already been sprinkled by Beza, Cartwright, {118} Baynes, and Parker, and even now the rest of it was descending full force in Scotland.

You now see whole Vialls full of wrath powred out by the whole Church of Scotland, who have engaged themselves, and their state for ever in this quarrell, and have beene carried along herein, not in a way

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281. See the account of the executions of three Catholic priests which took place in Cotton’s hometown when he was a young boy, in Larzer Ziff, *The Career of John Cotton: Puritanism and the American Experience* (Princeton, NJ, 1962), 3–4.

282. Cotton, *The Powring Out of the Seven Vials*, “The Third Viall,” 7.

of popular tumult, but with such wisdom, courage, judgement and Piety, that you may see and say that it is not a Viall poured out by an unadvised multitude, but by an Angell of God, by the Heavenly Ministers of his wrath.<sup>283</sup>

From Scotland the wrath of God against these degenerate church governments was pouring into England. Men questioned the episcopacy—let alone the papacy—as they never had before, and Cotton believed this growing doubt would spread from Great Britain through the Catholic countries to the very gates of Rome itself.

The fifth vial would be followed very shortly by the sixth, which was to dry up the river Euphrates. Cotton conceived this river to be the idolatry and revenues which nourished both the pope and the Turk. The ten Christian kings of Europe, converted under the fifth vial (Cotton did not identify them), would “dry up all these [papal] renewes.” This would deprive the Turks by encouraging the conversion of the Jews, who would invade the East and thus cut off the maintenance of the Turkish rulers. But the sixth vial was not to affect Europe alone. Its appearance—which in some degree had already begun—had implications for New England as well, since the drying up of idolatry referred not only to graven images but to the idols Mammon erected in the hearts of all men.

And so will God deale with our Cattell if they be our Gods, they shall either be worth little, or else he will deny us fodder for them; if they devoure our spirits, and take off our minds from the Ordinances of God; he will rend away anything that standeth between him and our soules; Therefore as ever we desire that we may prosper, and that their [*sic*] may be a ready way prepared for our comfort, let no streams of Idolatry, be found among us, ... Only let us take part with this Angell in powring out *Vialls* upon the corruptions that are found in our own hearts; look that their be no corruptions in us, but such as are stil drying and drying up, and see if God be not faithfull and gracious to us abundantly; stir we up our selves therefore, and one another hereunto, then shall we see Gods ancient people [the Jews] brought home and the Lord shall be one over al the Earth, and his name one, which will prove a Resurrection unto all the Churches of the Saints.<sup>284</sup>

283. *Ibid.*, “The Fifth Vial,” 4.

284. *Ibid.*, “The Sixth Vial,” 26.

In other words, if New Englanders would turn from the pursuit of earthly goods to the cultivation of greater righteousness, they would be rewarded with the blessed spectacle of the conversion of the Jews and the reign of Christ through the world—nothing less than the beginning of {119} the millennium. For Cotton, like Goodwin, thought that Christ, “by his Spirit and in his Servants,” would reign a thousand years on earth and that His reign would begin just as soon as the power of the Word, breaking forth throughout the world in the seventh vial, had finally defeated Antichrist. Whether or not New England dried up its own streams of idolatry, Cotton thought all of this would probably happen very soon. “I know not what you that are young may live unto, for the neerer these things come unto their accomplishment, the swifter their motion will be, as it is with all naturall motions.”<sup>285</sup> The question for New England, therefore, was whether it would be rewarded or punished by the millennium.

Cotton put these alternatives to his colonial listeners in blunt terms in his sermons on the verses in Revelation which speak of the first resurrection.<sup>286</sup> The first resurrection—which would be spiritual, not bodily—would take place about the time of Antichrist’s fall and would consist of two parts—the first being the resurrection of particular persons “restored and renewed by regenerating Grace” and the second being a resurrection of the churches “when as they are recovered againe from their Apostatical and dead estate in Idolatry and Superstition.”<sup>287</sup> Naturally the two parts were interdependent:

The particular members of the church rise by regeneration and the work of God’s grace in their hearts working in them by his spirit all grace to salvation: Faith, Hope, Patience, Humility, *etc.* Now they rising againe, not into a loose frame, but a state rising into a Church body, and the Church body so reformed as may beare witness against all Antichristianisme in doctrine, Worship and government; This is the first resurrection.<sup>288</sup>

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285. *Ibid.*, “The Fourth Part upon the Sixth Vial,” 11.

286. Rev. 20:5–6.

287. John Cotton, *The Churches Resurrection* (London, 1642), 8.

288. *Ibid.*, 9.



Cotton was careful to emphasize that the particular members making up these reformed churches would be “sincere members,” for otherwise “it could not bee said those men are *blessed and holy that have part in the first resurrection*, if they had part only in outward reformation.”<sup>289</sup> Such reformed churches therefore would truly constitute a “sincere and spirituall community.”

The first part of this resurrection-reformation—the conversion of particular members—had clearly already begun, but the second part would be fully accomplished only upon the ruination of Antichrist. “I cannot speake according to my Text, and say there is a first resurrection of Churches yet. Though there be a resurrection of Christians, and a yawning towards further reformation in these Churches.”<sup>290</sup> When Antichrist did fail, though, {120} there would be “a fresh supply of notable reformation, and notable judgements upon wicked men.”<sup>291</sup> Nations all over the world would then be blessed with the opportunity to reform. The “beauty of the Ordinances,” the allure of “so many Sincere hearted Christians in the Church,” would bring multitudes into the fold. For those who did not succumb to the attractions of godliness at that time, however, there would be a terrible punishment. They and their posterity would be given no opportunity to partake of reformation during all the years when Christ’s servants would rule the earth. “Such Nations and people as are not renewed and restored in the first resurrection, upon the destruction of Antichrist and the ruine of Rome, they shall not recover the like liberty, either of Reformation of themselves, or of persecution of the Churches, for a thousand Yeeres after.”<sup>292</sup> The moral for New England was obvious:

The use of this point is First a serious and strong warning unto all the people of God that shall live when Antichrist shall be abolished, and *Rome* ruinated. Take heed how you slip such opportunities of turning unto God. If men grow not more sincere and pure in seeking after God (whether they be publick States or private persons:) If men be not brought on, but will stand out such glorious reformation then, and such powerfull providences then; If men stand out then, and not bee

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289. *Ibid.*, 10.

290. *Ibid.*, 19.

291. *Ibid.*, 12.

292. *Ibid.*, 11–12.

awakened, it is to bee feared they will not be awakened, (nor men of their Spirits) for a thousand yeares together.<sup>293</sup>

God might yet bear with New England for a while, but if the colonists did not now “strike a fast Covenant with our God to be his people,” then they would be cast into outer darkness when Christ’s kingdom was established on earth. Surely this was the time to remember that “we are not like to see greater encouragements for a good while than now we see.”<sup>294</sup>

But, however much Cotton was prepared to question the “sincerity” of New England’s reformation, he was still convinced that it was moving in the right direction. His description of the millennium, which he thought might begin as soon as 1655, sounds very like the holy commonwealth already established in Massachusetts.

These thousand yeares therefore doe most properly begin from the throwing down of Antichrist and destruction of Rome; The Lord will then send such powerfull Ministers into the Church, that by the power of the keyes they shall take hold on Satan that is to say, convince him and his instruments of all Popish, and Paganish Religion and binde him by the Chaine, that is to say, the strong chaine of Gods ordinances, Word and Sacraments, and Censures. They shall not take hold of Satan in his own Person, for I doe believe Satan will ever be at liberty to tempt the Sonnes of men; and he is never so cast into the bottomless pit, but he hath a power to vex the Sonnes of men to the end of the {121} world. But he speakes of Satan in his instruments, that not one of them shall appeare, but the Lord in his word shall take hold on them and abandon them; and if they be Church members will bind them in chaines of the Ordinances of God, as Admonition, and Excommunication and hold them so close to it, that such wickednesse shall not abide uncontroled on the face of the Earth chiefly by Church Censures, and partly also by punishment from Civil Magistrates as need shall be.<sup>295</sup>

Moreover, men would then “clearely know that the true Church is not a Catholike visible, nor a Cathedrall, nor a Diocesan, nor a Provincially Church.”<sup>296</sup> They would realize, in other words, that true churches

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293. *Ibid.*, 14–15.

294. *Ibid.*, 16.

295. *Ibid.*, 5–6.

296. Cotton, *The Powing Out of the Seven Vials*, “The Seventh Vial,” 11.

were particular congregations made up of visible saints, exercising discipline according to God's ordinances, and they would establish such churches throughout the world. When this was accomplished, the millennium would have arrived. Then it could truly be said, "It is done; Even all that God hath to do in the world, for any further Reformation expect it not."<sup>297</sup>

By now the similarities between Goodwin's and Cotton's interpretations of the Apocalypse should be evident. Both believed that the fall of Antichrist would probably take place within the lifetime of people then living, that this fall would be accompanied by a reformation of churches similar to that practiced in New England, that this reformation would initiate the millennium, and that even now the way for all this was being prepared by the restoration of excommunication or "excommunicating gifts," which served to separate the visibly regenerate from the visibly profane. Neither man could be called a premillennialist since they expected this great reformation to develop out of a historical process that had already been in progress for several centuries. Nor were they prepared to claim absolute accuracy in the discernment of hypocrites short of Judgment Day. Satan—who was, of course, not identical with Antichrist—would merely be bound by the ordinances of God during the millennium, not destroyed. What Goodwin and Cotton envisaged was a great period *within history* during which it would be given to the saints to restrain evil through the righteous exercise of civil and ecclesiastical authority. It would, in other words, be a thousand-year extension of the New England Way. Yet this did not imply that the saints could bring the millennium on unaided. Even the beginnings that were being made in New England depended upon a divine covenant, and still there was a danger that that experiment might fail through the carelessness of the experimenters. But, as we have said, Goodwin and Cotton did not expect to establish the millennium through the action of the saints. Rather, the rule of the saints would become inevitable because a growing knowledge of the Lord would transform the hearts of men. As Cotton put it: {122}

And when once the light of the Gospell is dispersed, it will bring in all Nations, it will thunder upon them, and never leave untill it have

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297. *Ibid.*

changed them. If this knowledge of God come amongst an army of men, they will not touch any thing that is their brethrens, not meddle, not make with any to doe them harme, no mans purse shall be taken from him, no mans goods taken without due recompence, only they will not be deluded with shaddowes, nor suffer mountaines to overtop them, neither will they be encompassed with hands: they will raise such an earthquake first, in Church, and Commonwealth, as you will at length wonder at, for though it begin in a corner of the world, it will not cease till it have shaken all Christendome, for when men once begin clearely to see which is the true Church of God, that it is not Cathedrall, nor Provinciaall, nor Diocesan, but congregationall only, the officers whereof are godly Pastors, and Teachers, and ruling Elders and Deacons. And when they see that the Saints which they have embraced, and esteemed, are not the true Saints of God, nor these the Churches, nor those the officers of Christ wherewith they have been gulled: but they see now who are the Saints of the most high; and can put a difference now between precious and vile. In this way men will goe on to raise such an earthquake (and that not besides the Law neither) that if any City rise up against them, fall it must and stoop unto them, and at length Rome it self shall fall, and all the Cities of the Nations that cleave unto her, and every mountaine shall bee rooted up, and all their consecrated places shall lie levell with the common soile, this will the Lord bring to passe, and will not leave till he hath wrought his great work in the world.<sup>298</sup>

### *John Davenport*

There were other ministers in New England besides John Cotton who thought along apocalyptic lines. Perhaps the one whose views were closest to those of Cotton was John Davenport, the first minister of New Haven. Davenport, like his close friend, Thomas Goodwin, was converted to the cause of congregationalism by Cotton in 1633, just before the latter sailed for New England. Incurring the displeasure of the bishops shortly thereafter, Davenport himself fled to Holland, where he became involved in an acrimonious controversy over baptism and soon returned to England. Cotton, meanwhile, had been encouraging him to come to America by sending him reports—if we can take Cotton Mather’s word for it—“that the order of the churches and the commonwealth was now so settled in New-England, by common con-

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298. *Ibid.*, 15–16.

sent, that it brought into his mind the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.”<sup>299</sup> (Possibly to the embarrassment of his mentor, Davenport arrived in Massachusetts just in time to help settle the Antinomian Controversy.) By 1638 he was safely established in New Haven. There he set out to create a church of even {123} greater righteousness than those of Massachusetts. If the Bay Colony brought to mind the new heaven and earth, New Haven was intended to exemplify the quintessence of purity. As Cotton Mather later put it, Davenport’s objective was to do “all that was possible to render the renowned church of New-Haven like the New-Jerusalem.”<sup>300</sup>

Davenport’s desire to model the church of New Haven upon the New Jerusalem is especially interesting in the light of his views upon the millennium; for, like Goodwin and Cotton, he too believed there would be an extended period on earth in which the church would enjoy as much “perfection of light, and holiness, and love, as is attainable on this side of heaven.”<sup>301</sup> Unlike them, however, Davenport was a chiliast who believed Christ would reign on earth personally during the millennium, although he did not believe the saints would enjoy carnal pleasures at this time. These views, as he well knew, were dangerously close to those held by such millennial enthusiasts as the Fifth-Monarchy men. Yet, writing in 1667—seven years after the rule of saints in England had utterly collapsed—Davenport refused to renounce his chiliasm. “Concerning this his *second coming*, to set up his Kingdom on earth, some acknowledge no kingdom of Christ on earth, but spiritual and invisible in the hearts of the elect. The kingdom of Christ hath indeed been setup by his effectual operation of the spirit in the Ministry of the Gospel, from the first publishing of the Gospel .... But there is another, a *Political Kingdom of Christ* to be set up *in the last times*.”<sup>302</sup> The Fifth-Monarchy men had erred in two ways: “First, By

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299. John Cotton, quoted in Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol. 1 (Hartford, CT, 1855), 325.

300. *Ibid.*, 328.

301. John Davenport, “An Epistle to the Reader,” in Increase Mather, *The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation Explained and Applied* (London, 1669). Unfortunately, this preface is the only extant writing of Davenport on the millennium. Cotton Mather, however, states that he “both preached and wrote” on the subject. *Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol. 1, 331.

anticipating the time, which will not be till the pouring out of the sixth and seventh Vials. Secondly, By putting themselves upon a work which shall not be done by men, but by Christ himself.”<sup>303</sup> In spite of his strictures against the Fifth Monarchists for “anticipating the time,” Davenport apparently believed the second coming was near, for he noted “constant reports from sundry places and hands” that the Israelites were converging upon Jerusalem from all over the world, “carried on with great signs and wonders by a high and mighty hand of extraordinary providence.” This seemed to him to indicate that the Jews were being assembled by God preparatory to their long-prophesied conversion. Since Davenport thought they were not to be converted before “Romes ruine” and Christ’s appearance to judge Antichrist, it seems likely that he thought the millennium was near. Moreover, Davenport supported his views by citing Goodwin, {124} Alsted, and Mede—“(who was no *phanatick*, as the *Prelates* themselves will grant)” —all of whom thought the millennium might begin in the seventeenth century.

Although there is no direct evidence for it, Davenport’s apocalyptic views probably dated at least from his early days in New Haven. Mede and Alsted were both published before he left for America, and he apparently maintained a correspondence with Thomas Goodwin. Nor in New England could he have failed to keep in contact with his old friend John Cotton. Certainly Davenport’s conception of the millennium was close to that of his two colleagues, apart from his insistence upon Christ’s personal rule. He too was fascinated by the vision of a coming earthly perfection of the church, and it may well be that his strictness in the admission of church members was directly linked to this vision.

### *William Hooke*

Davenport’s associate at New Haven, William Hooke, was apparently also a chiliast. Hooke, who came to Massachusetts in 1636, was a minister at Taunton until he moved to New Haven in 1644. He remained there twelve years, returning to England in 1656 to become Oliver Cromwell’s chaplain. In 1662 he was ejected from his living, and

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302. *Ibid.*

303. *Ibid.*

from then until his death in 1678, he led the rather precarious existence of a nonconforming minister. All of Hooke's apocalyptic writings date from after the fall of the Protectorate. Thus, although he was sure that "the world is now drawing towards its end,"<sup>304</sup> he was understandably primarily concerned with reconciling his readers to a difficult time in the immediate future. His emphasis was on hope and faith in the face of adversity. Occasionally, however, he did suggest that in more propitious times he might have been an outspoken defender of millennialism. For instance, in a passage reminiscent of John Cotton, he spoke of "a great effusion of the Spirit of God" to be expected in the last times:

Hence it followeth, That there will be a very great light of Knowledge in this Day, so that there shall not be so much need, as now there is, for one to teach another; saying, *Know the Lord*, for they shall all know him from the least to the greatest.... This Light of Knowledg shall have a great influence into the Hearts and Lives of Men, who shall shine eminently in Holiness; ... Even Carters, Cooks, and Kitchen-Maids shall then shine in purity of life, and there shall be no more the *Canaanite* in the House of the Lord of Hosts<sup>305</sup>

In 1664 he wrote to Davenport that "I lissen much after ye mocions of ye {125} Turke, wreof ye Intelligencer, every weeke, writes something. For his slaying of ye 3d pt of men (viz: Antichrians) Rev. 9.18, 19, 20, 21 and ye slaying of ye witnesses by ye Beast yt ascendeth out of ye bottomles pit Rev. 11.7 (I say) these are ye two grte things mentioned to be done under ye 6th Trumpet, wch some are of opinion is drawing on to its last blast."<sup>306</sup> It seems very likely that Hooke shared Davenport's views on the millennium and church membership.

### *Thomas Parker*

Davenport, Cotton, and presumably Hooke combined strict views on church membership with anticipation of the imminent arrival of the millennium. At the other extreme was someone like Thomas Parker,

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304. William Hooke, *A Discourse Concerning the Witnesses, Relating to the Time, Place, and Manner of their Being Slain* (London, 1681), 33.

305. William Hooke, *A Short Discourse of the Nature and Extent of the Gospel-Day* (London, 1673), 145–46.

306. Letter to John Davenport, 1664 (from MS copy made by G. Lyon Turner in Beinecke Library, Yale University).

son of the well-known Robert Parker who had been an early advocate of Puritan reforms in England. Unlike his father, who had leaned toward congregationalism, Thomas inclined toward a presbyterian form of church government. At the church in Newbury, Massachusetts, over which he and his cousin James Noyes presided, members were admitted according to a rule, “so large, that the weakest Christians may be received.”<sup>307</sup> Parker’s views on the millennium were as flexible as the ones he held on church membership. In a book on the prophecies of Daniel, he set forth two possible systems of apocalyptic chronology—one putting the end of Antichrist and the beginning of New Jerusalem at 1650 and the other at 1860. And when it did come, Parker did not expect New Jerusalem to exist on earth for more than forty-five years. “As concerning the opinion of many Worthy, affirming, that the reign of the Saints a 1000 yeers, is to be expected in the glory of New *Jerusalem* at the end of the yeers of Antichrist. I cannot possibly bring my judgement to incline unto it.”<sup>308</sup> According to Parker, the expressions of “temporall felicity” which described New Jerusalem in the Bible were “either to be understood of its state of *inchoation*, ... especially from after the end of the yeers of Antichrist through the space of 45 yeers... or being applied to its state of heavenly perfection immediately ensuing, they are to be understood in a mysticall sense.”<sup>309</sup> Parker thus gave an Augustinian interpretation to the thousand-year period of Satan’s binding. As he saw it, it had begun either in 620 or in 840 and accordingly would end roughly a millennium later in the day of Judgement.

Parker’s main concern, however, was with Daniel’s seventy weeks and not the millennium. As was usual, he interpreted the seventy weeks as a period of 490 years during which the true church would be gathered out of {126} the “Spiritual *Babylon* of Antichrist.” This work could date from either 1160 (the Waldensians) or 1370 (Wyclif). In either case, this was the time when the church would be “restored and edified by the Ordinances of Christ and Word of truth.” At its end (either in 1650 or 1860), there would be established “the Kingdom of

307. Thomas Parker, *The True Copy of a Letter* (London, 1644), 4.

308. *The Visions and Prophecies of Daniel Expounded* (London, 1646), 147.

309. *Ibid.*, 148.



Saints, wherein they shall dwell in safety, their enemies rooted out in the space of 45 years, Verse 12: and the elect remnant of them converted, ... then many shall rise to life, and many to shame. Thus the generall resurrection is compounded with the last plagues on Antichrist.”<sup>310</sup> Quite clearly Parker did not go along with Cotton and Davenport when it came to the millennial rule of the saints. Whether this was related to his more lenient views on church membership, it is impossible to say. He did suggest that during the forty-five-year period preceding the last judgment, “the Ministers as Angels, letting in the elect by conversion through the gates of particular Churches, into the community of the whole Church of New Jerusalem shall hereby be instruments of bringing them into the heavenly perfection, and shall therein be glorified with their converts.”<sup>311</sup>

### *Thomas Shepard*

Somewhere in between Davenport and Parker stood Thomas Shepard, the minister at Cambridge. Shepard, who was quite strict in the admission of church members, was much less certain in his views on apocalyptic matters than either Davenport or Parker. Indeed, at one point, after speculating about whether one of Brightman's interpretations could be applied to the conversion of the Indians, he wrote, “but I have no skill in prophesies, nor do I beleeve every mans interpretation of such Scriptures.”<sup>312</sup> It is not too surprising, therefore, to discover that Shepard rejected the idea of a millennial reign of the saints on earth, although he was still prepared to relate the New England Way to the coming of Christ. This comes out most clearly in his treatment of the parable of the ten virgins in a series of sermons preached between 1636 and 1640. A preacher who was known for his “melting” sermons on both sides of the Atlantic, Shepard was concerned in this series with the difference between the sincere Christian and “the most refined Hypocrite.” To distinguish between saving and common grace was an endeavor particularly helpful to a people striving to build regenerate

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310. *Ibid.*, 124–25.

311. *Ibid.*, 148–49.

312. Thomas Shepard, *The Clear Sun-shine of the Gospel Breaking forth upon the Indians in New-England* (London, 1648), 30.

churches, and Shepard's work enjoyed a long popularity in New England. For our purposes, however, the context into which he put his elaborate distinction between true and false regenerations is more interesting than the distinctions themselves. {127}

He made this context clear at the very beginning of his exposition. The parable, he said, dealt with the churches' preparation to meet with Christ and with the coming of the Bridegroom Himself. Shepard thought there would be not one but two comings of Christ. The first, a figurative rather than literal appearance, would be "to call the *Jews*, and to gather in the fulness of the *Gentiles* with them, which is called the *brightness of his coming*, 2 *Thess.* 2:8. When there shall be such a brightness of the Truth shining forth in the world, armed with such instruments as shall utterly destroy Antichrist, long before his second coming."<sup>313</sup> The second coming, of course, would be at the time of the Day of Judgment. The parable, therefore, could be taken as applying to either coming. Of the two, Shepard considered it more likely that it referred to the latter coming. But this did not mean that it contained no useful morals for New England, particularly since these were the days when Christ's first coming in "a brightness of the truth" was obviously wreaking havoc on Antichrist.

So that although this Parable looks most directly unto those times which are yet to come, yet as all examples registred in holy Scripture for time past, are applicable and useful for us, so these that are yet to come are alike instructive to us, especially in these times and places, wherein the Lord (according to his manner of working great things usually) gives among us some small, yet lively resemblance of those dayes.<sup>314</sup>

Moreover, the churches' preparation for Christ would be the same no matter whether it was the first or the second time. They would become "virgin-churches"—fit spouses for their holy Bridegroom.

The state of the Members of some Churches about the time of Christ's coming, shall be this, they shall not be openly prophane, corrupt and scandalous, but Virgin-Professors, awakened (for some season) out of carnal security, stirring, lively Christians, not preserving their Chas-

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313. Thomas Shepard, *The Parable of the Ten Virgins Opened and Applied* (London, 1695), pt. 1, 9.

314. *Ibid.*, 9–10.

tity and Purity meerey in a way of works, but waiting for Christ in a Covenant of Grace, only some of these, and a good part of these, shall be indeed wise, stored with spiritual wisdom, fill'd with the power of Grace; but others of them, and a great part of them too, shall be found foolish at the coming of the Lord Jesus.<sup>315</sup>

Obviously the lesson for New Englanders in this parable was the danger of considering themselves to be regenerate when in fact they were naught but foolish hypocrites. To lessen this possibility with a detailed description of the true “symptoms” of regeneration was the object of Shepard’s sermons. {128}

### *John Eliot*

Of all the ministers who came to New England during the first years of settlement, probably the most forthright exponent of apocalyptic ideas was John Eliot, the famous missionary to the Indians. Eliot was one of the first arrivals in Massachusetts, landing in Boston in 1631. He was soon established as the minister at Roxbury and remained there until his death in 1690 at the age of 86. Sometime during the first years of his ministry, Eliot became determined to evangelize the Indians. He hired an English-speaking Indian to teach him the language, and was finally ready to begin his missionary work in 1646. Eliot labored diligently for the rest of his life among the Indians, often under very discouraging conditions. His perseverance in such a difficult work is all the more impressive since he made no concessions to Indian barbarity in the matter of church polity. The requirements for admission to membership in their churches, which were established only after years of preparation, were as high as those of the majority of the English churches.

For our purposes, the most interesting thing about Eliot’s missionary activity is its clearly apocalyptic inspiration. In the numerous letters Eliot wrote to England describing the work and asking for funds, he repeatedly connects missions to the Indians with the advent of the millennium. In one letter Eliot wrote of the missions as “a day of small things,” and begged for the prayers of the saints and churches. “There is,” he continued, “the more eminent need of Faith and Prayer, that the

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315. *Ibid.*, 3.

Lord himself, by his special grace, favour, and providence, would appear in this matter: for the Lord must raigne in these latter dayes, and more eminently, & observably, overtop all Instruments and meanes.”<sup>316</sup> Just a year later, in 1650, he maintained that “all those signes preceding the glorious coming of Christ are accomplishing,” and announced his determination to see that the Indians “be wholly governed by the Scriptures in all things both in Church and State,” since “unto that frame the Lord will bring all the world ere he hath done, but it will be more difficult in other Nations who have been adulterate with their *Antichristian* or humane wisdom.”<sup>317</sup> By 1653, Eliot was convinced that the Lord had “raised and improved” Oliver Cromwell to overthrow Antichrist and informed the Protector that the conversion of the Indians confirmed the arrival of the time for the spread of Christ’s kingdom over all the world:

In these times the Prophetes of *Antichrist* his downfall are accomplishing. And do we not see that the Spirit of the Lord, by the word {129} of Prophetie, hath raised up men, instruments in the Lords hand, to accomplish what is written herein.... In like manner the Lord having said, *The Gospel shall spread over all the Earth, even to all the ends of the Earth: and from the rising to the setting Sun: all Nations shall become the Nations, and Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.* Such words of Prophetie hath the Spirit used to stir up the servants of the Lord to make out after the accomplishment thereof: and hath stirred up a mighty Spirit of Prayer, and an expectation of Faith for the Conversion both of the *Jewes*, (yea all *Israel*) and of the *Gentiles* also, all over the world.<sup>318</sup>

Eliot, then, undertook his missionary work to the Indians in the firm conviction that these were the “latter dayes,” when the millennial kingdom of Christ would appear and spread to the ends of the earth. Moreover, he had very definite ideas about the nature of the coming reign of the Lord. Sometime around 1650 he wrote a treatise entitled *The Christian Commonwealth: or, the Civil Policy of the Rising Kingdom of Jesus*

316. John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew Jr., *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England*, ed. Edward Winslow (London, 1649), 18.

317. John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew Jr., *The Light Appearing More and More Towards the Perfect Day*, ed. Henry Whitefield (London, 1651), 23.

318. John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew Jr., *Tears of Repentance* (London, 1653), “To the Reader.”

*Christ*, which he dedicated to “the Chosen, and Holy, and Faithful, who manage the Wars of the Lord, against Antichrist, in great *Britain*.”<sup>319</sup> According to Eliot, Christ’s rule on earth would not be a personal one, but would consist simply of the supremacy of the Bible. “The Government of the Lord Jesus, ... by the Word of his Mouth, written in the holy Scriptures, shall order all affairs among men; And great shall be his Dominion.... all men submitting to be ruled by the Word, in civil, as well as Church-affairs.”<sup>320</sup> The work of the saints, therefore, in these tumultuous days was to act as the Lord’s instruments in bringing about Christ’s rule— “whether by Councils or Wars, or otherwise.” In prosecuting “that great business of changing the Government in *England*,” they should not search human polities and platforms of government, but should turn to the Scripture for “a Divine institution of civil Government.”<sup>321</sup> Indeed, the Spirit would bless “every institution of the Word, to make it powerful and effectual to attain its end better, and more effectually than any Humane Ordinance and Institution in the World can do.”<sup>322</sup>

The polity which Eliot thought the Word of God had instituted for the government of the world was a very simple one. It was based on God’s commandment “that a people should enter into Covenant with the Lord to become his people, even in their Civil Society, as well as in their {130} Church-Society.”<sup>323</sup> No law, statute, or judgment should be accounted valid “farther then it appeareth to arise and flow from the Word of God.”<sup>324</sup> Thus every covenanted nation should model its government upon the pattern of Israel set forth in the Scriptures, organizing itself into “myriads” or basic groups consisting of ten households each. Such “myriads” would be governed by an elected ruler who

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319. The treatise was not published until 1659, when, on the eve of the Restoration, it caused the government of Massachusetts Bay Colony profound embarrassment. Eliot eventually made a public retraction.

320. *The Christian Commonwealth* (London, 1659), “To the Chosen, and Holy and Faithful, etc.”

321. *Ibid.*

322. *Ibid.*

323. *Ibid.*, 1.

324. *Ibid.*, 3.

would join with others rulers of ten in an ascending hierarchy of councils. Thus five rulers of ten would join in a council which would govern under an elected ruler of fifty. Twenty rulers of fifty would form a council under a ruler of a thousand, and so on up to a million. The actual government would be carried on in periodic courts in which judgment out of the Scriptures would be passed on any matter requiring attention. Anything which could not be satisfactorily dealt with by a ruler of ten would be referred to the higher councils. In this manner the world would be governed by the Word of God only, and would partake of no human laws or polities.

Unfortunately, Eliot did not publish his views on the kind of “Church-Societie” appropriate to the rising kingdom of Christ until 1665, when he wrote the *Communion of Churches*, a treatise proposing “the Way of bringing all Christian Parishes to be Particular Reforming Congregationall Churches.” In this work he was primarily concerned with setting forth a system of church councils which would provide a means of uniting the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians and which would also serve as “an eminent Preparatory to these glorious dayes (when Christ shall be King over all the Earth).”<sup>325</sup> Eliot’s system of church councils was very like the platform of civil government he had advocated earlier, except that it was based on the number twelve instead of ten. Apart from defining “a Church of Believers” as “a company of visible saints combined together, with one heart, to hold Communion in all the instituted Gospel-worship, Ordinances and Discipline,”<sup>326</sup> Eliot made no statement about the admission of church members. In 1657, however, in a letter to Richard Baxter, he did recommend extending church privileges in England to the whole congregation, excluding only “the ignorant and prophane and scandalous.” At the same time, a smaller group of saints, “called higher by the grace of Christ,” might enjoy “a more strickt and select communion” without disrupting the rest of the parish.<sup>327</sup> It is difficult to say whether Eliot

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325. *Communion of Churches* (Cambridge, MA, 1665), 16.

326. *Ibid.*, 1.

327. *Some Unpublished Correspondence of the Reverend Richard Baxter and the Reverend John Eliot, the Apostle of the American Indians: 1656–1882*, ed. F. J. Powicke (Manchester, 1931), 25.

was merely advocating this measure as a temporary expedient, appropriate to the circumstances in which the English Puritans then found themselves, or {131} whether he felt this would be an integral part of "Church-Societie" during the millennium. He himself never instituted this practice in his own church in Roxbury or in the Indian churches, in spite of the fact that he did set up the civil government of the Praying Indians according to his "myriad" system. Furthermore, in *The Christian Commonwealth* he argued that "a willing subjection of a mans self to Christ in this [civil] Covenant, is some hopeful sign of some degree of faith in Christ, and love to God; and as a good preparative for a more neer approach to Christ in Church-fellowship, and Covenant."<sup>328</sup> Obviously when he wrote this, Eliot was envisaging a restriction of church membership, though it may not have been as strict as that employed by Davenport.

### Edward Johnson

Perhaps the man who best expressed the apocalyptic preoccupations of the first colonists was a layman, Edward Johnson. Johnson, a carpenter, wrote the first history of Massachusetts Bay Colony ever to be published. Entitled *The Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Savior in New England*, Johnson's history indicates the degree to which the apocalyptic conception of New England's destiny had taken hold of the imagination of the rank and file of the colonists. As its title suggests, the history was meant to depict the triumph of Christ over Satan in His American colony. The settlers themselves were represented as an army called up by their Savior "for freeing his people from their long servitude under usurping Prelacy."<sup>329</sup> The army's commission was a large one. As described by Johnson, it included instructions in the demeanor of church officers, the behavior of the people in the wilderness, the kind of civil government that was to be set up, and finally, "How the People of Christ ought to behave themselves in War-like Discipline."<sup>330</sup>

328. *The Christian Commonwealth*, 3.

329. Edward Johnson, *The Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England*, ed. William F. Poole (Andover, MA, 1867), 1.

330. *Ibid.*, 9.

The war by means of which these soldiers of Christ in New England were to put down prelacy was, of course, part of the great battle with Antichrist. In a chapter entitled “Of the Time of the Fall of Antichrist, and the Increase of the Gentile Churches, Even to the Provoking of the Twelve Tribes to Submit to the Kingdom of Christ,” Johnson, while admitting the exact time of the fall was obscure, nevertheless maintained that it was not far away. “But to come to the time of Antichrists fall; and all that expect it may depend upon the certainty of it: yea it may be boldly said that the time is come, and all may see the dawning of the day: you that long so much for it, come forth and fight: who can expect a victory without a battel?”<sup>331</sup> {132}

For those scoffers and doubters who would not believe that the day had really come until they could see Christ’s soldiers at the gates of Rome itself, Johnson had an easy answer. Had not the Lord said, “*Come out of her my people*”? To the New England historian, this obviously meant that Christ would come when His saints had been assembled in good order *outside* the church of Antichrist.

As it was necessary that there should be a *Moses* and *Aaron*, before the Lord would deliver his people and destroy *Pharaoh* lest they should be wildred indeed in the Wilderness; so now it was needfull, that the Churches of Christ should first obtain their purity, and the civill government its power to defend them, before Antichrist come to his finall ruine: behold the Lord Christ marshalling of his invincible Army to the battell: some suppose this onely to be mysticall, and not literall at all: assuredly the spirituall fight is chiefly to be attended, and the other not neglected, having a neer dependancy one upon the other, especially at this time.<sup>332</sup>

### *Purity and Eschatology*

Johnson’s insistence that the *raison d’être* of New England was a special part in God’s plan for bringing down Antichrist suggests that, within two decades of its founding, apocalyptic thinking had become, for a great many of the colonists, an essential part of the rationale for their new departure in Puritanism. As we have seen, the departure, which made New Englanders “*sui generis* even among Puritans,”<sup>333</sup> was

331. *Ibid.*, 231

332. *Ibid.*, 232.



their conception of the congregational church—a church whose membership was limited to the conspicuously regenerate and yet which functioned as the state church for an entire political body. In the New England mind, the establishment of this particular kind of holy commonwealth had somehow become indissolubly associated with the realization of Christ's kingdom in history. Indeed, the very creation of a New England Way was grounded on the assumption that not only was the kingdom capable of being realized within history, but that it was the inescapable obligation of the saints as God's instruments to work actively towards its establishment. And even though New England's ministers did not always agree on the best way to proceed toward this goal, they did agree that the extraordinary times in which they lived formed the prelude to a new age. As Richard Mather put it:

The Amplitude, and large extent of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ upon Earth, when *the Heathen shall be his Inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth his possession: and when all Kings shall fall down unto him, and all Nations do him service, ...* is a thing plainly and plentifully foretold and promised in the Holy Scriptures; ... And although as yet our Eyes have never seen it, so, nor our Fathers afore {133} us, ... yet *the time is coming, when things shall not thus continue but be greatly changed and altered, because the Lord hath spoken this Word, and it cannot be that his Word should not take effect.*<sup>334</sup>

Thus from the very beginning, the bent of the colonists in Massachusetts Bay—unlike their brethren at Plymouth—was not to withdraw from the world but to reform it, to work within the institutional continuities of history rather than to deny them. The tremendous impulse toward purity which gave birth to New England was gratified only on the condition that the saints would not thereby cut themselves off from the historical church—manifested for them in the Church of England—or from the political power of the state. Yet, the kingdom which they as God's instruments were pledged to further was not temporal but spiritual. Somehow this world's institutions had to be refashioned to conform to Christ's spiritual kingdom. “The Latter Erecting of Christs *Kingdom* in whole *Societies*, ... was our Design, and

333. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 434.

334. “To the Christian Reader,” in Eliot and Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*.

our Interest in this Country: tho' with Respect to the *Inward* and *Invisible* Kingdom, as the Scope thereof."<sup>335</sup>

It is no wonder that most of their English contemporaries reacted to this intention with incredulity and charges of fanaticism, for the New England design was precisely to make visible that which they admitted was invisible. They set out to do nothing less than reveal the boundaries of grace by making the church conform to the inward rule of Christ in the hearts of the elect. This ambition to erect Christ's kingdom by making it synonymous with the visible church and the definitive element of a secular community was much closer to radical millennialism than most Puritans came in the seventeenth century, and in fact, as we have seen, ran counter to the Calvinist conception of the church and its role in the world. For Calvin himself, although the church stood in a peculiar relationship to the kingdom, the church was identified with the kingdom only in the sense that the church served as the matrix for the embryonic, spiritual kingdom of Christ. Only when this foetal kingdom had been delivered from time's womb on the Last Day would its outlines be visible to the world. Then, in the separation of the saved and the damned, men would indeed perceive the predestined limits of grace. Until that time, it was the implicit rather than the explicit growth of Christ's kingdom which both impelled and shaped the flux of history.

In opposition to this conception of the kingdom, the New England Puritans contended "that the visible Church of God on earth, especially in the times of the Gospel, is the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth."<sup>336</sup> The touchstone to the New England conception of the church lies in the qualifying phrase, "especially in the times of the Gospel." Having agreed with Calvin {134} and their English brethren that the kingdom grew in history toward its eventual climactic triumph, the New England Puritans went on to maintain that by means of a last preaching of grace—the Reformation—the church would become more and more clearly identified with the kingdom as the hour of the latter's consummation approached. Moreover, if the Reformation did mark God's last offer of salvation to a sinful world, it seemed logical to the New

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335. Jonathan Mitchell, quoted in Miller, 433.

336. Shepard, *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, pt. 1, 4.

England clergy that this offer would be an example of purity as close to perfection as possible this side of heaven. What the New Englanders were saying, in other words, was that a particular church, covenanted together in “primitive” purity, was the closest possible historical approximation of an absolute eschatological reality. As they themselves put it:

We still beleeve though personall Christians may be eminent in their growth of Christianitie: yet Churches had still need to grow from apparent defects to puritie; and [*sic*] from Reformation to Reformation, age after age, till the Lord have utterly abolished Antichrist with the breath of his mouth, and the brightnesse of his coming, to the full and clear revelation of all his holy Truth; especially touching the ordering of his house and publiek worship.<sup>337</sup>

Thus the congregational churches of New England must be interpreted as looking forward to Judgment Day as well as backward to the apostolic churches and beyond them to God's covenant with the Israelites. The churches of New England were not merely an extension of God's transaction with Abraham, but a representation of things to come. To conceive of the visible church as the kingdom of heaven meant that each individual church covenant was an anticipation of Judgment Day—a miniature, albeit incomplete, sorting out of the saved and the damned. Its plausibility ultimately depended upon the assumption that in His last offer of grace the Lord would so pour out His Spirit upon the land that regenerate men would be able to discern the workings of divine grace in the hearts of their friends and neighbors. That regenerate men could be fallible, New Englanders would have been the first to admit. There would be no time before the end when the church upon earth would be so pure that not a hypocrite would be in it.

Yet this inability to attain perfection was no warrant for including within the kingdom men patently unregenerate. As John Cotton put it, arguing against the contention that it was unreasonable to expect a visible church to remain undefiled, “It is not every sinne, that defileth a Church, but sin openly knowne, and allowed, at least tollerated and not

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337. John Davenport, *An Answer to the Elders of the Several Churches in New-England unto Nine Positions Sent Over to Them* (London, 1643), “An Epistle Written by the Elders of the Churches in New-England.”

proceeded against by due admonition, and censure according to the rule of the Gospell.... {135} Let no man decline the evidence of this truth, by the wonted evasion of the invisible Church.”<sup>338</sup> The covenanted saints—those who could manifest their faith in the outcome of history by binding themselves to the fulfillment of divine purpose—could exclude large numbers of their compatriots from church membership in the certainty that the Spirit of the Lord would guarantee a working percentage of truly regenerate members because these were the “daies of the coming of the Son of man, wherein the Churches (especially in these places) grow to be Virgin-Professors.”<sup>339</sup>

The New England Puritans—with the possible exception of John Eliot—were by no means desirous of *radically* reconstructing the society which had produced them; but in terms of their eschatological conception of church history, they were outright revolutionaries insofar as they thought of themselves as the instruments providence had chosen to “advance” history by making a decisive and irrevocable break with Antichristian corruptions. To say exactly when the majority of the New England Puritans arrived at this conclusion would be difficult. But in the second generation’s nostalgia for the heroic purity of their fathers, the connection between a congregational church and the imminent coming of Christ became an inextricable part of the fabled errand into the wilderness. Indeed, the validity of the vision of New England as a new chosen nation in their minds came to depend upon its position as the penultimate development in the story of man’s salvation from Adam’s fall to the Day of Judgment.

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338. John Cotton, *Of the Holinesse of Church-Members* (London, 1650), 95.

339. Shepard, *Parable of the Ten Virgins*, pt. 1, 10.

# FROM MEDIEVAL ECONOMICS TO INDECISIVE PIETISM:

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SECOND-GENERATION PREACHING  
IN NEW ENGLAND, 1661–1690

*Gary North*

A successful program of Christian reconstruction must have two essential features if it is to keep from being swamped by secularism or overturned by traditionalism or a counter-reconstruction movement. *First*, it must have a positive eschatology. Men must have confidence in the long-term earthly effects of their present sacrifices for God's kingdom. *Second*, they must have a concept of law which is uniquely Christian. Without this, their specific recommendations for social change and personal discipline cannot be identified as explicitly Christian. Their projects will eventually drift with the prevailing intellectual currents of the day. Some version of natural law or common ground philosophy will replace the original biblical frame of reference. The uniquely Christian character of the movement will be dissipated. An optimistic outlook concerning one's labors is basic to the dynamic impulse of historical change, and a uniquely biblical law framework provides the tool for personal success and social transformation.

The New England Puritan leaders of the first generation, at least those outside of the Pilgrim colony at Plymouth, were generally committed to a postmillennial eschatology. They believed that New England would become a "city on a hill," a light to the Gentiles, and the firstfruits of the expanding kingdom of God on earth. They were optimists, and they began the conquest of the North American wilderness.

They also believed that they were in possession of a uniquely Christian law structure. They did not have to answer to the king or Parliament. They could rely on Old Testament laws to build their holy commonwealth. However, they also brought with them the Protestant version of medieval social theory, especially in the realm of economics. It was this inherited medievalism which was to be tested by the frontier

conditions of New England. Could a permanent standard of a “just price” or “fair dealing” be discovered? If so, could it be written into predictable statute law? If not, what kinds of circumstances would bring such unjust dealing out into the open, so that everyone, especially the magistrates, would recognize it for what it was? If none could be agreed upon, what then? {137}

The second generation in New England was forced steadily to abandon the medieval economic framework, especially after King Philip’s War, the great Indian uprising of 1675–76. After 1680, Puritan clerics no longer could influence the legislators to impose ad hoc interventions of the old medieval outlook. The clerics no longer had confidence that they could provide specific recommendations for concrete economic reforms in the name of Christ. They could preach only general sermons against general deviance. The idea of concrete guidelines for economics based on biblical law was abandoned when the medieval economic casuistry was abandoned.

Simultaneously, the old optimism of the first generation began to dim. There were some postmillennial optimists left, like the Rev. Jonathan Mitchel and the layman, Samuel Sewell, the famous diarist, but increasingly amillennialism and premillennialism (in the case of Increase and Cotton Mather) began to dominate the vision of the second generation. Thus, the two features most essential to the successful directing of social change—optimism and a unique law code—disappeared as dominant factors in Puritan theology after 1660. Odd as it may seem, a poet marked this historically crucial transition.

Michael Wigglesworth, within the space of a few months, produced two of the most famous poems in the history of New England. Indeed, they are used today as key documents of Puritan thought: *God’s Controversy With New England* and *The Day of Doom*. The year was 1662. The poems established a new pattern of expression which was to be followed closely by the writers of sermons throughout the period generally classified as the second generation. *God’s Controversy* began by cataloguing the blessings God had granted to the first generation of New England: international peace, domestic safety, the covenant, wise rulers, spiritual gifts, and light.<sup>340</sup> “Yea many thought the light would last, And be perpetual.” This was their inheritance. “Such, O New-England, was thy first, Such was thy best estate.” But the changes are

now becoming apparent: tempests, carnality, deadheartedness, excess of all kinds. Are these the same people who once prized religious liberty, who fled England into a wilderness, who were protected by the hand of God?<sup>341</sup> Wigglesworth was careful to enumerate the multitudinous economic sins of the people as part of the general indictment: {138}

Whence cometh it, that Pride and Luxury  
 Debate, Deceit, Contention and Strife,  
 False-dealing, Covetousness, Hypocrisy  
 (With such like Crimes) amongst us are so rife,  
 That one of them doth over-reach another?  
 And that an honest man can hardly trust his Brother.<sup>342</sup>

The ancient guidelines against excess had been breached, thus opening the land to the possibilities of God's retribution. Drought, then exceeding wetness, and finally barrenness have already appeared.

This, O New-England, hast thou got  
 By riot, and excess:  
 This hast thou brought upon thyself  
 By pride and wantonness.  
 Thus must thy worldliness be whipt.  
 They, that too much do crave,  
 Provoke the Lord to take away  
 Such blessings as they have.<sup>343</sup>

Beware, O sinful land, beware;  
 And do not think it strange  
 That sorer judgments are at hand,  
 Unless thou quickly change.<sup>344</sup>

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340. Wigglesworth, "God's Controversy [cited hereinafter as "GC"], lines 77–132, in Harrison T. Meserole, ed., *Seventeenth-Century American Poetry* (1968), 45–46.

341. "GC," lines 133–214, *ibid.*, 46–48.

342. "GC," lines 215–20, *ibid.*, 48.

343. "GC," lines 399–406, *ibid.*, 53.

344. "GC," lines 415–18, *ibid.*, 53.

In *The Day of Doom*, Wigglesworth echoed the same sentiments. The sinners of the land must bear in mind the penalties attached to their defiance: the day of final accounting would come upon them all.

Adulterers and Whoremongers  
 were there, with all unchast,  
 There Covetous, and Ravenous, that Riches got too fast.  
 Who us'd vile ways themselves to raise  
 t' Estates and worldly wealth,  
 Oppression by, or Knavery,  
 by force, or fraud, or stealth.<sup>345</sup>

Thus one and all, thus great and small,  
 the Rich as well as Poor,  
 And those of place as those most base,  
 do stand the Judge before.<sup>346</sup>

Only those who had been fair dealers in life might hope to escape God's wrath: {139}

Then were brought nigh a Company  
 of Civil honest Men,  
 That lov'd true dealing, and hated stealing,  
 ne'r wrong'd their Bretheren;  
 Who pleaded thus, Thou knowest us  
 that we were blameless livers;  
 No Whoremongers, no Murderers,  
 no quarrellers nor strivers.

Idolaters, Adulterers,  
 Church-robbers we were none,  
 Nor false-dealers, no couzeners,<sup>347</sup>  
 but paid each man his own.  
 Our way was fair, our dealing square,  
 we were no wasteful spenders,

345. Wigglesworth, "Day of Doom," stanza 32, *ibid.*, 63.

346. "Day," stanza 53a, *ibid.*, 69.

347. Cheaters, defrauders: Meserole, 79n.



No lewd toss-pots, no drunken sots,  
no scandalous offenders.<sup>348</sup>

Few documents of the day gained wider circulation than *The Day of Doom*. The sale of the first edition alone, Meserole informs us, provided a copy for every thirty-five inhabitants, some 1,800 copies. “No single poem—indeed no other work of literature—so captured the popular imagination of Puritan America as did *The Day of Doom*.”<sup>349</sup> Wigglesworth established a new genre, the jeremiad of crisis. In the earlier jeremiads of abundance, the listeners were warned not to forget the Giver of all material blessings, or else His wrath would follow. Wigglesworth’s emphasis was different: accepting New England’s achievement of abundance, he then turned to the evidence of existing wrath, proclaiming that “sorer judgments are at hand,/ Unless thou quickly change.” He, too, was operating in terms of the paradox of Deuteronomy 8—obedience, blessing, forgetfulness, curse—only he was convinced that New England had crossed the bridge between blessing and forgetfulness in his day, and the curses of God were now imminent. This became the frame of reference for the jeremiad of crisis, the standard form of sermon in the second generation.

### *Ownership and Stewardship*

The doctrine of Christian stewardship preached by the second generation’s clergy did not vary from that laid down by the founders. Indeed, it was hardly distinguishable from Aquinas’s perspective, insofar as the concept of God’s ownership of the world is concerned. But the Puritan emphasis on the final day of accounting stands out in a special way. Increase Mather’s language was aimed at calling for the continual exertion that is involved in the constant supervision of the whole of one’s estate:

Yea, men shall be called to an account in that day, not only for all that they have done, but for all that they have received.... Whatever talents God shall entrust to any man withall, first or last a day of reckoning will come. The Lord Jesus will say to some at the great Day, You had

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348. “Day,” stanzas 92–93, *ibid.*, 79.

349. Meserole, 37.

such estates in the world, but what did you do with your {140} riches? Did you improve them for God, or did you not abuse them for sin and to dishonor His name?<sup>350</sup>

A man's labor must be accomplished within his allotted portion of time—"O what a case are they in, that death cometh upon them and their work not done!"<sup>351</sup> Every moment of a man's life must be accounted for.<sup>352</sup> But a man's time is only one part of God's claim upon a man. "Our estates should be improved for Him; God has a right in every man's estate...."<sup>353</sup> The primary right of ownership belongs exclusively to God, and because of this fact, the requirements of fruitfulness, growth, and improvement are placed upon men as ethical imperatives. Although the jeremiads of crisis, due to their implied pessimism, generally avoided any serious consideration of the possibility of aggregate economic expansion (unlike sermons of the first generation), the hope for and even insistence upon personal and family economic development was still present.

The abhorrence of the waste of any gift from God was an obvious corollary to the doctrine of stewardship. This was as true for the second generation as for the first. Samuel Willard's *Mercy Magnified on a Penitent Prodigal* (1684) dwells on this theme repeatedly. Willard left no doubts in the mind of any reader as to his attitude on the relationship between sinners and waste. "Unregenerate men are the greatest spendthrifts; for they unprofitably waste all their substance upon their lusts."<sup>354</sup> Instead of using their property for God's glory, they spend it on sensuality and profaneness.<sup>355</sup> This, of course, does not mean that a man can judge himself righteous simply because he saves his money; the covetous man may save his wealth, but he too is a waster, deceiving himself.<sup>356</sup> Willard went so far as to use the language of trading to contrast saving grace and common grace; in doing so, he penned a sen-

350. I. Mather, *The Greatest Sinners* (1686), 88.

351. I. Mather, *The Doctrine of Divine Providence* (1684), 143.

352. I. Mather, *Testimony Against Profane Customs* ([1687] 1953), 35.

353. I. Mather, *Providence*, 146.

354. Willard, *Mercy Magnified on a Penitent Prodigal* (1684), 64.

355. *Ibid.*, 65–66.

356. *Ibid.*, 72.

tence that, if taken out of context, would have horrified even the stereotyped Papist indulgence salesmen found in sixteenth-century Protestant tracts. “Nothing is profitably laid out, but what is expended for salvation: this is the only saving purchase that any of the children of men can trade for....”<sup>357</sup> His point, however, was quite orthodox: the impotence of common grace in one’s salvation.

The best improvements that nature can make of God’s common favors cannot bring them to find and enjoy blessedness. Let men use them never so frugally and providently, according to the measures which they take of prudence and frugality, yet they will fall short....<sup>358</sup> {141}

One’s concern must be for the obedient, righteous administration of the property entrusted to each person by God. The goal is therefore ethical and soteriological, but the task, being earthly and therefore fraught with moral danger, must be regarded as innately systematic. Waste is not to be tolerated.

Urian Oakes called attention to the danger of confusing ends and means. The goal is the service of God; the means are gifts from God. In an almost prophetic passage, one which antedated Max Weber by two centuries, Oakes announced:

This world and the things of it were made for the service and accommodation of man in his way of serving God. Man had originally an empire and dominion over these creatures here below.... But sin hath inverted this order, brought confusion upon the earth. Man is dethroned, and become a servant and slave to those things that were made to serve him, and he puts those things in his heart that God hath put under his feet. Profits, pleasures, honors, these lusts of the world, are the masters, yea the idols of sinful men: the life of their spirits is in these things.<sup>359</sup>

Weber misread the Puritan ethic when he wrote: “The idea of a man’s duty to his possessions, to which he subordinates himself as an obedient steward, or even as an acquisitive machine, bears with chilling weight on his life.”<sup>360</sup> Not the Puritan ethic, but rather the secularized derivation thereof, was to be characterized by the view of man as “an

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357. *Ibid.*, 79.

358. *Ibid.*, 80.

359. Oakes, *A Seasonable Discourse* (1682), 27.

360. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 170.

acquisitive machine.” Oakes stated clearly that such a mental construct as “economic man” involves the death of the Puritan view of man, for it necessarily subordinates man to the creation instead of to the Creator.

Puritans believed in the sovereignty of God and the vicegerency of men over God’s creation. There was no concept more basic to the social outlook of the Puritan world. Man was seen as passive toward God and active over creation. Richard Steere’s poem, *Earth’s Felicities, Heaven’s Allowances*, sketched the archetype of the godly Puritan activist:

But for a man to know the highest joys  
This World affords, and yet without offence;  
To Live therein, and as a Master use them,  
In all Respects, and yet without abuse. . . .  
This man subjects to one, Commands the other,  
Owns God his Master, makes the World his Slave.<sup>361</sup>

Abandon this perspective, Oakes warned, and man becomes passive toward the world and an active rebel against God. To grant to the affairs and needs of the world such a degree of autonomy was regarded as an act of idolatry, a worshipping of the creature and not the Creator. {142}

With this kind of *activism* as its foundation, how was it possible that the second generation lost the commitment to earthly triumph which had motivated their fathers? The jeremiads present some evidence in this regard. The breakup of religious unity, the fragmentation of local and colony politics, the failure of the children to own the church covenant, the impact of King Philip’s War, and all the other blasts of God’s disfavor that were catalogued in the jeremiads combined to destroy the clergy’s hope in reaching the population and making of them godly Puritan activists. Oakes himself retreated into a pietistic world of individual victory apart from collective dominion. His sermon, *The Unconquerable*, preached before the local militia in 1672, had as its theme the individual triumph of each Christian soul, but it never mentioned the possibility of a victory of the army of Christian soldiers. In fact, it pointed to the victories of Satan’s armies as being typical of earthly affairs. “The great conquerors of the world have been slaves to their

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361. Steere, “Earth’s Felicities,” lines 286–89, 298–99, in Meserole, 259.

own pride, ambition, vainglory, covetousness, and other base lusts, which a Christian subdues and conquers. Many of them have been Satan's slaves, when they have been masters of the world."<sup>362</sup> God promises total victory only on the final day. "In the meanwhile, our work is to wait and pray, and exercise faith and patience...."<sup>363</sup>

William Stoughton produced a comprehensive theory of *stewardship*. A hierarchy of stewards operates under the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, the "one great Steward," who in turn works under the Father in this present dispensation. Gifts of all kinds are talents provided to men that they might improve them. "To betray a man's trust, or not to improve his talent, is to lie and deal falsely, for of a steward it is required that he be faithful, 1 Cor. 4:2."<sup>364</sup> Faithfulness to God is demonstrated, therefore, by a conscientious improvement of one's estate. Stoughton relied on the *metaphor of bankruptcy* to drive home his theological point. "It will be a doleful thing to be of a broken credit with God, and for the Lord to pronounce us bankrupt."<sup>365</sup> True to the outline of the jeremiad, he concluded by pointing out that God filled His wilderness house with jewels and gold, whereas the present generation fills it with lumber fit for burning.<sup>366</sup>

The leaders of the first generation had made it plain for all to hear that a commonwealth's poverty or success could not be viewed, in and of itself, as demonstrating its position covenantally. External covenant blessings were, at best, a sign of obedience of the collective society to God's covenant {143} requirements; possibly a gift for the sake of a godly remnant; or at worst a means of condemning a godless society, making its punishment that much worse when its time has come. External blessings of the society were only indirectly connected with the condition of the hearts of individuals: a society without Christians in it could not be expected to meet the terms of the civil covenant for very long. The founders no doubt expected that a society of saints

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362. Oakes, *The Unconquerable, All-Conquering & more-than- [than-] Conquering Souldier* (1674), 16.

363. *Ibid.*, 24.

364. Stoughton, *New-Englands True Interest* (1670), 14. An election sermon of 1668.

365. *Ibid.*, 25.

366. *Ibid.*, 28.

would meet the terms of civil government as set forth in the Bible, but they would not have said, as their sons were to say, that mere conversion and an owning of the church covenant would necessarily bring God's blessing to the commonwealth apart from the collective obedience of society to its covenantal standards. Each covenant has its own responsibilities.

On the question of personal poverty or wealth, the two generations were in agreement. Wealth as a sign of personal salvation was no less repugnant a doctrine to the sons than to the founders. Eleazer Mather, Increase's brother, set forth the general principle: the time was when there was less of the world, "but was there not more of heaven? less trading, buying, selling, but more praying, more watching over our own hearts, more close walking; less plenty and less iniquity..." Men were advised to take up "the New England prayer, *Lord keep me poor and keep me humble.*"<sup>367</sup>

Thomas Shepard, son of the more famous minister, dismissed the idea that personal wealth indicates personal holiness with that Puritan term reserved for the most heinous theological deviations: the whole idea is Papist.<sup>368</sup> God's gifts to individuals must be constantly improved if they are to be regarded as signs of election, wrote Willard.<sup>369</sup> Generally, wealth strengthens sinful hearts.<sup>370</sup> The ungodly, wrote Oakes, merely store up wealth for the godly, who receive it "sooner or later."<sup>371</sup> Echoing Cotton and Shepard, the preachers of the second generation

367. E. Mather, *A Serious Exhortation to the Present and Succeeding Generation in New-England* (1671), 9. He did, however, hold to the view that prosperity could be a sign of God's collective blessing on a community of saints who "have learned to want as well as abound; ..." But if men make gods of their riches, they are in deep trouble. "Outward prosperity is a worm at the root of godliness, so that religion dies when the world thrives, Deut. 28.47. & 32.15." Thus, he concluded, "prosperity in itself is of that nature that it is hard to judge of love or hatred, preference or absence of God with or from a people thereby ...." *Ibid.*, 9. Cf. William Adams, *The Necessity of the Pouring out of the Spirit from on High* (Boston, 1679), 20, 30.

368. Shepard, *Eye-Salve* (1673), 36. This was an election sermon for 1672.

369. Willard, *Useful Instructions for a Professing People in Times of Great Security and Degeneracy* (1673), 6.

370. Willard, *Mercy Magnified*, 57, 60.

371. Oakes, *New-England Pleaded with* (1673), 33. Election sermon, 1673.

reminded men that the only testimony to rely on is the testimony of God's Spirit to each man's spirit. Men were called, in every jeremiad, to search their hearts and not look to their own prosperity for signs of their favor with God. {144}

Stewardship, in the last analysis, demands full accountability from each human being. The requirement for every man's life is inescapable: man must not live aimlessly, unsystematically, in any of life's realms. The anonymous sermon, *The Crown and Glory of a Christian*, which went through at least three editions, emphasized work and downplayed the emotional introspection recommended by many second-generation sermons.

Be not poring and puzzling too long about laying your foundation; but having once laid Christ (alone) your foundation, go then to build upon it.... Live not at random, but square your life by the rule of righteousness, to wit, the Word of God, in thought, word and deed; at night call your faithless heart to an account how oft and how much you have come short of that rule the day past....<sup>372</sup>

Not continual, morbid self-examination concerning one's salvation, but continual reexamination of one's *work*: does it conform, and how shall I make it better? It was this attitude of rationalization of the various tasks of life that later characterized Benjamin Franklin's thirteen steps to personal virtue.<sup>373</sup> "Depend upon God for a blessing upon your daily labors," wrote the anonymous author.<sup>374</sup> Do not expect your own labors, autonomously, to bring fruit; your job is only to do your duty. The author did not expect men to paralyze themselves with terror about their salvation; having laid Christ once as the foundation, a man is then to go and build upon it. Rational, systematic work is enjoined, and not mystical contemplation and examination of self. Work is the steward's task. The blessings are God's responsibility and so is one's salvation. So long as a man is striving constantly to conform his whole life to the biblical requirements, he is doing his job in a fruitful manner. He will not be found short on the day of final accounting.

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372. *Crown and Glory*, 3rd ed. (1684), 10–11, 29.

373. Franklin, *Autobiography* (1960 ed.), 93–95.

374. *Crown and Glory*, 42.

### *Status and Social Mobility*

In 1676, William Hubbard preached a most unrepresentative election sermon in which he called for less diligence by magistrates in trying to weed out heretics.<sup>375</sup> Jonathan Mitchel's *Nehemiah on the Wall*, a 1667 election sermon, was more familiar (except for its optimism): he called for the magistrates to exercise their traditional responsibilities in the field of economics. He wanted a stronger civil government. Unlike Willard, [145] Mitchel put the responsibilities of stewardship squarely on the shoulders of the civil magistrates of his day. Stewardship is one of the primary tasks of rulers. As personal stewards over the commonwealth's economy, they, and not some autonomous market mechanism, are the primary actors in this universe of secondary causation and personal responsibility.

That which we commonly call wealth is a part of the wealth or welfare of a people, though not the greatest part, as the world is apt to esteem it. Good rulers will gladly be a furtherance thereunto, what in them lies, that the commonwealth may flourish and prosper in this respect, but especially in reference to necessary livelihood, when it is a time of distress and poverty, or special scarcity in this or that, of food or clothing.... No man can wholly exclude himself from being his brother's keeper, Gen. 4:9, but the keeping of the commonwealth of all their brethren is in a particular manner committed to the rulers; they are called in the Scripture shepherds.<sup>376</sup>

By calling for action on the part of the rulers in specific economic matters of scarcity, Mitchel returned to the outlook of the 1640s. His colleagues might preach in vague terms about economic or social evils in general, but they were not inclined to be this specific in their election sermons. Mitchel, like all Puritans, saw God as the sovereign owner of creation, but he argued that God had entrusted this responsibility to the civil authorities, "to keep and maintain His possession of it.

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375. Hubbard, *The Happiness of a People* (1676). For a partial analysis of this sermon, see Anne Kusener Nelson, "King Philip's War and the Hubbard-Mather Controversy," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 27 (1970): 615–29. Hubbard did not blame the outbreak of the war on the usual sins enumerated in a standard jeremiad. The cause, he said, might well be some special, hidden sin which we do not now know about (54). God does not bother to engage in our petty quarrels (50–51).

376. Mitchel, *Nehemiah on the Wall* (1671), 4, 7. Election sermon, 1667.



The eyes of the Christian world are upon you....” So, for that matter, are the eyes of God and His angels. Rulers must therefore seek “the welfare of the people.”<sup>377</sup>

Citizens obviously have a major responsibility in obeying the magistrates. “Keep order; keep in your places, acknowledging and attending the order that God hath established in the place where you live.” In short, “leave the guidance of the ship to those that are fit at helm, and are by God and His people set there....”<sup>378</sup> Here Mitchel’s colleagues were in absolute agreement. The jeremiads universally pointed to the failure of the citizenry to respect their superiors, whether in the family, the church, or in civil government. The key word was “pride.” It was invariably followed by an outraged cry against deviations in personal fashion. The preachers focused on the supposed *wilderness condition* of the land as justification for their outrage. “People in this land have not carried it,” wrote Increase Mather, “as becometh those that are in a wilderness, especially when it is such an humbling time as the late years have been.”<sup>379</sup> Both rich and poor are involved, said Mather, “especially here in Boston.” The daughters of Zion adopt any “proud fashion” that appears. Men are to be seen {146} continually in their “monstrous and horrid perriwigs ... whereby the anger of the Lord is kindled against this sinful land.”<sup>380</sup>

It was one thing for John Winthrop to challenge Thomas Dudley in 1632 for the latter’s ostentation in adorning his home with wainscotting (a wooden paneling on the walls of a house). He had more justification in his complaint, since it was, as he said, “the beginning of a plantation.”<sup>381</sup> Even so, it is not hard to understand Dudley’s anger when Winthrop had the frame of his house removed. Winthrop himself, when challenged, “acknowledged himself faulty” in taking the responsibility on himself without consulting anyone.<sup>382</sup> But when half

377. *Ibid.*, 19.

378. *Ibid.*, 26.

379. I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 7.

380. *Ibid.* Cf. Samuel Danforth, *A Brief Recognition of New-Englands Errand Into the Wilderness* (1671), 3; James Fitch, *An Explanation of the Solemn Advice* (1683), 42.

381. *Winthrop’s Journal*, vol. 1, 77.

382. *Ibid.*, 84–85.

a century had elapsed, we find the same argument of New England's "wilderness condition" being used to justify the meddling of the civil authorities in community fashions. The sermons which, a few pages earlier, had praised God for His bounty in making a former wilderness fruitful, could hardly be expected to convince the newly rich (or the hopefully optimistic social climber) that his, or his wife's, style of dress in some way constituted deviation from some hypothetical "wilderness standard."

Puritan preachers of the second generation, like those of the first, accepted the medieval heritage of the idea of a hierarchy of fixed—or nearly fixed—orders in society, each with its own powers, responsibilities, temptations, privileges. This was a universal Puritan perspective, as common in English Puritanism as in colonial America.<sup>383</sup> But the phenomenon of economic growth, in part aided by the Puritan concepts of stewardship, rational planning, the calling, and (in the early period) optimistic eschatology, brought with it additional "side effects," such as social mobility which was more fluid than anything imagined by medieval theologians. Of course, as the biologist Garrett Hardin has argued, the phrase "side effects" is really a bit of word magic: effects are effects.<sup>384</sup> *Upward social mobility* was a concomitant to the idea of personal responsibility and the right of the individual believer to exercise his responsibility in a calling. He was commanded to improve his talents, and if he was successful, his station would obviously be improved. Only if all other men improved their stations to the same extent—mechanically—would the problem of social mobility be avoided, and no one believed that such would ever be {147} the case in a society in which sinners, saints, and even Presbyterians might find themselves thrown together. Some men would succeed and other would fail. What baffled Puritan commentators was the *incomprehensible rapidity of social change* in the New England colonies, especially in Boston.

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383. Thomas F. Merin, ed., *William Perkins, 1558–1602* (1966), 189, 209 (from bk. 3 of *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience*); cf. M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism* ([1939] 1965), 412. Richard Baxter, *Chapters from A Christian Directory*, ed. Jeannette Tawney (1925), 158ff.

384. Garrett Hardin, "To Trouble a Star: The Cost of Intervention in Nature," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (January 1970): 19.

It was a society in which a servant could elevate himself to wealth within a few decades, especially if he was a skilled craftsman. John Hull, one of the most respected men in Boston and surely one of the richest, had raised himself from very modest circumstances.<sup>385</sup> At any given point in time it was virtually impossible to be certain of an individual's "proper" stratum in society, except in cases of extreme poverty or wealth. Social status was to the second generation what the just price had been to the first: an elusive quality which refused to be quantified or even defined. Yet the very *elusiveness* of the idea hypnotized Puritan preachers. They were certain that a definition could be found, but the perverse changes within the society kept it concealed. In their eyes, the evil lay with the society and not with the lack of definition. Changes in fashions, imitation by members of lower classes of their social superiors, the increase in affluence of the lower class as a class, this perverse unwillingness of men to keep in their original social positions into which they were born, all combined to convince Puritan commentators that New England society was in the process of dissolution, a sign of God's departure from the land. By 1674, Increase Mather (whose very name seemed to cry out against his theory of fixed status) had concluded that the violation of the fifth commandment, whereby inferiors rise up against superiors in the commonwealth—in schools, families, churches—was the chief sin of his generation: "If there be any prevailing iniquity in New England, this is it.... And mark what I say, if ever New England be destroyed, this very sin of disobedience to the fifth commandment will be the ruin of the land."<sup>386</sup> Willard saw the same crisis in the same institutions.<sup>387</sup>

Daniel Denison's last sermon, appended by William Hubbard to his funeral sermon for Denison, and published two years after the funeral, cites ambition as the curse of the land, along with envy: "... Ambition is restless, must raise commotions, that thereby it might have an opportu-

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385. T. B. Strandness estimates that only two or three men could have been richer than Hull in 1680 New England: *Samuel Sewall: A Puritan Portrait* (1967), 33. A standard account of Hull's life is found in Samuel Eliot Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (1930), chap. 5. On the upward social mobility possible in this period, see Perry Miller, "Declension in a Bible Commonwealth" (1941), in Miller, *Nature's Nation*, 40–47.

386. I. Mather, *The Wicked Mans Portion* (1675), 17. Preached in 1674.

387. Willard, *Useful Instructions*, 75.

nity of advancement, and employs envy to depress others, that they fancy may stand in their way....”<sup>388</sup> Such ambitious men are unwilling “to abide in {148} the calling, wherein they are set; they cannot stay for the blessing, nor believe when God hath need of their service, he will find them an employment, whatever stands in the way of their design, must give place....”<sup>389</sup> The clergy’s problem, of course, was to establish guidelines to decide in any given case whether a man’s ambition was of the restless sort, or whether the individual was simply exercising his calling. But to argue, as Denison did, that a fixed calling is basic to God’s plan for each man, involved him in a form of medievalism which was not likely to survive the acids of the competitive market mechanism, with its concept of voluntary free labor, the right of private contract, and profit in terms of an impersonal price mechanism.

The Boston Synod of 1679 listed pride in apparel and the illegitimate imitation by servants of the dress of their superiors, as early entries in its catalogue of over a dozen social evils that had brought miseries to New England.<sup>390</sup> Five years earlier, Increase Mather had announced his difficulty in distinguishing the dress of the regenerate from that of the unregenerate. It is a dark day when “professors of religion fashion themselves according to the world.”<sup>391</sup> But given the existence of this sin, what could be done to correct it? What *are* the standards of legitimate fashion for a godly society? Like the standards of economic oppression, the just price, and usurious interest, the standards of proper fashion were elusive. Theologians were sure only of their theoretical existence, but not of their actual definitions. Urian Oakes struggled mightily with this difficulty. He was convinced that human pride expresses itself in outward garb, “in affected trimmings and adornings of the outward man, that body of clay that is going to the dust and worms.” Strange apparel is going to be punished, he said, citing Zephaniah 1:8 as proof. Yet some rich and costly garments are all right (2 Sam. 1:24).

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388. Denison, *Irenicon*, attached to Hubbard, *The Benefit of a well-ordered Conversation* (1684), 195.

389. *Ibid.*, 196.

390. Boston Synod, *The Necessity of Reformation* (1679), 2–3.

391. I. Mather, *The Day of Trouble is Near* (1674), 22.

Nor am I so severe, or morose, as to exclaim against this or that fashion, provided it carry nothing of immodesty in it, or contrarily to the rules of moral honesty. The civil custom of the place where we live is that which we must regulate in this case. But when persons spend more time in trimming their bodies than their souls, ... when they go beyond what their state and condition will allow, that they are necessitated to run into debt, and neglect the works of mercy and charity, or exact upon others in their dealings, that they may maintain their port and garb; or when they exceed their rank and degree (whereas one end of apparel is to distinguish and put a difference between persons according to their places and conditions) and when the sons and daughters of Sion are proud and haughty in their carriage and attire in an humbling time, when the church is brought low, Jerusalem and Judah are in a {149} ruinous condition, and the Lord calls to deep humiliation. This is very displeasing to God, and both Scripture and Reason condemn it.<sup>392</sup>

Oakes put most of the Puritan theologians' opposition to the modern world into one lengthy exposition: excessive social change breaks down familiar communal standards—standards that function to keep members of differing classes in traditional occupations and in dress reflecting those occupations. The hierarchy of medieval life—a hierarchy reflecting a great chain of being from God down to Satan—was being shattered by the winds of change. Men and their wives were increasingly unwilling to accept such limitations on the exercise of their property rights. The appeal of the theologians to “civil custom” was precisely the issue in question: in a society experiencing rapid social change—from a tiny frontier community to a productive component of Atlantic trade and culture—civil customs were no longer fixed, universal, or a function of clerical opinion.<sup>393</sup> The very *fluidity of fashion*, where new styles swept through the community, reflected the *lack of fixed standards* and in turn dismayed the preachers.

*Status distinctions* were supposed to be respected by members of a Holy Commonwealth; this meant that each status required its appropriate set of fashions. James Fitch, like Mather and Oakes, blamed the

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392. Oakes, *Pleaded*, 34.

393. On fashions in New England, and on the resistance of the ladies to exhortations from the pulpit concerning deviant fashions, see Alice Morse Earle, *Customs and Fashions in Old New England* (1894), chap. 13.

poorer sort for their imitation of social superiors on precisely this ground: they made it difficult to determine their proper station in life.<sup>394</sup> But one basic question never seemed to occur to them: in a society in which men are not only free to increase their estates, but in fact have a moral obligation to do so, should they not be expected to improve their own personal statuses? If frugality, rational use of time and resources, systematic accounting, and a future-oriented view of the world are allowed to combine into an ethos favoring both individual and aggregate economic growth, then social mobility, upward and downward, should be characteristic of the particular society. Yet the Puritan theologians of the second generation did not reach such a conclusion. Therefore, the crucial question for their purposes should have revolved around the nature of *formal legislation* necessary to redirect the citizen's expressions of personal taste in fashion. This was the great stumbling stone for the Puritan oligarchs. They were never able to devise recommendations for formal legislation of this kind. But this inability did not keep them from railing continually about the deviant behavior of their contemporaries. Fashions continued to degenerate, economic oppression continued unabated, and factions seemed endless. Worthington C. Ford's description holds true: "Massachusetts Bay was {150} becoming degenerate, the older generation said. It is always becoming degenerate."<sup>395</sup>

### *The Reshaping of Community*

Property, Puritans were constantly reminded, has to be used principally for the service of God and secondarily (yet concomitantly) for the service of the community. The use of property for private purposes is legitimate only after the needs of the community (including one's family) have been met. Thus, it was natural for jeremiads to pay an increasing amount of attention to the signs within the commonwealth of concern for exclusively private interests and the sacrifice of public benefits. The operation of an impersonal market was not viewed as a device for the integration of private and public interests, at least not in

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394. Fitch, *Explanation*, 43.

395. Worthington C. Ford, "Sewall and Noyes on Wigs," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 20 (1917-19): 112.

its progressively autonomous form, and therefore the spread of private production for a market was viewed with suspicion and incomprehension.

“The reason why men bring no fruit to the glory of God,” Increase Mather declared, “is because they have so much of a private selfish spirit prevailing in them. All seek their own, not the things which are Christ’s.”<sup>396</sup> One obvious example of this self-seeking—obvious to the ministers—was the parsimonious attitude of the towns and congregations with respect to ministerial salaries. He was so incensed about this that he momentarily (perhaps by accident) gave up the cherished doctrine of the golden age of the first generation and its corollary, the degeneration of the sons. He cited a letter he had received from John Davenport, the last of the first generation’s ministers to die, in which Davenport quoted John Cotton—two decades in the grave—as saying that “the ministry of the Gospel is the cheapest commodity in this land....” So it is today, said Mather, forgetting briefly that the function of the jeremiad was to catalogue degeneration and not continuity.<sup>397</sup> Oakes used threats as well as cajoling: men who pursue their own selfish ends will have their labors cursed by God and be brought to naught.<sup>398</sup>

Men are simply not fit to be left to their own autonomous devices. “If God leave men,” wrote Willard, “they waste all. That every unregenerate man is not as vile and profligate as any ever was, is of God’s restraining grace; but if he withdraw and that man be left to himself, all goes to rack.... It is therefore a dreadful judgment of God for any man to be left to himself.”<sup>399</sup> Men desperately need *restraining institutions* and responsibilities; {151} *laissez faire* is ludicrous from this perspective, assuming the existence of a social hierarchy of the responsibility imposed by God. So Willard bewailed “a selfish spirit growing among the most, together with a neglect of one another’s good,” for these are signs of God’s departure from New England. Civil authority would

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396. I. Mather, *Greatest Sinners*, 117.

397. I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 7–8.

398. Oakes, *Pleaded*, 12.

399. Willard, *Mercy Magnified*, 69.

inevitably fragment. Puritan theology had an innate hostility to human autonomy.

Throughout this thirty-year period the common agricultural fields were in the process of dissolution. As the battle over control within each town was waged among the competing groups that claimed the authority to supervise the land divisions, social friction was a visible effect. The town of Sudbury, by 1660, had already gone the way of contentious communities, splitting into two separate communities.<sup>400</sup> Other towns seemed to be heading for a similar fate. Pastors saw the threat clearly: new towns would eventually demand their own leaders, churches, schools, and other associations, thus removing the present sheep from the local flock. Increase Mather cried out against such alterations in the structure of land tenure, never quite grasping the nature of the changes that were making such alterations economically rational:

Idolatry brings the sword, and covetousness is idolatry. *Land! Land!* hath been the idol of many in New England. Whereas the first planters here, that they might keep themselves together, were satisfied with one acre for each person, as his propriety, and after that with twenty acres for a family, how have men since coveted after the earth, that many hundreds, nay thousands of acres have been engrossed by one man, and they that profess themselves Christians have forsaken churches and ordinances, and all for land and elbow room enough in the world.<sup>401</sup>

A policy of communal ownership of a common field involved constant supervision by the authorities against timber thieves, wandering animals, broken fences, and other forms of private profiteering on “unowned” property. The greater the possibilities for private profit, the more difficult the task of administering the commons became. With the expansion of the market into interior towns, it became possible for farmers to reserve at least a small portion of their crops or goods for sale, and this increased the economic pressures favoring the private administration of small parcels of land. Production for an impersonal market was slowly making inroads into the highly personal administration of local common lands, thus forcing a replacement in land ten-

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400. Sumner Chilton Powell, *Puritan Village*, chaps. 8–9.

401. I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 9.



ure. Men producing for a market did not want counterclaims against their capital—land—from neighbors, especially given the tremendous investment of human labor that was necessary for making marginal land productive. They were taking very seriously the Lord's command to improve their estates, and private ownership, consolidation, and geographic {152} dispersal away from a central village were basic in such improvement. If they were to bear *individual responsibility before God* on the day of judgment, men wanted to have *individual authority over their property*. A family could exist on two dozen acres if it had access to the commons and a subsistence economy was the only goal. A single family removed from the commons needed closer to eighty acres to survive.<sup>402</sup> But many pastors saw these new requirements as sinister changes in the society. The lust for wealth had now spread from artisans and merchants, groups always suspected of covetousness, to yeomen on the land: "Do not your own consciences tell you that the market and price of ordinances is very low this day? Houses and lands, lots and farms, and outward accommodations are of more value with many people than the Gospel and Gospel-ordinances."<sup>403</sup>

*Economic oppression* was viewed as endemic in this new state of affairs: the poor exploit the rich (excessive wages) and the rich exploit the poor (excessive prices of goods). Self-seeking men abound, said Shepard, men who hold to a "lax, merry, loose religion..." Men today are not like those of that "first good old generation."<sup>404</sup> Day laborers are demanding impossible wages; usury is common—complaints like these occur in sermon after sermon.<sup>405</sup> Like Luther a century and a half earlier, Increase Mather challenged the ethical propriety of any economic arrangement in which the poor man could be charged as much for a good or service as he was actually willing to pay in every circumstance. There could be no appeal to anything like the impersonal forces of sup-

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402. Kenneth Lockridge, in his study of the town of Dedham, has estimated that the need for acreage was in the 60–90 acre range. The high average was necessary so that part of the land could lie fallow each year. Lockridge, *A New England Town*, 149n.

403. Oakes, *Pleaded*, 30.

404. Shepard, *Eye-Salve*, 34.

405. I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 11.

ply and demand; oppression is always oppression and always personal. Individuals must bear full responsibility for their actions:

And is there no oppression amongst us? Are there no biting usurers in New England? Are there not those that grind the faces of the poor? A poor man cometh amongst you, and he must have a commodity, whatever it costs him, and you will make him give you whatever you please, and put what price you please upon what he hath to give, too, without respecting the just value of the thing. Verily I am afraid that the oppressing sword will come upon us because of the oppressions and extortions which the eyes of the Lord's glory have seen amongst us.<sup>406</sup>

The seller was not seen as being under the restraints of competition from other sellers, nor was he seen as being restrained by the limits of the potential {153} buyer's willingness to forego the purchase. Sellers can make men pay whatever they please. This outlook betrays Mather's implicit medievalism, in which each producer is the local specialist, able to restrict entry by competitors, dealing with everyone on a purely personal basis, as if he were in the position of the medieval miller, i.e., the only supplier of the particular service. All relations are purely personal, and therefore economic transactions are invariably ethical affairs; terms imposed by the stronger upon the weaker are not simply Frank Norris's vision of "all the traffic will bear," but a system in which the traffic will bear anything, in principle, and can be brought to manageable, just proportions only by the voluntary restraint of the stronger party in a bargain.

New England has become, echoed Oakes, the place where there is continual "gripping and squeezing and grinding the faces of the poor and greediness," a place where the private spirit crushes charity "to the damage of the public and disgrace of religion." Unregulated economic competition spells the end of men's personal development spiritually: "Hence no progress in a cause of piety, no getting onward in the journey of heaven. You have men now where they were twenty years ago, for they are sunk and stuck fast in the mire and clay of this present world and cannot stir..."<sup>407</sup> It was a triumph, said Benjamin Keatch, of the impersonal ledger book over the demands of faith:

406. I. Mather, *Day of Trouble*, 22–23.

407. Oakes, *Pleaded*, 33. Cf. *Crown and Glory*, 59ff.; Fitch, *Explanation*, 45–46.

Merchants and Traders have a nimble Art,  
 To sum their Shop books, but neglect the Heart;  
 For that they think there's time enough, and look:  
 But seldom to the Reck'nings of that Book....  
 Many like drones, on other's Toil do live,  
 Though 'tis less honor to receive than give.  
 What Lying, Cheating, Couz'ning and Deceit  
 Do Traders use? O! how they overrate  
 What they would sell? But if they be to buy,  
 They undervalue each Commodity.<sup>408</sup>

Men buy cheap and sell dear. Divisions, contentions, factions, law-suits: everywhere the clergy observed a splintering of the society. The ideal of the peaceable kingdom is being challenged at every point.<sup>409</sup> These are the signs of God's departure.<sup>410</sup> Here are the signs of the weakness of Christ's community of formerly godly men.<sup>411</sup> The end is clear, given the paradox of Deuteronomy 8: "I say," wrote Shepard, "if after all this we will now turn our backs and revolt from God, we may then expect the Lord {154} [will] turn this fruitful land back into a wilderness again, Psal. 107.34."<sup>412</sup> From wilderness to fruitfulness and back again: the road is certain.<sup>413</sup> The commonwealth needs unity, for "Unity of counsel is one of the chief foundations of civil polity; but if the foundations be dissolved, what can the righteous do?"<sup>414</sup> But instead of unity of counsel, New England is plagued by a plurality of lawyers, whose commitment to the formal legal principle that every man is due his day in court thwarts the operation of substantive justice:

... the suppressing of such as will for their own ends espouse any case, right or wrong, and by their wits put fair cloak upon a foul case, and

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408. Keatch, *Sion in Distress*, 3rd ed. (1683), 29. The poem appeared in the midst of a sermon.

409. Stoughton, *True Interest*, 21; E. Mather, *Serious Exhortation*, 10.

410. I. Mather, *Day of Trouble*, 10.

411. Hubbard, *Happiness*, 18.

412. Shepard, *Eye-Salve*, 33.

413. Hubbard, *Happiness*, 61.

414. *Ibid.*, 17.

create needless suits, and be incendiaries in places, and maintain contention that contention might maintain them, such as care not who loses, so that they may gain: I say to suppress such will be of great use to the maintenance of justice and peace.<sup>415</sup>

Every man is not entitled to the best defense possible. The innocent man is; the guilty man is guilty. The modern legal system's faith in triumph of substantive justice, through the interaction of contenders in a court of formal, lawyer-directed law, was as repugnant to the Massachusetts theocracy as was the idea of the triumph of substantive economic justice through the formal operation of an unhampered market system. Lawyers were like uncontrolled prices in the view of the New England clerics: useful for some purposes in quiet, normal times, but not to be trusted as universally reliable guides to human action. To allow lawyers or the price system free autonomous operation in the midst of a Christian society would be to promote the destruction of that society. Continual contention and oppression, respectively, would be the inevitable results.

### *The Function of the Jeremiad*

“The problem, as the second generation saw it,” writes Robert Middlekauff, “was to explain the decline of New England and to prevent the decline {155} from becoming a fall.”<sup>416</sup> Members of the third generation were not showing the necessary signs of conversion along the

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415. Samuel Arnold, *David Serving His Generation* (1674), 17. This was a Plymouth election sermon. For a similar criticism of lawyers, see the Synod's conclusion in *Necessity of Reformation*, 6. Connecticut passed a law in 1663 prohibiting the use of lawyers in misdemeanor cases: *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, vol. 1, 395. [Cited hereinafter as *CCR*.] Unfortunately for the over-optimistic hopes in this regard by Winthrop and Cotton, citizens went to court against each other constantly in New England. Rutman cites the hostile comments of Winthrop and Cotton as examples of Puritan utopianism, and then marks the decline of that vision: “The prejudice against lawyers did not last. It gave way before need, for a people grasping for the rich opportunities of the New World unavoidably trespassed each other.” Rutman, *Winthrop's Boston*, 234. Ultimately Rutman's judgment is sound, although Thomas Lechford complained in the 1640s of the lack of possible income for a man of his profession. The jeremiads testify to the increase of lawyers in the final quarter of the century. This hostility was not confined to New England; Virginia expelled all lawyers from the colony in 1658: David Hawke, *The Colonial Experience* (1966), 292.

lines set down by their grandfathers: profession of faith, outward good behavior, and a relation of the circumstances of conversion. This last provision, added in the mid-1630s, was the stumbling block. The grandchildren apparently did not share the same kind of emotional conviction that the early settlers, fleeing England to establish a new society in the wilderness, had experienced.<sup>417</sup> The society seemed to be in the process of dissolution, as factions, quarrels, and controversy became commonplace. The second generation succumbed to the temptation of placing their fathers on a pedestal, regarding their own achievements as pale by comparison. Increasingly, change was regarded as decay.<sup>418</sup> The fathers had lived in an era of just dealing, external covenantal blessings, and purity of vision. Men shared with each other voluntarily, wrote the poet Benjamin Thompson. They were not concerned about fashions, their wives did not gossip, they were content with simplicity. “These golden times (too fortunate to hold) / Were quickly sin’d away for love of gold.”<sup>419</sup> This reconstruction of a mythical golden (i.e., goldless) age only served to remind the sons of the extent of the decay. That “good old spirit,” as Urian Oakes called it, was no longer in the hearts of New Englanders.<sup>420</sup>

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416. Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals* (1971), 98.

417. Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (1963); Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, rev. ed (1966), chap. 7. Raymond P. Stearns and David Holmes Brawner do not agree with Morgan’s estimate of the radical break with the past represented by the mid-1630s requirement that candidates for membership relate their experiences associated with conversion. They see this additional requirement as stemming from a desire simply to make the traditional confession of agreement with church standards a bit more rigorous. It was only “a technical improvement” in the process of church purification. Stearns and Brawner, “New England Church ‘Relations’ and Continuity in Early Congregational History,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* (April 1965): 13–45. On “technical improvement,” see 22. The fact remains, however, that the relation of conversion experience did add one more test for membership, the one most likely to deter a new generation of listeners who had not gone through the turmoil of founding a new Christian commonwealth.

418. Middlekauff, 103-4.

419. Thompson, “New-England Crisis” (1675), lines 13–14, in Meserole, 226.

420. Oakes, *Pleaded*, 27.

Thomas Shepard had warned that in the last days carnal security should be a mark of declining churches. John Cotton's sermons, *God's Promise to His Plantation*, preached in 1630 before he had left England, had stated specifically, "if you rebel against God, the same God that planted you will also root you out again, for all the evil which you shall do against yourselves..." {156} The sermon was reprinted in 1686, reminding New England of the wages of sin. Everywhere they looked, clergymen saw "the decay of godliness." Even as Shepard had cried out against a Christ-glutted age, so Oakes complained about a sermon-proof people whose lethargy could be shattered only by "some sharp affliction, some smarting rod, or sore trial" brought by God upon New England.<sup>421</sup> Clerics lived, officially at least, in the expectation of doom.

The jeremiad became, as Perry Miller has argued, an utterly formal ritual.<sup>422</sup> First, it struck out against religious formality, which in turn was seen as a product of the hardness of human hearts. Then came a catalogue of general sins, including (typically) lying, fraud, oppression in business, disobedience to superiors, ostentatious fashions, worldliness, pride, covetousness, and tight-fistedness with respect to clerical salaries. Next, a list of contemporary calamities (or promised calamities) would appear, followed by an appeal to men to search their hearts, reform their lives, and acknowledge their covenantal responsibilities. Finally, the promise of God's blessings was offered, His response to honest repentance. However, this was added almost as an afterthought; the pessimism of the jeremiad of crisis was, by the end of the period, quite pronounced.

Superficially, these jeremiads seem to follow the earlier pattern of the Deuteronomy 8 paradox. The founders came, sermon after sermon informed the listeners and readers, in order to establish a plantation of religion rather than a plantation of trade.<sup>423</sup> Into wilderness, a true desert, God brought His people, and He made the land fruitful for

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421. *Ibid.*, 25.

422. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, 31ff. [Cited hereinafter as *Colony*.]

423. Increase Mather, *Day of Trouble*, 23; Oakes, *Pleaded*, 21; John Higgenson, *The Cause of God* (1663), 10; Boston Synod, *Necessity of Reformation*, [i]; "Severals Related to the Fund" (1682), in Andrew McFarland Davis, ed., *Colonial Currency Reprints*, 4 vols. ([1910] 1964), vol. 1, 109.

them. But prosperity has blinded their descendants to the nature of their calling on earth, namely, to act as God's stewards. Thus, God is about to turn His back on the colony. His judgments are manifested everywhere. Apostasy produces calamity; therefore, His judgments are doctrinal teaching devices.<sup>424</sup>

But the similarity to older forms of exhortation is only superficial. The structure of the jeremiad of this period indicates the futility of the exercise. The preachers were dubious about the possibility of establishing specific standards for the measurement of communal success in meeting {157} God's requirements. A classic instance of this reluctance to establish external guidelines for success is found in Increase Mather's introduction to his wartime jeremiad, *An Earnest Exhortation To the Inhabitants of New-England* (1676). The sermon had been written several months before publication, he informed the reader, and the military affairs of the colony had subsequently grown optimistic. King Philip's Indian forces had been routed on several occasions. Mather realized that this turnabout tended to compromise the impact of his prophecy of doom. Men must not slacken their zeal in reforming the society's provoking evils just because favorable military reports are coming in. God's controversy with the land is not yet finished, he wrote.<sup>425</sup> "The Lord can easily punish us by the same instruments again, if we go on to provoke him. Yea, if the power and good providence of God prevent it not, it will be so."<sup>426</sup> In other words, outward success is no guarantee of God's favors, while outward disasters should be understood as categorical proof of His displeasure. These times are not like the days of the early church, Mather warned, when outward disaster came upon Christians only because God was judging the pagan lands in which they lived.<sup>427</sup> This is a Christian society, and it stands or falls in terms of the obedience of its citizens. The jeremiad of crisis was therefore molded on the principle of "heads I win, tails you

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424. "All judgments whatsoever, and in what way soever they come, are doctrinal; they bring instruction and teaching along with them, to those that either see or hear them, ..." Samuel Willard, *Useful Instructions*, 25. On apostasy's role in bringing social calamity, see 16. God is calling men to a "universal awakening" through His judgments: 22.

425. I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, [i].

426. *Ibid.*, [ii].

lose.” Disaster is a prelude to even worse things to come, while external victories are, at best, temporary. Thompson might proclaim, “New England’s hour of passion is at hand, / No power except Divine can it withstand,” but when the hour of passion was actually withstood, preachers needed to shift the terms of the jeremiad rapidly in order to explain why divine power had withstood it. As Perry Miller writes,

the jeremiad could make sense out of existence as long as adversity was to be overcome, but in the moment of victory it was confused. It flourished in dread of success; were reality ever to come up to its expectations, a new convention would be required, and this would presuppose a revolution in mind and society.<sup>428</sup>

The language of chapters 8 and 32 of Deuteronomy indicates the concern of God with the external obedience of the entire covenanted community to His law-order. But the jeremiads focused in a pietistic fashion on the *hearts of individuals*, giving far less concern to the possibility of the external reform of society through specific acts of legislation by a {158} Christian political order. The catalogue of external calamities and general sins was used, not to formulate formal legal codes, but to stir individual souls to repentance. Samuel Willard went so far as to deny that “general visitations” of God’s wrath necessarily imply “a general provocation” of God by the entire community.<sup>429</sup> The private deviation of a single individual, as in the case of Achan’s forbidden theft (Josh. 7), can bring the wrath of God upon an entire population. Willard had reversed Cotton’s argument that a saving remnant can preserve an externally apostate society from ruin: a single apostate man can apparently bring down the pillars of an externally obedient society. The general rule is made up of particulars, so each man must search his heart, pray, and seek God’s will for his life. Besides, until your heart is pure, you need not seek for external causes of God’s anger. If taken seriously, this injunction would permanently bar the possibility of success-

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427. *Ibid.*, 4. Obviously, Mather saw limits on the possibilities for the peace-preserving effects of the presence of a remnant of saints within a society of pagans or apostates, a line of argument which had been pursued by his father-in-law, John Cotton, in *The Way of Life*. Neither man was willing to admit the possibility of perpetual toleration on the part of God out of respect for such a remnant.

428. Miller, *Colony*, 33.

429. Willard, *Useful Instructions*, 72.



ful external political action, since orthodox Puritan thought never abandoned the doctrine of total depravity, resisting until the end the inroads of perfectionism and antinomianism. The principle set forth by Willard could not have escaped his audience: “Particular repentance goes before general mercies....”<sup>430</sup>

Why this concern with the personal soul to the exclusion of external reform? Because anything more than an examination of men’s hearts and a consideration of their activities in *private* associations (family, home, town) would lead to cries for *political reform*. Samuel Willard, in 1676, was not about to make an opening for *that* kind of activity. Some may object, he wrote, that external cursings come because of some sin by the rulers. “This objection is strange and impertinent....”<sup>431</sup> It is simply a “hypothetical excuse” made by sinful men, “to put off the edge of the conviction of present sins....” What is needed is personal reform; on this point, the New England jeremiad was adamant.<sup>432</sup>

Preachers used each calamity to demonstrate the displeasure of God at the failure of men to own the church covenant. But if social disasters could only prove the continuing failure of persons to fulfill their duties toward God, and if successes or blessings externally and collectively could not be used to demonstrate God’s favor toward such individualistic responses, then collective, covenantal blessings as such were nothing more {159} than a theoretical backdrop—a kind of limiting concept—which could never be relied on as an earthly reality. External blessings might be promised in all good faith; all individuals had to do was “to choose life, to choose spiritual, temporal, and eternal life.... If you do thus choose life, all will be well with New England....”<sup>433</sup> But when blessings seemed to arrive, other explanations were invariably

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430. *Ibid.*, 73.

431. *Ibid.*, 76.

432. Cf. I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 13; Oakes, *Seasonable Discourse*, 32. Perry Miller traces the internalization of the jeremiad from 1652 on, but primarily after 1660: *Colony*, 28. He probably overemphasizes the shift away from “calamity as a judgment” to “sinfulness as a curse” as the message of later ministers. They did not, as he argues, reduce social distresses “to mere footnotes.” Calamities were used continually throughout the second generation period to demonstrate God’s anger. Cf. Miller, “Declension in a Bible Commonwealth,” *Nature’s Nation*, 21 ff.

433. Samuel Torrey, *A Plea for the Life of Dying Religion* (1683), 41.

found to justify them, since it was obvious to New England's clergy that nothing like revival was happening in their churches. Church attendance was falling off throughout New England, and church membership was falling off within the narrowing circle of regular attenders.<sup>434</sup> Women had always outnumbered men in the pews, but now the proportion was growing steadily worse.<sup>435</sup> The responsibilities of membership no longer seemed worth the sacrifice to most people. They remained silent, and the messages of impending doom continued.

The very structure of the jeremiad led to *cultural pessimism*. To admit collective success was to abandon the formula. Men like the Mathers, Willard, Oakes, William Adams, and the members of the Synod of 1679 were unwilling to abandon the inherited formula. The founders had held to the validity of a *national covenant* involving national responsibilities, curses, and blessings.<sup>436</sup> The leaders of the second generation had substituted for the national covenant and its externals a concern almost exclusively for the covenant between individuals and their God within the *institutional church*. They chose to regard external, collective affairs as examples to be used exclusively for the purpose of calling individuals into the church covenant.

The preceding analyses of the jeremiad as a factor in the secularization of New England is almost the reverse of Perry Miller's evaluation. Miller argues, in the concluding paragraphs of his essay on "preparation for salvation," that the New England divines of the second generation appealed to their unresponding listeners to begin the work of salvation by hearkening unto the message, singing hymns instead of useless songs, dressing modestly, and in other ways demonstrating their concern for God's requirements. The preachers advised this kind

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434. Carl Bridenbaugh writes: "A consideration of the number and seating capacities of village meeting houses and churches demonstrates the sheer physical impossibility of crowding the entire village populations into their houses of worship. At no time after 1650 does it seem possible for the churches of Boston to have contained anywhere near a majority of the inhabitants; in 1690 little more than a quarter of them could have attended church simultaneously had they been so disposed." Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness*, 106.

435. Morgan, "New England Puritanism: Another Approach," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 18 (1961): 238.

436. Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 475–76.

of autonomous activity on the part of the {160} unregenerate, says Miller, not as their fathers had done, in order to see souls saved, but in order to keep the commonwealth from declining into oblivion. Thus, Miller asserts, by opening up a zone of autonomous human action in the program of community restoration, the preachers of the second generation led the way for Franklin's moralism.<sup>437</sup>

Is this the case? The jeremiads were only peripherally concerned with "preparation" and extremely concerned with salvation itself. They called the saints to refrain from dressing like pagans before they called the pagans to respect inherited status distinctions in fashions. They called men to examine their hearts, to pray, to repent as individuals. Conversion of individuals would ultimately bring a transformation of society. The jeremiads were intended to transform a declining society, but not through external conformity to God's civil law-order—a law-order whose specific economic applications had almost completely baffled the ministers—but rather through a *pietistic, individualistic searching of souls*. Miller would have us believe that secularism came to New England in part because the divines proposed a scheme of positive external reformation through men's acceptance of the tasks of *preparation for salvation*, a preparation which implied *human autonomy* preceding God's special grace. It would seem true that the ministers did further the secularization of the external political, social, and economic orders, but they did so through a program of *pietistic default*, rather than by any appeal to a positive human autonomy. The theological leaders of the second generation hoped for external covenantal blessings as a result of a pietistic regeneration of individual souls. Social

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437. Miller, "Preparation for Salvation' in Seventeenth-Century New England" (1943), in *Nature's Nation*, 50–77, esp. 75–77. Mr. Jon Zens, in a detailed survey of the history of the doctrine of preparation for salvation, explores the ambivalent phrases of both English and New England Puritan divines of the first generation. He concludes: "They did not teach, as they are accused of doing, 'meritorious preparation.'" As to the idea of human autonomy in the work of preparation, Zens is emphatic: "The Puritans stressed that in salvation God decrees the end, but in so doing also disposes the means ... to accomplish his purposes." Zens, "Preparationism" (mimeographed), 9, 14. Zens makes it very clear that this concept of God's means was held by Thomas Hooker, whose teachings on preparation are relied on heavily by Miller.

benefits would follow the conversion of discrete souls, not the autonomous activities of morally discreet men.

Miller's argument rests on his forced de-emphasis of those constant warnings by the clergy that even the work of preparation is a gift of God. Miller was fair in his citations of such passages, but in his estimation, these qualifications did not really counterbalance the language of autonomy in the doctrine of preparation. The evidence points elsewhere. Secularization did not come through any suggestion by the clergy of the possibility of positive, autonomous, personal activities of men who are the recipients {161} of common grace; it came far more as a result of the clergy's insistence that without individual, special grace in the hearts of men there could be no real possibility of reforming the external law-orders. It was the language of pietistic retreat rather than any language of positive external reform which gave the field to Franklin.

### *Pietism and Social Pessimism*

The jeremiads constantly appealed to the civil magistrates to enforce both tables of the Mosaic law in order to preserve and/or restore Christian society. Only after 1690 did leading Puritan divines officially acknowledge that *religious toleration* might be preferable to the imposition of force by the state in order to preserve the Holy Commonwealth's official commitment to the tenets of orthodox Protestantism, i.e., the first five commandments. The Mathers adopted this position in 1690, after decades of holding the doctrine of external compulsion.<sup>438</sup> In this sense, William Hubbard's election sermon of 1676 stood out as an anomaly.<sup>439</sup> He counseled against excessive zeal in weeding out heretics and apostates. Within four years of the delivery and publication of this sermon, the Massachusetts General Court followed Hubbard's advice and repealed the laws against the Quakers. Nevertheless, the majority of the clergy continued to recommend spiritual conformity

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438. Miller, *Colony*, 138ff. This liberalization of religion was a Massachusetts phenomenon. Connecticut lagged behind for at least another generation. Only in 1708 did pressure from England force the Connecticut Assembly to formally permit meetings of sober dissenters, and this privilege, according to Richard Bushman, was rarely granted. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee* (1967), 16.

through external compulsion. One of the marks of the fall from political influence of the clergy in Massachusetts after 1680 was their inability to convince the magistrates of the absolute necessity of suppressing theological deviation.

In the *realm of economics*, the clergy were even less precise. What, exactly, was the civil magistrate supposed to legislate? Even if magistrates had been willing to follow the lead of the theologians, they would have received very little assistance in resolving the complex problems of economics. The clergy, when it came to specifics, drew back rapidly. Even Increase Mather, whose constant meddling in the ecclesiastical affairs of {162} his fellow clerics earned him their hostility,<sup>440</sup> was willing to admit that in theory the ministers had sinned in their interference “in affairs not proper for us to engage in.”<sup>441</sup> They preached in general terms familiar to members of an organic commonwealth, but they laid down no legislative specifics for the cure of its economic deviations from that organic ideal. After 1680, as their influence waned in secular matters, the ministers showed no signs of abating in their intensity; having little responsibility for external affairs in the community, they apparently did not feel the need for tempering the language of critical outrage.<sup>442</sup>

What would cure New England’s ills? William Hubbard’s answer was simple: *charity*. Charity would restore the world they had lost. It had conquered the wilderness before their day, fulfilling Isaiah 66; without

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439. On Hubbard’s sermon, see Nelson, “King Philip’s War,” 615ff.; T. H. Breen, *Character of the Good Ruler*, 111ff.; Miller, *Colony*, 135–36. Increase Mather’s 1677 election sermon, *A Discourse Concerning the Danger of Apostasy*, had criticized the magistrates for having shown too much religious toleration. By 1690, Miller argues, both the Mathers had become advocates of toleration: *Colony*, 165. Breen, however, thinks that Cotton Mather’s sermon, *The Serviceable Man* (1690), was aimed at the proponents of toleration, and that it was only after Increase Mather returned to Massachusetts with a new charter requiring religious toleration that the younger Mather became a full advocate of toleration: *Good Ruler*, 200. In any case, by 1692, the Mathers were both religious tolerationists.

440. Clifford K. Shipton, “The New England Clergy of the ‘Glacial Age,’” *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 32 (1937): 30.

441. I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 13.

442. On the question of 1679–80 as the years marking the beginning of the decline of the clergy’s influence, see Shipton, “Glacial Age,” 30, and Miller, *Colony*, 142.

charity there would be a return to the wilderness. Charity would serve as “a sovereign remedy against all our troubles.”<sup>443</sup> Heresies would be cured, debts paid, public charges defrayed. Charity never failed the early church; hell could not stamp out the little organization. While other ministers did not see charity as a total panacea, they did argue that voluntary giving would help to transform New England. Oakes blamed the people for showing so little charity.<sup>444</sup> Shepard warned that New England’s clergy were in need of charity, so that ministers would not be reduced to the status of begging friars. Relief should come “out of some public bank or stock for an honorable relief...”<sup>445</sup> But as to the actual percentage of income that should be given out, the ministers, as always, were vague. They were also vague as to who should be in charge of charities, whether some basic amount is mandatory, or whether the state or church should be the enforcing agency. Cotton Mather, in 1710, decided that the full 10 percent figure is required of men, but the jeremiads generally avoided such specific percentages.<sup>446</sup> In short, no concrete institutional proposals for the implementation of a new system of charity came in this period.

The *kingdom of God*, which had served as a touchstone of optimism among members of the first generation, lost its optimistic definition in the second. The jeremiads pointed backward toward a golden age and forward to an almost inescapable declension of the commonwealth. The cultural pessimism of the majority of the jeremiads is striking. The exception is Jonathan Mitchel’s *Nehemiah on the Wall*. Mitchel pointed to Constantine’s {163} age as an archetype of Christianity’s triumph over the forces of evil in the social and religious realms.<sup>447</sup> God is honored—will be honored—“when Zion is built up and restored from her captivity into a condition of welfare....” Such external victory is the fulfillment of God’s prophecies and promises.

It is therefore no carnal thing, but an holy duty to desire, and in our places to seek and endeavor the peace and tranquility of Israel, not for

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443. Hubbard, *Happiness*, 60.

444. Oakes, *Pleaded*, 32.

445. Shepard, *Eye-Salve*, 47.

446. C. Mather, *Bonifacius: An Essay Upon the Good* ([1710] 1966), 108-9.

447. Mitchell, *Nehemiah*, 9.

low and sensual ends, but that God might have glory by his mercy to us, and by more abundant and fruitful service from us.... [In the case of physical sickness, God can be glorified, but we are to seek health: 8th commandment.] The same may be said of political health and welfare. God is to be submitted to, and glorified in affliction and tribulation, if He please to bring it; but He is to be waited on in all regular ways (in the use of all lawful means) for welfare, even outward peace and welfare: and it is a great glory to His name, where He bestows it upon a people of His (public peace and welfare upon a whole people especially) and He is to be glorified for it.<sup>448</sup>

This is anything but a representative passage of the era. Samuel Sewall took seriously optimism such as Mitchel expressed, but clerics, in their published sermons, gave their audience little hope for an external, social triumph on earth and in time.<sup>449</sup> The great personal eschatological event of *death* began to replace the visible kingdom of God as the focus of Puritan sermons.<sup>450</sup>

Another sign of change in perspective was the acceptance by the two Mathers of a premillennial eschatology. On numerous occasions, Increase outlined his expectations for New England. God is not yet finished with New England; there is always great darkness before the dawn; a radical discontinuous event—the bodily return of Christ in power and glory to begin His earthly reign on earth—may be expected immediately after the {164} conversion of the Jews, which could take

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448. *Ibid.*, 9–10.

449. Sewall, poem for Wednesday, Jan. 1, 1701, in Meserole, 305-6. Cf. *Letter Book of Samuel Sewall*, reprinted in the Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections*, 6th ser., vol. 1 (1886), 177, 288, 325; *ibid.*, vol. 2 (1888), 42.

450. Cf. John Norton, *Three Choice and Profitable Sermons* (1664), sermon 2, preached in 1663, 17: Christ promises to come for us at the point of death.... See also Gordon E. Geddes, “Welcome Joy: Death in Puritan New England, 1630/1730” (Ph.D. dissertation in history, University of California, Riverside, 1976). Writes Geddes: “These early visions of New England were built on an eschatology that focused on the final and communal triumph of Christ over death and on the consummation of the fullness of life in the completion of the church in Christ. But by the end of the century the goal of the city on the hill was abandoned. The world increasingly fell outside the realm of religious control, becoming either a weary place of pilgrimage or a beneficent system run by natural laws for the good of man. An individualized and spiritualized eschatology again predominated, and death became again the most important eschatological boundary.” From the intro., 14.

place at any time.<sup>451</sup> When he appealed to the younger generation to own the church covenant and assume their responsibilities, he was not encouraging them to begin any reconstruction of the Holy Commonwealth; he had abandoned any such hope.

What external hopes could men legitimately have concerning the prospects of the expansion of God's kingdom? Hubbard, in the midst of King Philip's War, could offer only this to men: "... a quiet possession of what they already have, with the enlargement of their property, if attainable."<sup>452</sup> Gone was the prospect of a final and successful confrontation with the Antichrist, the vision which had delighted Edward Johnson; the peaceable cultivation of one's own garden was its psychological substitute. The jeremiad served as an instrument of personal pietism and self-examination. Its appeal to examples of social or economic events was simply a means of stimulating personal repentance. Decline seemed inevitable to the authors of the jeremiads; for three decades the prophecies of doom persisted. But the prospects for the survival of New England kept getting better after 1690, if not on the terms of the Holy Commonwealth, then at least in terms of the expanding British Empire. A modification of the jeremiad was made increasingly necessary; the uncompromising severity of the written critiques of society could not be taken seriously by most citizens in the face of the continued success of the colonies.

An *other-worldliness* became characteristic of Puritan sermons in the second generation. The clergy abandoned the idea of *social reconstruction* through the application of concrete biblical laws to specific political and economic situations. Simultaneously, they abandoned *eschatological hope* for the community as an organism. The biblical image of the *soldier* dimmed; that other biblical image, the *pilgrim*, replaced it. A man should strive to attain inward peace, wrote Willard, by "living above the world, and keeping his heart disentangled, and his mind in heaven, in the midst of all outward occasions and urgency of business...." God calls a man "not to be of this world, but a pilgrim on

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451. I. Mather, *Greatest Sinners*, 78–79, 83ff.; *Earnest Exhortation*, 26; *Providence*, 54ff.; *Day of Trouble*, 12, 20. His most comprehensive eschatological work was his first published book, *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation* (1669).

452. Hubbard, *Happiness*, 28.



the earth, a citizen of heaven....”<sup>453</sup> Edward Johnson’s vision of an unconquerable army of Christian soldiers became, as was mentioned earlier, merely the promise of ultimate spiritual conquest for individual Christian soldiers, with no mention whatsoever of any army of saints.<sup>454</sup> Triumph is assured only on the final day of judgment; {165} presumably, one’s death serves as the gateway to triumph—victory beyond time and earth.

The ministers warned against the overemphasis men place in their particular callings. “Farms and merchandizing have been preferred before the things of God,” warned the Boston Synod of 1679.<sup>455</sup> John Whiting followed this outline: “Be there never so much farming and merchandise, buying and selling, and gain got by it, it is not such wealth [that] can make us rich indeed, while the fear of God is wanting.”<sup>456</sup> Both callings, the general (spiritual) and the particular (occupation), have to be respected.<sup>457</sup> Piety and faith have to be restored in the people; only then can externals be divinely blessed. The heart first, and then the civic body.

### 1675: The Turning Point

The three-decade period between 1661 and 1690 is generally regarded by historians as the era in which the Massachusetts Bay theocracy declined from its position of political strength into a religiously fragmented, increasingly secular culture. These years brought on a series of crises that shook the foundations of the clerical influence in New England: the growth of the merchants as a political force; the restoration of Charles II to the throne (and later, the accession of James II), which challenged colonial autonomy; a devastating Indian war; political divisions both in towns and at the level of the central governments; the division of the common fields; the advent of the Andros regime and the revolution which followed; the establishment of a per-

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453. Willard, *The High Esteem Which God hath of the Death of his Saints* (1683), 17.

454. Oakes, *Unconquerable*. See above, n. 384.

455. Synod, *Necessity of Reformation*, 7.

456. Whiting, *The Way of Israel’s Welfare* (1686), 8. This was a Hartford election sermon.

457. *Crown and Glory*, 12.

manent English bureaucracy to supervise the enforcement of the Navigation Acts; and, finally, the revocation of the charter in Massachusetts (and the granting of a desirable one to Connecticut). It was, certainly, a time of distress for those holding a social philosophy which emphasized the desirability of gradual change, semipermanent status rankings, and an organic community of saints.

From the Restoration through the mid-seventies, the king chose to allow his colonial servants a considerable degree of operational autonomy, so long as formal allegiance was maintained. He did not see to it that his demands for a liberalization of laws restricting religious freedom and limiting suffrage were actually obeyed; it took two decades for the Massachusetts legislature officially to impose this demand on their Puritan commonwealth, when the Quakers finally were acknowledged as citizens. The royal commission which arrived in the colonies in 1664 was snubbed. It was unable to impose the king's desires respecting the conduct of all judicial proceedings in his name, the permitting of the Book of Common Prayer for religious {166} worship, and freemanship separated entirely from church membership.

Two political factions formed in response to the king's pressures. One faction, led by the clergy, did not favor cooperation; the other, which included the bulk of the merchants, favored greater cooperation. From 1665–1675, the clerical faction triumphed. This, at least, is the picture drawn by Professor Bailyn.<sup>458</sup> The franchise was too wide for the merchants to gain power; farmers whose small property holdings would not have qualified them for the franchise anywhere in Europe could vote in New England if they were church members. The merchants' group remained partially disfranchised after the suffrage act of 1664, which imposed a religious qualification, but even had they all been able to vote, their overall voting weight in the community would not have altered the outcome.<sup>459</sup> But Bailyn's distinctions may be too finely drawn, given the extent of intermarriage between merchant and

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458. Michael Garibaldi Hall, *Edward Randolph and the American Colonies, 1676–1703* (1960), 17–18.

459. Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century*, 159–60.

clerical families. Colonial class distinctions were more amorphous than the following would indicate:

Economically all-powerful, politically influential but circumscribed, the merchants—willingly or not—were prime movers in a gradual, subtle, but fundamental transformation of New England society. Their involvement in the world of Atlantic commerce committed them to interests and attitudes incompatible with life in the Bible Commonwealths. Most of them did not seek the destruction of the Puritan society; but they could not evade the fact that in many ways commercial success grew in inverse proportion to the social strength of Puritanism.<sup>460</sup>

Thus the social distinctions derived from the early institutions of church and state were no longer effective among the majority of the merchants. This fact in itself constituted a threat to the guardians of the old order, for merchants were now in a position to challenge their authority. Though the merchants' influence did not yet extend over the political system, it reached into those subtle, fundamental attitudes and assumptions which ultimately determine institutions.<sup>461</sup>

Bailyn quite properly centers his attention on the *merchants as agents of social change*. Cosmopolitan, geared to the problems and opportunities associated with change, impatient with restrictions on trade imposed by {167} king or theocracy, they sought to establish a zone of legitimacy for market operations, profits, and the trappings of prestige and authority that accompany success in socially beneficial spheres of a community. But they were not alone in their commitment to the benefits of market operations, nor were they always consistent supporters of the market. The expansion of market transactions permitted the greater specialization of professions, a point noted by Adam Smith a century later.<sup>462</sup> Men began to produce for the market, and as the number of competitive buyers and sellers increased, the authorities found it

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460. *Ibid.*, 105.

461. *Ibid.*, 139. The distinctions between the Puritan clergy and the Boston merchants should not be overemphasized, however. Stephen Foster, in his study of Puritan New England, remarks that “so far from being at odds, merchants, magistrates and ministers through family connections and intermarriages formed one thoroughly interlocked community.” Foster, *Their Solitary Way*, 120; cf. 182ff. Foster provides a summary of four of these family genealogies: 187–89. By 1700 in Boston this process of intermarriage was well advanced.

less necessary to supervise the activities of the economy. The last great outburst of intervention into the market by the political authorities came in 1675–76, during King Philip’s War, the great Indian uprising.

The legal compilation of 1672 included the old 1651 statute enforcing differences of apparel on the two classes of men, i.e., those living above or below the “affluence line” or £200 of total assets. It also included a 1662 reaffirmation of the code: even tailors who made “upper-class” garments for children or servants dwelling with families that denied them such extravagance were to be admonished, then fined, along with the children or servants. Such a piece of legislation was necessary, the General Court explained (using the language of the jeremiads) because “excess in apparel amongst us [is] unbecoming a wilderness condition...”<sup>463</sup>

Oppression by wage laborers resulted, the Court declared, in their winning the right of daily wine allowances; henceforth, such allowances were deemed illegal (except in cases of physical necessity). A 20-shilling fine was imposed on the offending laborers.<sup>464</sup> It is important to record that this legislation carefully avoided any detailed scheme of wages, hours, and conditions, unlike the legislation of the 1630s. It would seem to indicate an unwillingness on the part of the central government to become embroiled in numerous, semipermanent wage disputes.

*Controls on production and export* of goods were still in vogue in 1672. A temporary prohibition on the export of bread had been passed

462. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, chap. 3. For a rather technical analysis of this concept of economic specialization and the limits of the market, as it relates to the formation of monopolies, see George J. Stigler, “The Division of Labor is Limited by the Extent of the Market,” *Journal of Political Economy* 59 (1951): 185–93.

463. *The Colonial Laws of Massachusetts* ([1672] 1887), 5–6; also included in *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, vol. 4, pt. 2, 41–42. [Cited hereinafter as *MCR*.] Connecticut passed a law which was almost identical with the wording of the Massachusetts legislation, included as a section of Connecticut’s list of “Provoking Evils” that had supposedly brought on the Indian war. Operating in terms of a somewhat lower standard of living (presumably), Connecticut enforced a £150 “affluence line” rather than Massachusetts’ £200 limit: *CCR*, vol. 2, 283. The entire list of “Provoking Evils” appears on 280–83.

464. *Colonial Laws, Supplements*, [20]2.

in 1662, {168} due to a temporary scarcity.<sup>465</sup> Hide exports were once again forbidden in 1672, reaffirming an old 1646 law. Only licensed monopolists were permitted to ship out leather hides.<sup>466</sup> Unlicensed persons were prohibited from boiling, pickling, or packing sturgeon in 1673.<sup>467</sup> Connecticut had a law against idleness in 1672.<sup>468</sup> Tanning standards were set in Connecticut by statute.<sup>469</sup> Monopolies were declared illegal, except those patented by the magistrates.<sup>470</sup> Massachusetts passed a detailed list of twenty-seven regulations to be met by ship captains regarding shipping and the employment of seamen.<sup>471</sup> A ten-year monopoly for the production of pitch, rosin, and turpentine (including an import monopoly) was granted to one group in 1671.<sup>472</sup> A 6 percent limit on interest was set in Connecticut; no one could be forced by a court of law to pay more than this, although if the debtor were willing to pay more it was legal.<sup>473</sup> Massachusetts, a bit more liberal, imposed a similar restriction at eight percent.<sup>474</sup>

The usual laws against *gaming*, *drunkenness*, and the inspection of the taverns by tithingmen remained in force in all the Puritan colonies throughout the period. So did laws against the ubiquitous roaming pigs and cattle. (The amount of total space devoted to animals in both town and colony records sometimes gives the impression that they were more of a problem than deviant humans.)

King Philip's War saw the final outpouring of economic controls in the early colonial period. The jeremiads had warned the people against

465. *MCR*, vol. 4, pt. 2, 43.

466. *Colonial Laws*, Supplements, [20]5; *MCR*, vol. 4, pt. 2, 512.

467. *Colonial Laws*, Supplements, [20]9.

468. *The Book of the General Laws of the People Within the Jurisdiction of Connecticut* (1675), 30. A similar law was passed in Massachusetts: *MCR*, vol. 4, pt. 2 (1667), 394–95. Men who fail to provide for their families or who “mispend what they earn” are to be accounted idle and are subject to assignment to the house of correction.

469. *General Laws*, 38.

470. *Ibid.*, 52.

471. *MCR*, vol. 4, pt. 2 (1667), 389–91.

472. *MCR*, vol. 4, pt. 2, 499.

473. *General Laws*, 68.

474. *Colonial Laws*, 153; cf. 41, 43.

the terrors that the Lord had in store for the apostate, and finally the war came to justify the concern of the theologians. Increase Mather pressed the General Court to pass a list of “Provoking Evils” that had brought on the curse of war. The deputies accepted the advice almost immediately; the magistrates balked for a week until news of another major Indian victory arrived. Then they, too, affirmed the statement.<sup>475</sup>

The prologue of the “Provoking Evils” acknowledged that the war was a punishment—fully deserved—of the sinful commonwealth. Continued warnings from God in the form of “many general (though lesser) judgments” {169} had been ignored. The magistrates and deputies then proposed a *list of social reforms* necessary to stay God’s wrath. Children were to be catechized more faithfully by the elders of the churches; they were to be encouraged to own the church covenant. Periwigs, long hair, and excess apparel must be eliminated from the commonwealth. Quakers were once again singled out, after a decade of relative peace, as culprits. A £5 fine was imposed (or the house of correction) on any person attending a Quaker meeting. (Naked breasts drew a 10s fine, 10 percent of the Quaker penalty, indicating Puritan priorities of 1675.) Disorderly youths in church, shameful tipping, violations against the fifth commandment for showing “contempt for authority: civil, ecclesiastical, and domestic,” idleness, and economic oppression were to be dealt with by the proper authorities. Oppression in pricing drew the wrath of the General Court; double restitution of the amount of the overcharge, plus a fine to be imposed at the discretion of the court, were imposed. Complaints against artisans could be lodged as well as complaints against merchants. No mention was made, however, of inflated agricultural prices.<sup>476</sup>

The key concern of the magistrates was shown the following year. Inhabitants of different counties were charging various prices for the same goods or services to the militia.<sup>477</sup> The answer to this problem, the General Court believed, was the passage of this enactment on May 3, 1676, the last time *full-scale price controls* were to be passed in New England until the advent of the Revolutionary War:

475. Nelson, “King Philip’s War,” 617.

476. *Colonial Laws, Supplements*, [2]32ff.; *MCR*, vol. 5, 59ff. Cf. *CCR*, vol. 2, 280–83.

It is ordered by this Court, that a committee shall be chosen in each county to examine the rates put up on all manner of things used or expended for the public, and to view the particular bills allowed by the militia of each town for expences, until the first of this instant [month]. And so far as they judge right and equal, to pass the same under their hands. And the committees abovesaid are hereby ordered to choose one man from among themselves in every [one] of the counties, who shall meet at Boston the first fourth day in July next, and bring with them the accounts allowed and passed in the several counties, where and when their work shall be to compare them together, and so to regulate the whole, as to them shall seem most just and equal, whose act being by them given under their hands to the {170} treasurer, shall be a sufficient warrant for their allowance in payment of the county rate.<sup>478</sup>

Richard Morris comments, “The act of 1675 for the reformation of ‘Provoking Evils’ marked the culmination of wage regulation in the pre-Revolutionary period.”<sup>479</sup> It also marked the demise of price control in general. It was the end of sumptuary laws that tried to regulate dress or other status-oriented displays of wealth.<sup>480</sup> One last great attempt at controlling animal imports from other colonies was made when a tariff was passed in 1680, but even this was repealed within a few months.<sup>481</sup> Clearly, it was the end of an era.

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477. The General Court stated that the goods and services are identical, wherever found. It operated in terms of the concept of intrinsic value, i.e., a rifle is a rifle, and therefore it is worth the same in all Massachusetts counties. Modern economic analysis can be dated from the 1870s, when the concept of intrinsic value was abandoned. The value of any good is dependent upon its supply and demand, which in turn are determined by location and timing. A rifle in Boston would not be worth as much as a rifle on some frontier community threatened by imminent attack. Cf. Gary North, “The Fallacy of ‘Intrinsic Value,’” *Freeman* (June 1969), reprinted in North, *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (1973), chap. 7.

478. *Colonial Laws*, Supplements, [2]48a; *MCR*, vol. 5, 79. A similar law was enacted in Connecticut in the same month: *CCR*, vol. 5, iv-v; a 33 percent profit maximum was established.

479. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America*, 77.

480. Miller, *Colony*, 50. If liquor controls are subsumed under the classification of sumptuary laws, then sumptuary laws did continue beyond 1675. Not, however, the fashion category of these laws.

481. *MCR*, vol. 5, 292.

Other manifestations of *altered attitudes* appeared at this time. Controls restricting the purchase of land by strangers in the isolated community of Dedham were effectively removed.<sup>482</sup> Communal recitations replaced the personal relations of prospective church members after 1675, reducing some of the psychological (and social) disadvantages involved.<sup>483</sup> The Connecticut probate records indicate that the heretofore almost universal entry of the makers of last testaments, the bequeathing of the soul to God, virtually disappeared after 1675.<sup>484</sup> It had been a practice recommended by pastors, yet it disappeared.<sup>485</sup>

Aletha Gilsdorf's study of seventeenth-century Puritan eschatology in America concludes that after 1676 a realization came upon ministers that the errand into the wilderness had in some way failed. An eschatological pessimism had set in at least by this time.<sup>486</sup> The clergy had made the call to reformation its communal rallying cry during the war.<sup>487</sup> The war was won by the colonial forces. Victory was a difficult prospect for writers of the jeremiads to deal with successfully; the appeal of the rallying cry wore off rapidly.

The Indian war had brought *serious dislocations* to New England society. Families were displaced, whole towns destroyed, and New England {171} experienced the worst death toll, proportional to total population, that has ever been sustained in a war fought by Americans.<sup>488</sup> Bands of soldiers had traveled through communities distant from their own, and they brought new ideas with them when they came and took new ones with them when they left. Leach has written that "King Philip's War put an abrupt end to this youthful period of colonial history, for the severe losses suffered by the colonies shook

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482. Lockridge, *Town*, 84.

483. Miller, *Colony*, 116.

484. Charles William Manwaring, ed., *A Digest of Early Connecticut Probate Records*, 3 vols. (1904), vol. 1, 150ff.

485. Cf. Norton, *Profitable Sermons*, 17.

486. Aletha Joy Gilsdorf, "The Puritan Apocalypse: New England Eschatology in the Seventeenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, 1965), 157ff. I would say that pessimism set in at least a decade and a half earlier.

487. Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk* (1958), 193.

488. *Ibid.*, 243.



their confidence, weakened their twin structures of church and state, and developed internal strains which were the unmistakable signs of a newer and more diversified order yet to come.... The old Puritan hopes of a true wilderness Zion were dead even in the very moment of victory.”<sup>489</sup>

The next fifteen years saw the imposition of English customs agents, the end of the religious requirement for the suffrage, the revocation of the Massachusetts charter—the great national covenant with God—in 1684, a papist sovereign on the throne the next year, the coming of Andros and the implied threat against landed property (it was more a threat than a reality<sup>490</sup>) a political revolution, and the final humiliation (for Massachusetts) in 1690: the inability of the various factions to create political stability, necessitating a call to the new king to command respect and to force the recalcitrant population to pay its taxes.<sup>491</sup> *Factionalism*, without the unifying presence of a personal sovereign, threatened to paralyze the Bay Colony. The new charter of 1691 removed the right of electing a governor from the people of the state and transferred it to the king. The locus of political activity immediately shifted to the legislature, and this in turn meant that the struggle for power would take place in the *towns*, since a town residence requirement for House members was established (at the time a revolutionary proposal: it abolished “virtual” representation).<sup>492</sup>

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489. *Ibid.*, 250.

490. Hall, 102ff.

491. *Ibid.*, 125ff.

492. Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms* (1970), 18ff., 32–33, 120ff. The law prohibiting virtual representation in the Massachusetts legislature was the outcome of a political impasse between Governor Phips and the “old charter” faction led by Elisha Cooke. Cooke’s anti-Mather, anti-Phips group continued to send their own members, all of whom were residents of Boston’s South End, as delegates of other Massachusetts towns. Phips refused to administer the oath of allegiance to these delegates. The Cooke faction would then disrupt the House, whereupon Phips would dissolve it. This happened twice in 1693. Phips, understandably, attempted to pressure the House into accepting a residence requirement resolution. In retaliation, Cooke’s forces were able to cut off Increase Mather’s salary as president of Harvard College unless he were willing to move to Cambridge. Finally, in the third House of 1693, the residence requirement was voted into law by the narrow margin of 26 to 24. On these early factional disputes, see G. B. Warden, *Boston, 1689–1776* (1970), 45–46.

Added to the political instability were *monetary instability and price* {172} *inflation*. Several *bank schemes* were put forward, a few were tried, and all failed. Legislative fiat was imposed to stabilize exchange rates between local currency and foreign; each time *Gresham's Law* went into effect, as the artificially overvalued currency was used by everyone for most purchases, while the artificially undervalued currency went into hoards or across the ocean to settle debts. Finally, the colony began in 1690 an *emission of paper bills*, which were depreciated in exchange by Massachusetts citizens almost the moment they went into circulation.<sup>493</sup> No reasonable long-run solution seemed imminent. The clerics were as baffled as the merchants as to what ought to be done.

### *Conclusion*

Nothing seemed to go right for clerics in these years. The jeremiads failed to stimulate the sons and daughters of church members to join the churches, even after the churches had practically torn themselves apart with strife over the halfway covenant in order to make it easier for the covenant line in each family to continue.<sup>494</sup> Church attendance was falling throughout the period. Political life gave every sign of that terrible evil, faction. Pessimism was the order of the day, if the jeremiads are to be regarded as accurate reflections of public opinion. After 1680, the only sign of brightness belonged to the merchants: the decade of 1680–90 was one of the most remarkable periods in American history in terms of commercial expansion, despite political turmoil and monetary instability.<sup>495</sup> That gave little comfort to conservative clerics, especially those outside of Boston whose incomes would not have reflected the new prosperity so rapidly.

The familiar economic guidelines of a medieval commonwealth—the just price, fair dealing, recognizable status-oriented fashions, export controls—were familiar in name only by 1680. The first genera-

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493. Bailyn, 102ff.; E. A. J. Johnson, *American Economic Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, chap. 9; William B. Weedon, *Economic and Social History of New England*, vol. 1, 325ff.

494. Morgan, *Puritan Family*, chap. 7.

495. Weedon, vol. 1, 353.

tion had found such controls on the voluntary exercise of property rights to be irregularly applied and almost impossible to enforce. By 1660, the *specific applications* of such medieval controls were conspicuously absent from Puritan sermons. The existence of such guidelines was insisted upon as a theological and moral necessity; Christian society was still inconceivable apart from them. But the search for practical applications was no longer seriously being attempted, by either the clergy or the colonial legislatures. Those who found it profitable to participate freely in a generally open market were thus at liberty to do so. The fact that increasing numbers of citizens and {173} church members were actually doing so appalled the clergy, but they were definitionally and institutionally impotent to do very much about it, except in a period of great emergency. As Tawney comments with regard to sixteenth-century prohibitions on usury, “No church has ever experienced any difficulty in preaching righteousness in general: no church has found a specific to disguise the unpalatableness of righteousness in particular.”<sup>496</sup> The jeremiads could only condemn the excesses associated with the uncontrolled use of private property; unrighteousness in general was opposed, but the clergy forfeited the right of defining the specifics to others.<sup>497</sup> But no others appeared on the scene to take the responsibility of defining the operational limits of a medieval commonwealth. It is unlikely that any group could have imposed such a vision on the New England colonies in the final quarter of the seventeenth century.

For half a century, from 1630 to 1680, the New England clergy had built up a paradigm of economic justice, but they were unable to translate the *language of conscience* into the *language of formal law*. Without such an operational framework for economic restraint or reform, it became impossible for the clergy to maintain effective political control over the external realm of economics, or even in their own congrega-

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496. R. H. Tawney, “Introduction,” Thomas Wilson, *Discourse on Usury* (1935), 114.

497. Abraham Kaplan’s comment is relevant on this failure of Puritan leaders to provide concrete economic recommendations for the preservation of the received doctrine of the Holy Commonwealth: “What is objectionable in a verbalistic morality is that its symbols function not as ideals but as utopias. They do not guide moral action, but substitute for it.” Cited by David Hawke, *A Transaction of Free Men: The Birth and Course of the Declaration of Independence* (1966), 244.

tions. It was not long before new theories were offered as substitutes for the dead language of a medieval universe.

There had been enormous economic progress during the era of the second generation in New England. A new culture had been constructed, and Boston became a part of the whole transatlantic trade system of Europe. But the progress in economic growth was less and less the product of a uniquely Puritan theology. More and more, economic affairs were seen as autonomous, and few business leaders or legislators in 1690 would have taken seriously the inherited medieval economic casuistry that the first generation had brought with them from England. The ethical framework for each individual's moral actions was unquestionably Christian, but outside the church and family, Puritanism had lost its position of leadership.<sup>498</sup> The secularization of the economic realm had begun. The economic capital that had been created by the hard work and sharp trading of the first generation became the foundation of a distinctly less Puritan New England. The old vision of the holy commonwealth could not {174} endure intact. An intellectual transformation preceded the economic transformation. Puritanism constructed a social framework which encouraged progress, and progress created rapid social change that the old medieval categories simply could not deal with successfully. The jeremiads of crisis demonstrated an unforeseen reality: nothing fails like success. The new wine of economic growth could not be contained by the old wineskins of medieval guild socialism.

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498. Shipton, " 'Glacial Age,' " 46.

## A NEO-PURITAN CRITIC REPLIES

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[The following is the only letter this *Journal* has received to date which is *critical* of vol. 5, no. 2, “Symposium on Puritanism and Law.” The author is apparently not writing with respect to the *Journal* itself, but with respect to the flyer which Chalcedon sent out promoting this issue. We print it verbatim and without comment, except to express the hope that some of the author’s misgivings will be alleviated by R. J. Rushdoony’s essay in this present issue. The *Journal* welcomes interaction with its essays.]

March 22, 1979

To: Symposium on Puritanism and Law  
The Journal of Christian Reconstruction

My name is \_\_\_\_ . I read the Puritans, published by Banner of Truth Trust. I have just read your short paper on why one must read all of Puritan literature and thus gain an accurate assessment on a world and life view. I write this short letter to you, to rebuke you for your err: but a rebuke which, I hope would be in the proper spirit and which has as its end, repentance and restoration unto full communion with Jesus Christ. May Jesus the Lord grant me wisdom to expose your error, the wisdom that leads and freely gives men salvation and not mere intellectual wisdom which I believe you are wrapped up in without proper sanctification.

From reading your paper (vol. 5, no. 2) what I perceive is that you are against making the whole Christian life and the whole writings of the Puritans center on the issues of *sin* and *grace*. You want to invade all areas of life and redeem these areas for Christ Jesus. You want to extent Gospel wisdom and sanctification to every area of life, and that, so as to bring all areas, spheres, everything unto a new and holy thing. You do not want to be merely confined in your Christian experience to be always caught up in wrestling and striving against sin. (I want to be very careful not to *judge you*. I am stating what I, as a Christian, think of your attitudes.) You do not want to always have your horizons fixed on just {176} “salvation” consisting always in witnessing, the local

church, and the concept of believers always being separated from the world, and only speaking out in the world when some sin is brought down: like homosexuality. You want to pervade the society with positive notes, and especially with the concept of redeeming this or that area for Christ and not just always talking about sin and grace, hell and heaven and salvation. Well enough with this description. I believe this is your sinful hangup; although I am not judging your mind. I want to be free from that sin.

To rebuttal you in the Biblical sense I would first off call to your attention the express purpose for which Christ came to earth: to save sinners. To save “*people*” not areas, spheres, non-personal entitites such as: economics, science, merchants, politics. Jesus has not as His aim to sanctify areas, spheres, etc. To save *people* from their *sins*—Matt. 1:21. Not to *reconstruct areas* of peoples lives; but to transform *sinner*s into non-sinners. This is the aim of Christ, and you do not seem to be one with Him in it!!! That means you are anti-Christ.

Now, if you would think immediately of Genesis 1–3 and the cultural mandate, that Christ wants to redeem man and put him back into the world which God created and thus see man fulfilling all his world and life functions as God originally created him for—this still is erroneous. Certainly, sinless Adam would have reached out into all spheres and areas of life: economics, politics, science: and done this holy and righteously unto God, but: this would not have been the aim, goal, pursuit, of Adam but rather the secondary consequences of absolute holiness. You see it is not Christs goal to redeem areas of economics, politics, this is rather a result of an efficient cause. This world is going to burn up, 2 Peter 3, redeeming areas is not the goal of Christianity—its redeeming people! Jude vs. 23 “and some save, snatching them out of the fire.” People not things is the goal of redemption.

I would urge you to leave off this Satanic pursuit of yours. You stand against Christ if you oppose dealing with the great issues of sin and grace.

Paul determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified. This is God’s concern, if it is not yours; then you better do some self-examination as to your salvation.

## 2. DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH

# OLIVER CROMWELL (1599–1658)

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*Judy Ishkanian*

There are some events in history that are so pivotal for the future that we tend to take them for granted. The English Revolution was such an event. The true significance of the English Civil Wars, 1641–49, and the years of the Commonwealth, 1649–60, escaped partisans on both sides. The restoration of the monarchy was viewed by most as a total defeat of the goals of Puritanism and republicanism. Yet it is difficult to imagine today's English-speaking world without the central importance of constitutional government, its industrialized economy, or its dominant middle class. We owe this basic framework to the flowering of the Reformation in England and Scotland, and to the unique outlet that Calvinism stamped on the English mind. The English Civil Wars, the execution of a king of England, and the years of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, occurred in a very short period of time, but were the result of one hundred years of historical development. None of these events would have come to pass in quite the same way without Oliver Cromwell.

That this unpretentious country gentleman should rise to rule England is a source of amazement, for his entire military and civil career spanned only fourteen years. This military leader, who is routinely compared to Caesar or Napoleon for strategic brilliance on the battlefield, had never seen a battle nor led a troop until he was forty-three years old. While serving his initial terms in Parliament, he was eclipsed by his illustrious cousins and more experienced politicians. Nevertheless, Oliver Cromwell rose to be the greatest Puritan statesman the seventeenth century produced in England. A man perhaps too partisan to his God, His cause, His people to be beloved by all Englishmen, either then or now, he is acknowledged by all to have brought order out of chaos and to have set a decaying island kingdom on a path of greatness and international respect that was to the benefit of the



entire nation. Who, in retrospect, can deny the effects of the doctrine of special election which Oliver Cromwell believed called him into God's service, or to his indomitable belief in the divine Providence which would guide him to the victory of His cause? Perhaps that is why this militaristic, partisan, passionate, devout Puritan has earned the title historian Christopher Hill has given him: "God's Englishman."

### *General Background*

The fortunes of the Cromwell family were tied to those of the Tudor monarchs. The Cromwell patronage was based on the dispersal of Catholic {178} landholdings after Henry VIII broke with the Vatican to create a national church. They were, thus, members of a rising Protestant aristocracy. While the politically motivated Protestantism of Henry VIII produced an independent, national church, the printed English translation of the Bible eventually gave England Puritanism, since conformity to the Word of God was increasingly demanded.

In the north, the intrepid theological child of Calvin, John Knox, was forging the structure of Scottish Presbyterianism in the midst of a traditionally violent and unruly government. Due, in large part, to his forceful leadership, Presbyterianism became the national church of Scotland, and the dominant voice in Scottish politics. It was a voice the volatile Stuart rulers came to fear and detest. In milder climes to the south, Queen Elizabeth had never relinquished control of the official Anglican Church, and had kept a watchful eye on religious enthusiasms of all persuasions. Unofficial Calvinism grew and flourished in Elizabethan England despite general repression and spasmodic periods of persecution, and whole sections of the country became known as "Puritan." Restive though Parliaments were at the close of the sixteenth century, Elizabeth and her Privy Council had retained her father's absolute monarchy.

With Elizabeth's death in 1603, James VI of Scotland succeeded the Spinster Queen to become James I of England. The country rejoiced to have what appeared to be a vigorous family man on the throne. He had been taught by the famous Puritan Buchanan, and the religious people in the land held high hopes that at last they had a kindred spirit at the helm. They were soon relieved of their illusions, for James I proved himself to be, in the words of historian Esme Wingfield-Stratford, "a

buffoon in purple.”<sup>499</sup> Avenging his lean years as captive king of the Presbyterian Kirk, James I and his Catholic wife plundered the fat English treasury. The modicum of statesmanship provided by the Elizabethan Privy Council was replaced with diplomacy by James’s bisexual courtesans. He set himself on a nonconciliatory course with his Parliaments that was to seal the doom of his son and successor, Charles I. The Stuart kings’ claim of “divine right of kings” to be above the law could not have been more ill-timed, considering the budding constitutionalism of increasingly Puritan influenced Parliaments. Charles I, with a Catholic wife of his own, ascended the throne. With Charles, England continued to be ruled by the petty intrigue of courtiers in both domestic and foreign affairs. At the same time, his assembled Parliaments were demanding that their authority be extended to all taxation, lawmaking, foreign affairs, and the control of the king’s advisors. An impasse was reached in 1628, when Parliament refused {179} to finance and implement Charles’s foreign policy. When it became apparent that none of the successively assembled Parliaments would accommodate his schemes, he purposed to govern England without calling any more into session. This he managed to do for eleven sullen, seething years, with his rationale of “divine right of kings” to place him above the law of the land.

### *Early Life*

A return to the turn of the century finds Oliver Cromwell entering the scene in 1599 at the twilight of Elizabeth’s long reign. His father, Robert Cromwell, was the second son of the heir to the Cromwell fortune, and as the second son of “The Golden Knight of Hinchinbrooke,” he was settled in the less spectacular, yet substantial, landholding at Huntingdon in East Anglia. Here, among seven sisters, Oliver Cromwell grew to fit the position of country gentleman, which he was destined by birth to fill. His parents were dedicated Puritans, and it is said that his mother, Elizabeth Steward, exerted a profound influence on him all her long life. Years later, in the public eye of the Protectorate, she was known and respected for her quiet wisdom. Beyond his home,

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499. Esme Wingfield-Stratford, *The History of British Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1948), 469.

the single greatest influence in his youth was Dr. Thomas Beard, under whom he sat for the entire tenure of grammar school. This fiery and zealous Puritan schoolmaster was also his pastor and family friend. It is impossible to imagine that Oliver had not read and absorbed his teacher's widely circulated book, *The Theatre of God's Judgements*, the thesis of which was that God actively intervenes in the affairs of men in this life, and no person is too great or too small to escape God's judgment, or violate God's law with impunity. In direct contradiction to the theory of "divine right of kings," Beard stated that princes are subject to God's law.

At age seventeen Cromwell left home to attend Cambridge University at the Puritan college of Sussex, although the death of his father necessitated his return home a year later. It is speculated that the following three years were spent in London at an Inn of Court (Lincoln Inn), where youthful gentry commonly attended to a mastery of legal matters important to landowners. A firm record exists of his marriage in London to Elizabeth Bourchier, daughter of a successful merchant, in 1620. Theirs was a stable and enduring marriage which produced eight children, and she shared with him all the blessings of smiling Providence, as well as the vicissitudes of war and the invective of Oliver's enemies. When raised to prominence along with Oliver, her frugality and preference for hearth and home won her ridicule in foppish royalist circles, whose appreciation for Puritan virtues was notably lacking. Unfortunately for the reputation of "Protectress Joan," as they sneeringly called her, their trivial, chiding remarks have survived the centuries. {180}

With the exception of a few political encounters, the life of Oliver Cromwell was, until 1640, occupied with family pleasures and personal pursuits. The year 1628, however, occupies a particular interest because it marks the first time he was elected to Parliament. He was witness, then, to all of the dramatic events that led to the dissolution of Parliament for eleven years. 1628 is also the date historians attach to the dramatic spiritual conversion, where the Puritan doctrine of his upbringing welded with a quickening of his own heart and soul. From that time forward, his correspondence indicates a concern for doctrine and for matters of the faith that was to be the guiding force in his life for the rest of his days. His fascination with the New England Colonies

prompted him to consider emigrating there during the frustrating thirties, and he came so close that he sold all his property. Many have been tempted to speculate on the course of events had Oliver Cromwell joined his brethren in New England.

### *The Civil Wars*

The Calvinist cause proved itself to be far from dead when, in 1638, Charles's Archbishop Laud attempted to force the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer on the stern Scottish Kirk. The move by Charles demonstrates three generations of Stuart misunderstanding of Scottish Presbyterianism, with its jealously guarded religious integrity. Instead of handling the tinderbox situation with tact, Charles provided the spark which was destined to consume him by taking arms against the Scots. Despite the initial bravado, the end of the "Bishop's Wars" found the king with 25,000 Scottish soldiers occupying the northern part of England with a demand for £12,000 a month subsidy pending a final settlement. Charles, his options gone, was forced to call another Parliament to meet the financial demands.

Oliver Cromwell had been elected to serve in the Short Parliament from the borough of Cambridge, and was elected again to the "Long Parliament" which convened on November 3, 1640. The spirit of determined unanimity that prevailed at the first session of the Long Parliament was not to be seen again for many years. That spirit produced dramatic reforms which many felt satisfied demands for the restoration of the ancient balance of government. Under the leadership of John Pym, the Triennial Act was passed, which insured that Parliament would meet on a regular basis, and Parliament passed another bill that it could not be dissolved against its own will. All prerogative courts were abolished, such as the Star Chamber and the High Commission, which had been a source of religious and political persecution since Elizabethan times. All existing taxes initiated outside the authority of Parliament were swept away.

The precipitous event of a violent Catholic insurrection in Ireland prompted Parliament narrowly to pass "The Grand Remonstrance," which {181} not only elaborated its position against raising arms against Ireland, but underscored its grievances with the Stuart rule and put forward even bolder attacks on royal sovereignty than had yet been

seen. Cromwell, still not prominent in Parliament, but active in gaining valuable experience in serving on committees behind the scenes, stood foursquare in support of “The Grand Remonstrance,” but its uncompromising tone divided the loyalties of members of Parliament. Given Parliament’s increased defiance, the king demanded the arrest of five parliamentary members (known thereafter as the Five Members, and included Pym and Cromwell’s cousin, John Hampden). King Charles himself arrived at Parliament with 100 soldiers to make the arrest, only to find that the Five Members had lost themselves in the safety of Parliament’s stronghold city of London. This display of force caused the House of Lords to turn against the king, and to avoid retaliation he sought refuge at Hampton Court.

The following months witnessed propaganda efforts of both sides, accompanied by the kind of preparations which foretell war. Finally, on August 22, 1642, King Charles raised his standard at Nottingham, and the English Civil War began.

Undoubtedly, many at the time viewed the outbreak of war as a struggle for power between divergent political forces, and they aligned themselves according to their interests and sympathies. The Presbyterians were seasoned veterans of political battles with royalty—particularly Stuart royalty—and there were among them sophisticated politicians and lawyers who were prominent in Parliament. Their hard-headed demand for the replacement of Episcopalianism with Presbyterianism as the national religion could point to Scotland as a successful example and could not have failed to appeal to many English Calvinists. Oliver Cromwell numbered among the thousands of Puritans who had never known an official “Calvinist” church affiliation. Puritans, variously identified as the Independents, the “Gathered Churches,” the Sectarians, or the Separatists, had learned their doctrine from the Geneva Bible in their homes from parents, under teachers, with afternoon lecturers, and home Bible study groups. They were advocates of religious tolerance for all orthodox sects and no national church. Theirs was a view of spiritual unity among believers rather than the organic, physical unity other religious groups sought. Their initial political naiveté came not from pietism (which infected Puritanism decades later), but from a lack of opportunity for practical expression of their Calvinistic ideas (unlike their brethren in the Colonies). As the

Civil War progressed, the Independents were to be found as well represented on the battlefield as the Presbyterians were in Parliament. However others might view the challenge of war, the Puritans did, with one heart, regard it as a signal from God that at last He was going to advance His kingdom on earth. The Lord was calling His own servants into battle to subdue and overcome the {182} Antichrist, whom Puritans on both sides of the Atlantic believed was either Charles I or Archbishop Laud. At last, the great war of faith raging on the continent (the Thirty Years War), which they had viewed from afar for so many years, was coming to English soil. Whatever the commitment of others, there was no hesitation on the part of Puritans, with Cromwell resolutely in their number, to answer the momentous opportunity that God was providing His own elect to bring righteous government to England.

At the outset of the Civil War, it became clear that this was no “business as usual” affair in Cromwell’s estimation. His daring innovations demonstrated his reliance on God’s special direction and leadership for victory. From the recruitment of his first troop of horse at Huntingdon, Captain Cromwell selected his cavalymen on the basis of their spiritual qualifications: “honest men,” “godly men,” “men of spirit,” he called them. Tossing aside the timid euphemisms of other parliamentary leaders, he stood squarely before his men and, as one soldier recalled, “promised to stand with us for the liberty of the gospel and the laws of the land.”<sup>500</sup> After the first battle of Edgehill in October 1642, Cromwell became certain that his method of recruitment was superior to that of the major portion of parliamentary forces and attempted to convince John Hampden, who thought his ideas were unrealistic:

Your troopers [wrote Cromwell] are most of them old decayed serving men and tapsters and such kind of fellows ... and their troopers are gentlemen’s sons, younger sons, persons of quality.... you must get men of a spirit ... that is likely to go as far as a gentleman will go or else I am sure you will be beaten still.<sup>501</sup>

Unrealistic or not, Cromwell’s “honest men” were proving themselves worthy in battle, and by 1643 Cromwell was promoted to Lieutenant-General of the Eastern Association, which he had helped to

500. Roger Howell, *Cromwell* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1977), 42.

501. *Ibid.*, 45.

organize, under the earl of Manchester. Discipline was loose in both the royalist and parliamentary armies, and so the discipline and drill to which Cromwell's "men of spirit" subjected themselves was all the more remarkable. Cromwell had insisted upon and received from Parliament the promise of regular pay for all the soldiers under his command, and ample provisions. While a measure of this sort seems an elementary aspect of a soldier's morale, in the seventeenth century no armies received pay on a regular monthly basis. Their reward for victory in battle was to plunder the enemies' baggage and supplies, the nearby town, or resort to the comforts of the camp followers. Cromwell's men were permitted none of these incentives and were disciplined for lapses in personal behavior or desertion. Therefore, regular pay and good provisions were an essential component {183} of Cromwell's strategy for high morale as well as for the obvious benefits in public relations.

By 1644, Cromwell commanded a regiment of fourteen troops. His officers were chosen for their proven ability, their commitment to the cause, and their spiritual integrity. It was becoming apparent to other Parliament and military leaders that Cromwell was developing a huge Independent Church-in-Arms—a fighting church in a Holy War—which they saw, perhaps far more clearly than Cromwell at that point, did portend to become genuinely subversive to the existing social order. So ingrained in the modern American mentality is the old Puritan idea of advancement by merit, that it is difficult to comprehend that the world, both then and now, has largely been ruled by a rigid class system in which neither individual merit nor personal integrity have been factors for consideration. Actually, within Cromwell's "congregation-in-arms" an aristocracy of its own was developing which was to confound the social expectations of the day. It was an aristocracy of the spirit which transcended all distinctions of class or rank and saw men of humble origins allowed to rise as far as their ability and commitment would permit. The "saints" clamored to be in Cromwell's service, and men of "quality" preferred to serve elsewhere. The devotion between Cromwell and his men developed far beyond expected limits and reflected the relationship of a pastor to his parish. Although he retained his membership in Parliament throughout the war, and served, after 1644, on the Committee of Both Kingdoms, his sym-

pathies were repeatedly with the army. The fellowship with his own troops undoubtedly influenced his view that the army was more representative of the concerns of God's people than was Parliament.

The discipline and morale of his troops made possible Cromwell's greatest innovative field tactic of recharging after the initial cavalry charge. Prince Rupert, Cromwell's prime adversary in the field, received his experience in the continental war and repeated the traditional use of cavalry. The dashing nephew of Charles I would stage his advance at full gallop and cut a swath through enemy lines. Win or lose, the control would be lost after the initial pass, and his cavalry would gallop off in anticipation of plunder or escape. Cromwell was able to make greater use of his troops in every battle because of his ability to hold his horse in tight control. Instead of charging at a gallop, he charged at full trot. Whatever the outcome of the initial charge, his men turned, regrouped, and awaited orders, so that whether they recharged to gain victory or retreated, they were in formation and in communication with their commander. With the enemy's horse off the field after the initial pass, they could, thereafter, turn to the heart of the enemy's defenses. Victory after victory rewarded their devotion to drill and discipline, and reinforced their spirit of invincibility, which came to be shared by the enemy. The great Prince Rupert himself, {184} after the decisive victory of Marston Moor, nicknamed Oliver, "Ironsides." Later the apt nickname was extended to include his soldiers as their reputation became a terror to all.

The first two years of the war saw Cromwell gain valuable military experience and rise to importance as a political voice in Parliament. Despite its scattered victories, the outlook for Parliament's forces generally, however, was not good. Time had been considered to be on the side of Parliament, with the richest counties under its control. The fleet had declared for Parliament, thus rendering the seas more secure from the threat of foreign aid to the king. Nevertheless, royalist forces made impressive gains in 1643. Parliament's great Sir Thomas Fairfax and his father were isolated in the north, blocking the Great North Road and preventing the earl of Newcastle and his private regiment of "Whitecoats" from aiding royalist allies in the south. Sir Ralph Hopton had, after many smaller victories, annihilated the army of the Western Association under General Waller at Roundway Down. It was this crisis



which prompted the dying Pym to negotiate the Scots into the field. The deaths of the two leaders, John Pym and John Hampden, in 1643, were a blow to the morale of the Puritans. The dedicated fighting spirit exemplified by Cromwell in the Eastern Association was being undone by the dilatory posture of his immediate superior, the earl of Manchester, as well as the commander-in-chief, the earl of Essex. This “no-win” policy of the parliamentary generals echoed the equivocal sentiment of factions in both houses of Parliament. Cromwell became the chief spokesman for a speedy and victorious conclusion to the war. As such, he was at odds with generals with such a vested interest in the existing system that they were as alarmed at the implications of the emerging Independency as a sociopolitical force as they were of the enemy in the field. Historian R. S. Paul notes that Oliver Cromwell had become “the acknowledged hero of the sects,”<sup>502</sup> and his partisan militancy was shrewdly watched by politicians who, nonetheless, regarded his services as indispensable, because it was observed by such as Sir Henry Vane that “God was with him.”<sup>503</sup>

The Battle of Marston Moor, July 2, 1644, was turned from impending defeat to victory by Cromwell, Fairfax, and the Scots. It was the reluctance of parliamentary and military leaders to follow through and capitalize on the gains that convinced Cromwell that the Cause must rid itself of the “no-win” fainthearted in its midst. The crisis surfaced with Commons receiving accusations of sabotage of the war effort against the earl of Manchester, and counteraccusations against Cromwell as an incendiary. The resolution of this divisive exercise came from an unexpected {185} direction when a bill was introduced removing all M.P.s from the field. This, the Self-Denying Ordinance of February 15, 1645, eliminated all the half-hearted generals such as Essex and Manchester, who were in the House of Lords. It also eliminated Oliver Cromwell. There is no reason to doubt that Cromwell had every intention of laying down his command with the others. He diligently worked on the Committee of Both Kingdoms to reorganize the army along the lines of his own regiment and was instrumental in securing Sir Thomas Fairfax as commander-in-chief of the New Model Army.

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502. R. S. Paul, *The Lord Protector* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955), 89.

503. *Ibid.*, 97.

Cromwell faded into the curious state of inaction which characterized his attendance on God's call and special direction.

Before the Self-Denying Ordinance went into effect, a military offensive launched at Leicester caused the new Commander-in-Chief Fairfax to dispatch Cromwell and his troop post haste. Fairfax insisted that, despite the ordinance, Cromwell was indispensable to the war effort. To Cromwell, waiting on God's sign, the seal was given when Parliament permitted him to be the exception to the rule. With Fairfax in command and Cromwell lieutenant-general of the cavalry, the New Model Army became, by the end of the Civil Wars, a national fighting force considered the best in Europe.<sup>504</sup> The first major test of the New Model Army was at the Battle of Naseby, June 14, 1645, which proved again the superiority of Cromwell's cavalry. The victory was the turning point of the first Civil War. The capture of King Charles's personal baggage revealed through the examination of his correspondence such duplicity and schemes for the wholesale betrayal of England that the "War Party" was vindicated in its assessment of the conflict and vacillating voices were silenced. The following year was a mopping-up action which ended with the escape of Charles from his headquarters at Oxford in order to surrender into what he hoped to be the friendly hands of the Scottish army at Newark. Shortly after his departure, Oxford fell, on June 24, 1646, ending the first Civil War. Despite his continuing attempts at intrigue, the king was reduced to a pawn in a power struggle emerging between Parliament and the Army, which had a newly discovered political voice of its own.

The Scots were the first to use King Charles to increase their bargaining power. They held the king for settlement of the arrears in pay for their army, still encamped in Newark. Receiving payment, they released the king to Parliament and withdrew from England.

The Parliament exulted at their possession of the king, for now they could risk disbanding the New Model Army. Their attempt hastily to dismantle the army without honoring the arrears in pay or the agreed-upon compensation for widows and orphans caused an uproar in the army. It {186} immediately organized itself into political units to pro-

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504. Brig. Gen. William A. Mitchell, *World's Military History* (Military Service Publishing Co., 1931), 301.

test its grievances. Each regiment elected an officer and a rank and file member to represent it in a Central Council of the Army. On the council, Fairfax, Cromwell, and Henry Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law and closest advisor until his death in 1652, were central figures. A highly political group which had already been fomenting concepts of social democracy in the army, called the Levellers, seized upon the newly formed political apparatus to advance its own views. Thus, the system of democracy among those indwelt by the Holy Spirit created by Cromwell within his "fighting Church," became politicized in peacetime.

With the king in the hands of Parliament, the army quickly realized that it was powerless to justify its continued existence. The council made a historic move which established the army as a *de facto* power equal to Parliament. Presumably under orders of the Council of the Army, Coronet Joyce and a troop of horse seized the king from the Parliament's Holdenby House and placed him under the custody of the army. This revolutionary move put Cromwell, still an M.P., in an awkward position. He and Ireton attempted to negotiate privately with the king on behalf of the army, and put forward a plan of government called "The Heads of Proposals," based on the concept of a limited constitutional monarchy. They were, in fact, ready to conciliate with any party to achieve a settlement with Parliament and yet preserve the unity of the army. To that end Cromwell made every effort to come to terms with the leader of the Levellers, John Lilburne, who in turn viewed Cromwell's peacemaking overtures to the king with extreme suspicion. The Parliament was not slow to retaliate for the loss of the king, and the Presbyterians excluded the army sympathizers, the Independents, from the House of Commons. Amidst London rioting, General Fairfax marched into London and forcibly reinstated the Independents and removed the Presbyterians! With all this stress it was imperative to establish army unity, and so the famous Putney Hall Debates were held in October and November of 1647 between the generals and their soldiers. To the Independent "Church Meeting" atmosphere the Levellers brought their own version of a constitution called the "Agreement of the People," demonstrating that they had moved far beyond discussing army grievances and were presuming to legislate on behalf of the nation. Among their innovative ideas were universal man-

hood suffrage, elimination of the House of Lords, freedom of the press, and annual Parliament. These ideas were presented in a Calvinistic frame of reference and represented divergent social interpretations of theologically oriented issues. Yet, as R. S. Paul notes, the extreme Levelers substituted “their Divine Rights of the People” for the “Divine Right of Kings.”<sup>505</sup> During the debates Cromwell developed {187} his position regarding social doctrines. His motives continued to be to establish God’s kingdom on earth. He seemed to favor any system which would advance that end. It is generally thought the intellectual Ireton gave direction to Cromwell’s ideas, and together they came to represent the conservative, so-called “Grandee” position in the army, supporting the preservation of private property and limited suffrage.

There is a great deal of speculation, though impossible to prove, that the king’s surprising escape from the custody of the army to Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight, was somehow engineered by Cromwell, whose cousin, Robert Hammond, happened to be governor of the Isle of Wight. As it was, Hammond did not suffer King Charles to leave, nor did he hand him over to contending parties, thus neutralizing the bargaining power of them all. The loss of the king caused a mutiny among radicals in the army who felt their interests had been betrayed, and Cromwell suppressed it with a heavy hand at Corkbush Field.

Charles, in a characteristic miscalculation, decided that, because all parties were locked in a struggle for power, the time was ripe to make his own move to regain the throne. Busily in touch with any and all who would support him, Charles finally accepted an offer by the Scots to return him forcibly to the throne, in exchange for the establishment of Scottish Presbyterianism as the national religion. As 1647 closed, the Scots were raising an army and Charles was calling royalist supporters to arms. He had failed to recognize that he had been witnessing a “family quarrel.” His move provided the outside threat guaranteed to end the quarrel. In the face of uprisings in South Wales, Kent, Sussex, and elsewhere, a mutiny of the formerly loyal fleet, and an invasion by the Scottish duke of Hamilton, the army immediately returned to legendary New Model discipline. The Parliament voted a No Address and cut off all communication with the king. The Second Civil War of 1648

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505. Paul, *The Lord Protector*, 219.

suppressed the uprisings and defeated the duke of Hamilton, who, it fatally turned out, did not enjoy the support of the Presbyterian Kirk. Cromwell crossed the Tweed and reached an agreement with the Kirk. Returning to England, he tarried in Yorkshire with a protracted siege of Pontefract. In London, Henry Ireton sized the reins of action. In a dark mood after the Second Civil War, the army deemed Charles a traitor, incapable of anything but duplicity and treachery. The army demanded that he be brought to trial. When Commons hesitated, the council moved to reoccupy London and General Fairfax gave the order to arrest Charles at Carisbrooke. He also sent for Cromwell, who had been obviously “waiting on the Lord” at Pontefract for history to take a turn. By order of Ireton, Col. Thomas Pride and his soldiers marched into Commons to purge it of all members who held a soft position toward the king. The remaining 150 members who survived the military oustings became the “Rump” Parliament which hastily tried the king and ten days {188} later executed him at Whitehall on January 30, 1649. Cromwell took full part in the proceedings and he never voiced a regret about the regicide, which legend says he termed, one dark night as Charles’s body lay in state, “Cruel necessity.”<sup>506</sup> The indictment of the king, once uttered, pointed to the modern age, waiting in the wings. It was, in the words of R. S. Paul,

unique and of a higher nature even than High Treason and since there was no regular machinery by which such case might be tried, Cromwell and his colleagues set up a clumsy machinery of their own. It was illegal machinery because the charges were in fact higher than those of which the Law took cognizance and it broke down because they tried to translate into terms of the English Common Law crimes which called into question the very foundation of the Law itself.... arbitrary power was being used to destroy arbitrary power.<sup>507</sup>

King Charles I repeated the example of his grandmother, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, by bearing himself in death with a dignity he never demonstrated in life. Yet, even in his noblest moment his words illustrate a basic alienation from the future being shaped around him:

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506. Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, The Lord Protector* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 293.

507. Paul, *The Lord Protector*, 194.

As for the people, truly I desire their liberty and freedom as much as anybody whatsoever, but I must tell you that their liberty and freedom consists in having government, laws by which their lives and their goods may be mostly their own. It is not having a share in the government; that is nothing appertaining to them. A subject and a sovereign are clean different things.<sup>508</sup>

### *The Commonwealth*

The establishment of the Commonwealth on March 17, 1649, was a victory for Puritans. Only Independents were members of the Rump Parliament, with not a Presbyterian within shouting distance. They were in control of the army, which had become the power in the land. Oliver Cromwell was the most powerful man in the Rump, as chairman of the newly formed Council of State, in which members of the Rump were culled out of the greater body to serve in executive capacity. He was a member of the new judicial court, and second in command of the army, where he was still the dominant member of its council. The Independents knew, and Oliver Cromwell knew, that from this time forward the Commonwealth dare not fail. Challenge from its enemies came from all quarters. News of the king's death had sent tremors throughout Europe, and Scotland immediately crowned Charles's son, "King Charles II," in absentia. A serious threat of a royalist invasion from Ireland deemed an {189} offensive against Ireland necessary, but was impossible until the mutinous agitation by the Levellers within the army was quelled. Leveller John Lilburne continued his antigovernment protesting, seemingly unmindful that the army was now the government. Cromwell, the same officer who had made possible a hearing for his ideas, now swiftly silenced him. All Leveller leaders were arrested. Mutinies were subdued with some bloodshed, but Cromwell's tactic involved severe measures for the leaders and leniency for the followers.

With military discipline restored, Cromwell turned his attention to the forthcoming campaign against Ireland. He made painstaking preparations, anticipating the use of siege tactics he was likely to encounter, and also contacted Irish allies. The actual campaign was expeditious

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508. John Kenyon, "The English Civil Wars, part 3," *British History Illustrated* (October/November 1978): 51.

and vicious by necessity—the memory of Drogheda lingers yet—for he knew that England was in no mood for a protracted war. Cromwell was well aware, too, that his political enemies would be more than happy should he bog down in Ireland. Within the year, Ireland was brought under his command and was declared a member of the Commonwealth.

In Scotland, royalist forces were rallying around King Charles II, and the people were reacting to the regicide of their Stuart kinsman. Cromwell became commander-in-chief of the army because Thomas Fairfax resigned in protest to the proposed invasion of Scotland and retired from public life. Cromwell made temporary peace with the radical wing of the army to preserve the precious solidarity, and then launched the war with Scotland. Trapped from the start on the coast at Dunbar, he faced formidable odds at Dunbar, yet won, on September 3, 1650, what even his incredulous friends saw as a miraculous victory. Oliver was convinced that God had delivered the Scots to him and was thereafter certain that, despite political disappointments, he was still faithfully pursuing God's cause. He came to terms with the Kirk through diplomacy, and with royalists through further decisive battles in Fife. Then Cromwell maneuvered the remnant of the Scottish army, which was still backing the royalists, and the followers of Charles II into England, thus severing them from their support in Scotland. On the providential date of September 3, 1651, Cromwell defeated Charles II in a brilliantly executed battle at Worcester. Only a miracle could have saved the Stuart cause at this point, and, as R. S. Paul points out, "miracles did not seem to be attracted to the Stuart cause."<sup>509</sup> Scotland, as Ireland, was annexed into the Commonwealth.

Cromwell returned from Worcester a military hero to face the intractable political problems posed by the Rump. The Rump could hardly be called representative of the electorate when whole segments of the country were no longer represented, yet its members felt that it was all that was {190} left of the Long Parliament and showed no inclination to dissolve itself. Instead of meeting triennially, it had been in one continuous session since 1641. The army wanted it dissolved, but they shared with the Rump the fear that free elections would doom the

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509. Paul, *The Lord Protector*, 243.

Independents. For this reason, Cromwell and his officers suffered along until 1653 with the Rump's dalliance on matters of law reform, religious reform, and the war with the Dutch. When the Rump attempted to pass a bill prohibiting their dissolution for another three years, the pretense of cooperation was dropped, and Cromwell moved with decisive speed and force to prove what everyone already knew: the army was the law of the land. On April 20, 1653, he entered Commons with a few officers and, after listening quietly to the proceedings, he leaped forward in a rage of righteous indignation and castigated the startled M.P.s with an emotional speech. "Come, come, I will put an end to your prating.... Call them in, call them in,"<sup>510</sup> and the sergeant-at-arms opened the door to two files of musketeers, who escorted the speaker from his chair. Thus ended the Rump and the Republic! According to Cromwell, not so much as the "barking of a dog" greeted its demise.<sup>511</sup>

### *The Protectorate*

Oliver Cromwell, in the spring of 1653, embarked on the final years of his life at the pinnacle of power in England, displaying what the historians describe as the "paradox" of Cromwell the "Independent," and Cromwell the "Lord Protector." The perceptive R. S. Paul aptly resolves the seeming paradox by placing the years of the Protectorate as the fulfillment of Cromwell's prophetic mission:

It was resolved in the "prophetic" function of Cromwell's political mission. On the fundamental questions of "healing and settling" he did not believe it was he himself who was speaking to the nation, but it was God speaking through him. His attitude to his Parliaments and his public utterances breathe the spirit of the prophetic "Thus saith the Lord": it was not a denial of the Independents' principles of democracy, but a development of their contention that all government should be theocratic and therefore prophetic—it was to be a public ministry exercised on behalf of the whole nation.<sup>512</sup>

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510. Howell, *Cromwell*, 175.

511. Fraser, *Cromwell, The Lord Protector*, 424.

512. Paul, *The Lord Protector*, 274.



Initially, Cromwell hoped to share his prophetic mission with the Nominated Assembly (nicknamed “Barebones Parliament”) selected from the congregations of the “gathered churches.” His commission to it on July 4, 1653, was not a political speech, but had the ring of a charge at the collective Ordination of the Assembly members. The great general had {191} pastored a “fighting church,” and now the Protector was calling his “political church” into service. As with the Rump, the 150 members could not claim to be representative of the nation at large, and in terms of political policy they reflected the very same split seen developing between rival factions on the Council of Officers. Nonetheless, the Nominated Assembly proceeded, in a businesslike way, working through committees, but its program designed to usher in the millennium sent spasms of horror throughout England. Some of its “shocking” legislation was to legalize civil marriages, regulate the registration of births and deaths, probate of wills, provide relief to the poor, humane care for the insane; the repeal of laws calling for the execution of pickpockets, horse thieves, and the like after the first offense, and to end the relatively less humane methods of execution, such as burning at the stake and pressing to death. The “Barebones” brought calamity about its ears when it answered the mandate for law reform by voting to eliminate the Chancery, and the need for an equitable religious settlement by voting to abolish tithes. To avert national chaos, Cromwell dissolved the Nominated Assembly a scant six months after it had begun. The influence of Major-General Thomas Harrison, and the Fifth Monarchists, who advocated civil reform based on biblical patterns, faded with the demise of the “rule of the saints”—a sad passing for Cromwell and those who had hoped to see the kingdom of God established on earth in that culminating year.

The complexion of the Protectorate years took a different turn with advisor John Lambert leading the way of the Council of Officers for a professional atmosphere. It was perhaps rendered necessary, since the repeated purges of Parliament and army had lost enthusiasts of many persuasions along the way. There was a pressing need to get on with the business of government, where Cromwell now likened himself to a constable of peace between warring factions. It is astonishing that in four years, 1654–1658, most of the farsighted and enduring foreign policy measures took place. The standing, professional New Model

Army, with an evangelist at the helm of state, made the upstart nation impossible to ignore. Spain had been among the first to recognize the Commonwealth. Taken as a whole, the concentrated thrust of Cromwell's foreign policy was to expand English trade and export Protestant evangelism. This overview was translated into an action plan called the Western Design. Despite the on-going naval war with the Dutch over trade supremacy, Cromwell envisioned a multinational Protestant union under the leadership of England. To the relief of Holland, it never materialized, yet because of the Protectorate's aggressive trade policies, it was commercially subordinated to England, anyway. The Protectorate's unwillingness to strike bargains or resort to courtly intrigue won uncompromising respect from diplomats and the nations they represented. The Western Design was linked with {192} the objectives of the East India Company, and plans for global domination were initiated. As contemporaries said, "Cromwell gave the Lion tooth and claw." The attacks on the Spanish monopoly of the Americas eventually resulted, for example, in the acquisition of Jamaica, whose colonization played a central role in England's trade with its developing colonies. Origins of the British Empire are solidly rooted in the Protectorate years. Christopher Hill reflects:

But for good or ill, England's world position was transformed out of all recognition ... was changed from an agricultural island to a world power that was chiefly industrial and commercial.... Ignored before by most countries, during the time between 1654–58 all countries and interests were courting Cromwell.<sup>513</sup>

The first Protectorate Parliament convened on Cromwell's favorite date; "September 3," 1654. Under the "Instrument of Government," Oliver was installed as the Lord Protector. New faces were ascending, as the revolutionaries receded from view. Cromwell's most valuable advisor at the time was John Thurloe, who developed an effective intelligence system designed to monitor not only foreign governments, but the local population as well. Plots were uncovered involving disgruntled republicans, army men, and royalists. A drastically unpopular program was installed under the major-generals, which had the effect of placing the entire nation under guard by regional military directors.

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513. Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman* (New York: Dial Press, 1970), 165.

Until this measure, the basic military nature of the regime had not been so widely evident. At the same time, Puritan manners and habits were forced on all Englishmen by ordinance. It was the seemingly inconsequential interference with the “simple pleasures” of unbelievers that brought home the implications of the Puritan revolution to these people far more than the loss of their king.

With Cromwell’s dissolution of the First Protectorate Parliament, the second and last Protectorate Parliament was called in 1657. It presented a replacement for the Instrument of Government in the “Humble Petition and Advise,” which reinstated many of the old forms of government, such as the House of Lords, and the hereditary principle of succession. Cromwell had been made a king in everything but name. He was offered the crown and refused it.

Cromwell attained a stature from which he could not only stretch out his hands toward the crown, so long the supreme symbol of authority in England, but also, in final triumph, reject it and still retain his power.<sup>514</sup>

Prematurely old and sick with kidney stones, malaria from the campaign in Ireland, and respiratory ailments from the campaign in Scotland, {193} Oliver Cromwell was taken in death on September 3, 1658, during the worst gale ever recorded in England. Mourners noted the date and pondered the providence of God.

### *Conclusion*

Only a strong man with the prestige of Oliver Cromwell could have maintained order after his death, and his son, Richard, was hopelessly unsuited to the task. In 1660, King Charles II returned to England, serenaded by the fatuous cheers of his subjects. Yet, in only a few years, people were hearkening back sentimentally to “those Oliveran days of liberty.” Even London’s plague and fire of 1665–66 were muttered to be God’s judgment on Charles II’s England. English diplomats complained that they were treated differently by foreign countries while representing Charles II than they were when representing Cromwell, and the ambassador of the Netherlands “told Charles II to his face that, of course his country treated him differently from the Protector, for

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514. Fraser, *Cromwell, the Lord Protector*, 705.

‘Cromwell was a great man who made himself feared by land and sea.’<sup>515</sup> In retrospect, it is easy to see that the return of the monarchy was of little consequence in history. Parliaments were destined to rule England, representing the middle class, with its commercial and industrial interests. Its emulation of Cromwell’s emphasis on aggressive world trade coupled with a worldwide outreach of Protestant evangelism caused England to enjoy her greatest moments. Cromwell, the Englishman, would appreciate that. But Cromwell was, first and foremost, a Puritan, and the full assessment of the cause he served cannot be contained within the boundaries of English history. The revolutionaries knew that in order to establish God’s kingdom in England through Independency, they must tear out the “Root and Branch” of institutions contrary to that end. This, they found, was impossible to do. If Cromwell resembles a displaced American it is because Independency—Puritanism—IS the Root and Branch of America. Efforts to eliminate America’s Root and Branch were to prove equally difficult to others. It was no accident that the tiny American colonies watched with prayerful interest the Cromwellian era in England. Many Puritans and republicans emigrated to the colonies during the 1660s and strengthened the atmosphere of intellectual and practical curiosity and freedom that remains a Puritan legacy. It matters little, really, that the cause of Puritanism was short-circuited by pietism and a 250-year love affair with secular humanism. The fact remains that Puritanism is not a historical curiosity or a fallen blossom of the English Reformation. For, in its essence, the Puritan movement was, and is, a living expression of faith in the sovereignty of God over all areas of human endeavor. Oliver Cromwell was one man, {194} called of God, and confessing Jesus Christ as Saviour, who dared to strive for his Savior’s kingdom on earth, whether on the battlefield or as chief-of-state. While historians mark the Cromwellian period as the dawn of the modern era, the full implications of the Puritan dream of a Holy Commonwealth built on biblical laws of justice and love have not been realized. Yet if a Christian movement were to arise in our time with the courage and vision to advance Christ’s kingdom on earth, no doubt God would send a Cromwell to lead it—and the world again would tremble. Per-

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515. Hill, *God’s Englishman*, 254.

haps that is why Major-General Thomas Harrison, the Fifth Monarchist ridiculed by contemporaries and historians, may have had the last word on all of us when, from the scaffold, he answered the jeering crowd:

Wait upon the Lord, for you know not what the Lord is leading to, and what the end of the Lord will be.... Though we may suffer hard things, yet He hath a gracious end, and will make for His own glory and the good end of His people.<sup>516</sup>

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516. *Ibid.*, 248.

3.  
CHRISTIAN  
RECONSTRUCTION

# INTRODUCTION TO WILLIAM SYMINGTON'S *MESSIAH THE PRINCE*

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*James B. Jordan*

William Symington was born in Paisley, Scotland, in 1795, and died in 1879. A descendent of the persecuted Covenanters, he was born into and reared in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, which he served all his life. The book from which this selection is taken, *Messiah the Prince*, was written during his ministry at the church in Stranraer, and was first published in 1839. In that year Symington moved to a pastorate in Glasgow, where he served until called to the Chair of Systematic Theology at the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, also in Glasgow.

*Messiah the Prince, or The Mediatoral Dominion of Jesus Christ* stands squarely in the Scottish theological tradition of affirming that the church is a kingdom of grace, and the state a kingdom of nature. Traditional theology had always maintained that Christ is King of both institutions by virtue of creation and of His essential Godhood, but that He is King of the church also by virtue of His redemptive work, having been enthroned as “mediatorial” King upon His ascension, when He sat down at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:13). Symington went further and asserted that Christ is mediatorial King also of the nations, thus bringing the state and all of society under the specifically redemptive sceptre of Christ. This concept is defended at length in *Messiah the Prince*.

Christ being King of the state as well as of church—no new idea for any Scottish Covenanter, though newly strengthened by Symington’s work—clearly the nations are not free to invent their own laws, but must submit to those of Christ. We take up Symington’s discussion at this point. {195}

**MESSIAH THE PRINCE, OR  
THE MEDIATORIAL DOMINION OF JESUS CHRIST**

*William Symington, D.D.*

*The Nations*

It is the duty of nations, as the subjects of Christ, to take his law as their rule. They are apt to think it enough that they take, as their standard of legislation and administration, human reason, natural conscience, public opinion, or political expediency. None of these, however, nor indeed all of them together, can supply a sufficient guide in affairs of state. Of course, heathen nations, who are not in possession of the revealed will of God, must be regulated by the law of nature: but this is no good reason why those who have a revelation of the divine will should be restricted to the use of a more imperfect rule. It is absurd to contend that, because civil society is founded in nature, men are to be guided, in directing its affairs and consulting its interests, solely by the light of nature. Might not the same be said with as much propriety, of many other relations of human life, such as parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants—the duties of which we never think of exempting from the control of a preternatural revelation? Nay, might it not, with equal propriety, be maintained, as was formerly hinted, that as certain religious duties, such as prayer and praise, are founded in nature, we are in the performance of them to have no respect either to the authority or directions of the Holy Scriptures? The truth is, that revelation is given to man to supply the imperfections of the law of nature; and to restrict ourselves to the latter, and renounce the former, in any case in which it is competent to guide us, is at once to condemn God's gift and to defeat the end for which it was given. We contend, then, that the Bible is to be our rule, not only in matters of a purely religious nature, in matters connected with conscience and the worship of God, but in matters of a civil or political nature. To say that in such matters we have nothing to do with the Bible, is to maintain what is manifestly untenable. To require nations, who possess the sacred volume, to confine themselves, in their political affairs, to the dim light of nature, is not less absurd than it would be to require men,



when the sun is in the heavens, to shut out its full blaze and go about their ordinary duties by the feeble rays of a taper. Indeed, if nations are moral {197} subjects, they are bound to regulate their conduct by whatever laws their moral Governor has been pleased to give them; and as they are the subjects of the Mediator, they must be under the law of the Mediator as contained in the scriptures. He has not placed his moral subjects in ignorance of his will, nor left them to search for it amid the obscurities and imperfections of a law which sin has effaced and well nigh obliterated. In the Holy Scriptures of truth, he has given them a fairer and more complete exhibition of the principles of immutable and eternal justice, than that which is to be found in the law of nature.

We have only to look into the volume of revelation itself, to have these reasonings confirmed. The people of Israel were instructed to regulate their national concerns by a revealed standard, and were taught to regard the possession of God's revealed statutes and judgments as a national distinction for which they were bound to be grateful. Nor is there anything said which would warrant us to conclude that this was to be regarded as peculiar to that people. "Behold," says Moses, "I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it: keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations. And what nation is so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?" (Deut. 4:5-6, 8). In strict conformity with this, the chief magistrate was to have a copy of the law, according to which he should act in the discharge of his official duties. "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel" (Deut. 17:18-20). The same principle is illustrated in the instructions given to the rulers, judges and kings of Israel. To Joshua it was said, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt

meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Josh. 1:8). When the days of David drew nigh that he should die, he charged Solomon, his successor on the throne: “Be thou strong and shew thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself” (1 Kings 2:1–3). {198}

We wait not to quote those passages, in which nations and their rulers are encouraged to obey the law of God by the promise of suitable rewards; are cautioned against disobedience by appropriate threats; and are spoken of as actually punished for their transgression of this rule. What has been already adduced is sufficient to shew that the Jews, at least, were bound to regulate their national concerns by the revealed will of Jehovah: and the inference from this is neither obscure nor illegitimate, that nations, like them in possession of revealed truth, are still bound to take it as their supreme rule, standard, and guide, in all their civil affairs. Neither do we wait to inquire what parts of the judicial law given to the Jews are binding upon Christian states. We build at present upon the broad and undeniable *fact* that nations as such, and civil magistrates in their official capacity, when the matter of revelation was less extensive than it is now, were bound to make it their rule of duty; and from this we deduce the natural and reasonable inference, that civil communities blessed by God with the perfect revelation of his will, are under obligation, at all times, to shape and model their political conduct by the dictates of this infallible standard. The principle on which they were at any time bound to do so being a moral principle, they must be held bound to do the same at all times: what is moral is neither of local nor of temporary obligation. If nations are not bound by the Word of God, they are not responsible or punishable for acting contrary to it, but may, at pleasure, revel with impunity in the violation of every branch of revealed truth—a degree of licentious indulgence which, however agreeable to the taste of the infidel, cannot fail to shock the mind of every Christian.

When we look into the New Testament, we find even in it many things respecting the nature, origin, and ends of civil government; the qualifications, duties, and claims of civil rulers; and the obligations of subjects towards magistrates, both supreme and subordinate. For what purpose, we ask, are these placed in the sacred volume? Surely not to be overlooked, but to be read, pondered, and obeyed. They are certainly designed to be of use; but this they cannot be, if nations as such, and men in their civil capacity, are not under their authority as parts of revealed truth. When, therefore, we find civil rulers, kings and judges, commanded to *be wise* and to *be instructed*, must we not understand them as required to go to the Bible for the instruction they need, and to extract from this sacred repository their lessons of political wisdom? It thus appears satisfactorily established, that nations are under the obligation of the revealed will of Christ in general, and bound to regulate their transactions by it, in as far as it contains what is applicable to such, whether in the form of principle, precept, or example.

And if this is the case with regard to revelation as a whole, it will not be denied to be so with regard to the moral law in particular. Nations, as {199} such, are under the obligation of the moral law; they are bound to regulate their affairs by the principles and precepts of the decalogue. Every precept of that law they are bound to obey. It is, we are aware, maintained that only the precepts of the second table are obligatory on civil communities. As an individual standing in a particular relation and circumstances is not under obligation to obey those parts of revelation which have respect to persons placed in other relations and circumstances, so it is contended that nations are only under the obligation of such parts of the moral law as can be shewn to apply to them. We frankly admit the fairness of this reasoning. But then we are prepared to maintain that every part of the moral law is applicable to nations. If nations in their national capacity, and magistrates in their official character, are admitted to be moral subjects, it will not be easy to shew that they are exempt from the obligation of any part of the moral law. If it could be shewn that there are some requirements in that law which nations are incompetent to fulfil, it would follow, of course, that from these they are exempted. If, however, it can be shewn that nations are capable of obeying every precept—those of the first as well as those of the second table—it will be difficult to persuade an

unprejudiced mind that they are free from the obligation of any one of them. With regard to the second table, there is, of course, no dispute; yet the last precept of this department reaches farther than many of those who contend against all national religion can consistently go; it respects the state of the heart. But it may easily be shewn, that nations are as capable of obeying the precepts of the first as those of the second table. How is it, we ask, that nations can obey even the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments, but just by passing laws obligating men to perform their respective relative duties; by protecting the life and property of individuals; by discouraging licentiousness; and by promoting truth between man and man, by the sanctity of an oath? And may they not, in like manner, manifest their obedience to the first, second, third, and fourth precepts, by embodying into their constitution an acknowledgment of the being and character of the one living and true God; by providing for the ordinances of divine worship being maintained and observed in the land; by enacting laws calculated to restrain all blasphemous abuse of God's sacred name; and by making provision for the sanctification of the Sabbath? And if nations are thus capable of obeying the whole moral law, who will contend that they are not under obligation so to do? We allow that the Scriptures of truth are necessary to guide them in yielding this obedience: but is not this true of the one table as much as of the other? The kingdoms of the world require, indeed, much direction from the Word of God, in performing the solemn and delicate duties obligatory upon them by the first table of the moral law: but do they require no such direction with regard to those of the second? They do. The law of marriage belongs to the {200} fifth precept; but how, without having recourse to other portions of the Scriptures, can any Christian nation legislate against polygamy? The law of murder is founded on the sixth; and how, without betaking to some other part of revealed truth, can it be shewn that the murderer should be punished with death? It thus appears that nations, as such, are bound to recognise the obligation of the Word of God as a whole; to make it their rule in all their transactions, and their standard of appeal in all circumstances; and, in this way, to shew their dutiful subjection to that divine Mediator, who is at once the author of revelation, and the Governor among the nations.

# PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

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Volume 7 (1980) of the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* will feature symposiums on “Inflation” and “Evangelism.” Manuscripts dealing with either topic are now being reviewed for publication. Anyone wishing to submit a manuscript for consideration would be wise to clear the topic in advance with the editor. Manuscripts should be between 20 and 40 pages in length, typewritten and double-spaced. A *Manuscript Style Sheet* for the *Journal* is available from the editor or directly from Chalcedon. It is imperative that each writer consult this style sheet before submitting a final draft of any manuscript. If accepted, the *Journal* will pay the author \$75 upon publication. Shorter manuscripts (under 15 pages) receive \$35. Book reviews (5–10 pages) receive \$10; books dealing with the symposium’s topic are preferred. Suggestions concerning the reprinting of important documents or published articles, if accepted, are worth \$20, if accompanied by a clear photocopy of the recommended piece.

Manuscripts suitable for publication in the sections on “Christian Reconstruction” and “Defenders of the Faith” are always given careful consideration, as are suggestions for reprinting. Again, it is wise to clear the topic in advance with the editor. Summaries of dissertations are acceptable.

## *Deadlines:*

INFLATION February 15, 1980

EVANGELISM August 15, 1980

## *Contact:*

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# THE MINISTRY OF CHALCEDON

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Chalcedon [kalSEEdon] is a Christian educational organization devoted exclusively to research, publishing, and cogent communication of a distinctly Christian scholarship to the world at large. It makes available a variety of services and programs, all geared to the needs of interested laymen who understand the propositions that Jesus Christ speaks to the mind as well as the heart, and that His claims extend beyond the narrow confines of the various institutional churches. We exist in order to support the efforts of all orthodox denominations and churches.

Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition: “Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man....” This formula challenges directly every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; Christ alone can announce that “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the one who is the source of true human freedom (Galatians 5:1).

Christians have generally given up two crucial features of theology that in the past led to the creation of what we know as Western civilization. They no longer have any real optimism concerning the possibility of an earthly victory of Christian principles and Christian institutions, and they have also abandoned the means of such a victory in external human affairs: a distinctly biblical concept of law. The testimony of the Bible and Western history should be clear: when God’s people have been confident about the ultimate earthly success of their religion and committed socially to God’s revealed system of external law, they have been victorious. When either aspect of their faith has declined, they have lost ground. Without optimism, they lose their zeal to exercise dominion over God’s creation

(Genesis 1:28); without revealed law, they are left without guidance and drift along with the standards of their day.

Once Christians invented the university; now they retreat into little Bible colleges or sports factories. Once they built hospitals throughout Europe and America; now the civil governments have taken them over. Once Christians were inspired by “Onward, Christian Soldiers”; now they see themselves as “poor wayfaring strangers” with “joy, joy, joy, joy down in their hearts” only on Sundays and perhaps Wednesday evenings. They are, in a word, pathetic. Unquestionably, they have become culturally impotent.

Chalcedon is committed to the idea of Christian reconstruction. It is premised on the belief that ideas have consequences. It takes seriously the words of Professor F. A. Hayek: “It may well be true that we as scholars tend to overestimate the influence which we can exercise on contemporary affairs. But I doubt whether it is possible to overestimate the influence which ideas have in the long run.” If Christians are to reconquer lost ground in preparation for ultimate victory (Isaiah 2, 65, 66), they must rediscover their intellectual heritage. They must come to grips with the Bible’s warning and its promise: “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18). Chalcedon’s resources are being used to remind Christians of this basic truth: what men believe makes a difference. Therefore, men should not believe lies, for it is the truth that sets them free (John 8:32).

*Finis*