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Symposium on
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Symposium on Puritanism and Society

Gary North, Editor

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THE JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION

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

Gary North

Historians over the last half century have rediscovered the Puritan movement. *Puritan studies* today is a recognized subsection of historical research, in a way that “Pilgrim studies” is not, or that “Quaker studies” is not. The new-found respect paid to the Puritan movement is a welcome antidote to the hostility of historians like Vernon L. Parrington, whose late-nineteenth-century brand of rationalism blinded them to the importance and impact of Puritans in British and colonial U.S. history.

A legitimate question is this: If the Puritans had such a great impact on the English-speaking world, was this impact only coincidental with their world-and-life view? In other words, was their historical impact related in some meaningful way with their conception of what their earthly responsibilities were? Was their impact in history something essentially random, something which could not have been predicted by someone familiar with their theology and their world-and-life view, or was their impact predictable? Could someone looking at the sermons, diaries, treatises, pamphlets, and other Puritan literature be able to say, with confidence, that if there were enough of these people within a culture, then that culture would be influenced substantially in particular ways? And would those ways be strictly internal and familial—reduced local crime, perhaps, or fewer divorces—or would that impact be far more broad culturally, such as improved scientific research, more investment per capita, greater economic growth, more universities, increased literacy, improved military tactics, better agriculture, more charity, improved cleanliness, and so forth?

There are those within the modern or neo-Puritan movement who would seem to prefer to believe that the enormous historical impact Puritanism had on the English-speaking world was essentially random, unpredictable, and unrelated to the Puritans’ vision of God, man, law,

society, and the future. They are willing to admit that Puritan theology and personal ethics were beneficial for the communities in which Puritans lived, because Puritans were such good neighbors. They didn't get drunk, have wild parties, beat their wives, declare bankruptcy, or work as burglars. They were nice folks, though somewhat stern. They preached about the God of the Bible, of course, and this is understood by neo-Puritans as being very important, but primarily for its own sake, not for the sake of social transformation. This is the "nice neighbors" interpretation of Puritanism. {2}

The problem with the "nice neighbors" interpretation of Puritanism is that it can provide no meaningful explanation of how Puritans reshaped the English-speaking world, especially in the North American wilderness. Neo-Puritans are aware of Cromwell and the New Model Army, and John Winthrop's holy commonwealth idea, but they are unwilling or unable to explain how such crucial historical movements grew out of Puritan theology, with its "nice, but stern neighbor" vision of the Christian's earthly responsibilities. How did a theology of "nice neighborism" lead to a movement which literally changed the face of Western culture?

If we view Puritanism in terms of the "Puritanism of the sanctuary" emphasis of the "reprinting neo-Puritans," then Puritanism as a social movement is simply unexplainable except in terms of "deviations" from a hypothetical "properly restricted" world-and-life view that Puritans unfortunately neglected to adopt. These supposed deviations from Christian men's legitimate and proper concerns—deviations like politics, economics, military strategy, scientific advance, jurisprudence—"infected" early Puritanism so completely that Puritanism became something far different from what any fair-minded observer could have predicted if he had contented himself with listening to "truly representative" Puritan sermons or reading them in inexpensive reprints. The problem for "reprinting neo-Puritans" is to provide an explanation for this widespread, almost universal "infection." Why did these "deviations" take place? Why did "nice neighborism" become "Christian reconstructionism" within the various Puritan movements of the seventeenth century? Why, in fact, is it so difficult to find evidence of Puritan "nice neighborism" that remained nothing more than "nice neighborism" throughout the seventeenth century? Was there some-

thing about Puritan theology, especially in the crucial areas of eschatology and law, that led to “Christian reconstructionism,” and which militated against any self-imposed limitation of the kingdom idea to the realm of church, family, and (at most) local community? And if there *was* something about Puritan theology and Puritanism’s world-and-life view which was so easily “infected” with visions of a universal kingdom of God, in time and on earth, was this “something” itself fundamentally deviant theologically—a grotesque error of interpretation which was not really basic to “true” Puritanism, and which we can eliminate from our neo-Puritan reconstruction of the Puritan heritage without in any way destroying key aspects of that heritage? If the “reprinting neo-Puritans” do not get these questions answered quickly, comprehensively, and convincingly, then they will find that this undefined, unexplained “something” reappears, and those who are today reading the reprints are very likely to become “infected” with the old Puritan vision of an advancing kingdom. They are likely to abandon the “reprinting neo-Puritan” theology of “nice neighborism” and adopt something more potent socially, politically, and economically. The reprints, {3} despite their highly selective nature—the products of the highly selective editors in charge of reprinting—are likely to produce results startlingly different from those intended by the advocates of theological “nice neighborism.”

New England Puritans built a society in the wilderness. They did so, as well as they could, in terms of the Puritan heritage they brought from England. They unquestionably were concerned about evangelism, especially among their own children and servants who lived in their households. They were concerned about their families, and about the Bible’s requirements for the family. They were concerned about life and death, sex and marriage, music and church polity, economics and politics. They were concerned, in short, with *society*, for they saw society as the arena of conflict between two kingdoms—the kingdom of God and the rebellious kingdom of Satan. They believed that the war between the two kingdoms begins in the heart of each man, and extends outward into every nook and cranny of society. Where men are, there is a battlefield, they believed. They also believed that God is sovereign by right in every one of these nooks and crannies, that He demands full obedience, and that He expects His people to work, in time and on

earth, to see to it that the power of Satan is swept clean, from every nook and from every cranny.

The heart of the Puritan movement was a concept of a “clean sweep.” They were not perfectionists. They rejected the idea that sinful men could, in fact, ever expect to accomplish a perfectly clean sweep of Satan’s kingdom, any more than a sane woman ever expects to get her home completely free of dust and dirt, especially where there is a family growing up. But at the same time, they knew that God’s ideal is an ethical clean sweep, and that it is the task of Christians to keep at those brooms (or vacuum cleaners) daily, doing all they can to get the society swept. The ideal of the clean sweep is a perpetual one, the Puritans declared, which is *why* they were called Puritans. They wanted purity, not just in the church, but in the kingdom—a kingdom that encompassed far more than the heart, the family, and the institutional church.

Today’s “reprinting neo-Puritans” are content to concentrate their efforts on the heart, family, and institutional church. They think that anything more than this is unbiblical, since it requires too many brooms and too many sweepers. Today’s tiny band of hearty sweepers have all they think they can handle with the nooks and crannies of their homes and congregations. If they were assigned more than these little tasks by God, they would simply have to admit defeat. After all, they argue, enough is enough, and too much is, well, just too much. They have enough to worry about without having to examine God’s ideal for a godly society.

The trouble is, people from outside the sanctuary keep tracking in the filth and dirt from the society at large. Our homes keep getting dusty. The {4} corruption of the society at large does not recognize the sanctity of the heart, home, and congregation. The muck gets tramped in daily. Television, entertainment, books, the evening news, school (especially government schooling), and every other corrupt institution outside the narrow confines of the neo-Puritan cloister keep tracking in the filth of Satan’s kingdom. While the “reprinting neo-Puritans” may be able to rationalize the presence of filth all around them—it’s neutral filth, perhaps, or inevitable filth, or even martyr-uplifting filth which improves Christian character by teaching us what cleanliness is by contrast—those of us who have taken seriously the Puritans’ call for a clean sweep are not content to see our homes and churches and

nation buried in the stuff. Predictably, when we issue a call to other Christians to clean up this filth, *root and branch* (to coin a phrase), a goodly number of embarrassed reprinters start publishing critical comments about “taking on tasks that were never assigned to us,” or “concerning ourselves with problems that are better left to God,” or “trying to impose a standard of cleanliness that was limited to the Old Testament,” or arguing that, really, “there are no permanent standards of cleanliness outside the institutional church,” or wailing about the “shortage of brooms.” After all, if we overload ourselves by trying to sweep clean some of the filth outside our little homes and tiny churches, we will not have the strength or capital left to get the nooks and crannies clean in our homes and churches. God, after all, no longer promises to send us more sweepers (converts) and brooms (capital) in response to our determined effort to sweep the streets and alleys, highways, byways. He did in Old Testament times, perhaps, or at least He said He would (knowing full well that nobody back then would try, since the task is just simply impossible, and anyway Israel was a pretty small nation), but He never promised such increases to His church, the body of Christ, His bride. All He wants from His bride today is a nice clean home and nice polished pews.

What we find, then, is that the majority of so-called “five-point” Calvinists today have adopted a sixth point: *limited sanctification*. They say they believe in *definitive* sanctification, renewal of the heart. God justifies sinners objectively by imputation, and sanctifies them subjectively by imparting righteousness to them, giving them new hearts which should issue in new lives. This *progressive* sanctification is, however, limited, because men’s assignments, as individuals, are limited to only a few concerns. People are to work out their own salvations—salvations that are theirs (Phil. 2:12)—with fear and trembling, but in order for them not to be too fearful or too trembling, God has supposedly announced that sanctification is limited to their hearts, homes, local churches, and their own personal occupations. God’s definitive sanctification of individuals is *in practice* limited, for the working out of this sanctification is limited—*limited in scope*. God’s definitive sanctification is perfect, but limited in scope, for {5} the zones of personal responsibility of each Christian are limited in scope. We stop “sweeping” at the door of the institutional church. We stop working out the

implications of our faith. But how can this be? If we are sanctified definitively—renewed by God’s perfect grace—then how can we stop growing, stop sweeping, stop working out the implications of our faith, and still be alive and well on planet earth?

If we stop working out the principles of God’s kingdom, then one of two things must be true. *First*, we have put a self-imposed limit on our *progressive* sanctification—the outworking of our faith—and we are therefore in sin, denying the comprehensive claims of God’s law on our every thought and action. *Second*, we are perfectly justified in our definition of His perfect but limited sanctification, for that perfect sanctification is limited in scope by God. We may have been definitively sanctified by the impartation of Christ’s perfection, by His grace, into our lives, but since that perfect sanctification does not involve extending His principles of life into every sphere of our existence, we are “off the hook.” God has deliberately limited the extent of definitive sanctification. Christ died for our sins—sins being limited to heart, home, and institutional church—and beyond these narrow spheres there is neither sin nor good, neither right nor wrong, neither God’s kingdom nor Satan’s kingdom, neither hot nor cold, neither light nor darkness. Everything beyond heart, home, and congregation is therefore *adiaphora*: things irrelevant to the faith. Definitive sanctification does not extend to them, and therefore our personal efforts at progressive sanctification (through God’s continuing grace, of course: Eph. 2:10) need not extend to them. In short, *Christ’s salvation is limited in scope*. He wants a clean sweep, but one limited in scope. Get those nooks and crannies of the congregation all shiny, get that spiritual Lysol into your heart, and keep the wedding bands free of tarnish, and you have done your job, in time and on earth. Why, a man hardly has time to read a book as fat as William Gurnall’s *Christian in Complete Armor*, let alone apply it in his life, and as it is, the book limits itself to heart and hearth. So busy was Gurnall in scrubbing down a few valves of his heart that he neglected questions even of church polity, maintaining his comfortable pulpit by signing the Act of Uniformity in 1662, while two thousand Puritan ministers were ejected from their churches for refusing to sign. The heart encompasses far more than full-time scrubbers of “spiritual aortas only” dare to imagine. They may think they have everything nicely scrubbed, only because they refuse to recognize that *the heart of*

man covers the whole world, for man is responsible for covering the whole world (Gen. 1:28). (And speaking of the Act of Uniformity, isn't it interesting that one "shining light" of the "reprinting neo-Puritan" camp figuratively signs his own personal Act of Uniformity—ordination in the neo-orthodox Presbyterian Church of the U.S.—every year, despite the fact that he owes {6} his income primarily to tithing members of the conservative Presbyterian Church in America who support the seminary which employs him, and despite the fact that he has journeyed to churches within that neo-orthodox denomination to warn them against allying themselves with the "schismatic" P.C.A., whose members now support him? Gurnall's spirit lives! Unfortunately.)

We see today a conflict between the "heart and hearth" Puritans and the "root and branch" Puritans, between the "nice neighbor" Puritans and the "Christian reconstruction" Puritans, between Puritanism of the sanctuary and Puritanism of the kingdom. The "nice neighbor" Puritans resent the implication that there might be more to biblical responsibility than keeping your lawn mowed and not raping your neighbor's daughter. What bothers them is the thought that Christians should work for political change that would lead to the passage of legislation that would make it a *capital crime* to rape your neighbor's daughter. (The Social Gospel advocates, on the other hand, are more concerned about passing a law seeing to it that everyone's lawn is mowed, to be enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency and the local zoning commission.) And for those, like Jon Zens, who have become neo-Anabaptists, the most appalling thought of all is that the civil government might pass the death penalty for *any* crime at all by using the name of Christ and God's law. (What he thinks about capital punishment in the name of neutral natural law, or undefined civil equity, is not clear, but since his *Baptist Reformation Review* devotes at least one article per issue to whipping the most recent issue of the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, we can expect to be illuminated soon, assuming the *BRR* does not go bankrupt, something the editors have threatened [teased?] us with recently.)

Since some neo-Puritan critics of the *Journal's* interpretation of Puritanism have implied that we do not really have much respect for evangelism and traditional preaching, we are publishing an article by **Allen C. Guelzo** on Puritan sermons. Men of this century take it for granted

that weekly sermons are always available. Not so in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sometimes as few as one out of twenty ministers (priests) in a region actually preached, and then not very well. The sermon was the single most important source of information about current events in those years, so the British monarchy took special pains to see to it that only the “right” sort of person entered a pulpit. Better an empty pulpit than a Puritan one, the rulers concluded. People wanted two- and three-hour sermons. They wanted spiritual meat. They were willing to go to great expense and risk to get such sermons. The heart of the Puritan movement, Guelzo concludes, was its commitment to the preaching ministry. It took very special men to fill the Puritan pulpits, and he shows what sort of men they were, and what kind of sermons they preached. {7}

What about Cromwell and the Protectorate? Jon Zens has criticized Cromwell’s heritage in the name of neo-Anabaptism. David Chilton provides a line-by-line consideration of the charges against Cromwell made by Zens. Concludes Chilton: Cromwell was a man of action, a man of principle, and a man trying to bring order into the chaos of religious and political life in mid-seventeenth-century England. Chilton points out the weaknesses of the historical sources Mr. Zens has used to make his case against Cromwell. He also presses Zens (and, by implication, both of Mr. Zens’s cheering fans) to make clear his position about what the civil government is to do, by what law-structure it is to accomplish its goals, and the relationship between a legitimate law-order and the revealed word of God. What are the criteria, in short, for a legitimate law-order, and by contrast, for illegitimate law-orders? Are these criteria biblical? If not, why not? If so, prove it.

We are reprinting **Richard Flinn’s** essay on the Puritan family. Unquestionably, the family was a key institution for Puritans. What did they think its tasks are? What kind of family did they advocate? How did the family fit into the overall life of the Puritan holy commonwealth? Flinn provides some preliminary answers.

Rita Mancha then asks, “What was the role of women in Puritan thought?” She traces the Puritans’ outlook from Calvin to Jonathan Edwards. Women are functionally subordinate, but not inferior ethically, in the writings of the Puritans. Some of them believed that women’s minds are incapable of grappling with theology, unlike

Calvin's opinion, but there was no attempt to "lord it over" women, nor to deny them their rights. But the central social goal of Puritanism of the seventeenth century was order—ecclesiastical, social, political, and familial—and order implies hierarchy. Women had a subordinate place in church order and in the family. To deny this order, they believed, is to threaten the very fabric of Christian society. (Her comments on *Mrs. Jonathan Edwards* and "enthusiasm" are also revealing.)

Edmund S. Morgan shows the problems faced by Puritan magistrates when sex and marriage were separated. They were zealous in defending the conjugal rights of married partners. They were not prudes. They were realists. He shows that they faced grave problems with large numbers of unmarried servants in their midst, as well as immigrant men who had left their wives in England. They rarely enforced the law against adultery with death, although it was on the books as a capital crime. They did enforce the death penalty against sexual perverts, however.

James B. Jordan reviews a classic book by Percy Scholes, *The Puritans and Music in England and New England* (1969). The book shows how musically inclined the Puritans were. The article provides a fine antidote to the myth, proclaimed as recently as the summer of 1979 by entertainer, {8} linguist, and actors' union president Theodore Bikel, that "This nation doesn't support the arts as much as many poorer nations do. Maybe that's because this country derives its culture from the Puritans, who not only did not have any art in their lives but who were openly hostile to art." Bikel was complaining of the 75 percent unemployment rate in his union, and instead of abolishing the union's prohibition on non-union performers selling their services at free-market (non-union) wages, he called for more federal aid to the arts. Who gets the blame for unemployment? Above-market union-scale wages enforced by coercive government laws? Why no, the Puritans are to blame! Bikel may understand a dozen foreign languages, but he sure doesn't understand Puritan history and market competition.

Gordon Geddes discusses the Puritan view of death and dying. He shows that the Puritans removed some of the late-medieval views and rituals concerning death and dying, going further than the sixteenth-century Reformers did. In the medieval perspective, death was the central event after conversion. "The resurrection, the last judgment, and

the completion of the church were treated as appendages to these earlier events occurring for each soul,” namely, the soul’s meeting with God in judgment immediately after death. The early New England Puritans, because of their postmillennial views, saw the expansion of the church and the enlargement of the kingdom as a process equally as important as one’s face-to-face meeting with God after death. Only when that optimistic eschatology was abandoned at the end of the seventeenth century, did their focus of concern switch back to death. As Geddes writes: “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. Conversion, still conceived of as turning from death in sin to life in Christ, became less a realized eschatological event and more a necessary preparation for death.”

This late-seventeenth-century parallel development of inward-looking pietism and order-producing natural law was also important for economic policy. My essay concludes a study of the changes in economic thought within the New England Puritan movement, 1630–1720. Pietists grew weary of trying to come up with economic recommendations for the civil magistrates to enforce after the price control mania of King Philip’s War, 1675–76. The preachers still criticized the traditional economic evils, but they had fewer and fewer concrete suggestions about how the civil government, or {9} even individual businessmen, might avoid these moral evils. Simultaneously, their opposition to James II and his Governor, Sir Edmund Andros, led them to shift the terms of the traditional “jeremiad” sermons. Instead of blaming their economic troubles on the declining spiritual commitment of the children and the non-attenders, they began to blame the king’s army of bureaucrats, tax collectors, and customs officials. They appealed for a return to the “good old days,” not in the name of the old theology, but to the older conditions of free trade and lower taxes. Eco-

conomic problems were explained increasingly in terms of market processes and natural law, rather than in terms of personal exploitation and God's judgment on the colony for its spiritual decline. Thus, the combination of pietism and secularism, of pessimism concerning the applicability of the holy commonwealth principle and optimism concerning the beneficial results of unencumbered free trade, produced a new concept of economics. The old medievalism was abandoned. In its place was substituted something far closer to Adam Smith's "invisible hand." The effort to impose medieval economic categories in the name of biblical wisdom finally ceased, partially because the ministers grew weary of trying to fit medieval economic categories onto the real world of economic reality, and partially because of a growing awareness on the part of the public that economic freedom brings benefits and economic order, in contrast to the disorder and reduced income produced by bureaucrats employed by the king. They threw out the medieval bathwater and the postmillennial soap. They did not throw out the economic baby, because it had already reached adolescence. It might not smell very orthodox to the pastors, but it sure smelled a lot better than James II's legion of customs collectors.

Finally, we present **Greg Bahnsen's** reply to the review essay written by Meredith Kline. Those who had already begun the cheering from the grandstand when Kline's essay appeared in the *Westminster Theological Journal* will not be pleased by the results of the game: Bahnsen 40, Kline 2.¹ But at least it will provide another opportunity for Mr. Zens to get in a few shots, since he went to the expense of reprinting Kline's piece in a recent issue of *Baptist Reformation Review*.

We want to be fair. We offer Dr. Kline the right to reply to Dr. Bahnsen's piece. We did not make a verbal deal with Dr. Bahnsen, as the editor of the *Westminster Theological Journal* made with Dr. Kline, that no one will be allowed to publish a rebuttal to his essay. (That "sweetheart deal" worked to your benefit, because Dr. Bahnsen decided to publish his essay here, since the *WTJ* had to decline the opportunity.)

1. For the benefit of our foreign readers, in American football you can get two points in only one way: your opponent is caught behind his own goal line and is "sacked." In other words, the points come because your team has a good defense, and the other team's offense couldn't get going. Games are seldom won on the basis of good defense. Your opponent won't make that many mistakes.

1. PURITANISM AND SOCIETY

THE PURITAN PREACHING MINISTRY IN OLD AND NEW ENGLAND

Allen C. Guelzo

The Puritan preacher has not come down to the present generation as a figure cut for admiration or popularity or daring, and we have got most of our mental pictures of the Puritan ministry from things like Stephen Vincent Benet's poem on Cotton Mather. Benet's Mather was "always seeing witches, / Daylight, moonlight, / They buzzed about his head." This particular Puritan minister, claims Benet, "didn't die happy":

When he walked in the streets
Men looked the other way²

Nathaniel Hawthorne, that Puritan-haunted novelist, gave us another set of images: in "Young Goodman Brown," the minister is a "gray blasphemer" who secretly creeps off to unholy convocations;³ in *The Scarlet Letter*, the Rev. Dimmesdale is "a being who felt himself quite astray and at a loss in the pathway of human existence," too weak and ineffectual to own up to the gigantic hypocrisy which he is perpetrating.⁴ But the most potent set of images, one of the oldest, was created in 1663 by Samuel Butler in his mock-epic *Hudibras*. There, the Puritan preacher and soldier are combined to make an ogre who pounds "the pulpit, drum ecclesiastic":

He'd run in debt by Disputation,
And pay with Ratiocination ...

2. Stephen Vincent Benet, "Cotton Mather," in *Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benet*, vol. 1 (New York: Farrar & Rhinehart, Inc., 1942), 396-97.

3. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," in *Hawthorne's Short Stories*, ed. Newton Arvin (New York: Vintage Books, 1946), 179.

4. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1893), 78.

His ordinary Rate of Speech
 In loftiness of sound was rich,
 A Babylonish dialect,
 Which learned pedants much affect.

These were the sort of men, if we believe Butler, who

Compound for Sins they are inclin'd to
 By damning those they have no mind to.⁵ {11}

To a certain extent, the Puritan ministers themselves in both England and New England contributed not a little to those bad images. John Howe, for instance, preached for three hours at a stretch, with introductions so lengthy that one listener confessed that Howe was so long laying the table that the people had lost their appetite for the meal. On another occasion, the famous Richard Baxter preached a sermon so full of points, sub-points, and what not that he actually succeeded in getting all the way up to “sixty-fourthly...”⁶ Putting together the images of both fiction and fact, we almost come to the point of agreeing with Butler that the Puritans were

More peevish, cross, and splenetick,
 Than Dog distract, or Monkey sick.⁷

Almost—but not quite: because, alongside these images are others, and they can be put into a brief composite by the reaction Thomas Fuller received the day he preached for two hours, and, seeing he was still only in the midst of his development, offered to stop and give his hearers a chance to come back and hear the finish some other time. *But the people demanded he continue.* “Wonder not,” an observer concluded, “that hungry people crave more meat.”⁸ What we see here is that, for feeding hungry flocks, for a right proclamation of the gospel,

5. Samuel Butler, *Hudibras, First Part*, canto 3, in *The Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson and G. Bullough (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 588.

6. J. I. Packer, “An Introduction to the Puritans,” Pensacola Theological Institute Lecture, 1973.

7. Butler, 592.

8. Packer, “An Introduction to the Puritans.”

and for serious, painstaking effort in preaching, there has scarcely ever been a generation that excelled the Puritans, and that is an image which has the power to outweigh all of the others. But equally weighty is the image which the Puritan ministers had of themselves, for they saw the minister as

the Ambassador of the most high king unto his people, to declare unto them the whole counsel of God: Afterward rightly to divide the word of God to the people, as the only food of their souls ... a Prophet to speak in such sort that when the unbelievers and unlearned come in before him, they may be rebuked and judged, and so the secrets of the heart made manifest unto true repentance and faith ... and finally, a skilful Shepherd to feed God his flock with the wholesome food of his word.⁹

This is a far cry from the picture of the stiff, flint-hearted Calvinist, hammering away at his dreary, depressing obsession with total depravity and original sin. It is true that they preached these things, and we may be thankful that they did so: but it is not true that either the preachers or the hearers found these things in the least bit dull. Urian Oakes, in a {12} sermon before Boston's Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company in 1672, painted the picture of the Christian constantly engaged in unremitting war with a corrupt and depraved nature: not only is he, Nehemiah-like, compelled to keep the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other, but he is constantly forced to be using his sword at the same time as he is trying to build himself up in grace. He must, says Oakes, "actually use his Weapon whilst he is working; fighting with one hand, and building or laboring with the other." But far from depressing the Puritan, this spectacular combat exhilarated him: the title of Oakes's sermon was *The Unconquerable, All-conquering, and more-than-conquering Souldier*. When Joshua Moody told his congregation that Christians are like soldiers landed in an enemy country, whose commander has burned their ships and bade them either eat up their enemies or drink up the sea, the response he expected was something like the cheer which the Puritan troopers of the New Model Army set up when they attacked the Spaniards. "It is impossible," said

9. "A Parte of a Register" (1593), in David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Norton Library, 1974), 2.

Perry Miller, the great remembrancer of the New England Puritans, “to conceive of a disillusioned Puritan; ... whatever he did, he did with zest and gusto. In that sense we might say that though his life was full of anguish of spirit, he nevertheless enjoyed it hugely. Existence for him was completely dramatic, every minute charged with meaning.”¹⁰

And little wonder, when London Puritans like Richard Sibbes could exhort their people,

Rather than God’s purpose shall fail, that a man should perish before the time that God hath allotted him, the lion’s shall not devour, and the fire shall not burn ... rather than a man shall miscarry when God hath anything for him to do, God will work a miracle.... And this is a wondrous ground of confidence, that we should carry ourselves above all threatenings, and above all fears whatsoever.¹¹

Calvinists they were, yes; and they were strict and rigorously disciplined, too. But to them, the disciplined life was a thing of beauty, and eternal predestination an unspeakable comfort. And the preachers of lessons like that—no matter what the other images may be—are certainly worth listening to.

* * * * *

Having said that, I must now turn around and confess that the character of a Puritan is an almost impossible thing to define. In the England of the 1500s and 1600s, when these Puritans flourished, the meaning of the word ranged from abuse to praise, from an economic, to a political, to a {13} religious conviction. There were “puritans” within the Church of England and without it, and more still who weren’t completely sure where they were. Generally, we can safely say that Puritans were Englishmen, who were dissatisfied with the church, some with its vestments, some with its doctrine, and a few who were entertaining the potentially dangerous idea that the state church ought to be done away with completely. About the only thing on which they

10. Perry Miller, “The Puritan Way of Life,” in *The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings*, ed. Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson (New York: Harper Torch-books, 1963), vol. 1, 60.

11. Richard Sibbes, “The Saint’s Safety in Evil Times” (London, 1637), in *Works of Richard Sibbes*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London: Banner of Truth Trust, reprint, 1973), vol. 1, 325.

agreed, and which justified for them the application of the term “puritan,” was that the church was not the Reformed church it ought to be.

There was another area of agreement amongst all these differing groups, perhaps not quite so significant in the eyes of the social and economic historians, but definitely large enough to qualify it as the other chief earmark of the Puritan, and that was the value he would set upon the role of the preacher of the gospel. “The dignity of the Ministers function,” William Gouge declared, “is in spiritual respect so great, as no calling in the world can be compared unto it.” He unfolds his viewpoint further: “I would not be understood to speake only of outward respect, for our master is heavenly.” The respect Gouge demands “is diligently to attend unto our message, Willingly to follow our directions, to account our coming welcome, our feet beautiful, in heart to esteem us as God’s angels, yea, as Christ himself.” William Perkins, the great dean of Puritanism, spoke of preachers as “Angels” and as “Ambassadors sent from the high God.” “Every true minister” is “God’s interpreter to the people and the peoples to God,” and Richard Sibbes was bold enough to call ministers “Christ’s mouth”—“Christ is either received or rejected in his Ministers.”¹²

How did they come to exalt preaching to such a dizzy height—in fact, to what almost sounds like a sacerdotal height? Certainly, they shied away from attributing any priestly functions to the minister—indeed, calling him “minister” and not “priest” was one way in which they proclaimed just how little they had, or wanted to have, in common with the Church of England. But they made the minister only a little lower than the angels because preaching was generally the only way that people heard the gospel. It is more difficult for us to appreciate, in an age inundated by Bibles and translations, the great paucity of printed material anywhere in England except the principal cities; and consequently, all the more responsibility and importance were attached to those who *had* read the Bible, owned copies of it, and—most precious of all—were fearless in preaching it. The emphasis, in light of the scarcity of books and the even greater scarcity of those who could read

12. Gouge, *Works*, vol. 2, 258; Perkins, *Works*, vol. 3, 431; Sibbes, *Bowels Opened* (London, 1639), 142-43; in Charles H. and Katharine George, *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 324-25.

them, fell upon *hearing* the Word, as Hugh Latimer {14} had explained at the very beginning of the English Reformation:

We cannot be saved without the hearing of the Word: it is a necessary way to salvation. We cannot be saved without faith, and faith cometh by hearing the Word.... [Therefore] there must be preachers if we look to be saved¹³

Thus, for the Puritans, was preaching actually a means of grace, and the ministry assumed its importance chiefly from that fact. As the Puritan annotators of the Geneva Bible put it, only by preaching could men “increase their knowledge ... that at length they may obtaine eternal life.” The preacher has the capacity to “open the gates of heaven with the worde of God which [is] the righte keye.” Where there is no preaching ministry, “there is neither key, nor autoritie”; where there *is* such a ministry, nothing must hinder the preaching of the gospel, neither by “promises where Gods honour and preaching of his trueth is hindered,” nor by the ignorance of the preacher himself, who should always “haue store of sondrie and ample instructions.”¹⁴

But another factor in the English situation also tended to elevate the importance of the preaching minister, and that was the fact that, not only was there a scarcity of Bibles and godly books to be read, but there was a pronounced scarcity of men to proclaim the truths contained therein. Not only, in the eyes of Perkins and Sibbes, was England bleeding to death spiritually for want of knowledge, but the blood bank appeared to have gone on vacation, leaving a pitifully inadequate handful of technicians to do the job. Doubtless, Perkins and Sibbes would have made much of the preaching task under any circumstances. But when the lack of preachers showed itself to be acute, they responded by exalting even higher the position of the men who did preach.

That there *was* such an alarming lack of preachers in England in the sixteenth century, and that the Puritans were not seeing ghosts for bed-sheets is plainly apparent from the parish and diocesan records. In Devon in 1561, only one in twelve of the clergy of the established

13. Latimer, in Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, *Theology of the English Reformers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 119.

14. The Geneva Bible, 1560 edition, notations on Titus 1:1; Matthew 16:19; Matthew 2:12; Matthew 13:52.

church had been licensed to preach; only 58 out of 288 had even the barest semblance of an education. In Cornwall, there were perhaps six preachers for the whole county, and in Wiltshire only 20 out of 220 of the clergy were preachers, and not even all of them were duly licensed. Some excuse might be made for the West Country counties, but even moving eastward, the picture got no better. The diocese of Worcester could muster only one preacher from every four of its clergy; and in Gloucester in 1562, only 54 out of 247 of the clergy preached. The ratios were just as bad and even worse in the larger towns: the diocese of Rochester, just outside London, could get {15} up only one preacher in five clergymen; in the archdeaconry of Leicester, it was down to one in eight; and in the archdeaconry of Coventry, it slipped to the abominable level of one in 22. In the archdeaconry of Canterbury itself, there was available for a thousand communicants only one preacher in the year 1569. Thirty years later, matters showed that they had not been improved by the passage of time. Even in the avowedly Puritan county of Norfolk, eight churches had no quarterly sermon, and 88 had no monthly sermon; in Suffolk, 42 churches had neither monthly nor quarterly sermons. As late as the 1630s, Bishop Wren, who himself had scant interest in promoting Puritanism, confirmed that in the churches of Norwich in Norfolk, there were only four Sunday morning sermons to be heard.¹⁵

But the problem was not merely that the pulpits were empty; far from it—the figures cited above show that the church did not lack for clerics. The pulpits were filled, indeed; but with the wrong types. In 1586, a group of Essex Puritans, angered at those “Dumme Doggs, Unskilful sacrificing priestes, Destroyeing Drones, or rather Caterpillars of the Word” who passed as ministers, indicted their local clergy as a pack of incompetents, “some having bene Shoemakers, Barbers, Tailers, even water-bearers, shepheards, and horse keepers.” And in case they should not be believed, the Essex men compiled a register of prominent examples, and did not mince descriptions:

15. This startling list of figures is the product of the research of the indefatigable Christopher Hill, in *Society and Puritanism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 52-53.

James Allen, vicar of Shopland; some time a serving man, unable to preach, for he cannot render an accompt of his faith, neither in Latine nor English, yet made a minister within these 3 or 4 yeeres.

Mr. Phippe, vicar of Barling, Sometime a sadler by occupation, convicted of whoredom, who kept a whore long time in his house, a man far unable to preach.

Mr Mason, parson of Rawrey, had a childe by his maide, and is vehemently suspected to have lived incontinentlie with others, and was brought for the same before a Justice of peace.¹⁶

As a result, John Milton lamented, “the hungry sheep look up and are not fed.” Josiah Nichols, Puritan rector of Eastwell in Kent, found on investigation that only 40 in his parish of 400 communicants had any knowledge “of Christ, what he was in his person: what in his office: how sin came into the world: what punishment for sin: what becomes of our bodies being rotten in the grave.”¹⁷ Richard Baxter frequently met those {16} “who know not whether Christ be God or man, and wonder when I tell them the history of his birth and life and death, as if they had never heard it before.”¹⁸ What Englishmen *did* believe, as William Perkins discovered, was a far cry from orthodox Christianity, and so that there would be no mistake, he created a little syllabus of errors that, he noted, seemed to be the sum and substance of English religion:

That God is serued by the rehearsing of the ten commandements, the Lords Prayer, and the Crede.

That it is the safest to doe in Religion as most doe.

That merry ballads and bookes, as *Scoggin, Beuis of Southampton, &c.*, are good to driue away the time, and to remooue heart-qualmes. That ye know all the Preacher can tell you.

That drinking and bezeling in the ale-house or tauerne, is good fellowship, and shewes a good kinde nature, and maintaines neighbourhood. Howsoever a man live, yet if he call upon God on his death bed, and say Lord have mercy upon me, and so go away like a lamb, he

16. “Seconde Parte of a Register,” part 2, 211, 77, 157-62, in Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), 7-9.

17. Hill, 56.

18. Richard Baxter, *Gildas Salvianus, or The Reformed Pastor*, ed. William Brown (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 196.

is certainly saved.

A man may go to wizards, called wisemen, for counsel; because God hath provided a salve for every sore.

If a man be no adulterer, no thief, nor murderer, and do no man harm, he is a right honest man.¹⁹

It was bad enough that England should lack good preaching, and worse still that she should be afflicted with such men, as one Puritan pamphlet described, “whom no careful owner of cattle would make overseer of his sheep’s bodies.”²⁰ But there was yet another threat lurking over the horizon that made the Puritan insistence on preaching all the more urgent, and that was the Catholic Counter-Reformation. We have taken a little too much for granted the success of the Reformation in England in the sixteenth century, and because we are able to look back on the accomplished fact, we blithely assume that its triumph was always obvious and inevitable. But to Perkins, and Sibbes, and many more who lived then, such a triumph was not by any means yet arrived, nor were they sure it would. Catholicism had behind it all the weight of tradition and general cultural inertia, not to mention the influence of powerful and conservative landlords. From 1580 onwards, that influence was powerfully seconded by skilful and courageous Jesuit propagandists, who, after only one year of steady infiltration across the Channel, claimed between 10,000 and 20,000 converts and reclaimed Anglicans.²¹ “It is a marvel,” groaned presbyterian Walter {17} Travers, “how that there be everywhere so many with us both corrupt in doctrine and defiled in life and conversation. For how many Papists be there now-a-days that even fifteen years after the reformation of religion occupy the place of ministers in the church.”²² In 1641, the Parliament accused the “Jesuited Papists” of being one of the causes of the Civil Wars, for hating the laws of the realm “as obstacles of that change and subversion of religion which they so much long for.”²³ As late as

19. Perkins, in Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 86; and Alan Simpson, *Puritanism in Old and New England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 8.

20. In Hill, 52.

21. Arnold Oskar Meyer, *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth*, trans. J. R. McKee (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1967), 60.

22. Travers, in George, 329.

1663, John Bunyan still suspected the Anglican services of being tainted with “the scraps and fragments of the devices of some popes, some friars, and I know not what.”²⁴ With the ever-present possibility of a Catholic resurgence, or a Catholic invasion (such as the Invincible Armada), in their minds, the need for a national inoculation of preaching became the decisive Puritan demand.

The value the Puritan set upon preaching, and the high desperation of England’s future which largely caused that value, were probably never better summed up than in a sermon preached before Queen Elizabeth by the Cambridge divine—and notorious Puritan—Edward Dering, on February 25th, 1570. Dering reminded the queen that a ruler’s greatest duty was “to be careful for religion, to maintain the gospel, to teach the people knowledge, and build his whole government with faithfulness.” That being the case, Dering pointed out that faithfulness, knowledge, and care were conspicuous by their absence in the English Church; and “of all miseries wherewith the church is grieved, none is greater than this, that her ministers be ignorant and can say nothing.” On he went, piling up his case: “...what be many ministers of our time and country, other than dumb dogs? ... and yet this is but one evil, and if it were reformed, yet much were still amiss.”

I would lead you first to your benefices. And behold, some are defiled with impropriations, some with sequestrations, some loaded with pensions, some robbed of their commodities.... Look after this upon your patrons. And lo, some are selling their benefices, some farming them, some keep them for their children, some give them to boys, some to servingmen, a very few seek after learned pastors.... Look upon your ministry, and there are some of one occupation, some of another, some shake bucklers, some ruffians, some hawkers and hunters, some dicers and carders, some blind guides and cannot see, some dumb dogs and will not bark. {18}

23. “The Grand Remonstrance” (1641), in *The Puritan Revolution: A Documentary History*, ed. Stuart E. Prall (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co. Inc., Anchor Books, 1968), 49, and *Crown and Parliament in Tudor-Stuart England*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and R. F. Fries (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1959), 212.

24. John Bunyan, “I Will Pray With the Spirit” (1663), in *The Works of John Bunyan*, ed. George Offor (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977, reprint of 1875 edition), 624.

But Dering reserved his bitterest blast for the queen herself, for “in the meanwhile that all these whoredoms are committed, you at whose hands God will require it, you sit still and are careless.” “Let these things alone,” Dering rumbled, “and God is a righteous God, he will one day call you to your reckoning.”²⁵

Shocking words to use on a queen—but that very realization explains much of the ultimate frustration of so many Puritan efforts. The head of the Church which the Puritans felt was in such sorry need of reforming *was* the queen, and Elizabeth Tudor had no intention of taking advice on church affairs from the Puritan party. And it was exactly the high value which they set on preaching, ironically, that ensured Elizabeth’s eternal enmity. Elizabeth was too wary to risk sharing political power, so she never married; she was no more willing to risk the intricate balance of religious power in England—not to mention her own not-inconsiderable personal power—by giving over the pulpits of the land to men who considered themselves commissioned by a higher authority than herself. Remember that, in the absence of other media of communication, sermons were for the average Englishman his only source of news—religious, social, and political. Therefore, said Silver-Tongued Smith, “if the preacher say anything of our armies beyond the sea, or council at home, or matters at court,” people were eager to receive it.²⁶ To Elizabeth, this represented nothing less than a potential source of criticism, opinion-making, and simple plain disagreement. Even when a preacher’s words were not overtly political, or even when they were not accepted outright, they still formed the basis for discussion; such rivals Elizabeth would not tolerate. The Tudor dynasty, perpetually short on cash and lacking the security of an obvious heir to the throne, had come more than once within a hair of collapse, and Elizabeth declined the risk of what could be, at least, a powerful pressure group, and which might become, at worst, a Protestant fifth column in her kingdom. Did the Puritans want preachers throughout the county? Let them be content with three or four. Did they want to preach sermons? Let them, as James I commanded, preach

25. Edward Dering, “A Sermon Before the Queen’s Majesty,” in Leonard J. Trinterud, *Elizabethan Puritanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 150-60.

26. In Hill, 32.

only on the Creed or the Ten Commandments or the Lord's Prayer, and never on predestination or against Popery. And let them, as Charles I ruled for good measure, preach on the divine right of kings once each quarter.²⁷

But that only heightened the Puritan desperation: they invented lectureships, and farmed themselves out as private chaplains to sympathetic noblemen. Those who held churches wore the surplice and preached {19} correctly when the bishop paid a visit: the next week, the surplice went back into the drawer and the preacher resumed his exhortations. Given their close scriptural view of the ministry, the need for preaching and for clearing out the deadwood, the defense of the kingdom from Jesuitry, and the almost incomprehensible betrayal of these aims—or so it strongly seemed—by the state and the bishops—is it any wonder that Perkins and Sibbes and Gouge should have spoken of the preacher in the exalted terms that they did?

* * * * *

Considering the situation, one might have expected the Puritans to welcome all the aid they could get, and so open their ranks to any would-be preachers who appeared to be friendly. Much to their credit, this is exactly what they did *not* do. In fact, they were a consciously exclusive brotherhood, and they laid down stiff qualifications for the preaching ministry, and, although there was never quite a written code in England for these men, it was probably all the more rigid for being unspoken. One can, however, pick up bits and pieces of it from a number of ministerial manuals current in the period.

Certainly the most famous was Richard Baxter's *Gildas Salvianus, or The Reformed Pastor*, written in 1656 for a local ministers' meeting after Baxter had had some brushes with the highly anticlerical Quakers. The first of the qualifications which Baxter laid down is that a minister, or would-be minister, be *converted*, something which may seem to us absurdly obvious, but which was by no means so obvious as Baxter looked around him at many who called themselves ministers. "None but converted men," reasons Baxter, "do make God their chief end ... others make the ministry but a trade to live by."

27. *Ibid.*, 38.

They choose it rather than another calling, because their parents did destine them to it, or because it affordeth them a competent maintenance; because it is a life wherein they have more opportunity to furnish their intellects with all kind of science; or because it is not toil-some to the body, to those that have a mind to favour the flesh; because it is accompanied with some reverence and respect from men, and have others “receive the law at their mouth.”

“Were it not for these, or similar objects,” warns Baxter, “they would soon give over.” No unconverted man could bear the burden.²⁸

Furthermore, says Baxter, “how can you follow sinners, with compassion in your hearts and tears in your eyes, and beseech them in the name of the Lord to stop their course, and return and live, and never had so much compassion on your own soul, as to do this much for yourselves?” Such preachers may sound as though they were made of excellent stuff, and “cry down sin as loudly as others,” but Baxter is convinced in spite of this that, at best, the “unsanctified men” will by their noise only make people think that “they do but talk to pass away the hour, and because they must say something for their money, and that all these are but words of course.”²⁹ It is more possible that he will wreck the lives of the sheep he should be guarding. “Do you think it a likely thing, that he will fight against Satan with all his might, who is himself a servant to Satan? Will he do any great harm to the kingdom of the devil, who is himself a member and a subject of that kingdom?” Beware, says Baxter, for he will be like “a traitorous commander, that shooteth nothing against the enemy but powder”: he “may cause his guns to make as great a sound or report as those that are loaded with bullets; but he doth no hurt to the enemy.”³⁰

There was yet another qualification that was tacitly assumed, and that was *education*. The Puritans had little time for visionaries (“enthusiasts,” they called them, and there was hardly a darker term of opprobrium in the Puritan vocabulary) or for those who surrendered themselves to vague, ineffable impulses in the mistaken desire to have the Spirit lead them into all truth. The Puritans, to be sure, definitely believed that the Holy Spirit is the agent of conversion, and not some

28. Baxter, 80.

29. *Ibid.*, 81-84.

30. *Ibid.*, 82-84.

autonomous “free will” of man—but once that was done, the Puritan was obligated to learn as much as possible about almost everything. They hated a faith that was inarticulate, and they hated even more a faith that deliberately ignored science and philosophy to go sit in a corner in a grim pietistic introspection. “That God who is abstract wisdom,” one Puritan explained, “and delights that his rationally creatures should search after it, and that his Ministers should study to propagate it, will expect that you should be Foster-fathers of knowledge.”³¹

Protestantism has historically had a very bad time—from the Anabaptists at Munster to the Jesus People—convincing itself that justification by faith alone is not also a justification for ignorance, and that faith would not make knowledge superfluous. The Puritans of New England had a sour taste of this in the case of Mistress Anne Hutchinson in 1637, who accused most of the Massachusetts Bay ministry of being under what she called “a covenant of works”; contrasted, of course, with her position in what she proclaimed as a “covenant of grace.” She turned the terms of Puritan theology to suit herself and used them as warrant for passing judgment on the clergy. Her authority for doing so was revealed by one of her followers, who informed Edward Johnson: “Come along with me.... I’ll bring you to a Woman that preaches better gospel than any of your black-coats that have been at the Ninneversity.” Johnson’s friend added, “I had rather hear such a one that speakes from the meer motion of the {21} spirit without any study at all, than any of your learned Scholars, and admit that they may speak by the help of the spirit, yet the other goes beyond them.”³² In some circles, Mistress Anne’s reasoning and methods would be applauded with devout ooh’s and aah’s; but as far as the Puritan Edward Johnson was concerned, she was giving herself up, not to the spirit of truth, but “the spirit of giddiness.”³³

Richard Baxter, in another work in 1676, had argued, Mistress Hutchinson to the contrary, that

31. Miller, *New England Mind*, 69.

32. Edward Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence of Zion’s Saviour in New England* (1653), ed. J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1910), 127.

33. *Ibid.*

We must use our best *Reason* in diligent Meditation, and Judgement, to search the *Works* of God in Nature, to know which are the true Canonical Scriptures, to discern true *Copies*, and *Readings* where the Copies differ, to *expound* the Text, to Translate it truly, to discern the *Order* of sacred Verities that are dispersed through all the Scriptures, to gather them into *Catechistnes*, and *Professions* of Faith, discerning things more necessary from the less needful...³⁴

Baxter acknowledged that the enthusiasts had zeal, but he had scant patience with zeal not according to knowledge, and he wryly hinted that it was “laziness hath learned to allege the vanity of all our studies, and how entirely the Spirit must qualify us for, and assist us in our work; as if God had commanded the use of means, and then warranted us to neglect them; as if it was his way to cause us to thrive in a course of idleness, and to bring us to knowledge by dreams when we are asleep, or take us up into heaven, and show us his counsels, while we think of no such matter, but are idling away our time on earth.”³⁵

Baxter, however, was not encouraging a closet scholarship: what godly men learned and studied they should pass on to others, and, above all, they should strive to inculcate their congregations with the same habits on as many levels as possible. Baxter urged ministers, as a work of compassion no less, to buy books and catechisms for the poor to study. Cotton Mather listed among his works of “doing good” the distribution of “little *books of piety*.”

You may without *great cost*, be furnished with *little books* to suit all occasions: *books* for the *old* and for the *young*; *books* for persons under *afflictions*, or under *desertions*; *books* for persons under the power of special *vices*; *books* for them that neglect *household piety*; *books* for the *sea-faring*; *books* for the *erroneous*....³⁶ {22}

There was scarcely any place in the human mind that the Puritan empire of intellect did not lay claim.

Not without reason, then, did the Puritans gird up the loins of their minds and, in the words of Walter Travers, make the universities of

34. Richard Baxter, “The Judgement of Nonconformists” (1676), in Miller, *New England Mind*, 72.

35. Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, 71.

36. Cotton Mather, *Bonifacius: An Essay Upon the Good* (1710), ed. David Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 77.

England “the seed and fry of the holy ministry throughout the realm.” In the crucial period of 1565–1575, no less than 228 Puritans were in residence at Cambridge, and of the eighty-one avowedly Puritan preachers who later settled in Suffolk in the 1580s, almost fifty had been in residence in just one Cambridge College, St. John’s. The Cambridge faculty was also dominated by Puritans, such as the bold Edward Dering, William Perkins, the Presbyterian apostle Thomas Cartwright, and Lawrence Chaderton, who was a fellow of Christ College from 1568 to 1576, preacher at St. Clement’s, Cambridge, for fifty more years, and was still alive to see the advent of the Puritan Civil Wars—led, ironically, by a former Cambridge man, Oliver Cromwell, who had matriculated at Sidney Sussex College in 1616. Oxford also bore the Puritan stamp, even though it never became the Puritan seminary that Cambridge became: still, some 42 Puritans were in residence there in 1565 to 1575, and it produced such notables as John Pym, John Hampden, and John Owen.³⁷ Puritans in the New World lost none of the zeal for university learning during their transatlantic voyage. In fact, their first action after building houses, planting crops, and erecting churches was to found Harvard College: “to advance *Learning* and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust.”³⁸ For this reason does Richard Hofstadter, the historian of American intellectualism—or, more properly, the lack of it—say, “The Puritan clergy came as close to being an intellectual ruling class as America has ever had.”³⁹

But a regenerated spirit and a master’s degree from the university were still not in themselves a call to the ministry, however so much they might be the indispensable preludes to such a call. That call remained the third and great qualification of the Puritan minister, and John Owen, in his 1643 treatise, *The Duty of Pastors and People Distinguished*, gives “three ways a man may receive, and be assured that he

37. These figures are derived from Patrick Collinson’s excellent chapter in *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 122–30.

38. *New Englands First Fruits* (1643), in S. E. Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, Cornell Paperbacks, 1965), 31.

39. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 59.

hath received this divine mission, or know that he is called of God to the preaching of the word”—these, I think, we may take as normative of Puritanism as a whole.⁴⁰ {23}

First, Owen believes that one may know and be assured of a call to the ministry by *special revelation*. Not, he explains, by a “light prophetic,” but by whether one’s *doctrine* conforms to that contained in God’s special revelation, the Bible. To a lesser degree, it is accompanied by an *inner feeling of conviction*, but because such is “but a transient impression, of itself not apt to give any such assurance, it may be questioned from what other principle it doth proceed.” Owen was much more interested in what a man actually believed than in what he thought he felt about what he believed. The only way Owen would admit the evidence of feeling was that “a man pretending to extraordinary vocation by immediate revelation (in respect of self-persuasion of the truth of his call) must be as certain of it as he could be of a burning fire in his bones.”⁴¹

Secondly, a man should *give evidence of his call* to others in the various exercise of the appropriate spiritual gifts, a man’s gifts being not so much what *he* saw them as being, but what he gave evidence to others of having. Thirdly, one may know that one is called to preach if placed by God in such a situation that preaching becomes a *virtual necessity*. Owen gives the example of a Christian, “cast, by shipwreck, or otherwise upon the country of some barbarous people that never heard the name of Christ.” Since God had obviously placed him there, ought not the Christian “to preach unto them? And if God give a blessing to his endeavours, may he not become a pastor to the converted souls?”⁴² A perilous situation called forth preachers, and for a Christian to step into such a place was, for Owen, obvious evidence that God meant to use him as a preacher there—and so we have returned to the very reason why Perkins and Sibbes, Baxter and Owen, exalted the preaching office so highly in England. To live in England was to live in a perilous

40. John Owen, *The Duty of Pastors and People Distinguished* (1643), in *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967, reprint of 1850-53 edition), vol. 13, 29.

41. *Ibid.*, 31.

42. *Ibid.*, 38.

situation, and so it called out for preachers, and in that calling out and in that need, the preacher was not unlike the one-eyed man, king in the country of the blind.

* * * * *

Once having passed muster, the preacher was then expected to devote his life to being just that, and he should mind neither the manner nor the hour. John Rogers was in the habit of “taking hold with both hands at one time of the supporters of the Canopy over the Pulpit, and roaring hideously, to represent the torments of the damned,” which, as one student noted (perhaps tongue-in-cheek) “had an awakening force attending it.” When Rogers was invited to preach at a wedding, he promptly held forth in his customary manner, to such effect that the marriage festivity “was turned into bitter mourning, so that all the Ministers that were at the marriage {24} were employed in comforting, or advising, consciences awakened by that sermon.”⁴³ But Rogers, however colorful his gyrations may have been, is too much the stereotype Puritan killjoy, and Giles Firmin thought that “some expressions and gestures he used would now seem indecent.” I suspect, nonetheless, that there are a good number of modern ministers who would be overjoyed at provoking such a reaction—or any reaction—at their wedding sermons.

Much more typical of the Puritan manner was John Dod, who disapproved of those who “labor still to keep men under terrors, and load them with threatenings.” He preferred “soft words and hard arguments.”⁴⁴ So did Richard Sibbes: “The ambassadors of so gentle a Saviour should not be over-masterly, setting themselves up in the hearts of people where Christ alone should sit as in his own temple.”⁴⁵ If you desire to preach with warmth and zeal, said Baxter, then “read some rousing, awakening book” before going into the pulpit, “or meditate on the weight of the subject on which you are to speak, and on the great

43. Giles Firmin, in Hall, *Faithful Shepherd*, 65.

44. John Dod, *A Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (1612), in Hall, 65.

45. Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax*, 1630, in Sibbes, *Works*, vol. 1, 53.

necessity of your people's souls, that you may go in the zeal of the Lord into his house."⁴⁶

The favorite Puritan adjectives for the preacher were *learned*, *judicious*, and *grave*. Above all, they were to be grave: full of a high seriousness about the work they were doing. There is not one Puritan sermon that I have read that contains what I would call a single joke. Indeed, Baxter declared that "of all the preaching in the world (that speaks not stark lies) I hate that preaching which tends to make hearers laugh, or move their minds with tickling levity, and affect them as stage-plays used to do, instead of affecting them with a holy reverence of the name of God." We should, insisted Baxter, "as it were suppose we saw the throne of God, and the millions of glorious angels attending him, that we may be awed with his majesty when we draw near to him in holy things."⁴⁷ It was the sermons of James Aliens and William Phipps that were full, said the Essex Puritans, of "fond fables to make their hearers laugh." That, the Puritans would have thought beneath themselves and beneath their hearers.

They could, however, use dramatics of many types, as Thomas Goodwin once related to John Howe (both of them well-renowned preachers) concerning John Rogers. On one occasion in the 1620s, Rogers bore down on his congregation for their neglect of the Bible:

[H]e personates God to the people, telling them, 'Well, I have trusted you so long with my Bible ... it lies in such and such houses all covered with dust and cobwebs, you {25} care not to listen to it. Do you use my Bible so? Well, you shall have my Bible no longer.' And he takes up the Bible from his cushion, and seemed as if he were going away with it and carrying it from them; but immediately turns again and personates the people to God, falls down on his knees, cries and pleads most earnestly, 'Lord, whatever thou dost to us, take not thy Bible from us; kill our children, burn our houses, destroy our goods; only spare us thy Bible, take not away thy Bible.' And then he personates God again to the people: 'Say you so? Well, I will try you a while longer; and here is my Bible for you. I will see how you use it, whether you will love it more ... observe it more ... practice it more, and live more according to it.'

46. Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, 62-63.

47. *Ibid.*, 119-20.

Such was the manner of one Puritan pastor, along with his roaring sermons and wedding sermons, and the effect he produced in Thomas Goodwin was that “when he got out [of Rogers’s church] ... [he] was fain to hang a quarter of an hour on the neck of his horse weeping before he had power to mount.”⁴⁸

It lies, finally, with John Bunyan to give the quintessential portrait of the Puritan manner, in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, “a picture of a very grave person hang up against the wall, and this was the fashion of it: it had eyes lift up to Heaven, the best of books in its hand, the law of truth was written on its lips, the world was behind its back; it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head.... This is ... the only man whom the Lord of the Place whither thou art going hath authorized to be thy guide in all difficult places thou mayest meet with in the way...”⁴⁹

* * * *

The Puritans not only expected a certain manner of the minister, but they also expected *a certain manner of preaching*; not only were they set upon what special effects were to be used, but they were also in complete unity on how the script should be written, and that unity was expressed over and over again in the insistence that the sermon should be “plain.” The “plain style” was, in fact, a trademark of the brotherhood, and Richard Baxter was foremost in supplying a rationale for “plainness”:

God commandeth us to be as plain as we can, that we may inform the ignorant; and as convincing and serious as we are able, that we may melt and change their hardened hearts.⁵⁰

Increase Mather put it another way in the eulogium he wrote for his father, Richard Mather, in 1670:

His way of preaching was plain, aiming to shoot his Arrows not over {26} his peoples heads, but into their Hearts and Consciences. Whence he studiously avoided obscure phrases, Exotick words, or

48. John Howe, in J. I. Packer, “Puritanism as a Movement of Revival,” unpublished ms.

49. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678), ed. Roger Sharrock (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1975), 60-61.

50. Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, 137.

unnecessary citation of Latin sentences.... The Lord gave him an excellent faculty in making abstruse things plain, that in handling the deepest Mysteries he would accommodate himself to Vulgar Capacities, that even the meanest might learn something.⁵¹

And Increase's son, Cotton, put it most succinctly in his eulogy for John Eliot, the missionary to the Indians, whose "way of *Preaching* was very *plain*; so that the very *Lambs* might wade into his Discourses on those texts and themes, wherein *Elephants* might swim...."⁵²

The Puritans were always considering the *end* for which they preached, and it did not seem altogether likely that stuffed lectures and sentimental rhetoric were either appropriate or successful as a means of grace. Men were converted by being confronted with doctrine, not lovely cadences. "Swelling words of humane wisdom," John Cotton warned, "make mens preaching seeme to Christ (as it were) a blubberlipt Ministry." Far better to address men as Christ himself had, in "their own in English as we say.... He lets fly poynt blanck."⁵³

The significance of the "plain style" can be best appreciated by contrast with the "metaphysical" style that typified Anglican preaching of the day. The magnificent compositions of John Donne and Lancelot Andrewes were the favored sermons of the court, and the free-flowing, involved eloquence of their style established a norm that their followers made into an institution. Thus, between the Puritan and the Anglican yawned a *chasm of form and style*: the Anglican preached as an orator, and his sermons read like Demosthenian orations, while the Puritans pleaded with men as might a lawyer, so that the Puritan sermon resembled nothing so much as a lawyer's brief. Where the Anglican leaped from point to point in free flights of rhetoric, ever-widening like some intricate embroidery-work, the Puritan laid open his text, explained the circumstances of it, extracted the important doctrines, and proceeded from deduction to deduction with no more of a transition than a number.⁵⁴

51. Increase Mather, *The Life and Death of that Reverend Man in God, Mr. Richard Mather* (1670), in Miller & Johnson, *Puritans*, vol. 2, 494.

52. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, bk. 3, 1702, in Miller & Johnson, vol. 2, 501.

53. John Cotton in Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958), 11.

As examples: Lancelot Andrewes, whose work has only received its reward in our own century, thanks to the critical essays of T.S. Eliot, speaks of repentance in his Ash Wednesday sermon of 1619:

Repentance it selfe is nothing els, but *redire ad principē*, a kind of circling; to *returne* to Him by *repentance*, from *whom*, by sinne, we {27} have turned away. And much after a circle is this *text* [Joel 2.12–13]: begins with the word *turne*, and *returnes* about the same word againe.... Being thus *turned to our hearts*, we *turne* againe, and behold the τροχος γενεσεως) (as *Saint James* termeth it) the *wheele of our nature*, that it *turneth* apace, and *turnes* off dayly some, and them younger than we; and that within a while, our *turne will* come, that our breath must goe forth, and we *turne* againe to our *dust*.

And, when that is past, another of the Prophet, That *Righteousness shall turne againe to judgement: Mercie* that nowsitts in the throne, shall rise up and give place: *Justice* also shall have her *turne*. And, then comes the *last turne, Convertentur peccatores in infernum*, the sinners shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget, in time, to *turne* unto *God*.⁵⁵

Now, Richard Sibbes speaks of repentance, from 1637:

It is a good thing to be affected with the least token of God's displeasure, when we can gather by good evidence that God hath a quarrel against us. You see how sensible Christ was, and so it will be with us if we get not into him betimes; we shall be sensible of sin one day whether we will or no; conscience is not put in us for nought. You may stupify and stifle the mouth of conscience with this or that trick now, but it will not be so forever; it will discharge its office, and lay bitter things to our charge, and stare in our faces, and drive us to despair one day. Sin is another matter when it is revealed to conscience than we take it, howsoever we go blockishly and stupidly on now. It is sweet in the temptation and allurements, but it hath an ill farewell and sting. If we could judge of sin as we shall do when it is past, especially when we come to our reckoning at the hour of death, and at the day of judgment, then we would be of another mind; then we would say that all sinners, as the Scripture terms them, "are fools..."⁵⁶

54. Miller, *New England Mind*, 332-33.

55. Lancelot Andrewes, "A Sermon Preached before King James" (1619), in *Sermons*, ed. G. M. Story (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 122, 126.

56. Sibbes, "Christ's Sufferings for Man's Sin" (1637), in *Works*, vol. 1, 363.

Where Andrewes cleverly constructs an intricate conceit on the word, “turne,” Sibbes goes in directly for the conscience; where Andrewes tosses off Latin and Greek for good measure, Sibbes brings his hearers up straight with blunt, precise accusations. The *oration* and the *lawyer’s brief*. Andrewes was obviously as orthodox as Sibbes in the matter of repentance; but judge for yourself which was more likely to stimulate repentance among the tailor, the baker, and the candlestick maker of London.

The great teacher of the “plain style” was, as in so many things Puritan, William Perkins, and especially as found in his *The Art of Prophecy*. As Perry Miller suggests, Perkins had picked up the strands of the new logic of the Huguenot dialectician Peter Ramus, whose *schema* threw overboard the old rhetorical hierarchy of Aristotle that had reigned in Europe ever since the end of the Crusades. Aristotelian dogma viewed preaching as only one other species of rhetoric, and commanded it to obey the {28} same structural laws as all the other kinds. There was to be an *exordium*, functioning like a musical prelude, beginning with whatever takes the orator’s fancy; a *narration*, as “some survey of the actions that form the subject matter of the speech”;⁵⁷ *arguments*, to confirm one’s theme by appeals to reason or authority; *interrogation*, using questions and such to rebut objections; and an *epilogue*, to review and “excite your hearers’ emotions.”⁵⁸ Perkins, following Ramus, realized that the sermon could not be chained to Aristotle’s *schema* and still have the effectiveness he wanted for it. Ramistic logic, to the joy of Perkins and the Ramistic disciples who followed him, elevated the *argument* to the highest level, and since Ramus believed that the “law of invention” would naturally dictate the appropriateness of whatever would follow, one had only to give the text its argument and let it take its head.

Perkins and the writers of preaching manuals among the Puritans proceeded to strip the sermon of its Aristotelian encumbrances and fit it to do the work of reformation. The *exordium* was lopped off as unworthy of God’s people (godly people, they reasoned, needed no

57. Aristotle, “Rhetorica,” trans. W. Rhys Roberts, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 1442.

58. *Ibid.*, 1450.

dainty enticements to get their attention for a sermon). The opening paragraph contained an unvarnished statement of the preacher's intentions upon the text, along with a systematic dismemberment of the text into its constituent portions. Jonathan Edwards's celebrated Enfield sermon, "Sinners In the Hands of An Angry God," featured a text ("Their foot shall slide in due time"—Deut. 32:35) broken into four elements concerning "those wicked Israelites":

1. That they were always exposed to destruction;
2. It implies, that they were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction....
3. They are liable to fall of themselves....
4. The reason why they are not fallen already, and do not fall now, is only that God's appointed time is not come.⁵⁹

These deductions were then recombined to form the "doctrine," which, in this case, was, "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God...." Richard Bernard, who rivaled the popularity of Perkins with his *The Faithful Shepherd*, called this "doctrine" a "Theological Axiom, either consisting in the express words of Scripture, or flowing from them by immediate consequence."⁶⁰ {29} So, this first section was devoted to "opening," explaining, and distilling the truths of the text into one proposition.

The second section, bypassing the Aristotelian narration, went straight to the arguments, or (as they would have said), the "reasons" or "uses." These "reasons" were designed to reinforce intellectual acceptance of the "doctrine" and were something of an apologetic in nature: one might draw confirmation from experience, natural law, systematic theology, and related Scripture. Edwards—to continue the illustration—supported his proposition with ten such "reasons":

59. These and the following citations of the Enfield sermon are from *Jonathan Edwards: Selections*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson and Clarence H. Faust (New York: Hill and Wang, 1962), 155-72; and *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Edward Hickman (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974, reprint of 1834 edition), vol. 2, 7-12.

60. Richard Bernard, in Phyllis M. and Nicholas R. Jones, "The Structure of the Sermons," in *Salvation in New England: Selections from the Sermons of the First Preachers*, ed. Phyllis M. and Nicholas R. Jones (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1977), 8.

1. There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment....
2. They deserve to be cast into hell; ...
3. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell....
4. They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell....
5. The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him....
6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning....
7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand....
8. Natural men's prudence and care ... do not secure them a moment....
9. All wicked men's pains and contrivance ... do not secure them from hell one moment.
10. God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment.

Therefore, Edwards is able to say, "In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God."

Thirdly, the Puritan ignored the *interrogation* and *epilogue* to create a new section, the "applications" (often, confusingly, called "uses" when the second section was called "reasons"), which contained sundry vivid applications and exhortations on the "doctrine" that had been proposed and defended. Here, the Puritan was free to lapse into rhetorical flourish if he desired, and it is here that Edwards unleashed some of his most famous images. Resorting almost completely to sensational comparison (there is as much Locke here as there is Ramus, as Miller has shown in his biography of Edwards), Edwards lays his "doctrine" on heavily by reminding the hearers of several things, that

1. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God ... there is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.... {30}
2. Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead....
3. There are black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads....

4. The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present....
5. The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string....
6. The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked....

Then, resorting to exhortation, he appeals to them to repent, based on five considerations:

1. The *misery* you are exposed to....
2. The fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to....
3. It is an everlasting wrath....
4. You have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open....
5. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the greater part of adult persons that ever shall be saved, will be brought in now in a little time....

Therefore, he says, let “every one fly out of Sodom....” And then he ends. No epilogue; not even really a conclusion; but the shrieks of soul-agony that resulted became so “amazing” that Edwards was forced to pause.⁶¹

It might drive the impact of the sermon in all the harder were we to remember that Edwards preached “using no gestures, but looked straight forward; Gideon Clark said ‘he looked on the bell rope until he looked it off’ and used in the pulpit, as notes, only a little booklet of foolscap that he had sewn together himself for the purpose covered with hardly more than his outline and text references.”⁶² A manuscript in the pulpit was considered inconsistent with the “plain style,” and a preacher who wanted to have every word in perfect place had little choice but to memorize the entire thing. Such memorization was rare—New England sermons were timed by an hourglass in the pulpit, and Edward Johnson recorded his great satisfaction with one of Thomas Hooker’s sermons in which “the glasse was turned up twice.”⁶³

61. Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), 145.

62. *Ibid.*, 51.

63. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 135.

Most Puritan ministers, therefore, compromised by doing as John Dod, who found memorization too binding and “resolved afterwards never to pen his sermon *verbatim*, but his usual manner was to write only the *Analysis* of his Text, the proofs of Scripture for the Doctrines, with the Reasons and Uses, and so leaving the rest to meditation in which course {31} he never found defect.”⁶⁴ The result was Edwards’s little foolscap books, or something like the preaching notes of Thomas Hooker: “small pages (about five by seven inches), densely covered on both sides with very small handwriting; the divisions of the sermon clearly marked (doctrines, reasons, and uses); texts of Scripture cited and often copied in full; and the contents of each division swiftly detailed in a few complete sentences.”⁶⁵

This stark simplicity of design and delivery was lucid enough for even the dimmest wits, yet thorough enough to satisfy the sharpest critics. And one great redeeming feature was its easy applicability to any occasion, something particularly needful amongst a people that seemed to have no fill of sermons. New England Puritans had advertised their interest in the hearing of sermons even before they touched American soil by providing for three sermons daily on the voyage over: John Cotton preached in the morning, Thomas Hooker in the afternoon, and Samuel Stone in the evening.⁶⁶ It was taken for granted that, once established, the ministers would preach twice on Sundays (there had originally been a provision for a separate “teacher” and “pastor” in the churches of the New England Way, but it proved too expensive an experiment, and the two tasks were eventually devolved back on one man); but the clergy of New England went one better and also instituted a weekday lecture. The lecture differed from the Sunday meetings only in that they dispensed with the metrical psalm-singing and customary prayers, and were devoted exclusively to preaching. Strange as it may seem to a generation in which sermons tend to be valued in inverse proportion to their frequency, the lectures were an outstanding success. In 1634, the civil authorities tried futilely to limit all the church lectures to one certain day of the week, so that business would

64. Dod, in Jones, *Salvation in New England*, 17.

65. *Ibid.*

66. *Ibid.*, 4.

not be interrupted by the constant bustling around to sermons; they had to content themselves with a resolution that the lectures be ended early enough to get people home before dark.⁶⁷ By Jonathan Edwards's day, the Boston First Church lecture had become something of a New England affair, and a preacher who was invited to deliver the lecture knew that he was being sized up by the clergy and the community, so that he generally pulled himself together and gave the best he could summon.⁶⁸

Sermons were also called for on other occasions. "Election" sermons were preached on the spring day set aside for tabulating the votes for governor and assistant. The assembled dignitaries and citizens were usually crowded into the town's largest meetinghouse, and the subject would usually touch on the responsibility of the civil magistrate to do {32} thus-and-such in support of the law, the clergy, and what not.⁶⁹ "Artillery" sermons, such as the one Urian Oakes preached before Boston's Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company, began in 1659 and generally marked the musters of the militia and the election of officers.⁷⁰ As New England slipped more and more rapidly from the spirituality of its founders, Fast and Thanksgiving Day sermons were preached (nineteen in Massachusetts Bay in 1639 had swelled to fifty by 1676), and the predominant theme of declension that these sermons treated produced its own sermon type, the jeremiad. There were sermons at weddings, at baptisms, and at victories and defeats—but not at funerals, viewing funeral sermons as part of superstitious abuses. The Puritan burial procedure was done "with some honest company of the Church, without either singing or reading, yea, without all kind of ceremony heretofore used ... with such gravity and sobriety as those that be present may seem to fear the judgments of God, and to hate sin, which is the cause of death."⁷¹ It was the only part of the Puritan life which the preaching ministry did not touch.⁷²

67. Morison, *Intellectual Life*, 167.

68. Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 3.

69. Morison, 175.

70. Boorstin, *Americans*, 13.

71. John Canne, in David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 104.

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It is no exaggeration, and in fact a point of quiet pride, for Francis Higginson, the first teacher of Massachusetts Bay, to say, “Thanks be to God, we have here plenty of preaching...”⁷³ The Puritan mind delighted in preaching. The Puritan minister was the one standing in the gap, and the honor—as well as the responsibility—motivated all his efforts to be the people’s bulwark against lukewarmness at home, unedifying practice in the church, Jesuit intrigue from abroad, and hostility from a suspicious and unsympathetic government—and later, a suspicious and unsympathetic New World. Both their manner of living and their style of preaching set them apart from their contemporaries, and it made of them a godly example that even the simplest could see and understand; and they knew it, and it motivated them all the more. But perhaps their chiefest and greatest motivation, apart from their own eternal reward, was the one summed up by John Flavel, and he says in one paragraph more about the character of the Puritan ministry than has been said in many books: {33}

Is it not worth all our labours and sufferings, to come with all those souls we instrumentally begat to Christ: and all that we edified, reduced, confirmed, and comforted in the way to heaven; and say, *Lord, here am I, and the children thou hast given me?* To hear one spiritual child say, Lord, this is the minister, by whom I believed: Another, this is he, by whom I was edified, established, and comforted. This is the man that resolved my doubts, quickened my dying affections, reduced my soul when wandering from the truth! O blessed by thy name, that I ever saw his face, and heard his voice! What think we of this, brethren?⁷⁴

Indeed, what think we of this?

72. Editor’s Note: According to Gordon Geddes, the funeral sermon was preached on the Thursday or Sunday following burial, or even later, part of a regularly scheduled church meeting. In the case of people about to be executed, they were preached to and prayed for at the Thursday meeting, and then would be taken out and hanged. There was no funeral sermon for them the following Sunday. There was never any preaching at the burial service, as was the case with Anglicans.

73. Francis Higginson to his friends at Leicester, September 1629, in *Letters from New England: The Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1629–1638*, ed. Everett Emerson (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976), 38.

74. John Flavel, “The Character of a True Evangelical Pastor,” in *The Works of John Flavel* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968, reprint of 1820 edition), vol. 6, 579.

CROMWELL AND HIS CRITICS

[A REPLY TO JON ZENS]

David H. Chilton

In the fall of 1978, Dr. Gary North issued a one-page leaflet advertising the “Symposium on Puritanism and Law,” contained in volume 5, number 2 of the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*. The thesis of the advertisement, reproduced below, is that Puritanism must be seen as a “package deal.” Secular historians have long emphasized the “secular” accomplishments of the Puritans, while disregarding and misunderstanding Puritan theology. On the other hand, those whom Dr. North calls “the reprinting neo-Puritans” have emphasized the theology of the Puritans, but have divorced it from the Puritan vision of a godly society. Thus, both groups have produced a distorted view of Puritanism; neither one has sufficiently appreciated the relationship between Puritan theology and Puritan life.

To be sure, the Puritan was deeply concerned with secret prayer, inner piety, and methods of receiving the Lord’s Supper; but he was just as concerned with national obedience. Until the Restoration, the idea that the two could be legitimately separated was abhorrent in the extreme. And while we would not agree with everything the Puritans ever did, it is our position that to the extent that they were consistent to their vision, the Puritan worldview was essentially Biblical. The Scriptural injunction to love God with every aspect of our being is a command that has reference to both inner piety and cultural transformation. Obedience to every word of God is enjoined upon every man, with the whole man, in every area of life and thought. For a man to claim to have faith, while rejecting God’s law in the home, church, state, business, or any other sphere, has always been hypocrisy.

This was clearly seen by men such as Oliver Cromwell, a man who, for all his faults, sought to cultivate true piety, internally and externally, and desired total reformation, “in root and branch.” Cromwell’s achievements are fairly well known (and there is an excellent bio-

graphical article by Judy Ishkanian in volume 6, number 1 of the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*). On the other hand, William Gurnall, who is unfavorably compared to Cromwell in Dr. North's advertisement, is almost entirely unknown. A brief note about him, before we proceed any further, will be helpful in understanding the debate. {35}

William Gurnall (1616–1679) was the minister of the parish of Lavenham before, during, and after Cromwell's Protectorate. Although he lived in one of the most important periods of history, he never took a firm stand on an issue. The reader will search his massive tome, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, in vain for the slightest reference to the momentous events taking place as the book was being written (1655–1662). Gurnall spent his early life in Lynn, "one of the chief towns of the most thoroughly Protestant districts in England in the seventeenth century."⁷⁵ From 1632 to 1639 he attended Emmanuel College at Cambridge (which Queen Elizabeth once called "a Puritan foundation"), and during his residence there he was exposed to the practical outworkings of both Puritan theology and statist repression. For example, while Gurnall was at Emmanuel, a Mr. Bernard was tried before Laud for preaching against Romanism and died in prison; William Prynne, John Bastwicke, and Henry Burton were pilloried and had their ears cropped off (Prynne was also branded on his cheek); and in a famous taxation case, a judge declared, "The King is the Law!" As J. C. Ryle observed, "No one could be at Cambridge from 1632 to 1639, without seeing and hearing things which would leave a mark on his memory for life, and without coming across a stream of conflicting opinions which he would remember to his dying day."⁷⁶ The pragmatic lesson, of course, is that it is wise never to take sides; and that when one is forced to do so, safety lies on the side of power.

Nor is there anything in Gurnall's later history which gives the impression of a man taking his place in the ranks of battle. There is no record that he did anything for the Puritan cause whatsoever. In fact, it is difficult to see exactly what it is about him that entitles him to the name *Puritan*. Ryle described him as having "notoriously Puritan sen-

75. J. C. Ryle, "A Biographical Account of the Author," in William Gurnall, *The Christian In Complete Armour* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1964), xvii.

76. *Ibid.*, xxi.

timents”;⁷⁷ just what these were it is hard to imagine. He was, technically, Calvinistic in soteriology, but so were many in the Anglican camp. Doctrines such as double predestination certainly were not a Puritan monopoly.⁷⁸ The real “hallmark of Puritanism,” as New has stressed, was *activism*.⁷⁹ “Anglicanism was a religion of aspiration, and Puritanism of perspiration.”⁸⁰ And if there is one trait conspicuously absent from Gurnall’s life, it was activism. Between his leaving Cambridge in 1639 and becoming rector of Lavenham in 1644, nothing at all is known of him. J. C. Ryle wrote:

It would be difficult to name five years of English history in which so {36} many important events occurred, as between 1639 and 1644. Within these five years the famous Long Parliament commenced its sittings, the no less famous Westminster Assembly of divines was convened, Lord Strafford was beheaded, Archbishop Laud committed to prison, and the courts of High Commission and Star Chamber abolished. Within these five years the civil war between the king and the parliament actually broke out, the standard was raised at Nottingham, the battles of Edgehill, Newbury, and Marston Moor were fought, and Hampden, Pym and Lord Falkland were all laid in their graves. Last, but not least, the “Solemn League and Covenant” was subscribed by the adherents of the Parliament side, in which, among other things, they pledged themselves to “endeavor the extirpation of popery and prelacy, that is, church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy.”

And what was Gurnall doing all these five years? We cannot tell.⁸¹

There is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that William Gurnall ever stuck his neck out in the defense of the faith. True, if he followed the advice in his book, he was busy fighting spiritual battles against his lusts and temptations; but, as Martin Luther once said, “Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on

77. *Ibid.*, xxxi.

78. John F. H. New, *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558–1640* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964).

79. *Ibid.*, 85.

80. *Ibid.*, 104.

81. Ryle, xxii.

all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”

To some readers this may seem to be drawing unjustified conclusions from the simple lack of historical evidence about Gurnall’s activities, but I don’t think so. My contention is backed up by one striking fact which none can deny: Gurnall’s acceptance of the Act of Uniformity. In 1662, after the Restoration of Charles II, the Act required every minister to publicly assent to everything in the newly revised *Book of Common Prayer* (deliberately drawn up in phrases guaranteed to offend any Puritan), and to renounce the Solemn League and Covenant. On the appointed day, August 24, two thousand pastors were forced out of their pulpits for refusing to submit. In Ryle’s words, “many of these two thousand were the best, the ablest, and the holiest ministers of the day.”⁸² For many of them, this courageous stand led to arrests, imprisonment, loss of livelihood, and even death. One of those who suffered was William Gurnall’s own father-in-law. Yet Gurnall submitted to the Act, and it should be noted that the Puritans themselves did not consider Gurnall to be one of them. An attack on him was published in 1665, the full title of which is:

Covenant Renouncers Desperate Apostates, opened in two letters, written by a Christian friend to Mr. W. Gurnall, of Lavenham in Suffolk, which may indefinitely serve as an admonition to all such Presbyterian ministers or others, who have forced their conscience, not only to leap over, but to renounce their solemn covenant obligation to endeavor a {37} reformation according to God’s word, and the extirpation of all prelatical superstitions, and contrary thereunto conform to those superstitious vanities against which they had so solemnly sworn. Printed in Anti-turncoat Street, and sold at the sign of Truth’s Delight, right opposite to Backsliding Alley.⁸³

Gurnall was perhaps irritated by such hostility, but he had the comfort of knowing that, unlike his ejected brethren, he still retained his parish; and Lavenham provided a wealthy living. In contrast to other mystics, Gurnall does not seem to have been unusually distressed by the pleasures of Vanity Fair.

82. *Ibid.*, xxxii.

83. *Ibid.*

The foregoing remarks are not intended to discredit everything Gurnall said. His weighty (1200 page) volume is packed with witty and pithy remarks, and, in a narrow sense, it is doctrinally orthodox. I have myself often quoted Gurnall in sermons; he had an unusual gift for turning a happy phrase. What I take issue with is Gurnall's *perspective*, that the "Christian warfare" can be reduced to a wholly internal struggle. Gurnall retreated from a battle in which his comrades were dying in order to meditate on transcendent verities, and the thrust of his book is an encouragement to others to do the same. Lest it be thought that we are kicking dead dogs, let the reader be reminded that our concern is very much with the present: Gurnall's spiritual heirs are falling into the same ditch with their blind leader. At this moment, the United States government is at war with Christianity, attempting to close Christian schools and silence Christian pastors—and the "neo-Puritans" are wondering what the fuss is all about. Gary North's statement, at any rate, should be viewed in its proper light: we want *more* of Cromwell (without affixing the Chalcedon *imprimatur* to everything he did), and *less* of William Gurnall.

Dr. North's little essay seems to have touched a nerve among Gurnallian retreatists (see "A Neo-Puritan Critic Replies," in the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 6, 1:175–76). The most serious response to date, however, is by John Zens in the Spring 1979 issue of *Baptist Reformation Review*. Below, we will reprint Dr. North's advertisement, followed by Mr. Zens's complete article (in successive portions) and my answers. To avoid confusion, Mr. Zens's statements will appear in a different font.

SYMPOSIUM ON PURITANISM AND LAW
THE JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION

Gary North

The Puritans have only recently been rediscovered, first by secular historians, and then by contemporary Christians. The secular historians, led {38} by Perry Miller (a professor of English literature) and William Haller (another English professor) in the 1930s, and by numerous British and American historians—some of whom are Marxists—since the 1950s, have focused especially on Puritan contributions in litera-

ture, philosophy, government, and social policy. The rediscovery of the Puritans by modern Christians came later, generally since the 1960s, especially through the influence of numerous reprintings of selected (and selective) Puritan sermons. These inexpensive reprints, accompanied by modern histories dealing with Puritan theology, piety, and ecclesiology, have opened up several aspects of the world of the Puritans to those who are their theological heirs. These reprints have generally been helpful.

One problem which must be acknowledged is the seeming inability of the two groups most responsible for the Puritan revival to understand each other. Indeed, it is almost as if the two groups were completely unaware of each other's existence. The secular historians have only an incomplete grasp of the nuances and meaning of Puritan theology, precisely because they do not understand Protestant theology or the Bible. On the other hand, the major promoters of Puritan reprints are self-consciously pietistic in their perspective. They deliberately concern themselves only with questions of Puritan piety, worship, and evangelism. They shy away from any consideration of the reasons for the Puritans' enormous impact on Anglo-American history, the question which most interests the secular historians. As Rushdoony once wrote, the secularists are interested in history, but not in God, and the modern Christians are interested in God, but not in history. If you compare, for example, Antonia Fraser's masterful biography of Cromwell, which surveys the impact he had on English society, with the devotional biographies produced by the reprint-oriented neo-Puritans, you will immediately understand the nature of the gap. The interests of the two camps are very different. The secularists search the documents of Puritanism in order to find aspects of their thought that led to their vision of a kingdom of God on earth, which was later transformed (secularized) by others into a concern for the kingdom of man. (This is why few historians are interested in the Pilgrims, as distinguished from the New England Puritans; the Pilgrims had less of this vision.) The "reprinting neo-Puritans" have read carefully selected Puritan sermons and have found few traces of their vision of the kingdom of God on earth—a kingdom of Christian law, Christian economics, Christian politics. These researchers have concerned themselves only with an

internalized Puritan kingdom, a Puritan “kingdom of the heart.” New England Puritanism confounds them, understandably.

The Puritan movement, taken as a whole—not just selectively sifted sermons—was concerned with the ideal of a Holy Commonwealth, a City on a Hill that would, they hoped, shine before ungodly men and lead to their {39} regeneration and the reconstruction of the whole world in terms of Jesus Christ. The secularist historians see that this was the essence of the Puritan movement, but they deny that such a rigidly theological vision was or is workable. The “reprinting neo-Puritans” agree with the secularists on this point. They too believe that the Holy Commonwealth ideal is unworkable, in time and on earth (before Christ’s second coming). They also tend to argue that no comprehensive, kingdom-oriented vision of Christian reconstruction can ever be valid, and therefore they have consciously, systematically attempted to ignore the obvious, namely, that the Puritan movement, especially the outlook of the New England Puritans, was based on the Holy Commonwealth ideal. They content themselves with reprinting what some Puritan preachers wrote concerning predestination, church worship, and internal self-examination, while generally ignoring what tens of thousands of Puritan soldiers, merchants, scientists, judges, politicians, lawyers, and (yes) preachers did to lay the foundations of Western science, technology, constitutionalism, business management, and military strategy. The “reprinting neo-Puritans” have contented themselves with the “Puritanism of the sanctuary,” systematically ignoring or de-emphasizing the “Puritanism of social transformation” that secular historians have documented so thoroughly.

The “reprinting neo-Puritans” for the most part do not think that it is valid to call for the total reconstruction of society in terms of Christ’s saving grace and the enforcement of biblical law, and neither do the secularists. The “reprinting neo-Puritans” do not think that Christ’s people are called to such a task, nor are Christians morally responsible before God to work toward such transformation, and neither do the secularists. The “reprinting neo-Puritans” do not believe that the Bible sets forth standards of righteousness for every sphere of life that can serve as guidelines for Christian reconstruction, and neither do the secularists.

The problem, then, with the revival of interest in Puritanism is that it has been led by “reprinting neo-Puritans” and the secularists. The “reprinting neo-Puritans” want to shave the Holy Commonwealth out of the Puritan heritage, while the secularists want to shave the Puritan heritage out of the Holy Commonwealth ideal. The “reprinting neo-Puritans” want to see the spread of Puritanism’s theological roots, but without the social fruits; the secularists want to see the spread of the social fruits, but without Puritanism’s theological roots. Both groups are bound to be disappointed in the future. To put it in a vernacular, Puritanism is a package deal.

The *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* is devoting two⁸⁴ issues to a consideration of the neglected Christian reconstruction ideal of Puritanism and its effects in history. The first issue, “Puritanism and Law,” surveys {40} the commitment to biblical law of the New England Puritans and some of the English reformers and Puritans. (We are not setting up an historical stick-man—that every Puritan was a consistent theonomist—so that the “reprinting neo-Puritans” can knock him down with still more of their highly selective reprints.) The second issue, scheduled for publication next summer, deals with “Puritanism and Society.” What we will demonstrate is that the secularists are correct in their conclusion that the culture-transforming power of Puritanism was directly related to their theology. We are arguing that their theology, which ought to be our theology, is still capable of that same culture-transforming influence, which both the secularists and the “reprinting neo-Puritans” are so anxious to deny.

If we believed in graffiti on public buildings, which we don’t, we would like to see this one plastered over every public building in the world:

CROMWELL LIVES!

The secularists respect his accomplishments, power, and cultural impact, but despise his theology. The “reprinting neo-Puritans” like parts of his theology, but not the parts that led directly to his accomplishments, power, and cultural impact, which they tend to regard as a kind of embarrassment. The *Journal* is committed to the

84. Three, as it turned out: “Puritanism and Law,” “Puritanism and Progress,” and “Puritanism and Society.”

proposition that we need a whole lot more of Cromwell, and a whole lot less of Gurnall.

“MORE OF CROMWELL, LESS OF GURNALL”?

Jon Zens

Dr. North’s general overview of the contemporary revival of interest in Puritans is, I believe, insightful and accurate. I cannot agree with the conclusions he sets forth, but he does raise some crucial issues that few have seriously faced, and, therefore, deserve our further consideration.

“Reprinting Neo-Puritans”

First, Dr. North has in view mainly the Banner of Truth Trust when he refers to the “reprinting neo-Puritans.” The “reprinting neo-Puritans” have sought to make available many Puritan classics at a price Christians can afford. They have tried to select material from the Puritans that reflects their pastoral concerns to defend the gospel and apply it to the hearts of men. However, as Dr. North points out, these modern reprints are indeed selective, and I believe that as a result of this one-sided presentation of Puritanism a major problem has surfaced. The problem is this: the contemporary pastors, young men aspiring to the ministry, and people in the pews who are reading these reprints are generally ignorant of a dominating theme in Puritanism, which Dr. North refers to as “the ideal of a Holy Common-wealth,” {41} or a “national church.” William Haller summarized this theme as follows:

The object of the Puritan reformers was the reorganization of English society in the form of a church governed according to presbyterian principles. Until they were summoned by Parliament to the Westminster Assembly, they were granted no opportunity to put their ideas into effect, but they were allowed within limits to preach to the people and to publish books. They were very far from approving in principle the tolerance by which they profited. Their ideal was uniformity based upon the will of a godly people and maintained with the support of a godly civil state. They would have had the state set up presbyterianism first and trust the preachers to render the people godly afterwards. (*The Rise of Puritanism* [1938; New York, 1957], 171)

Thus, modern Christians reading these reprints are usually unaware that there was in fact a dominant *political* force in Puritanism, which, as Dr. North rightly observes, grew out of their conception of the Gospel. To be honest, therefore, with Puritanism as a whole, we must either

acknowledge that this “Holy Commonwealth” ideal is indeed a valid outworking of the power of the gospel, or we must reject it as *inimical* to the truth of the gospel. Dr. North would agree with the former position, while I have argued elsewhere that the latter position is Biblically accurate (cf. “What Can We Learn From Reformation History?,” *BRR*, Autumn, 1978, 1–13). In all fairness, it must be noted that Iain Murray, editor of the *Banner of Truth Magazine*, has had many kind things to say about some church-state situations (cf. “Spiritual Characteristics of the First American Settlement,” *Sword and Trowel*, July/August, 1977, et al.).

It must be stated at the outset that Chalcedon has never espoused the idea of a “national church.” This is an important point, for Mr. Zens refers to the concept constantly throughout his essay. The term does not occur in Dr. North’s ad, nor does it ever receive favorable mention in the writings of any Chalcedon scholar. We have repeatedly stated our belief in the separation of church and state. We *do* believe in “the ideal of a Holy Commonwealth,” but such a concept is vastly different from that of a “national church.” A “national church” means one of two things: (1) a nation ruled by ecclesiastical officers; or (2) a church ruled by civil officers. We reject both of these options as manifestly unbiblical.

But though church and state must be functionally separate, *religion* and state can never be separated. Man is created in the image of God, and every aspect of his life is inescapably defined in terms of his relationship to God. Therefore, *the state is always religious*. “He that is not with me is against me,” Jesus said. Every man, and every human institution, is either Christian or non-Christian. Every law of man is either grounded on God’s law, or it is not. No man, in any area of life, is neutral with respect {42} to God and His word. All men are required by God’s law to be Christian, at every point of their existence and activity. If the state is not Christian, it is Antichrist, and no amount of scholastic weaseling can successfully obscure this fact. In a chapter entitled, “Separation of Church and State,” Greg Bahnsen says:

The objection that the civil magistrate’s enforcement of God’s law would be a violation of the separation of church and state is unfounded. Church and state are separated as to their functions in *both* Testaments of God’s word; thus the law which was valid in the Older Testament cannot be invalidated in the New Testament on the

basis of church/ state separation.... The church and state, though separate from one another, are united *under the authority of God*.⁸⁵

Did the Puritans believe in a “national church”? John Owen, Oliver Cromwell’s chaplain, certainly believed that the state must be Christian, as he argued strenuously before Parliament.⁸⁶ But he just as strenuously argued against a “national church”:⁸⁷ what Owen and the Puritans wanted was a commonwealth in which every man, and every thing, high and low, was constituted “HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD” (Zech. 14:20).

William Haller’s statement that “they would have had the state set up presbyterianism first and trust the preachers to render the people godly afterwards” is totally without foundation, and Haller understandably offers no documentation for it. In fact, Zens’s overly selective quotation distorts the meaning of Haller’s assertion. A fuller quotation follows:

They would have had the state set up presbyterianism first and trust the preachers to render the people godly afterwards. As it was, the condition actually imposed upon them by the policy of the government was that they begin by trying to convert the people and trust in God to bring about presbyterian reform in his own time. The immediate result was that in the hope of establishing ultimately their cherished scheme of uniformity, they spent two generations preaching a doctrine and a way of life which promoted active individual religious experience and expression, promoted it much faster than means could be found to control or direct it.⁸⁸

In other words, Haller is theorizing about what the Puritans “would have” done if they had had the chance, but goes on to state what their *actual* program was. This is, to say the least, a rather precarious method of doing history, especially when supporting evidence is lacking. To allege that the Puritans were primarily interested in the state is an easy slur {43} to make, but it is groundless. The Puritans simply viewed God’s word as law over every area of life—civil, ecclesiastical, and personal—and desired total reformation in terms of Scripture.

85. Greg Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1977), 432.

86. John Owen, *Works* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965-68), vol. 8, 245-471.

87. *Ibid.*, vol. 8, 163ff.; vol. 14, 517ff.

88. William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (University of Pennsylvania, 1972), 173. The pagination in my copy varies slightly from the original edition.

Nor is Chalcedon *primarily* interested in the reformation of the state. Certainly, we work for the application of Scripture in every area, including politics; but it is always with the recognition that, as R. J. Rushdoony has written, “The key to social renewal is individual regeneration,”⁸⁹ and that “true reform begins with the submission of our own lives, homes, and callings to God’s Law-word. The world is then recaptured step by step as men institute true reform in their realms.”⁹⁰ Indeed, “the purpose of regeneration is that man reconstruct all things in conformity to God’s order.”⁹¹

Zens is correct in pointing out that the issue centers on our differing views regarding the nature of the gospel and salvation. The Gurnallian view of salvation is *internalistic* and *individualistic*. Man’s purpose is seen solely in terms of conversion, and the salvation of the soul is seen as the end of the road. Salvation, in this view, consists of man’s deliverance from his environment. The Reformation concept, on the other hand, is that God saves men totally, *in* their environment. The entirety of life is restored, and (in James B. Jordan’s phrase) “the torn fabric of life is made whole again.” Conversion, therefore, is clearly important as the foundational event in a man’s life, his starting-point; but we must not stop there. In restoring His image to man by regeneration (Eph. 4:23–24; Col. 3:10), God restores him to his original purpose, that of godly dominion over creation (Gen. 1:26–28). If such a purpose is “inimical” to our gospel, then we are preaching a false gospel. During Hezekiah’s reform, “the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the Lord” (2 Chron. 30:12). A biblical worldview sees no necessary contradiction between working for godly laws and rulers, and working for a godly people. Both are needed. We pray for God’s hand to bring vital godliness into the root of society at every level. To hope and work for anything less is a confession of unbelief, a denial that Jesus is Lord.

Secondly, we must acknowledge that the Chalcedon movement, headed by Dr. R. J. Rushdoony, is, on the surface, being more historically

89. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1973), 122.

90. *Ibid.*, 627.

91. *Ibid.*, 777.

honest with Puritanism than the “reprinting neo-Puritans.” The Chalcedon movement is committed not only to the *theology* of the Puritans, but also to the theocracy they envisioned. However, in the light of Dr. North’s statements, it appears that this movement is seizing on the *political* implications of {44} Puritanism, but shying away from Puritan *piety*. While the Puritans tried to emphasize the gospel in their political endeavors (albeit unsuccessfully, for church-state endeavors are opposed to the gospel), the Chalcedon movement seems to allow concern for political dominion to crowd out a proper Biblical perspective of Christ’s kingdom (cf. my review of Dr. Rushdoony’s *God’s Plan for Victory* in *BRR*, Autumn 1977, 56–58).

In the words of the Oxford English Dictionary, to be *pious* is to be “careful of the duties owed by created beings to God; characterized by or showing reverence and obedience to God; faithful to religious duties and observances; devout, godly, religious.” True piety, therefore, is godliness—and godliness must govern all activities, including political activities. Or does a man enter a neutral zone when he steps into political office? May a ruler steal from his citizens, for “political” purposes, and still be regarded as a pious man? Not as long as 1 Samuel 8 is in our Bibles. The Puritans rightly saw that piety locked in a prayer closet is merely a hypocritical sham: “He who prays as he ought,” said Owen, “will endeavor to live as he prays.”⁹² Piety is a recognition of God as Creator, and a submission to all “the duties owed by created beings to God”; and as John Barret pointed out, “He that said what we should Be, to Him it certainly belongeth to say what we should do.”⁹³ Jesus Christ claimed that *all authority* in heaven *and in earth* is His, and to affirm His lordship over the state is simply to acknowledge His dominion over a part of the whole. To deny His lordship is unbiblical, and thus impious.

The Chalcedon position, however, seems to Zens to go beyond even the excesses of Puritanism, allowing “concern for political dominion to crowd out a proper Biblical perspective of Christ’s kingdom.” If this be true, then of course Chalcedon is seriously in error; but before leaping to conclusions, let us first ask: what is a proper Biblical perspective of

92. Owen, vol. 7, 295.

93. Cited in Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study of Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Guardian Press, 1976), 48.

Christ's kingdom? Mr. Zens does not tell us. He simply asserts that we are violating it. We shall be forced, therefore, to go to the Bible.

It is our position that the truly Biblical perspective regarding Christ's kingdom necessarily involves a concern for political dominion. If this is so, then such a concern cannot possibly "crowd out" the Biblical perspective; it merely applies it. In Acts 4:12, Peter declared: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." What, you may ask, does *that* have to do with politics? And as far as most "neo-Puritan" preaching goes nowadays, the answer is: absolutely nothing. But to those in the first century who were listening to Peter, it was overwhelming in its political {45} implications. The statement is, quite baldly, a declaration of war against the Roman Empire. For at the moment of Peter's declaration, the emperor was being hailed everywhere as the divine saviour of the world, "*whose only work,*" in Antony's phrase, "*was to save where anyone needed to be saved.*"⁹⁴ Ethelbert Stauffer has written of the messianic inscriptions on the emperor's coins:

The symbolic meaning is clear: a new day is dawning for the world. The divine saviour-king, born in the historical order ordained by the state, has come to power on land and sea, and inaugurates the cosmic era of salvation. Salvation is to be found in none other save Augustus, and there is no other name given to men in which they can be saved. This is the climax of the Advent proclamation of the Roman empire.⁹⁵

As H. B. Swete commented on Revelation 7:10, the cry of the redeemed multitude, *Salvation to our God ... and unto the Lamb*, "is equivalent to attributing to Both the title of *Soter* (Saviour), so freely given by the loyal or pliant cities of Asia to the Emperors, but belonging in Christian eyes only to God and to His Christ."⁹⁶

Thus, the declaration of the early church that Jesus is Saviour had immediate ramifications in the political sphere. This is not to say that the message of the gospel is primarily political. The message of the gos-

94. Ethelbert Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), 52.

95. *Ibid.*, 88.

96. H. B. Swete, *Commentary on Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1977), 101.

pel and the kingdom of Christ is *universal*, and for this reason it comprehends nations as well as individuals. Christianity's conflict with Rome originated from the fact that there were "two Empires, two social organizations, designed to embrace the whole world," warring with one another.⁹⁷ Our Lord's Great Commission was not a mandate for bare proclamation alone, but for *the discipleship of the nations* (Matt. 28:19), and the purpose of the mandate is not the erection of a national church, but the establishment of national obedience, that the *nations* should "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).

It was just this fearless declaration of Christ as Lord and Saviour which brought the early church into conflict with the authorities. The charge brought by the prosecution in one first-century trial was: "These all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus" (Acts 17:7). A short time after this incident, the Apostle Paul unequivocally stated the Christian doctrine of the state. Every ruler, he said, is a "*minister of God*" (Rom. 13:4), responsible before God to protect the righteous and "to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Again, Paul makes bold the claim that at Christ's ascension He was installed as supreme {46} Lord, above *all* rulers (Eph. 1:20–22). All men, rulers included, are obligated to acknowledge Christ's lordship. This is what His kingship means. If our concept of Christ's kingdom involves anything less than this, we are allotting to Him a very tiny kingdom indeed, and one with which any Roman emperor would have been happy to coexist. If Mr. Zens's "proper Biblical perspective of Christ's kingdom" had only been preached in the early church, how many martyrs would have been spared flame and sword! But Chalcedon believes that the apostles and martyrs were correct in their estimate of Christ's kingdom, and that Mr. Zens's retreatism is *improper* and *unbiblical*; moreover, it is treasonous to the cause of Christ's kingdom.

The Goals of the Chalcedon Movement

Thirdly, we need to keep clearly in mind the stated goals of the Chalcedon movement. They desire to conquer society with God's law,

97. Westcott, cited in Swete, lxxxi.

and see the establishment of modern-day church-states. They exult in such theocratic attempts as Calvin's Geneva, Cromwell's England, and the Puritan's experiment in New England (cf. Rushdoony, *God's Plan*, 15; *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, 782–793; Greg Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, 549–569). The unfolding of the nature of Christ's kingdom in the New Testament, however, stands opposed to such "Christian Reconstruction" efforts, and church history is strewn with the wreckage of Constantinian sacralism (cf. Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, 18–60; Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, 21–62).

It is in light of the clearly-stated goals of the Chalcedon movement that we must evaluate Dr. North's feeling that he could wish for "Cromwell Lives!" to be "plastered over every public building in the world." Anyone who currently finds himself assenting to this desire needs to carefully and soberly consider the history surrounding Cromwell, and then ask himself if he is really prepared to live in a society patterned after Cromwell's Protectorate.

As previously noted, we abhor the idea of a "church-state." What we do long for is the establishment of *Christian* states governed by Biblical law. To the extent that any past "theocracies" have conformed to Scripture, we do "exult" in them. Where these communities have departed from God's law, however, we feel no necessity to defend them.⁹⁸ And this is perhaps as good a place as any to point out that Puritanism should *not* be considered as a "package deal" where it was inconsistent to the principle {47} of Biblical absolutism. The implications of the Puritans' theology are of a piece with their theology itself, and to separate the two is unjustifiable. But when the Puritans fell into strictly pagan notions of a "just price," for instance, they were guilty of a failure to apply their own theology. It must be remembered that when Mr. Zens opposes the Puritan "package," he is opposing the whole package: not the social fruit only, but the theological root. For, he says, "the unfolding of the nature of Christ's kingdom in the New Testament ... stands opposed to such 'Christian Reconstruction' efforts," thereby proposing a differing theological model. But even this is mere verbiage; we are not told what, in Zens's view, the nature of Christ's kingdom is.

98. See, e.g., Gary North, "Medieval Economics in Puritan New England, 1630–1660," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 2.

This is not argument, it is rhetoric. James B. Jordan has cited similar statements, such as the assertion that a theocratic ideal fails to do justice to the “flow of redemptive history”: “This contention, however, is *not* an argument, but only the *form* of an argument. It is necessary for the opponent to come forth with texts which *demonstrate* that the ‘flow of redemptive history’ has removed from operation God’s own explanation of His moral law.”⁹⁹ In like manner, if Zens wishes to have his “arguments” taken seriously, he will have to first tell us what he is talking about, and then display a Biblical basis for it.

Some of Cromwell’s History

For those interested, the more detailed historical accounts of Daniel Neal (*The History of the Puritans* [London, 1882], vol. III, 318–359, 406–468; vol. IV, 1–189) and J. B. Marsden (*The History of the Later Puritans* [London, 1852], 141–409, especially 289–328) should be consulted. Here, only certain pertinent observations will be outlined. First, on the surface, Cromwell was interested in religious freedom. He was much more liberal in this regard than the Presbyterian Puritans (Marsden, 376). However, the irony is that in spite of his expressed desire for some toleration in matters of religion, Cromwell was most *oppressive* in many of his policies and actions. Thus, Cromwell felt justified in killing others who had in the past molested Protestants. “Protestants, wherever they were oppressed found in” Cromwell, says George P. Fisher, “a defender whose arm was long enough to smite their assailants” (*The Reformation* [New York, 1893], 441). “Cromwell,” says Marsden, “and his army regarded themselves as instruments in God’s hands to avenge the Protestant blood which had been shed like water on every side. The atrocities of the Popish massacre and of the Ten Years rebellion, cried aloud for vengeance” (329).

At the beginning of Cromwell’s Protectorate, {48}

the Parliament of 1653 professed to legislate as Christian statesmen for a Christian community. They punished irreligion as an offence against the state. The respect they showed for uneasy consciences they showed only at the pillory and the whipping post. Whatever were their motives, religious liberty, in connection with this subject, never crossed their minds. (Marsden, 374)

99. James B. Jordan, “Calvinism and ‘The Judicial Law of Moses,’” the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 5, no. 2:20.

And even in Cromwell's better moments, his conception of religious toleration could never be extended to include Catholics or Episcopalians (Neal, IV, 69). Thus, during the Protectorate, all citizens suspected of Romish sympathies were subjected to an "oath of abjuration," which said in part, "I, _____, do abjure and renounce the Pope's supremacy and authority over the Catholic church in general, and myself in particular."

Upon refusal of this oath, the Protector and his successors might, by process in the exchequer, seize upon two-thirds of their estates both real and personal, for the use of the public. (Neal, IV, 146)

Cromwell was committed to the proposition that Catholics or Episcopalians could not be good citizens. His commitment to a "national church" would always hinder the implications of religious tolerance from being realized.

It is noteworthy that the two works on which Mr. Zens is most dependent for his allegations are (as we shall see) riddled with error. Many statements which are not downright fabrications are quite misleading. The cautious reader will do well to refer to the much more reliable works by Fraser, Hill, and Paul (cited below).

To state that Cromwell "felt justified in killing" those who had molested Protestants is a dangerous oversimplification. It is true that he led an expedition against the Irish Catholic rebels, but this was not simply a "religious war." Irish Catholicism was, in Hill's words, "a *political* religion in a sense in which Catholicism in England had ceased to be political";¹⁰⁰ Cromwell's move was a police action to preserve the peace of the Commonwealth. "Yet in England he was prepared in fact to tolerate Catholics and Episcopalians: Roman Catholic historians agree that their co-religionists were better off during the Protectorate than they had ever been under James or Charles I."¹⁰¹ Cromwell was far more interested in peace and order than in the enforcement of religious uniformity. The "oath of abjuration" cited by Zens *was passed over Cromwell's objections, and he never enforced it.*¹⁰²

100. Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 121.

101. *Ibid.* See also Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell: The Lord Protector* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 488ff.

102. Fraser, 628.

As for the punishments for the irreligious, we should remember that not everything the Puritans did was true to their avowed principle of *sola* {49} *Scriptura*. Scripture never mandates punishments for “uneasy consciences”; stocks and pillories are cruel and humiliating measures never countenanced by God’s law; and whipping is nowhere encountered in the law as a suitable method of dealing with heretics. Chalcedon’s goals have to do not with repeating Puritan errors, but with establishing *Biblical* law. Where Puritanism fell short of this, it may and should be criticized. The errors of Puritanism serve as a warning to those who would stand on their shoulders, and it is our duty to be consistent to their Biblical principles, rather than to their unbiblical aberrations. To the extent that they were faithful to Biblical law, we rejoice. But Puritanism itself is not the ideal, except insofar as it is an historical example of a people who achieved remarkable consistency in the application of Scriptural standards. The ideal is universal obedience to the law of the Lord.

A Bold Seizure

On June 4, 1647, “by the advice and direction of lieutenant-general Cromwell,” the agitators came to Holmby-house, where King Charles I was staying, and carried him away to the army at Newmarket (Neal, III, 335). They took this action because “whoever had him in their power must be masters of the peace, and make their own terms” (Neal, III, 336). This bold action, of course, was not well received by Parliament or the populace in general.

The King of England Executed

In December, 1648, the first rumblings about bringing King Charles to trial were heard. In January, 1649, the House of Commons “passed three memorable votes, which like a chain-shot swept away the King, the Lords, the law and liberties, the fundamental government and property of this nation at one blow.”

1. That the people are, under God, the original of all just power.
2. That the Commons of England in Parliament assembled, being chosen and representing the people, have the supreme power of the nation.

3. That whatsoever is enacted or declared for law by the House of Commons assembled in Parliament has the force of law (Marsden, 289–290).

Then followed an ordinance for the trial of Charles Stuart, King of England for high treason.

The Lords refused to have any share in these violent proceedings.... And even among the Republicans there was one illustrious man, Algernon Sidney ... who sternly opposed the measure.... "No one will stir," said Cromwell, in answer to his remonstrances. "I tell you {50} we will cut his head off with the crown upon it." "I cannot prevent you," answered Sidney, "but I certainly will have nothing to do with this affair." (Marsden, 290)

On January 27, the court condemned Charles "to be put to death by the severing of his head from his body," to take place on January 30, 1649.

No support for this dastardly action could be found in any quarters among the political or spiritual leaders in England (Marsden, 296–303).

(John) Owen alone, of all the Puritan clergy, had the daring to applaud the proceedings of the army. On the 31st of December (1648) he preached two sermons before the House of Commons, expressed his admiration of the conduct of the army, and censured those members of the house who ... voluntarily absented themselves.... On the day after the King's death, Owen preached before the Parliament. He published his sermon, with the title "Righteous zeal encouraged by divine protection" ... his language was guarded, and he carefully abstained from expressing approbation of the deed which covered the land with mourning. The strongest passage is that in which he says, "when kings command unrighteous things, and the people suit them with willing compliance, none doubts but that the destruction of both is just and righteous." (Marsden, 302–320)

The ambassadors from Holland sought earnestly to stop Charles' execution. They were able to speak with Cromwell and others, but their pleas fell on deaf ears (Marsden, 316).

On the morning of January 30, 1649, King Charles was brought to the scaffold, where he uttered his final words, "and kneeling down he submitted himself to an executioner masked with crape, who at one stroke severed his head from his body" (Marsden, 318).

Marsden makes these astute observations:

Cromwell is generally regarded as the chief promoter of the king's death. This he himself denied; but it was part of his character to put forward

other men to announce his own measures in the first instance, leaving him at liberty either to fall behind and disengage himself, or to spread all sail and take the lead, as the breeze of public opinion might be favorable or adverse. It will not readily be supposed that the house of commons undertook so daring an exploit without instructions from its masters, the army, or that the army embarked in it without their generals, or their generals without Cromwell. Once begun, none urged the matter forward more eagerly, no man was more impatient to bring it to a fatal close. (306)

While the Presbyterian Puritans are technically cleared of involvement in Charles' death (Marsden, 300), it must nevertheless be observed that they were committed to enforcing uniformity of religion in England. Therefore, as Bishop Warburton remarked, "those who were capable of punishing Arians with death, were capable of doing any wickedness for the cause of God" (quoted by Neal, III, 464). We must learn from this that past {51} "national churches" have always fostered various atrocities *in the name of Christ*. We have no reason to expect anything but a repetition of such atrocities if the contemporary "Christian Reconstruction" goals are ever achieved.

Again we are presented with falsehoods masquerading as history. Cromwell did *not* order the seizure of the king, and he learned about it only after it had been done.¹⁰³ "Those who regard Oliver as the contriver of the whole scheme adopt a naive conspiracy theory of history ... and underestimate the strength and self-confidence of the rank-and-file organization of the New Model Army."¹⁰⁴ Indeed, at this time, "Cromwell believed that a restoration of monarchy was essential to the stability of property and the social order.... He threw himself into negotiations (with the king) with such enthusiasm that his cousin and friend Oliver St. John had to warn him that he was doing the King's business too fast."¹⁰⁵ But Charles's deceit and duplicity made negotiations increasingly difficult, and talks finally broke down completely, after repeated attempts by Cromwell to work out a compromise.

On November 6, 1648,¹⁰⁶ the Army's Council of Officers called for Charles's execution. Cromwell had nothing to do with this (he wasn't

103. *Ibid.*, 193ff. Incidentally, it took place on June 3, not June 4. But why quibble?

104. Hill, 90.

105. *Ibid.*, 92.

106. Not December.

even present at the meeting), and until late in December he was still trying to save the king's life.¹⁰⁷ "Yet once trial and execution had been decided on, Cromwell threw himself into it with the vigour he always showed when his mind was made up."¹⁰⁸ It is perhaps Cromwell's chief offense that he does not present us with the picture of the "born-again" politique, simpering and flaccid; when indecisiveness is a virtue, the man of action is feared, hated, and slandered.

Public sympathy would seem to have been against the king's execution, but it is quite inaccurate (and betrays Marsden's sloppy rewriting of history) to suggest that John Owen was the only Puritan clergyman in support of the action. He was joined by such outstanding preachers as Stephen Marshall, Joseph Caryl, Hugh Peter, and Thomas Brooks, to name a few.¹⁰⁹ But the fundamental issue cannot in any case be judged by consensus. Is any man, even a king, above law? The Biblical writers didn't think so, and neither {52} did the Puritans. This king had waged war against his own people, and claimed to be the supreme power beyond the law. Lucy Hutchinson, wife of one of the regicides, later wrote of the attitude of those who judged the king:

It was upon the consciences of many of them, that if they did not execute justice upon him, God would require at their hands all the blood and desolation which should ensue by their suffering him to escape, when God had brought him into their hands.¹¹⁰

"Cruel necessity," perhaps; but necessity nevertheless. And the same may be said of those other incidents in history which Mr. Zens likes to call "atrocities." Certainly, many atrocious acts have been committed in the name of Christ, but in order to determine the question precisely, we need a definition of the word *atrocious*. Is it an atrocity to execute someone, after trial and due process, who is guilty of what the Bible calls a capital crime? If God has commanded capital punishment, any protest against it is sin. The rejection of God's law constitutes a claim to be a

107. Hill, 102–3; Fraser, 268ff.; Robert S. Paul, *The Lord Protector: Religion and Politics in the Life of Oliver Cromwell* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 184.

108. *Ibid.*

109. John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism During the English Civil Wars, 1640–1648* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 94–95.

110. Cited in Paul, 191.

higher god. To call godly lawkeeping an “atrocious,” therefore, is slander; and to allow crime to go unpunished—that is an atrocity. Zens’s whole appeal at this point is an emotional attempt to cloud the issue. Not once does he deal with the Biblical basis (or lack thereof) for the king’s execution. Could not the same charges of “atrocious” have been brought against Moses? (And it is doubtful whether he *ever* had the mob on his side.) The basic issue is that of obedience to the whole of Biblical law, of which capital punishment is certainly a part.

The goals of Christian Reconstruction have to do with the establishment of Biblical principles throughout all of life. Capital punishment for capital crimes is one aspect of Biblical law that we may ignore only at our peril. But Chalcedon does not have a “capital punishment platform” as such; we simply stand for the whole of God’s law. My stomach may be just as queasy at the thought of execution as the next man’s, but gastrointestinal problems are not the issue: God’s word is. If we would rather serve Baal, then by all means let us do so at once, and abandon Scripture entirely. But if we claim to serve the God of the Bible, we had better get serious about obeying Him. As one Puritan put it, “The least truth is Christ’s and not ours, and therefore we are not to take liberty to affirm or deny at our pleasures.”¹¹¹

If Mr. Zens really wants to prove that any particular historical incident was an atrocity, he has only to demonstrate that it was in violation of Biblical law. This he has not attempted to do, and yet such an argument would be the only one a Christian may accept. In Numbers 16, Korah {53} led a rebellion against Moses just after a man had been executed, and his argument contained the implication that there would be further “atrocities”; “Thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness ...” (v. 13). Zens’s cavil is similar to Korah’s: both are essentially humanistic. The basic issue must always center on obedience *vs.* disobedience to the law of the Lord. The false premise in Zens’s charge is his faulty standard of humanism. Until he is ready to tangle with us on the basis of Scriptural authority, his arguments are devoid of any validity.

Further Atrocities Committed

111. Richard Sibbes, *Works* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973), vol. 1, 76.

Once embarked in crime, the regicidal party afforded no exception to the universal law: one sin provoked another. Once stained with blood, their hands with less reluctance were defiled with it again. On the 9th of March the scaffold was once more erected in the Palace Yard, and three of the greatest royalists were beheaded—the Duke of Hamilton, the Earl of Holland, and Lord Capel; and the scaffold never witnessed nobler specimens of Christian heroism.... The execution of Charles has had many apologists; the slaughter of these noblemen has had few or none. (Marsden, 322, 326)

(Cromwell's) aim was to establish a commonwealth based upon the Bible.... By what right, except the right of the sword, were they attempting to impose their impracticable commonwealth upon a reluctant people? With what sincerity could they profess to be acting on the nation's behalf when its voice was sternly repressed by frequent executions and swarms of soldiery? (Marsden, 336)

Napoleon justified his crimes by the doctrines of fatalism; Cromwell sheltered his ambition beneath the veil of impulses supposed to be divine. The contrivances are similar.... Before he set out, Cromwell spent a full hour with Ludlow in expounding the hundred-and-tenth Psalm, believing, or affecting to believe, that he himself was the hero of its triumphs. His campaign in Scotland was to be the fulfillment of prophecy, and the enemies of the Lord were to be subdued before him. The battle of Dunbar followed soon after; it was fought on the 3rd of September, 1650. The Scotch were beaten, and Cromwell was again victorious. Fanaticism had never yet appeared upon so wide a stage, or played her part in a scene so dreadful. On the field of Dunbar Puritan fought with Puritan; the Independent plunged his steel into the Presbyterian; men by thousands threw away their lives and slaughtered one another to prove that the Solemn League was superseded by the Engagement.... So, with solemn words upon their lips and rising from the attitude of prayer, they fell upon the work of slaughter. Cromwell, having spent a long time in prayer, presented himself with joy upon his face to his chief captains. The Lord, he said, had answered his petitions: in God's name he promised them victory. He gave as the word for the English army, The Lord of hosts. The sign was welcomed through the camp with a dreadful enthusiasm. (Marsden, 342, 343) {54}

The next year an event occurred which increased the exasperation of the Presbyterians and Independents against each other. This was the trial and execution of Love, the Presbyterian minister.... He was charged with a criminal correspondence with the young king (Charles II), and condemned to death upon the scaffold as a traitor. Love had been a sufferer for conscience sake through his whole life.... He was attended upon the

scaffold on Tower-hill by (Thomas) Manton, (Edward) Calamy, and other eminent Presbyterians.... He then kneeled down and prayed aloud, and rising up embraced the ministers and friends around him, and calmly laid his head upon the block. He died before he was forty years of age; and the example of his courage and his piety produced a deep impression. Dr. Manton announced his intention of preaching a funeral sermon: the soldiers threatened to be present and to shoot him through the head in his pulpit. (Marsden, 346–48; cf. Neal, IV, 39–46)

Their sin had found them out. One crime had produced another; and at every step they were entangled in the consequences of their great transgression. They (Cromwell's army) were an isolated band of men with whom the nation had nothing in common; and their power was but a shadow, for they were still creatures of the army. Hitherto the religious Puritans had clung to them in spite of all their faults....

But the King's death, the war against the Scotch, and the execution of Love, were the three successive crimes which snapped the connection with a violent wrench, and turned reverence and admiration into scorn. The political leaders of the Puritans found themselves all at once deserted. (Marsden, 349)

Public Opinion Suppressed Under Cromwell's Army

The government, after Charles' death, was a mere usurpation. The House of Commons appointed a Council of State, consisting of forty members, with whose assistance it resolved to undertake the supreme control. The Council, as indeed the Parliament itself, was under the dictation of the army. How carefully the expression of public opinion was suppressed we may learn from the fact, that not only were those members excluded from the House who disapproved of the King's death, but even those who subscribed a declaration that they approved of the proceedings against the King, and engaged to be true to the commonwealth, underwent a rigorous sifting, and many of them were excluded. (Marsden, 332–33)

Cromwell Instituted "Triers"

Cromwell set up a Board of "triers" for the examination and approval of candidates for benefices, and without the certificate of this Board, composed mostly of Independent divines, no person could take an ecclesiastical office.... the Puritans, when they found themselves in possession of power, interdicted the use of the Prayer-book in private houses as well as in churches, and imitated, but too successfully, the persecuting spirit of their opponents. (Fisher, 439) {55}

The Political Environment in which Puritanism Flourished Temporarily

During the commonwealth and the Protectorate of Cromwell Puritanism enjoyed its triumph. For the first time in its changeful history it was left without an adversary. (Marsden, 311)

Cromwell Justified Violence in the Name of God

The young king (Charles II), having been first crowned in Scotland, made a rash attempt to invade England and recover his southern throne. Cromwell defeated him at Worcester on the 3rd of September, 1652. The contest was severe, and the carnage dreadful. The king, after many romantic adventures, escaped to France in a fishing boat.... Cromwell returned in triumph to London.... An act was passed for making the 3rd of September a thanksgiving day forever, and a fast was ordered in these terms: "to seek God for improvement of His great mercies, and for doing things most to His glory and the good of the Commonwealth." Then the work of vengeance was immediately renewed, and the very next day the most illustrious of the prisoners were ordered to be tried on the charge of high treason. The Earl of Derby was beheaded within a month at Bolton. (Marsden, 353–55)

Cromwell's Protectorate Brought Heavy Taxation Upon the People

As the public discontent increased, the personal reputation of the leaders of the Commonwealth suffered in proportion. They were everywhere charged with selfishness and rapacity, and the murmurs of the nation were fomented by a tax of ninety thousand pounds a month, which had been imposed by a vote of the House of Commons in April, 1649, for the maintenance of the forces.... The taxation was enormous. At no period of the war had the King's army cost more than half the sum now levied; and that of Parliament had not exceeded two-thirds of it. (Marsden, 351–52; cf. Neal, IV, 120–21)

Cromwell's Regime, Taken as a Whole, was Dictatorial

The records of despotism afford neither interest nor variety. Cromwell and his officers were absolute, more absolute than any of the Tudors, and there followed four years of silence (after 1654).... In 1656 he called together another Parliament and his former difficulties at once confronted him. Again he had recourse to his stale expedient. He excluded all whom he disliked, and the list included every member who had the least claim to be considered a man of honour or a patriot. The excluded members published an impassioned protest. This man, they said, hath assumed an absolute sovereignty as if he came down from the throne of God: by force of arms he has invaded the fundamental right and liberty of England; his armed men have prevented the free meeting and sitting of the intended Parliament.... This act doth change the state of the people from freedom to slavery, and whosoever hath advised or assisted

the Lord Protector is a capital enemy to the Commonwealth and guilty of high treason.... But the Protector could not {56} recede, nor would his position allow him to remain inactive. (Marsden, 393–94)

Marsden's and Neal's Concluding Thoughts About Cromwell

But with all these good qualities it is certain, the Protector was a strong enthusiast, and did not take up his religion upon rational or solid principles, which led him into sundry mistakes, not supported by reason or Scripture. One of his favorite principles was a particular faith; that is, if anything was strongly impressed upon his mind in prayer, he apprehended it came immediately from God, and was a rule of action; but if there were no impressions, but a flatness in his devotions, it was a denial. Upon this maxim he is said to have suffered the late king to be put to death, in an arbitrary and illegal manner.—Another maxim was, that “in extraordinary cases something extraordinary, or beyond the common rules of justice, may be done; that the moral laws, which are binding in ordinary cases, may then be dispensed with; and that private justice must give way to public necessity.” Which was the Protector's governing principle in all his unwarranted stretches of power. A third principle by which the Protector was misled was his determining the goodness of a cause by the success. An appeal to the sword was with him an appeal to God; and as victory inclined, God owned or disencouraged the cause.—It is impossible that a man's conduct could be just or consistent, while it was directed by such mistaken principles.... Ambition and thirst of glory might sometimes lead the Protector aside, for he imagined himself to be a second Phineas, raised up by Providence to be the scourge of idolatry and superstition, and in climbing to the pinnacle of supreme power, did not always keep within the bounds of law and equity. (Neal, IV, 186–87)

His court during the last few years of his life equaled, if it did not surpass, even the regal state of the magnificent Elizabeth. But his own conscience was probably his chief tormentor.... His share in the war, in the King's death, in the execution of so many Royalists and in the subversion of real liberty, must have been often in his thoughts. Necessity was the only plea, yet where was the necessity? His own judgment forced him to correct the decisions of the Council Chamber by the Word of God. How could he justify his subversion of Republic which he had sworn to guard? Was he conscious of no guilty ambition in his attempt to wear the crown? He had been the hero and the leader of a great cause; he had drawn his sword for justice, for religion, and for God. Had he not betrayed his country? Had he not disgraced the cause of religion? Had he not forsaken God? ... Cromwell's last words were collected with even more than usual care, and published to the world by one of his attendants.... (Said Cromwell), “The

Lord hath filled me with as much assurance of His pardon and His love as my soul can hold. I am a conqueror and more than conqueror through Christ who strengtheneth me.” Deeper penitence and less rapture would have been more in season at the close of such a life as his. He offered up a fervent prayer for the nation; of which it has been said, and not without some justice, that it is the invocation of {57} a mediator rather than the meek petition of a sinner. On the whole, Cromwell’s deathbed does not greatly exalt his reputation as a religious man. It is antinomianism under thin disguise. The tone of his mind and the current of his thoughts led him to gather comfort, not so much from a humble assurance of the Saviour’s love and the Spirit’s presence, as of the safety of those for whose salvation God had covenanted. (Marsden, 398–401)

The right to establish a Biblical commonwealth comes, obviously, from the Bible itself. The ruler is commanded to be a minister of God. As Romans 13 clearly states, this includes the power of the sword in administering the wrath of God. If the state is obedient to Biblical law, it is acting for the good of the people—whether they think so or not. As Moses observed, “What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deut. 4:8). In other words, *Biblical law is flawlessly righteous: its statutes and judgments cannot possibly be improved upon*. Many in Israel disagreed with this estimation, of course, just as many in Cromwell’s England did. But, as stated above, consensus is not the final standard of truth. The point is that Cromwell and the Puritans sincerely attempted to carry out the dictates of Scripture, and it is in light of Scripture alone that they may be judged. The executions of men such as Hamilton, Holland, and Capel occurred not simply because they were Royalists at heart, but because they had led an armed invasion against England. It is characteristic of Gurnallism to rise above such trifles as war, but Cromwell, for all his warts, was a Biblical realist. Although it is certainly possible for both sides in a war to be wrong, both cannot be *right*; and only a pole-sitting mystic could seriously entertain the idea that the differences between an aggressor and a defender can be politely smoothed over.

Marsden again resorts to myth in his statements about Cromwell’s discussion of Psalm 110. The “hero of its triumphs,” of course, is none other than Jesus Christ, as the New Testament writers consistently affirm (e.g., Matt. 22:41–45; Heb. 5:5–6). Thus, if Oliver Cromwell really

regarded this passage as a prophecy of himself, he was clearly a blasphemous egomaniac. What did Cromwell really believe? He cited the third verse (“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power”). The present occasion, he went on, is manifestly “a day of the power of *Christ*,” when *Christ* is extending *His* rule in the world. Cromwell, a postmillennialist, genuinely believed that Christ’s kingdom would encompass the earth, and that the victories of Puritanism were signs of progress toward that goal. Therefore, he urged his hearers, as the people of God, to acknowledge their calling and volunteer themselves in the service of Christ.¹¹² He did *not* {58} claim to be the “hero” of the Psalm, nor did he claim that his era in particular was *the* day of Christ’s power. Whatever one may think of Cromwell’s exegesis or eschatology, there is surely a better way to express disagreement than by propagating falsehoods. And although the statement comes from Marsden, Zens does bear some culpability for making use of such a serious remark without checking its truthfulness. What clearer example could there be of the need to return to the ethical demands of the Bible? “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor,” even if he has been dead for over 300 years.

To those of us who are theological heirs of both Scottish Covenanters and English Puritans, it is indeed a disheartening experience to read of their plunging steel into one another; but, again, our personal feelings are not the issue. Sad as it may be, the Scots were in the wrong. They blindly pursued Royalism without due consideration for the demands of Scripture. True, they did force the irreligious young Charles Stuart to sign the Covenant as the condition of their allegiance, but as Alexander Smellie wrote, “It is not a transaction on which we can look back with joy or pride. Seldom in history has there been a more conspicuous example of ‘faith unfaithful.’ Both the prince and the leaders of the Covenant were, in this case, unpardonably in the wrong.”¹¹³ J. D. Douglas correctly observes:

The first Charles had preferred to die rather than sign the Covenant, on which condition the Scottish army would have come to his aid in

112. Fraser, 433; Paul, 279.

113. Alexander Smellie, *Men of the Covenant* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1962), 28.

England. No trace of any such fervent religious feeling characterized his son. He was prepared to swallow the Covenant at a gulp, to give himself the chance of possessing a crown which he had never worn.¹¹⁴

One of the Scottish commissioners, Alexander Jaffray, later admitted:

We did sinfully both entangle and engage the nation and ourselves, and that poor young prince ... ; making him sign and swear a covenant, which we knew, from clear and demonstrable reasons, that he hated in his heart. Yet, finding that upon these terms only, he could be admitted to rule over us (all other means having then failed him) *he* sinfully complied with what *we* most sinfully pressed upon him:—where, I must confess, to my apprehension, *our* sin was more than *his*.¹¹⁵

Walter Smith, another Covenanter, made this assessment:

Both church and state have agreed to proclaim and bring home and set up this man Charles II, who is now both an idol and a tyrant, to rule over a Christian people in covenant with God, while by many evidences he was known to be a heart-enemy to God and godliness, and, in all his oaths and declarations, a mocking hypocrite.¹¹⁶ {59}

In the face of the knowledge that what they were doing was wrong, the Scottish Covenanters heedlessly marched into an alliance with a godless ruler instead of joining their Calvinistic brethren in England. When Charles Stuart fully came to power in 1660, he rewarded their sinful generosity by initiating a vicious, 28-year persecution of Scottish Protestants. The earl of Lauderdale congratulated him: “Never was King soe absolute as you are in poor old Scotland.”¹¹⁷

Thus, while the Scots were busily discarding their religious liberty, the Puritans were defending theirs, and fighting for their very lives. I would not for a moment hesitate to put cold steel or hot lead into the heart of an attacker, regardless of his alleged religious beliefs; and if there are any Calvinists who are frightened by such a statement, let me assure them that they are quite safe so long as they refrain from attacking me. The concept of self-defense is Biblical, and is not difficult to

114. J. D. Douglas, *Light in the North* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 62.

115. *Ibid.*, 64.

116. *Ibid.*, 66.

117. Smellie, 203.

understand. Cromwell's Puritans simply acted in terms of it. One wise Royalist swore that "he would rather have a troop of horse descend upon him than one lone Puritan convinced he was right."¹¹⁸ It is a sound policy, and the Covenanters paid dearly for ignoring it.

Several examples to demonstrate Cromwell's "dictatorial regime" are cited by Zens: the execution of Christopher Love, the suppression of public opinion, the institution of a board of "triers," and heavy taxation. As to Love's death, we must remember that he was guilty of attempting the overthrow of the Commonwealth and the restoration of Charles Stuart. Whatever we may think of his personal religion, he still was joining forces with a *real* dictator against a government that was trying to be explicitly Christian. He was executed not for his private opinions, but for his treasonous acts. Certainly, there were problems in the Protectorate; but as Love's fellow Presbyterian Robert Baillie wrote, "All who are wise think that our evils would grow yet more if Cromwell were removed."¹¹⁹ Whatever suppression of public opinion there was occurred because of the need to stabilize a new government against those who attempted to undermine it—a claim, indeed, made by ungodly and totalitarian governments as well as by the godly. But the only basis for judgment can be the Bible itself. Cromwell was not popular, but as Paul notes, "Much of the evidence of unpopularity ... is also evidence that the threat which Cromwell professed to fear was real: the Lord Protector believed he stood between the nation and civil war, and he had good grounds for this view."¹²⁰ Paul writes further:

He had to rule, or else be prepared to see the religious freedom that he {60} prized above all other earthly benefits disappear either into the prison of uniformity or into a madhouse of anarchy. It was the major tragedy of his rule that in defending one liberty he seemed to threaten all the rest, that in standing as the champion of freedom he often appeared as the epitome of tyranny.

Nevertheless we must ask ourselves whether at that time religious liberty could have been won in any other way.¹²¹

118. Cited in New, 85.

119. Cited in Hill, 151.

120. Paul, 319.

121. *Ibid.*, 392.

Cromwell's government did institute unjustifiable taxation in some cases, as well as a "board of triers" (although this latter was motivated by political rather than strictly ecclesiastical considerations). But on what basis may we say these policies were wrong? Apart from the restraints imposed by Biblical law, a ruler may do as he pleases. We may not like what he does, but we cannot judge him without an infallible standard for determining what a ruler may or may not do. By rejecting the law as the standard of measurement, Jon Zens has nullified his own criticism of Cromwell, for the Lord Protector could easily retort that he is "free from the law." And it is just my commitment to Biblical law which enables me to acknowledge Cromwell's wrongdoing at this point. Yet it must be noted also that Cromwell did not invent these policies. He had inherited many ideas about lawful government from his culture, and the fact that he failed to abandon some of them should not blind us to the fact that he did achieve a great deal in establishing a nation and reforming its judicial structure on Biblical grounds.

We may dismiss Marsden's concluding comments about Cromwell's "guilty conscience" as unsupportable speculation, but the quotation from Neal regarding Cromwell's views of the moral law should receive some attention. Neal gives the distinct impression that the statement, "moral laws ... may ... be dispensed with," came from Cromwell's lips. It did not. It is found in Bishop Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, in which he quotes an *enemy* of Cromwell, giving his own interpretation of Cromwell's motives.¹²² There is no reason whatsoever to suppose that it is a faithful representation. In contrast to such slander, R. S. Paul summarizes Oliver's position:

Whereas his conception of duty might lead him to act dictatorily, it could never lead him to act amorally, much less contrary to Biblical morality as he understood it: Cromwell might misinterpret the Biblical standards, he might be guilty of false exegesis, but he could never deliberately mishandle Scripture, for he had placed himself under the judgment of its revelation.¹²³

Oliver Cromwell was a real man, with moral as well as physical blemishes. As with any man of action, there is much about him that we

122. Fraser, 285.

123. Paul, 386.

can {61} criticize (and we can do so without resorting to fabrication). He was, nonetheless, a fearless man of God who led his nation in the light of the law, retaining his power though rejecting the crown, seeking favors from none but the Most High. He is a disturbing, disquieting figure for those who prefer the security of flight and defeat to the risks of battle and victory. Cromwell's religion provided no easy escapes, no cozy retreats. In contrast to Gurnall, who wallowed in the luxury afforded by his conformity, who never lifted a finger to serve Christ where such service might cost anything, Oliver Cromwell saw the battle for what it was, counted the cost, and ventured forth in the Lord's army. The Gurnalls of this age, terrified by Canaan's giants, are capable of nothing more than sniping at those who conquer in the Lord's name. History will be made and written by the Cromwells of the age, while the cowards retreat to the safety of the footnotes.

Let us have more of Cromwell, much more; let us have less of Gurnall and his reprinters; and let the dead *bury* their dead for once, instead of trying to resurrect him.

I have not selected negative material just to paint a *dreary* picture of Cromwell. Rather, I have tried to present *historical realities* for us to face in the light of the unqualified enthusiasm Dr. North displayed by wishing in his heart to have "Cromwell Lives!" plastered on public buildings. Since the Chalcedon movement finds its roots in past "national church" situations, we must honestly ask ourselves if we would wish in our sober moments to be citizens of such territories where the "rule of Christ" was desired. In light of the trail of blood that one finds in past "Holy Commonwealths," do we really want "More of Cromwell"?

"National Churches" Distract From The Gospel

As I have read about what transpired during the years of Puritan ascendancy (1643–1649), one thing that distresses me is how the "national church" issue constantly distracted men from the gospel. The efforts necessary to maintain a "Holy Commonwealth" kept many men from the basics of the gospel. We have warrant from Scripture to believe that when men swallow camels and strain at gnats, they lose sight of the weightier matters of the law (Matt. 23:23–24). I fear that future history will reveal that those caught up in Dr. North's misguided enthusiasm were deflected from the gospel by their idealistic "Christian Reconstruction" efforts.

It is true that national churches distract from the gospel. But as noted above, the Chalcedon movement does not find its historical roots in such situations, nor is it working for a national church now. Scripture *does* demand a Holy Commonwealth; and gospel preaching, according to Christ's {62} mandate, requires national obedience to Christ's commands. How can the desire for the fulfillment of the Great Commission possibly distract anyone from the gospel? The Holy Commonwealth cannot distract us from anything but a false gospel of irrelevant pietism.

Interestingly, Mr. Zens cites Matthew 23:23 for support. The NASV reads: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe the mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others." I have yet to read a Chalcedon publication about tithing dill seeds. We do have, for those who are interested, an abundance of material about "justice and mercy and faithfulness," however. That phrase, in fact, would make a fitting subtitle to R. J. Rushdoony's *Institutes of Biblical Law*. The very things we are arguing for *are* "the weightier matters of the law." As the text states, justice is an important aspect of Biblical law. If we do away with the law, as Mr. Zens wishes, we do away with justice. We also destroy mercy and faithfulness by forsaking the law. The purpose of Christian reconstruction is to restore Biblical law as the foundation of society and culture, and it is only through such efforts that justice and mercy will return to our land. But since Zens wants no part of such an effort, his appeal to Matthew 23 seems insincere. To my understanding, he wants to discard the law entirely, weightier matters and all. Still, if he wishes to point out any camels we are swallowing, we will be happy to spit them out. But for one who rejects Biblical law to make the charge, it may be a case of the ham calling the bacon unclean.

Moreover, this text demonstrates the unity between piety and law-keeping. Jesus is rebuking the scribes and Pharisees for what Zens and the "reprinting neo-Puritans" are guilty of: a shallow pietism that ignores the fundamentals of Biblical law.

Must We Accept Puritanism As A "Package Deal"?

Overall, the Chalcedon movement is probably doing more justice to the Puritans than either the secularists or the “reprinting neo-Puritans.” They are attempting to see Puritanism as a “package deal,” as Dr. North suggests. However, we ought to be very sceptical about “package deals,” for history clearly shows that no “Christian” movement or system has been perfect. We must test all movements and systems by the infallible Scriptures, and we are taught in the New Testament that true believers are equipped to judge and discern whether or not men and movements are “of God” (Heb. 5:14; 1 John 2:19–20, 27; 4:1–6; 5:4, 18–21). Those who swallow “package deals” hook, line, and sinker will be spiritually “ripped off.” Some have mistakenly assumed that to be *truly* Calvinistic, you had to embrace {63} the entire “system,” which included infant baptism and Sabbath-keeping (cf. Neal, III, 420–421; IV, 144).

But, it seems to me, Puritanism in reality is a *mixed bag*. That which Dr. North sees as the *genius* of Puritanism—the culture-transforming outworkings of their theology—is actually the very element we must *separate* from in the interests of gospel purity. The Puritans were committed to the Five Points of Dortian theology. But they went *beyond* Dort in their elaborations of “covenant theology” (cf. Perry Miller, “The Marrow of Puritan Divinity,” *Errand Into the Wilderness* [1935; Harper and Row, 1956], 48–98), and in their reintroduction of a Sabbath which smacked more of Judaistic legalism than of the gospel (cf. Douglas Campbell, *The Puritan in Holland, England and America* [New York, 1893], 156–160). The Puritans, of course, continued the *theocratic* tradition in which the Synod of Dort was couched. Thus, it is absolutely necessary to be *selective* in what we identify with in Puritanism.

We cannot separate “the culture-transforming outworkings of their theology” from the Puritans’ theology itself, because both aspects are Biblical, and form a unit. Jesus certainly did not separate the characteristics praised in the Beatitudes from the duty to obey every jot and tittle of Old Testament law. Furthermore, as we saw earlier, the state is always religious, for or against Christ. We have a Christian responsibility in every area of life. The question is, do “the interests of gospel purity” affect our lives? Does Christ’s lordship make a difference for the Christian ruler, lawyer, legislator, or judge? Or is the lordship of Christ limited to the world of the prayer closet? The truth is that God has commanded both the gospel and the law, the theology and its cultural outworkings. To obey selectively is to deify ourselves, and to

make our word higher than God's. Thomas Manton observed that "to single out what pleaseth us is to make ourselves gods":¹²⁴

Those that dispense with any commandment voluntarily and willingly, have never yet learned the way of true obedience to God.... The authority of the law is lost if men pick and choose as they please.... They that do not obey all, will not long obey any."¹²⁵

Our Lord commanded us to be salt, affecting and transforming our culture. He commanded us to be lights to the world around us—shining not simply in distinction to the surrounding darkness, but in order to shed light, to lighten the world around us. Our theology is not to be hid under the bushel of pietism, but to transform the culture. And men are to see our good works in order that they may be led to glorify God (i.e., be {64} converted). A "gospel purity" which does not seek to transform culture is no gospel at all. Zens's "pure gospel" is in reality a message stripped of all meaning and relevance to the world and life.

Modern Readers Fearful To Question The "Puritan Tradition"

As I pointed out earlier, a very serious problem has arisen as a result of the Calvinistic book market being flooded with selected Puritan works. When brethren become immersed in Puritan thought, they consciously or unconsciously find themselves defending the Puritan "system," and rejecting anything that questions that "system." This simply ought not to be the case, for most modern readers of the Puritans are not aware of the sociopolitical context in which that system arose and hence are premature in their defenses. But, further, as Dr. North points out, the "system" turns out to entail a lot more than the "reprinting neo-Puritans" are putting before the public. While I believe that some definite benefit has accrued as a result of the revival of Puritan literature, it has also, unfortunately, contributed to the complication of matters by (1) elevating this era of church history as virtually sacrosanct; (2) perpetrating incorrect interpretations of Scripture (i.e., Gal. 3:24; cf. my "Study of the Development of Law in the History of Redemption," *BRR*, Winter, 1978, 36–37); and (3) fixing in the minds of contemporaries certain modes of thinking crystallized in the Puritan era which, I believe,

124. Thomas Manton, *Works* (Worthington, PA: Maranatha Publications, n.d.), vol. 6, 12.

125. *Ibid.*, 56–57.

are not patently Biblical (such as their doctrines of the “Covenant of Works/Covenant of Grace,” and the Sabbath).

Legalism in Puritanism

The more I read about life in the Puritan era, the more I am driven to the conclusion that it was consistently marked by a tendency toward *legalism*. By “legalism,” I mean the imposition of things as “law,” which go far beyond the explicit or inferential statements of Scripture. And here I have in view matters which pervaded Puritanism such as: (1) the imposition of strict Sabbath keeping (i.e., that it was sinful to ring more bells than one in summoning people to church on the “Sabbath”); (2) the imposition of infant baptism as a godly and necessary ordinance (cf. Neal, III, 420–21); the imposition of Christianity as the state religion upon all citizens; and the imposition of Old Covenant laws as still binding for the “Christian” state. I do not think it is exaggerating or overstating the case to assert that these unscriptural impositions structured and *dominated* the Puritan society. It is not surprising, therefore, that Walter Chantry sees the contemporary Chalcedon movement as a new form of legalism, for it unapologetically identifies with the “package deal” offered in Puritanism (review of Rushdoony’s *God’s Plan, Banner of Truth*, April, 1978, 23–24). {65}

There *was* a tendency toward legalism among some Puritans, in the sense defined by Zens (although they did not hold to legalism in the sense of justification by works). There are also legalistic elements among *us*: we all have a sinful tendency to *legislate* where God has not spoken. But the basic attempt in Puritanism, as in the Chalcedon movement, was to be founded on Biblical law alone. They made mistakes, and I am sure we err also. Where we are wrong in applying the principles of Biblical law, we stand in need of correction. But to argue against the basic system of law itself is to argue against God, the Author of the law.

But that Puritan society was *dominated* by legalism remains to be proved. Mr. Zens calls the impositions of the Sabbath, infant baptism, national religion, and lawkeeping “unscriptural,” but he does not offer more than the bare assertion of it. If it can be demonstrated that any of these does “go far beyond the explicit or inferential statements of Scripture,” then we must abandon it. Scripture does not, of course, forbid ringing more than one bell on Sunday, and I was not aware that it was a primary tenet of Puritanism; if it was, they were simply wrong. Note:

they were *not* wrong to enforce Biblical demands. They were wrong in enforcing the teachings of men rather than the commands of God, as Jesus said of the Pharisees (Matt. 15:1–9). In fact, a basic concern of the Chalcedon staff has been to reject the imposition of humanistic principles in the place of Biblical laws. But so far Mr. Zens has given no Scriptural evidence that the commands of the Old Testament are not binding on us today.

The Subtle, But Destructive Nature of Legalism

It is imperative to see the subtly destructive nature of legalism. For instance, the Puritans were Biblical in placing moderate smoking and drinking in the realm of Christian liberty, yet, sadly, they fell into legalism by imposing a “national church” and “Sabbath-keeping” upon the people. Contemporary Baptists, on the other hand, see the evils of “national churches,” but fall into legalism by imposing rules about smoking and drinking. The crucial point to be gleaned from all of this is that any *form* of legalism will always cause the insights of a movement to be dimmed, and even eventually snuffed out. Look at what happened after the Puritan movement was literally stained by the blood of its victims:

The victory (at Dunbar) no doubt was great, but greater still was the disaster. Puritanism received at the battle of Dunbar a wound that never healed. After this its professions of religion were no longer believed.... High churchmen of the school of Laud confirmed themselves with fresh arguments in the conclusion that Puritan religion was grimace and folly, a plausible exterior covering a bad heart. The men who had overthrown the church and beheaded the king were equally ready, it appeared, to devour each other.... They (the Scotch) had prayed fervently; but so too had Cromwell and his officers. Each were {66} certain that their prayers were heard, when it was clear that one party, if not both, lay under a vile delusion—a delusion to which thousands of innocent men were sacrificed.... Was there, then, no certainty and no benefit in prayer? Was there no overruling Providence? It was certain that unbelief, and even atheism, soon afterwards appeared amongst the Puritans. (Marsden, 344–46)

Those involved in the current “Reformed” movement must be very careful not to repeat the pattern of history, and fall into old or new forms of legalism, which will ultimately deprive the movement of true joy and spirituality which freedom in Christ brings (Gal. 5:1, 13, 22).

Yes, there is certainty and benefit in prayer, and there is an overruling Providence. That is exactly why Cromwell won—*his* prayers were answered! As we have seen, the Scots sinfully followed a godless leader, desiring, as Israel of old, a king instead of godly rule. They rejected God's kingship, and hypocritically prayed for His blessing. They would have done well to heed the words of Solomon: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9). As for the reasons why Puritanism descended into unbelief, the subject may be pursued elsewhere.¹²⁶ But it would seem to be stretching a point to suggest that their unbelief had its origin in the victory at Dunbar.

I must agree with Mr. Zens that legalism deprives us of "true joy and spirituality." But he really means that the laws of the Bible stand against joy and spirituality. How can this be? The Old Testament law *commands* joy: "Ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God" (Deut. 12:12). God, apparently, did not share in the apprehension that His laws could somehow deprive men of joy, except insofar as they sinfully rejected it. In fact, the Bible actually goes so far as to say (Psalm 1) that the man who meditates in the law day and night will be happy! To state, therefore, that the law produces unhappiness, is a rather significant admission on Mr. Zens's part.

Does the law of God militate against "spirituality"? The Apostle Paul did not think so: "For we know that the law is spiritual" (Rom. 7:14). It is authored by the Spirit, and cannot conflict with spirituality. True, God's law is against the joys of disobedience. The law is also against a lawless, Platonic "spirituality" which denies God's lordship over creation. Truly Biblical joy is a product of no longer being in rebellion against our Creator. Happiness is impossible apart from obedience to Biblical law.

The Danger of Substituting Thematic Generalities for Exegetical Realities

The Chalcedon movement begins with a *thematic generality*—the "dominion of Christ"—and ends up in a form of *legalism*—the Christian

126. See Gary North, "From Medieval Economics to Indecisive Pietism," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 6, no. 1:156ff.

is {67} bound to the minutae of the Old Covenant law. In light of such passages as Col. 1:20, we must recognize the *cosmic* dimensions of Christ's work. However, the universal dominion of Christ takes on a specific form *in this age*—a form which the Chalcedon movement must deny.

1. John 17:2—This text teaches us that indeed our Lord's dominion is absolute and universal—"You have given Him power over all flesh." But it also teaches us that His universal authority has a specific and delimited purpose in this age which is soteric in nature—"in order that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him." Thus, the universal dominion of Christ in this age is related to His sovereign bestowal of *spiritual blessings* (cf. Eph. 1:3), not to *subduing culture*. Eph. 1:22 reflects this same perspective: "And (God) has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things with reference to the church." It is clear that Christ's purpose for this "present evil age" is to *build His church* through gospel proclamation (the sphere of special grace), not to *conquer culture* (the sphere of general, or common grace) with the Mosaic code. Thus, to isolate the general theme of Christ's universal dominion, and employ it as a foundation for various "Christian Reconstruction" efforts is a very dangerous tactic.

It is tempting for men who have been in contexts where God was little, weak, and at the mercy of man's "free-will," to become enamored with Chalcedon's plea for the realization of Christ's dominion in the totality of life. It all sounds very appealing because, on the surface, it gives all the glory to Christ. But upon closer exegetical examination the implications of the "dominion of Christ" which the Chalcedon movement is pandering as *necessary "truth"* will be found to be opposed to the gospel and kingdom of Christ. Dr. North's bold cry for "More of Cromwell" unequivocally indicates he wishes the "dominion of Christ" to be realized in a nation. Are you prepared to have your head severed from your body in the "Holy Commonwealth" Dr. North envisions? Are you prepared to be involved in executions that might take place in setting up the "dominion of Christ" in a country?

It is most unusual for Chalcedon to be accused of "substituting thematic generalities for exegetical realities." Up to now, our opponents have accused us of such things as "proof-texting" and being "Biblicistic." Moreover, Mr. Zens must be commended for bringing Scripture into the discussion, as this is a rare tactic among those who write

against us. By the time we are finished, however, the reasons for its rarity may become clear.

It is certain that a major aspect of Christ's worldwide dominion is the bestowal of salvation upon the elect (John 17:2). But is this the *only* purpose? According to Colossians 1:8, He rules "that in *all things* He might have the preeminence"; in Philippians 2:10–11, He rules in order {68} that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." And "He must reign, till He hath put *all* enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15:25).

We do not conceive of the dominion of Christ as separate from the evangelization of the world. But Biblical evangelism is more than soul-saving: Christ commanded us to *disciple the nations*. Evangelism does not consist only in telling men how to be justified. Evangelism must also teach all men to observe everything our Lord has commanded us (Matt. 28:20). And He has commanded us to observe every jot and tittle of the Old Testament law (Matt. 5:17–20).

Zens cites Ephesians 1:3, intending to demonstrate that Christ is concerned with dispensing "spiritual blessings" rather than subduing culture. But it is a mistake to assume that "spiritual" means "nonphysical." This is to derive our theology from the Apostle Plato. The word *blessing* means "a bestowal of goods." *Spiritual* means "of the Holy Spirit," and Paul is speaking of *blessings that come from the Holy Spirit*. The very context of this verse speaks of Christ's total government, of His administration of *all things*, "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:10), and tells us that in Christ they are our inheritance (v. 11). The meek shall inherit the earth, among other things. Should not Christians therefore subdue culture? What else could Jesus have meant by describing us as the salt of the earth, the light of the world? Christianity is not a subculture: we are to seek dominion, worldwide conversion, and universal obedience to Jesus Christ. When our culture, high and low, is immersed in depravity, perversion, and lawlessness, shouldn't we subdue it? Should a man, for example, attempt to "subdue" his wife's rapist? Or is it more Christian to stand by and do nothing (except, perhaps, to witness to him of the "soteric nature" of Christ's dominion)? I am afraid that it is just this kind of fearful, unbelieving flight into a pagan "spirituality" which has caused

the decline of our culture. The salt has lost its savor, and now our theologians are actually defending the “savorless nature” of salt.

Ephesians 1:22, of all texts, certainly does *not* reflect Zens’s perspective. Zens is trying to force it to say that Christ is Lord over only things that pertain to the church. Rather narrow “dominion,” don’t you think? Let’s examine the text:

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ ... raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above *all* principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and *every* name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put *all* things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over *all* things to the church. (Eph. 1:20–22; emphasis added)

“Principality and power” are words used not only of demonic powers (although they are certainly included here); they also describe human {69} rulers and officials (Luke 12:11–12; Col. 1:16; Tit. 3:1; Rom. 13:1–3). The passage is clearly teaching that Christ has been installed as universal King over *all* governments, for the sake of His people, the church. In other words, God works all things together for good to those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). What Chalcedon is saying, therefore, is that all men, magistrates included, are responsible to Jesus Christ as His vassals. They are commanded to submit to Him (Ps. 2). If they do not submit, they will be crushed, for the sake of Christ’s church.

Mr. Zens is right. This kind of exegesis is “very dangerous”: it is just what Satan and his minions fear the most. But if Satan can keep God’s people duped by the Platonic “exegesis” of Mr. Zens and others, his dominions will remain quite secure. The “spirituality” of retreatism has never hurt anyone, least of all the devil.

But, we are told, Chalcedon’s program is “opposed to the gospel and kingdom of Christ.” (I’m still waiting for proof of this assertion.) We have stated repeatedly that we believe in evangelism. We do, however, oppose false gospels. Are we opposed to the kingdom of Christ? No, but we are opposed to the “kingdom” of Jon Zens and others who oppose the lordship of Christ and the authority of God’s law.

Mr. Zens mentions executions again. Yes, we do believe in capital punishment for what God calls capital crimes. Zens implies that there is something wrong with this, and apparently feels that he has a higher

moral standard than God; but such an attitude is dangerous. He even seems afraid that he and his followers may come up for execution themselves once the Holy Commonwealth is set up. But, for all those who are concerned about this, St. Paul offers some advice:

Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

2. The New Testament Data As A Whole

If a true believer was to read through the New Testament several times, and then read the Chalcedon materials outlining directives for “Christian Reconstruction,” he would not find any parallels between the two. The idea that Christians should direct their energies to “political action” with the goal of “making the state again a Christian state, and its actions conform with the law of God” (Rushdoony, *God’s Plan*, 30) is foreign to the duties of the Christian life spelled out in the New Testament.

This, then, brings us to the central hermeneutical issue: is it valid to impose as *legally binding* upon believers and magistrates the minutae of the {70} Old Covenant law? Since the Chalcedon movement cannot justify its “culture-transforming” efforts exegetically from the New Testament, they must, as have all previous sacralists, draw from the literature of the Old Covenant theocracy (cf. Geerhardus Vos, *The Covenant in Reformed Theology* [1893], trans. by S. Voorvinde and W. VanGemeren, 2).

Mr. Zens draws an unbiblical distinction between the Old and New Testaments. It is true that Christianity is not only, or primarily, political. But we are commanded to obey God’s law in every area of life. This includes politics. The New Testament states that the civil magistrate is a minister of God: that is, he is responsible to *administer* the word of God in his area of authority. The ruler is not a free agent. Furthermore, he is to punish “evildoers.” What is an *evildoer*? Is the ruler free to decide that question for himself? To answer in the affirmative is to regard Romans 13 as a blank check for statist absolutism: the ruler may decide that all Jews, for example, are “evildoers.” Hitler thus was only

doing his job. And we may say the same about the pharaoh and King Herod when they ordered the murder of infants. But this is not, of course, what Romans 13 is defending. How, then, is a ruler to decide what an “evildoer” is? And, having decided that, how can he be sure of the appropriate penalty for each particular crime? (Is hanging a proper punishment for theft? Should a rapist be forced to sit in a corner for a week?) Since the ruler is God’s minister, it naturally follows that he must seek to discover God’s standards for the exercise of his ministry. And this brings us back to Jesus’s statement in Matthew 23:23: *Justice is defined by the Old Testament law*. The principles for governing a state are simply not spelled out in the New Testament. This is because God assumed that His people would read the other four-fifths of His Book.

If we demand that something must be repeated in the New Testament for it to have validity, we are first of all setting ourselves up as judges of Scripture. And if a law is not valid unless it can be found in the New Testament, should we regard sexual relations between men and animals as an example of the glorious liberty of the New Covenant? Is it now permitted to trip a blind man, simply because the New Testament does not repeat such a prohibition? Is it now a mark of sanctification and freedom from legalism to gouge a poor man by charging him interest on a loan? “No, no,” you protest, “all those things are still wrong.” How do you know? If we discard the Old Testament laws as legalistic, we have no basis for justice, no means of recognizing it, and no principles with which to apply it. Jesus and the apostles assumed the abiding validity of the law in exhaustive detail, and the whole of the New Testament is written in terms of that assumption. To divide the two Testaments in the manner of Zens is to divide Christ from Himself.

{71}

I suggest that this approach leads to two fatal errors:

1. The emphasis on the Old Covenant literature as a corpus of binding law causes men to be distracted from the obvious fact that the New Covenant documents view these inspired books as *Christ-centered*, not as *law-centered* (cf. “Study in the Development of Law,” *BRR*, Winter, 1978, 20–23). This accounts for the possibility of men being diverted from the gospel by focusing so much attention on the details of the Old Testament law and their alleged application in today’s societies.

Here again is an unbiblical distinction between Christ and the law. But He said that His mission was to fulfill the law, to confirm its validity (Matt. 5:17–20). Continually throughout His ministry, Christ upheld the enduring authority of the law against all who would detract from it (cf. Matt. 15). Does attention to the details of Old Covenant law truly divert men from the gospel? Not according to our Lord. In Luke 19:8–9, Christ pronounced Zacchaeus to be saved *after* Zacchaeus announced his willingness to obey a detail of Old Covenant law (four-fold restitution). He did not seem to be worried that Zacchaeus might be drawn away from being Christ-centered through preoccupation with the law. In fact, if we say we know Him but do not keep His commandments, we are liars (1 John 2:3–4). *Sin* is defined in the New Testament as transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). Finally, in rejecting those who falsely claim to be His, Jesus will say, “I never knew you”—they were not Christ-centered; “Depart from me, you who commit *lawlessness*”—they were not law-centered (Matt. 7:23). The division between Christ and the law is not countenanced by Scripture.

2. The emphasis on the Old Covenant as yet binding on all Christians and all nations leads to a *legalism* which falls under the “anathema” found in Gal. 1:8–9. Paul’s reasoning is clear: if you isolate anything which had legal force in the Old Covenant—even something which is nothing, such as circumcision (Gal. 5:6)—and impose it as binding upon the Christian conscience, you have “fallen from grace,” and “become a debtor to do the whole law” (Gal. 5:3–4). We must identify “law” with the New Covenant which is, in this age, of *legal force*, not with the Old Covenant which has passed away (cf. “Development of Law,” 34). Listening to the words of Christ and His apostles will keep us from coming under bondage to nonbinding laws and rules.

The *legalism* rebuked in Galatians was twofold: (1) the requirement of obedience to the law as a condition of justification—i.e., salvation by works; (2) the specific requirement of obedience to ceremonial rites which had come to their typological completion in the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ, and were therefore no longer binding in that form (although {72} we still observe their meaning by believing in Jesus Christ). The Galatian legalists were clearly heretics.

But *antinomianism* is a heresy too. Nowhere is it stated in the New Testament that God’s moral law, in family, state, or society, is no longer

valid. Nowhere is it implied that the case-law applications of the Decalogue are now obsolete. When the New Testament writers mention our freedom from specific Old Testament regulations, *they cite only ceremonial laws*—such as sacrifices, the priesthood, circumcision, and feasts—which pictorially represented the mediatorial, saving work of Christ until He came. If the New Testament were really what our opponents say it is, the demolition of the Chalcedon movement would be relatively easy: just come up with a New Testament text which specifically rejects the moral law as no longer binding. (For example, a passage condemning a man for making restitution would do the job rather nicely.) That this challenge has never been met should indicate just how accurately our foes are representing the New Testament.

In identifying Chalcedon with the Galatian legalists, Zens has again committed slander, and he knows it. Not one line from the writings of Chalcedon scholars has ever been produced in which we claim to be justified by our obedience to the law. We are justified only on account of the doing and dying of Jesus Christ. But that is not the end of the story. According to Romans 8:4, we who are in Christ are now enabled to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law by the power of the Holy Spirit, who changes us from lawbreakers to lawkeepers. This process is called *sanctification*, and the law is plainly stated to be the standard of sanctification. Name-calling is rather easy, and is a handy substitute for exegesis; but if the position just stated is to be considered *legalism*, the charge must be substantiated on the basis of Scripture. Serious men should not regard anything less as worthy of their time. And our opponents should realize that, before God, they have the responsibility to make their charges stick or else repent. For many, the issue has long since ceased to be academic.

If something is “law,” then the violation of it is “sin.” To impose *anything* upon men’s consciences as “law,” when in reality it does not have legal force, is to fall under the severest condemnation of Christ (Luke 11: 46; Matt. 15:1–6; 23:4; Mark 7:5–13). It is not going too far to say that the strongest invectives in the New Testament are directed against those who would burden Christ’s flock with “laws,” the violation of which are not truly “sin.” And, mark well, it makes no difference whether these “laws” arise out of Fundamentalism (i.e., “you cannot smoke and be a member of our church”) or Puritanism (i.e., “you may not smoke within

two miles of a church on Sundays”), for *all* such “laws” are opposed to the simplicity of the gospel and bring people under a dangerous bondage. {73}

Zens’s statements here are absolutely correct: God severely condemns those who add to His word. But I would remind Mr. Zens that the condemnations of those who *take away* from His word are just as severe. Zens is accusing us of *adding* to God’s word when all we are doing is *quoting* from it. Our opponents would do well to stop worrying about being executed by theonomists, and begin worrying about having their part taken out of the tree of life, and out of the holy city (Rev. 22:19).

The Gospel is At Stake

The plea of Dr. North for “More of Cromwell” vividly calls attention to what is really at stake. Both his beginning presuppositions and his goals down the road are contrary to the gospel of Christ. In light of the fact that the Chalcedon movement exults in the “achievements” of such past political/religious contexts as Cromwell’s Protectorate indicates that they are retrogressing from the achievement of religious freedom which has come only after many have shed their blood in the midst of intolerant church-state nations. Those committed to achieving the “dominion of Christ” in political contexts, and who spend their energies in “Christian Reconstruction” efforts, can only be expected to move away from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ (cf. Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, 62).

My Kingdom is not of this world:
 if My kingdom were of this world,
 then would my servants fight, that I should
 not be delivered to the Jews: but now is
 My kingdom not from hence. (John 18:36)

“Religious freedom” in this sense is a desirable goal for humanists who really want freedom from God, but does the Bible teach it? It plainly does not. As we saw before, Romans 13 calls for magistrates to use their power in terms of God’s standard, the law. The civil power is not to be neutral, but Biblical and Christian. He is to enforce Christian law, and, in Thomas Manton’s words, “A gross error kept secret cometh not under the magistrate’s cognisance, but the diffusion and dissemination of errors he must take notice of; as when men infect others, and

openly blaspheme Christian doctrine, 'he beareth not the sword in vain.'¹²⁷ According to Biblical law, the state may *not* move against Baal-worshippers, for instance, so long as they don't evangelize for it, or commit any other crimes in connection with it. But the Bible knows nothing of religious neutrality for the state: that is a pagan invention.

John 18:36 is a passage which humanists love to misinterpret. They {74} twist it to mean that Christ's kingdom doesn't have anything to do with this world. But that isn't what Jesus said. Gary North, in his pamphlet, "Backward, Christian Soldiers," stated its meaning:

The misinterpretation of Christ's words—that His kingdom is not of this world—should finally be given the burial it deserves. He was asserting to Pilate that his *source* of authority, of human sovereignty, of Lordship was not an earthly source, but a heavenly source. His words are clear: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). Not *from* hence; He was speaking of the *source* of His authority, not the place of His legitimate reign. But how many retreatist sermons have been preached concerning the wholly spiritual, exclusively internal realm of Christ's kingdom, as a supposedly accurate explanation of this famous biblical text? I shudder to think of the number: like the sands of the seashore.

Christ's kingdom does not derive from this world, nor is it established by mere political action. But to say that Christ's kingdom has nothing to do with this world is to deny that Christ is King over all kings and Lord over all lords. The New Testament calls Christ *Lord* over 24 times as often as it calls Him *Saviour*, and I think the apostles were trying to tell us something: that in every area of life—personal, family, society, state, science, economics, and all else—we are to serve Him and be obedient to His law.

Hereby do we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar.

127. Manton, vol. 5, 239.

THE PURITAN FAMILY AND THE CHRISTIAN ECONOMY

Richard Flinn

All God's creatures and ordinances are good ... but some are more excellent than others. And marriage being of this latter sort, is not holy only, but even honorable also. "Marriage," saith the Apostle, "is honorable among all men"—and no disgrace then to any man. So we are to esteem of it, and not to condemn what God hath graced, or to dishonor what He hath honored. We shall but wrong the giver in debasing His gift. —*Thomas Gataker*¹²⁸

One of the most significant goals of the movement known as Puritanism was that of a godly society. It was widely accepted that to achieve this end God had ordained four basic institutions: the commonwealth (the state), the Church, the family, and (later) the school—as a subsection of family institution. All of these institutions formed a symbiotic, interlocking whole. All were equally under the law of God; all had specific functions to perform with respect to the whole. The intent of this article is to discuss the specific role and functions of the family in the creation as a whole—that is, how the family related to, and was in turn dependent upon, the other institutions within the "Christian Economy." My purpose is primarily one of description; the treatment is not exhaustive. Rather, I have drawn heavily on the works of some of the most influential early Puritans—Cartwright, Perkins, and Greenham—intending by this means to establish the *Zeitgeist* with respect to the family within which the later Puritans moved.

1. The Foundational Nature of the Family Institution

While long overlooked, it cannot be questioned that the institution of the family and marriage assumed, for the Puritans, a role of para-

128. Cited in Everett H. Emerson, *English Puritanism From John Hooper to John Milton* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1968), 211.

mount importance. An indication of this is given by a glance at Dod's *Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, published in 1603. This was the outstanding Puritan work on the Decalogue, and in it the major areas of ethics and axiology were carefully and deliberately worked out. William Haller notes that a huge place was given within this code to the duties of husband and wife and of the family in general.¹²⁹

William Perkins, a seminal Puritan theologian, reflects the dignity, honor, and importance placed upon marriage when he argues that as a state or calling it was far more excellent than the single life. He cites four reasons:

1. It was ordained of God in paradise above and before all other states of life. {76}
2. It was instilled upon solemn consultation among the three persons of the Trinity.
3. God blessed marriage.
4. Marriage was appointed by God to be "the foundation and seminary of all other sorts and kinds of life in the commonwealth and in the Church."¹³⁰

It is this last statement which interests us in particular. Not only was marriage the foundation of the creational order, it was also the very seed plot, the breeding place, the nursery of all society. Within the structure of this institution, God had ordained that man would be schooled and trained for his work of subduing the creation, whether it be in the state, the Church, the school, or the family. The health, vitality, and sanctification of the family was inextricably connected with the sanctification of the whole society. Moreover it was not an institution which could operate independently of the other institutions of society. Its function, although basic, was also complementary to the role of the Church and the state. In Richard Greenham's image, fathers of families, by teaching and applying doctrine at home and

129. William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 120.

130. William Perkins, *The Works of William Perkins*, ed. Ian Breward, Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics, no. 3 (Abingdon, Berks.: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), 419.

administering discipline within the same, had to join hands with the magistrate and the minister; in their respective administration of the Word of God, each complemented and reinforced the other. In this way, godliness would spread over the land.¹³¹

The Puritans taught, then, that God had given the family basic societal functions to perform within the fabric of society and the creation. William Perkins summarized these in a table of four purposes of marriage and the family:

1. Procreation of children for the propagation of and continuance of humanity.
2. The procreation of a holy seed, whereby the Church of God must be kept holy and chaste so that there might be a holy company of men to worship God always upon the earth.
3. After the Fall it was God's sovereign means to avoid fornication and slake the lusts of the flesh.
4. To aid all the parties in the marriage in performing their respective callings and duties in a better and more comfortable manner.¹³²

Assuming that Perkins is representative of the general position, the remainder of this article will be an exposition of these four general rubrics.

2. The Procreation of Children

There is nothing particularly distinctive or startling here. Two comments need to be made. Firstly, that the procreation of the human race {77} was a primary purpose in marriage did not mean that barrenness was grounds for divorce. On the one hand, children were not the only purpose of marriage, so lack of children was insufficient grounds for divorce or for any otherwise immoral action to compensate for sterility.¹³³ On the other hand, the fruit of the womb was wholly dependent upon God. Therefore, the only ground for divorce was adultery or fornication, which break the very bond and covenant of marriage. The innocent party could and should forgive the other upon his or her

131. Cited in Emerson, *English Puritanism.*, 153.

132. Perkins, *Works*, 420.

133. Gordon S. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion: His Place in the Development of Christian Piety* (London: Epworth Press, 1957), 56.

repentance, however. Interestingly, Perkins also taught that both husband and *wife* could legitimately require a divorce, which view stood in stark contrast to the consensus of the time.¹³⁴

In the second place, we should not conclude that the wife was regarded as a mere “baby-machine,” or as part of the goods and chattels of her husband. We confront here a stereotype of Puritan domestic relations that is mythical. In fact, the Puritan concept of marriage was based upon the patriarchal mode as according to the Scriptures. The wife had to be subordinate to her husband in authority, but she was equal to her husband in her title to grace and independent responsibility before God.¹³⁵ Because of this, women had their own spiritual pilgrimage to conduct and men tended to give high regard to their spirituality, wisdom, discernment, and gifts. It was right for a woman to be given authority and responsibility in the home or elsewhere as God had so gifted her, but He would never gift her for roles, or intend her gifts for roles forbidden in the Scriptures. The letters of Samuel Rutherford to the wives of his flock at Anwoth give a striking example of how a woman could be regarded as a counsellor, confidant, sister in the faith, and a source of encouragement.¹³⁶ Haller encapsulates the position when he notes that although the wife was the weaker vessel, she was responsible to the same law of God, and God had given her a husband to compensate for her frailty.¹³⁷ Husbands, then, could not lord it over their wives, using them as tools or mere instruments, but “husbands and wives should treat one another with loving dignity... Above all there must be patience, and a readiness to forgive even the sin of adultery.”¹³⁸

Ian Breward, in an introduction to the practical writings of William Perkins, notes that so reformed was the Puritan view of marriage and the relationship between husband and wife that “the position of

134. Perkins, *Works*, 425–26. Willful desertion as a ground for divorce was apparently not considered by Perkins.

135. Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 120, 1.

136. Samuel Rutherford, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford: A Selection* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973).

137. Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 121.

138. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion*, 56.

women in England aroused comment among foreign visitors, who felt that the weaker sex {78} had more privileges there than elsewhere.”¹³⁹ We must dismiss the pejorative stereotype and affirm that the centrality of child bearing in Puritan marriage meant neither a using nor abusing of wives by their husbands. The Puritan’s trembling before the Word of God precluded such abuses.

3. *The Procreation of a Holy Seed for the Church*

It is immediately apparent that the second major purpose for marriage flows directly out of the *Weltanschauung* of covenant theology. One of the divine callings of Christian parents was to be involved in the work of producing the holy seed of the Covenant. In this way, God has been pleased to build up the Church of Christ and the number of the elect. The health, growth, and well-being of the Church achieved through the raising up of godly children was to be a primary end in marriage. Married life was to be deliberately structured toward this end.¹⁴⁰ What did this mean, however, in specific terms? Firstly, parents had to enter into marriage and the task of raising children with humble, repentant hearts, sanctifying the process through prayer and the Scriptures. Consider, for example, Greenham’s colorful description of unsanctified sex in marriage and its results:

Christians therefore must know that when men and women raging with boiling lusts meet together as brute beasts, have none other respects than to satisfy their carnal concupiscence and to strengthen themselves in worldly desires, when they make no conscience to sanctify the marriage bed with prayer, when they have no care to increase the church of God and the elect, it is the just judgment of God to send them monsters, untimely births, or disfigured children, or natural fools, or else such as having good gifts of the mind and well portioned bodies, are most wicked, graceless, and profane persons.¹⁴¹

Parents, then, should consciously plan to procreate children in such a manner that the fruit of the marriage be an enrichment of the Church.

139. Ian Breward in Perkins, *Works*, 413.

140. See Greenham’s discourse on this subject in Emerson, *English Puritanism*, 148-53.

141. *Ibid.*, 150.

Secondly, parents should be aware of the possibility that God may have given them children which He would later call into official position in the Church. This interdependence between the family and the Church is underscored when Perkins argues that in training and educating children the *first* objective of the parent was to be aware of any better gifted and intelligent children and these had to be set aside, consecrated to God, and brought up in the study of the Scriptures that they might “serve afterward in the ministry of the Church.”¹⁴²

It is worth noting here that the integration of covenant theology into the doctrines of both Church and family included a consideration of the negative aspects of the covenant also. Unfaithful parents often had the judgment of {79} God inflicted on them through their children. The aspects of covenantal curse were openly applied to the family. Judgment upon parents was seen to take two forms: firstly through ungodly children who caused great shame while they lived and who caused even greater pain when they were cast into hell. Covenant theology gave no room for laxity or presumption on the part of the parents, at least in the Puritan milieu. Having children was indeed a mercy, argues John Flavel, but if they perished from want of knowledge, where was the mercy in that?¹⁴³ He goes on to cite seven or eight reasons why parents must instruct and train their children in godliness. Amongst these are the creational closeness of the parent-child relationship (“... what child can choose but relent, while a parent is speaking with a melting heart to him about his eternal concerns?”),¹⁴⁴ and God’s direct charge to parents to care for the souls of their children. But not the least of the reasons cited was the fear of the curse of the covenant falling upon one’s children. He writes:

What shall comfort you at the parting time if they die, through your neglect, in a Christless condition? O! this is a cutting consideration, my child is in hell and I did nothing to prevent it; I helped him thither! Duty discharged is the only comfort in that day.¹⁴⁵

142. Perkins, *Works*, 431.

143. John Flavel, *The Works of John Flavel*, 6 vols. (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), 4:374.

144. *Ibid.*, 4:540.

145. *Ibid.*, 374.

Secondly, covenantal judgment could also be administered to lax parents temporally. Cartwright, another early Puritan, argued that the first duty of parents was joining in prayer for their children. They were to pray specifically for a “godly posterity,” so that:

In birth the children bee comly and not monstrous in coming forth like monsters which might be a grief unto them or an occasion that the wicked should speak evil of the Gospel.¹⁴⁶

The first duty of the parents, then, was to pray that their children be a source of blessing to the Church. This was to be engaged in at the conception, gestation, birth, and, indeed, throughout the life of the child. The second duty was to consecrate suitably gifted children for leadership in the Church. Then, general guidelines were given for training children in righteousness and godliness. Perkins suggested that there were three general principles given by God for this end. Firstly, the child should be admitted into the fellowship of the Church by baptism. Secondly, the seeds of godliness and religion should be sown in the heart of the child as soon as it could understand anything. As the child grew in years care should be taken that it {80} grew commensurately in grace and knowledge. Finally, Perkins noted that the instruction of children in learning and religion must be done in such a way that they take it with delight.¹⁴⁷ These first two are straightforward enough, but the last principle serves to explode another widespread myth with regard to the Puritans and their family structure. Puritan parents are often painted as being harsh and tyrannical disciplinarians who, while remaining aloof from their children, expected their progeny to be seen and not heard and behave as adults when they were seen. While undoubtedly there must have been some disciplinary excesses, the writings of the Puritan divines demonstrate the bankruptcy of the stereotype. Rather, instruction was to be tailored to the level of the child. Care must be taken, wrote Perkins, that they be allowed moderate recreation for their years. When children did go

146. Thomas Cartwright, *Cartwrightiana*, ed. Albert Peel and Leland H. Carlson, Elizabethan Nonconformist Tests, vol. 1 (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957), 185–86. Notice here again the dual concern of children becoming part of God’s judgment upon the parents, on the one hand, and a curse to the Church, on the other.

147. Perkins, *Works*, 431.

astray they must be disciplined *first* by the Word of God and, if that did not help, then the rod of correction was to be used. Perkins cautioned his readers that two unjustifiable extremes be avoided—overindulgence, on the one hand, and harsh severity on the other.¹⁴⁸ To avoid these extremes, care should be taken to adjust physical correction to the psychology of the child; it should be applied, moreover, in love and prayer, and not to relieve the feelings of the parents.¹⁴⁹

Greenham gives further insight into how extreme severity was to be prevented. He argued that the discipline and correction of children was to be done, not primarily for their sin and fault against the parents, but for their sin against God. Moreover, when a parent observed a child sin, he should “enter his own heart” to see whether the sin originated with him. If the answer was affirmative or probable, then the parent should consider how God’s hand of just judgment might well be upon the parent. In such cases, when the parent would be angry with the child, he should have a holy anger toward himself. He should then repent of his own sin and pray for the healing of the child.¹⁵⁰

It is clear from the foregoing examples that the tyrannical nature of Puritan education, training, and correction is a misrepresentation. Instead, what can be seen is that in this area, as indeed in all other areas, the Puritans sought to place themselves under the rule of Christ. Discipline and correction was not a personal, autonomous reaction to the self-perceived errors of a child. Instead, it was first of all an expression of jealousy for God and His law; secondly, that law was to be administered prophetically, before physical correction, the latter being used only when necessary. Even then, care had to be taken that discipline was sensitive to the constitution of the child. Finally, and possibly most significantly, the parent, in training his children so that they would build up the Church, had to be repentant and humble before God, applying the same standards (law) to himself as his child. {81}

148. *Ibid.*

149. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion*, 57.

150. Cited in Emerson, *English Puritanism*, 150-51.

4. *Avoidance of Fornication and the Slaking of the Lusts of the Flesh*

Perkins posits this as the third major purpose of marriage, providentially ordained by God after the Fall. The desire for sexual continence was a holy and proper motive for marriage. Richard Baxter gives it as one of the reasons for marriage. If one could not remain continent in the single state, then marriage was desirable.¹⁵¹ Perkins was even more adamant—it was mandatory. For him continence was an excellent ground for marriage. When a child grew to maturity the best endeavors had to be made to provide him with a mate, or at least advise him on the matter. Neglect in this area exposed children to the possibility of whoredom, or wicked and ungodly marriages.¹⁵²

Parents, then, were to encourage their children in marriage, particularly so when they were facing temptations in the area of sexual purity. God's providential answer to lustful temptations was marriage. In choosing a mate for their children, parents ought to prize greatly "purity and wisdom," rather than "beauty or riches," but if it should so happen that a mate have all of these attributes, so much the better! The parents should be all the more thankful.¹⁵³ Of course, it goes without saying that parents should be moderate and not force their children to marry against their will. But so seriously did Perkins regard marriage as being God's providential means for the maintenance of holy living that he taught that where parents were negligent in taking care of this aspect of the welfare of their children, the latter should declare the matter first of all to relatives, and then to magistrates for redress.¹⁵⁴

This serves to reveal something of the Puritan attitude toward sex, which we can characterize as neither prurient nor prudish. Sex was an essential duty of marriage. In itself it was indifferent, neither good nor bad. If sexuality was expressed in a proper way, it became a holy and undefiled action. Like all other aspects of life, it was to be sanctified by

151. Richard Baxter, *The Practical Workes of Richard Baxter*, 4 vols. (London: Arthur Hall and Co., 1847), 1:395.

152. Perkins, *Works*, 143.

153. *Ibid.*

154. *Ibid.*, 432.

the Word and prayer. The Scriptures give the right and holy manner of conduct in sex. This could be summarized into two principles:

1. *Moderation*

William Perkins notes:

...even in wedlock, excess in lust is no better than plain adultery before God. This is the judgment of the ancient church, that intemperance, that is, immoderate desires even between man and woman are fornication.¹⁵⁵ {82}

According to Edmund Morgan, excess in Puritan context meant the point at which earthly delights came to dim the heavenly goal. The Puritans knew how to laugh and love, but neither of these activities ruled or dominated their lives.¹⁵⁶

2. *Holy Abstinence*

The Scriptures gave out that there were times when one should engage in holy abstinence from sex. Perkins taught that there were only two such times, namely, when a woman was in menstruation, or during a time of great calamity when both partners were to give themselves to fasting and prayer.¹⁵⁷

In conclusion, sex was an essential and holy part of marriage. It had three vital functions and fruits in the economy of God. It produced children; it preserved a clean body and a fit temple for the Holy Spirit; and it produced a “lively type” of the communion between Christ and the Church.¹⁵⁸

5. To Enable the Parties in Marriage to Perform Their Respective Callings and Duties Better

To every Christian, God had given both general and special callings. General callings were those applicable to all Christians; special callings varied from person to person. The institution of marriage and the family was given by God to aid Christians in fulfilling their respective callings. The first area in which the institution of marriage assisted was

155. *Ibid.*, 424.

156. Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Family* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 64.

157. Perkins, *Works*, 424.

158. *Ibid.*, 425.

that of piety and general sanctification. The central role of the family in the religious development of children has been noted above. Husband and wife, however, were also to sharpen one another and build one another up in the faith. Thomas Cartwright taught that a prominent duty of husband and wife was that they admonish one another. The husband was to admonish and teach his wife. The wife was to sensitively counsel and admonish her husband when he failed in his duty. The husband was instructed to hear such admonition, which was always to be administered in the light of her subjection and in humility, confessing herself to be the weaker vessel.¹⁵⁹ Hence, both husband and wife had to play an active role in the sanctification of the other partner. Marriage, then, like all other activities of life to which men were called by God, was an opportunity for spiritual growth and the expression of Christian piety.¹⁶⁰

The family was also ordained by God to assist its members in fulfilling {83} their respective special callings. Parents were to prepare their children for, and guide them into, their special callings. Marriage itself was a special calling. It follows that the Puritans believed it to be the duty of Christian parents to educate and prepare their children to be godly and wise parents in their own time. It was not enough for a Christian to be a husband or father. He must be a *Christian* husband and a *Christian* father. The child had to be taught to hammer out the calling of marriage upon the anvil of the Word of God. Firstly, he was to be instructed how to find a good mate and what constituted a good mate. He was also taught how to work, how to be industrious, and how to manage a house. Thomas Gataker, preaching on the value of a good wife, exhorted his listeners to train their daughters so that they:

... be a blessing, not a cross or a curse to those that shall have them ... labor and train them up in true wisdom and discretion, in the fear of God, and such graces as shall make them truly amiable, as well in God's sight as in man's eyes; in housewifery and industry, and skill to

159. Cartwright, *Cartwrightiana*, 186. This perspective serves to underscore again the thesis developed earlier—that Puritan marriage theology did not allow for women to be regarded as inferior before God. They were to play a direct and active role in the sanctification of their own husbands.

160. Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 120.

manage household affairs: that so they may be helpers to their husbands, and not hinderers, as to that end they were made at first.¹⁶¹

It follows concomitantly, that God had ordained that the family prepare and guide children into all other special callings. Perkins admonished parents in this very area. Rather than letting their children be applied to any condition in life, it was the duty of parents to make fit callings for their children, and children fit for their callings. To ascertain what constituted a proper calling for their children, they had to take cognizance of two things in their children: their inclinations and their natural gifts. Finding a fit calling for one's progeny was of great importance. Parents were forbidden to gratify their own ambitions through their children. Rather, they had to submit to the rule of God in their lives and the lives of their children, mediated through the Scriptures and through providence. Perkins concludes:

The truth is that parents cannot do greater wrong to their children and the society of man than to apply them to unfit callings.¹⁶²

In summary, we have seen that in Puritan theology, the family and marriage was understood to be foundational to God's created order. In each of the four major purposes given of God to the family there was a foundational element. The family was given by God to procreate the human race, to maintain the health and growth of the church, and to prepare men for their respective callings. It was also providentially given by God to help prevent fornication and maintain one's body a temple of the Holy Spirit. Rightly did Perkins call the family "the seminary of all other sorts and kinds of life in the commonwealth in the Church."¹⁶³ Moreover, we have seen how, as the {84} family functioned so as to fulfill these goals, all of the family—both parents and children—were to be self-consciously under the law of God and that law was the same law for *all* family members. The law that bound children equally bound the parents. The law that bound the wife, also bound the husband. This meant that the aristocratic authority structure of the Puritan family (husband head of wife, parents head of children, etc.)

161. Emerson, *English Puritanism*, 215.

162. Perkins, *Works*, 460.

163. *Ibid.*, 419.

did not become an autocratic authority. It remained theocratic at every point.

6. *The Puritan Family at Worship*

Finally, a treatment of the Puritan family would be incomplete without a discussion of how the family worshipped. A not-well-known publication of the Westminster Assembly is crucial here—namely, “The Directory for Family Worship.”¹⁶⁴ This directory was adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1647. It gave instructions as to why, when, and how each family was to worship privately within their own homes. An indication of the seriousness with which the Puritans viewed this duty is given by an introductory statement, added by the assembly when it adopted the measure. We read:

... the Assembly doth require and appoint ministers and ruling elders to make *diligent search and enquiry*, in the congregations committed to their charge respectively, whether there be among them any family or families which use to neglect this necessary duty; and if any such family be found, the head of the family is to be first admonished privately to amend his fault ... after which reproof, if he still be found to neglect family worship, *let him be, for his obstinacy in such offence, suspended and debarred from the Lord’s Supper*, as being firstly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein, till he amend.¹⁶⁵

The conducting and exercise of family worship was made an object of the discipline of the Scottish Church. This is not at all out of character and harmony with the general Puritan conviction with respect to family worship.

Singular in this regard was the Puritan conception of the family or household as a “little church.” Perkins described the family as a little church, Gouge called it the “seminary of the Church and commonwealth ...” and Baxter characterized the home as “a church ... a society of Christians combined for the better worshipping and serving God.”¹⁶⁶ Lewis Bayly taught that “what the preacher is in the pulpit, the

164. This can be found printed in the Free Presbyterian Church’s edition of the Westminster Confession of Faith, published by Free Presbyterian Publications, Glasgow.

165. Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Publications Committee, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1973), 418. Emphasis mine.

same the Christian householder is in his house.” He is quoting Augustine.¹⁶⁷ To this end, the family was to assemble at least twice a day for worship. In the morning they gathered to {85} call upon the name of God before they began the works of their respective callings. In the evening, when the family had known the blessing of God upon the labor of the day, they prayed for the protection of God through the night. When families practiced this kind of devotion they were “even a kind of paradise upon earth.”¹⁶⁸ The reference to the Garden of Eden is obvious.

We should not imagine that this conception of the family as a little church and the householder as a preacher produced rampant ecclesiastical atomism. This was prevented by the binding of private family worship to the corporate worship of the Church. The primary ordinance for maintenance of this bond was the Sabbath. The Lord’s Day was the grand climax of Puritan household religion.¹⁶⁹ Lewis Bayly described how the family was to observe the Sabbath. It was prepared for on Saturday night. Sunday morning devotions were briefer to allow for private meditation and the walk to church. During the service, the family worshipped together. After church, at dinner there was an examination upon the sermon. Those who remembered well were commended, but the head of the household was not to discourage weaker members. The objective was to ascertain what of the sermon was understood, to further explain it, and to make direct application to the family. The afternoon was taken up with catechetical instruction and works of mercy for the poor and the sick.¹⁷⁰ In this manner the private worship of the family was bound to the Church and under the indirect authority of the officers of the Church.

Thus the Puritan family lived, served, worshipped, and glorified God in the Church, in the state, and in the creation at large. Such a high view of the family was the bedrock of the Puritan social reformation.

166. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion*, 55.

167. *Ibid.*, 57.

168. Perkins, *Works*, 417–18.

169. Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion*, 63.

170. Cited in *ibid.*, 64. Morgan notes a similar phenomenon in New England family worship. Morgan, *Puritan Family*, 102.

While the Reformation had recovered the importance of the family, the Puritans restored it to its proper position in the social order. Herein lies one of the oft-neglected strengths of the Puritan reformation.

THE WOMAN'S AUTHORITY: CALVIN TO EDWARDS

Rita Mancha

Women's liberation has become a topic of cocktail party conversations, college campus debates, laundry room fantasizings, and General Assembly headaches. Even the most naive of persons cannot plead ignorance of this present controversy; for, besides the deluge of publicity, it is one which hits home. A husband cannot ignore a once-contented wife who is suddenly driven to "find herself," drop the dishes, and pick up a career. Nor is it likely that an ordained woman behind the pulpit will be accepted without so much as a raised eyebrow, a clenched fist, or perhaps even a letter of transfer.

The proponents of women's liberation would have us believe that we are living in a momentous age: one which marks the birth of Woman. In ages past, Woman has quietly endured her bondage, but she is presently being led out of Egypt, and the passing of the Equal Rights Amendment will mark her entrance into the Promised Land. To aid her on her journey, she turns to "Liberation Theology," where "there is neither male nor female," and God is sometimes referred to as "Our Heavenly Mother."

To what do we owe the present Liberation Theology and reevaluation of woman's role in society? It is true that some isolated passages in Scripture can be used to support Liberation Theology, but then isolated passages are often used to support just about anything. When turning to Scripture as the authority, one must look at the whole picture, and not just those portions which accommodate our preconceived notions. Blatant statements such as: "I do not allow woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet" (1 Tim. 2:12) cannot be ignored, nor can they be excused under the guise of cultural factors. Is culture to be our authority? Should the present societal reality dictate the commands of God, or should the opposite be true?

In the final analysis, we must confront the question of authority. If Scripture is to be our final authority, we have much to gain from men in history who have relied upon the same authority. We have an urgent need in the present age to echo the Reformers' plea of *sola scriptura*.

The notable Reformer, John Calvin, may be regarded by many today as the epitome of male chauvinists: one who was living in an age when the {87} social consciousness had not yet been awakened to the plight of woman. We cannot disregard the influence of culture, nor can we judge Calvin by the standards of modern America; but, if his cry of *sola scriptura* holds any credence, his words are valuable today.

For Calvin, the whole question of the role of women was one of authority. In obeying the ultimate authority of Scripture, one sees that God works through a temporal authority structure to which one must submit oneself as in obedience to God Himself, thus giving glory to Him.

As God has ordained this authority structure, women must be subject to men. Calvin gives two primary reasons for this subjection of women. First, it was a law enacted by God at the creation. Second, it was inflicted as a punishment on woman at the Fall.¹⁷¹

The *first* point is not only based upon the fact that woman derived her origin from man, making her inferior in rank, but also that woman was created for the sake of man, making her subject to him. The mere fact that woman was second in the order of creation is not a sound argument in and of itself. After all, Jesus came after John the Baptist, thereby proving that order in creation does not imply inferiority.¹⁷² Rather, woman is inferior in rank because she was "joined to the man on the express condition, that she should be at hand to render obedience to him."¹⁷³ When Moses records that woman was created as a "suitable helper," he testifies that "God did not create two chiefs of equal power, but added to the man an inferior aid."¹⁷⁴ Note that this

171. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, trans. Rev. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), 68.

172. *Ibid.*, 68.

173. *Ibid.*, 69.

174. *Ibid.*

inferiority is one of rank, or power, and not of general capabilities. Thus, Calvin establishes his first point, and is able to say, "That the man is the beginning of the woman and the end for which she was made, is evident from the Law."¹⁷⁵

Proceeding to Calvin's *second* point, we see that whereas woman has been commanded to obey man from the beginning, as a result of the Fall her subjection is now less voluntary and agreeable. "She had, indeed, previously been subject to her husband, but that was a liberal and gentle subjection; now, however, she is cast into servitude."¹⁷⁶

This is not to burden Eve with the entire responsibility of the Fall. Adam complied with Eve's desires, and is also guilty of rebellion. As a result, Adam, too, is deprived of his authority. Adam has lost his authority over {88} the earth; he must now labor for its fruits. Likewise, Eve must suffer a twofold punishment: the pain of childbirth and subjection to her husband and dependence upon his will.¹⁷⁷

This condition of woman is the very reason why women are not permitted to teach men. The *teaching office* implies the rank of power or authority, which is expressly denied women. It is not that women possess inferior mental capabilities, or that they are not to concern themselves with diligent study. Indeed, 1 Timothy 2:11 exhorts a woman to "receive instruction," but this is to be done "quietly," and "with entire submissiveness."

It is also not to discharge women from the duty of instructing their families, but only excludes women from the office of teaching, as it carries a superiority in church order which is inconsistent with subjection.¹⁷⁸

This subjection in no way limits a woman on her path to salvation, nor does it set boundaries upon her faith, or deny her the call to witness. Calvin refers to the author of Hebrews, who acknowledges "that

175. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. Rev. John Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), vol. 1, 358.

176. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Rev. John King (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), vol. 1, 172.

177. *Ibid.*

178. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, 468.

women may know that this Truth belongs to them as well as to men,” by citing Sarah as an example of the faithful.¹⁷⁹

Calvin also notes the faith of the holy women who followed Jesus to the cross and appeared at the tomb. Indeed, he sees in Mary “a lively image of our calling,” who, when hearing Jesus call her name, responded “Rabboni,” professing her obedience and naming herself a disciple of our Lord.¹⁸⁰

Calvin calls to our attention that it was Mary who was sent to the disciples to proclaim the resurrection.

Here we behold also the inconceivable kindness of Christ, in choosing and appointing *women* to be the witnesses of his resurrection to the Apostles; for the commission which is given to them is the only foundation for our salvation, and contains the chief point of heavenly wisdom.¹⁸¹

This is not, however, to be seen as granting women the right to teach men. Rather, “this occurrence was extraordinary, and—we might almost say—accidental.”¹⁸² Calvin sees this as God’s way of chastising the apostles for their apostasy.

I consider this was done by way of reproach, because they had been {89} so tardy and sluggish to believe. And, indeed, they deserve not only to have *women* for their teachers, but even oxen and asses; since the Son of God had been so long and laboriously employed in teaching, and yet they had made so little, or hardly any progress.... Yet it pleased the Lord, by means of those weak and contemptible vessels, to give a display of his power.¹⁸³

Just as God used the women at the tomb to chastise the apostles, so He uses women in government in the same reproachful manner. Governmental leadership by women is “utterly at variance with the legitimate order of nature,” and is seen as God’s judgment to reproach men for their sluggishness. These women are “endowed not only with a

179. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), 281.

180. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Gospel of John*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), vol. 2, 258.

181. *Ibid.*, 260.

182. *Ibid.*

183. *Ibid.*, 260-61.

manly but a heroic Spirit, as in the case of Deborah we have an illustrious example.”¹⁸⁴

The example of Deborah, however, represents an extraordinary act of God, and is not to be seen as the prescribed order of things.

If women were once supernaturally called as prophets and teachers by the Spirit of God, He who is above all law might do this; but, being a particular case, this is not opposed to the constant and ordinary system of government.¹⁸⁵

The problem of women rulers in government was a prominent one for Calvin. At the time of his writings, Mary Stuart was ruling in Scotland and Elizabeth in England. John Knox's *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* had been published in Geneva, although without Calvin's permission. Although Calvin did not approve of women in government, he was not so stern as Knox. Calvin stated that as long as the laws of the kingdom had granted a woman the right to rule, she must be obeyed, and there should be no attempt to overthrow her government. “Though government by a woman is a sign of God's anger, it is to be endured till God removes it.”¹⁸⁶

Thus, Calvin gave a qualified approval in letting women maintain their thrones in the governmental sphere, but he stood firm in denying sex equality in religious offices. In Calvin's day, it was believed that emergencies sometimes necessitated that a woman assume the duties of a particular church office. For example, it was a common practice for midwives to baptize infants near death. However, Calvin did not hold that baptism was necessary for salvation; therefore, it would be better for the child to die unbaptized than for a woman to transgress the law of God.¹⁸⁷ Calvin {90} here echoes the words of Tertullian, who did not permit a woman to speak in church, teach, or baptize. “This was that

184. Jules Bonnet, ed., *Letters of John Calvin* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1858), vol. 3, 38.

185. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, 67.

186. Georgia Harkness, *John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1931), 155.

187. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), vol. 2, 1321.

she might not claim for herself the function of any man, much less that of a priest.”¹⁸⁸

Again, referring to the women at the tomb, Calvin emphasizes that, by the command of God, they taught the apostles, but were not granted the authority of the apostles themselves.

But, in executing this injunction, they do not act as if they had been Apostles; and, therefore, it is wrong to frame a law out of this injunction of Christ and allow women to perform the office of baptizing. Let us be satisfied in knowing that Christ displayed in them the boundless treasures of his grace, when he once appointed them to be the teachers of the Apostles, and yet did not intend that what was done by a singular privilege should be viewed as an example.¹⁸⁹

There is one church office which Calvin grants may be held by women. This is the office of deacon, but there must be a distinction made between the two grades of this office, as prescribed in Romans 12:8: “He that gives, let him do it with simplicity; ... he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” Calvin explains that this first clause refers to the deacons whose duty it is to distribute the alms, while the second clause refers to “those who had devoted themselves to the care of the poor and sick.” The widows Paul mentions in 1 Timothy 5:9–10 are examples of those performing the latter mentioned function of deacons. Women could fill no other public office than to devote themselves to the care of the poor.¹⁹⁰

After reading Calvin’s statements on the role of women, it is evident that women are seen as being inferior to men in power and authority, not capabilities. God commands that women cannot perform certain functions that are granted to men. However, women are given intelligence, they can know the truth necessary to salvation, and they can be a living witness of that truth. Lest anyone still label Calvin as a male chauvinist, a look at his personal letters provides a more complete picture. His letters do not display a condescending tone to his female correspondents. On the contrary, they are written in the same manner as are his letters to male correspondents. He respects women’s intelli-

188. *Ibid.*

189. Calvin, *Commentaries on the Gospel of John*, vol. 1, 260-61.

190. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 2, 1061.

gence; he encourages them to seek after God's truth, and to learn of His ways; and he commends women for the witness of their lives.

Calvin reminds the dutchess of Ferrara that because of her position, she "more than most princely persons, ... [is] able to promote and advance the Kingdom of Christ."¹⁹¹ Also, Calvin does not place limits upon what the dutchess should know. On the contrary, in replying to an inquiry she had made of him, he writes: {91}

I beseech you to pardon my simplicity. Should it be your pleasure to have more full instruction in this argument, ... I will attempt, so far as the Lord shall enable me, to satisfy you.... That he should manifest in you the efficacy of his spirit in such a way that you may be as much honored in his household as he has elevated you in station and dignity among men.¹⁹²

Calvin also wrote to women of a humbler rank: women who, because of their faith and courage, were imprisoned in Paris. It is in these letters that we see a most compassionate Calvin. He encourages the women, commending them for their courage and constancy, exhorting them not to lose heart because they are inferior in rank, for God is doing mighty works through them. Calvin reminds them that God has chosen "the weak things to cast down the strong," and tells them: "This is what should give you great encouragement in order that the consideration of your sex cause you not to fail, though it is often lightly esteemed of men."¹⁹³ Speaking of those who hate the truth of God, Calvin writes:

If they avail themselves of sex or external condition to fall more furiously upon us (as we see in what derision they hold women and poor artisans, as if these had no right to speak of God and learn the way of their salvation,) know that such conduct is a testimony against them and to their utter confusion. But since it has pleased God to call you as well as men (for he has no respect either of male or female,) it is needful that you do your duty to give him glory, according to the measure of grace he has dealt out to you....¹⁹⁴

191. Bonnet, vol. 1, 296.

192. *Ibid.*, 305-6.

193. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 364.

194. *Ibid.*

Calvin refers to the words of Joel, who stated that God's Spirit shall cause sons and daughters to prophesy, thereby showing that God "communicates in like manner his other necessary graces, and leaves neither sons or daughters, men nor women, destitute of the gifts proper for maintaining his glory."¹⁹⁵

Calvin's letter to the women prisoners in Paris contains a most beautiful passage which could be quoted by anyone today who is seeking equality for men and women. Certainly this passage is a far cry from the male chauvinistic attitude which is thought to typify Calvin. In it, he again makes reference to the women at the tomb. Calvin writes:

If he then so honored women, and endowed them with so much courage, think ye he has less power now, or that his purposes are changed? How many thousands of women have there been who have spared neither their blood nor their lives to maintain the name of Jesus Christ, and announce his reign! Has not God caused their martyrdom to fructify? Has their faith not obtained the glory of the world as well as that of martyrs? And without going so far, have we not still before {92} our eyes, examples of how God works daily by their testimony, and confounds his enemies in such a manner that there is no preaching of such efficacy as the fortitude and perseverance, which they possess in confessing the name of Christ?¹⁹⁶

In summarizing Calvin's view of the role of women in the church, we must conclude that woman derived her origin from man and was created to obey him, but this pleasant obedience was turned to servitude at the Fall. Woman is inferior in rank to man, and must submit herself to his authority. For this reason, she cannot lawfully hold an ecclesiastical teaching office, for this would imply functional superiority. However, she is a companion to man. She is not an unthinking servant who has nothing to contribute. She is intelligent, and eager to learn. She is a faithful instrument of God, working diligently to promote the kingdom of Christ. She rebels against God when she defies His authority structure and assumes a position meant for man, but she also rebels against God when she excuses herself by claiming that she is a weak vessel who can do nothing to contribute to the kingdom of God. Both men and women must realize that "Since we have a common salvation in him, it

195. *Ibid.*, 365.

196. *Ibid.*, 366.

is necessary that all with one accord, men as well as women, should maintain his cause."¹⁹⁷

Following close behind in Calvin's footsteps, the New England Puritans also recognized that the problem of the role of women was basically a question of authority, or to use a favorite word of the Puritans, "order." The Puritans worshipped a God of order who, in avoiding confusion, had not created the world according to an equality principle, but set up temporal authorities to whom one was accountable, as being accountable to God. All creatures are commanded to serve God indirectly by serving other creatures.

With one exception everything in the world had a double purpose: its ultimate end was to serve God, its immediate end was to serve another being. And that other being, of course, was man, the chief beneficiary next to God in the scheme of creation.¹⁹⁸

The Puritan woman was taught that she was created ultimately for God, but immediately for man. She was distinguished from other creatures, having an immortal soul and being able to commune directly with God through prayer. Woman was not seen as a necessary evil, but as a necessary good.

However, the Puritans did not have a very favorable estimation of the abilities of woman. It was the duty of the Puritan husband to instruct his wife in matters of religion and "to make it easy to her."¹⁹⁹ Puritan women {93} were expected to concede to the fact that they were weaker than men in body and mind. Any woman who tried to solve theological problems on her own was reminded of the fate of the wife of Governor Hopkins of Connecticut. Governor Winthrop accredited Mistress Hopkins's insanity to the fact that "she spent too much time in reading and writing." Speaking of the Hopkinses, Thomas Parker recorded that:

Her husband, being very loving and tender of her, was loath to grieve her; but he saw his error, when it was too late. For if she had attended her household affairs and such things as belong to women, and not gone out of her way and calling to meddle in such things as are proper

197. *Ibid.*, 365.

198. Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), 13.

199. *Ibid.*, 44.

to men, whose minds are stronger, etc., she had kept her wits, and might have improved them usefully and honorably in the place God had set her.²⁰⁰

Her “place” was at home, and that was rarely questioned. By law, when a Puritan woman married, she could hold no property of her own, but must give it all over to her husband. After she had given everything up to him, she could devote herself solely to the managing of his household.²⁰¹ Hereafter, her duties would consist of “educating of her children, keeping and improving what is got by the industry of man ... to see that nothing be wasted, or prodigally spent.”²⁰²

She received the fruits of the earth from her husband, as God provided them. Representing God’s authority over her, her husband was “the Conduit Pipe of the variety of blessings that God suplyeth them with,”²⁰³ and she was to respond to him out of a mixture of fear and love. This fear was not “a slavish Fear, which is nourished with hatred or aversion; but a noble and generous Fear, which proceeds from Love.”²⁰⁴ This was not the fear a servant feels toward a master. The Puritan wife was not her husband’s slave. In fact, the courts often took action to insure that women were treated as wives and not as slaves.

The concept of covenant relationships was central to Puritan life, and marriage was the highest of all relationships possible between mortals. “All relationships which are neither naturall nor violent, but voluntary, are by vertue of some covenant.”²⁰⁵ God had ordained that men were to live together, and gave them the freedom to enter covenant relationships voluntarily, thus obeying God’s will. All who gave their free consent to be married were agreeing that they would give unconditional obedience to the rules of marriage God had established with Adam and Eve. Since marriage was the highest human relationship possible, it served as the closest {94} comparison of the believer’s relationship to God.

200. *Ibid.*

201. *Ibid.*, 42.

202. *Ibid.*

203. *Ibid.*, 45.

204. *Ibid.*

205. *Ibid.*, 26.

The metaphor seems to have dominated Puritan thought so completely as to suggest that the Puritans' religious experiences in some way duplicated their domestic experiences.²⁰⁶

Indeed, the family is the key to understanding many aspects of Puritan life.

Weakness in the family endangered the entire social order, for the Puritans knew that the pattern of submission set in the home fixed the attitude toward authority throughout life and that strong family government prevented disorder in the state. The father was a model for all authority—magistrates were called the fathers by their people—and the Biblical commandment to honor parents was expanded to include all rulers.²⁰⁷

Jonathan Edwards declared in the mid-eighteenth century that "Every Christian family is a little church, and the heads of it are its authoritative teachers and governors."²⁰⁸ Thus, a study of the order which presided over the Puritan family is a study of the church order as well.

It was the father's duty, as head of the house, to lead in prayer at family devotions, to catechize his children and servants, and to teach all those under his care to read in order that they might study the Bible.²⁰⁹

The wife was equal to her husband in authority over the children and servants. An individual's authority was relative, depending upon the relationship in question. In the home, the wife was bound to her husband, but the children and servants were bound to her. This demonstrates that "no man could be a servant or minister or a king in any general or absolute sense but only in relation to another man or group of men."²¹⁰

Calvin, unlike the Puritans, does not stress the idea of marriage as a covenant relationship, nor does he declare the family a model for all other spheres of social life, including the spiritual and political. He

206. *Ibid.*, 166.

207. Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 14.

208. Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. John E. Smith, vol. 4, *The Great Awakening* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 486.

209. Bushman, 14.

210. Morgan, 28.

does, however, designate the husband the head of the household, and recognizes that there are few instances where subjection is not required of the wife. One such instance is mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:4, where the husband and wife are both given authority over each other's body. Calvin remarks that here, instead of requiring subjection from the wife, Paul "puts them upon a level." Calvin answers this by saying that "it was not his intention to treat of all their duties, but simply of the mutual obligation as to the marriage bed."²¹¹ {95}

Much of what Jonathan Edwards has written reads as though it could have been penned by John Calvin. Edwards agreed that women should engage in Christian conversation, but this should be done with modesty and reverence toward men. All private Christians, whether men or women, were to admonish one another in a humble manner, not assuming any authority which was not rightly theirs. The lower in station a person was, the more humility he must exhibit. Therefore, "it becomes women and those that are young, ordinarily to be at a greater distance from any appearance of authority in speaking than others."²¹²

Like Calvin, Edwards encourages women to be bold witnesses for Christ, even though some may hold them in low esteem. The following excerpt from Edwards reads much like Calvin's letter to the women prisoners in Paris.

'Tis beautiful in private Christians, though they are women and children, to be bold in professing the faith of Christ, and in the practice of all religion, and in owning God's hand in the work of his power and grace, without any fear of men, though they should be reproached as fools and madmen, and frowned upon by great men, and cast off by parents and all the world. But for private Christians, women and others, to instruct, rebuke and exhort, with a like sort of boldness as becomes a minister when preaching, is not beautiful.²¹³

Jonathan Edwards's wife, Sarah, provides an illustrious example of the Puritan woman. She and her husband shared equally the responsibility of disciplining their eleven children. Mr. Edwards led in family prayers, and Sarah depended on him for spiritual guidance and strength. She fed on his spiritual leadership each evening during quiet

211. Harkness, 156.

212. Edwards, 486.

213. *Ibid.*, 428.

times of devotion, and when she felt need of it during the day, she rushed into his study, being assured that no matter how busy he was, he would greet her eagerly.²¹⁴

Sarah was by no means the homely, plain, withdrawn woman Puritan women are often imagined to have been. She was a beautiful woman, and her husband admired her beauty. "Everything she did was with a flair. She took the trouble to tie her hair with a ribbon for breakfast."²¹⁵ This flair was evident on Sarah Pierrepont's wedding day, as she wore "no white wraith mistily drifting toward some vague spiritual experience ... but she wore a pea-green satin brocade with a bold pattern as she stepped joyfully toward her lover."²¹⁶

It seems that Mrs. Edwards was quite an influential woman: her place in the Great Awakening being described as "hardly inferior to that occupied {96} by her husband."²¹⁷ Mrs. Edwards was a mystic devotee, and it was her religious experience which convinced her husband against his will that intimate communion with the Divine could possibly overpower the human body. For nearly three years, Mrs. Edwards remained in a state of spiritual exhilaration, being overcome by her emotions and the vividness of her visions of divine things, so much so that she would faint or dance with joy. At the request of her husband, she wrote a statement about these occurrences, to which Edwards often referred and finally put into his own words in his *Thoughts on the Revival in New England*, though not mentioning his wife by name.²¹⁸

Although Mrs. Edwards had great influence upon her husband, even in theological matters, many Puritan wives devoted the whole of their intelligence to managing the household, thus freeing the husband to devote himself to his study and occupation. The wife of the Reverend Samuel Whiting "by her discretion freed her husband from all secular avocations."²¹⁹

214. Catherine Marshall, *Something More* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1974), 74-75.

215. *Ibid.*, 75.

216. *Ibid.*, 73.

217. Alexander V. G. Allen, *American Religious Leaders: Jonathan Edwards* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1890), 197.

218. *Ibid.*, 198.

The Reverend Richard Mather thought the death of his wife was all the more grievous to him because:

she being a Woman of singular Prudence for the Management of Affairs, had taken off from her husband all Secular Cares, so that he wholly devoted himself to his Study, and to Sacred Employments.²²⁰

It should be noted that some amount of intelligence was attributed to the female sex. In fact, the Puritan diarist, Samuel Sewall, turned over all the economic affairs of his household to his wife, realizing that she had “superior financial judgment.” “She had a better faculty than I at managing Affairs: I will assist her.”²²¹

Although women had superior abilities in some areas, Puritans believed that a woman could not apply her mental capacities to theological issues. If she attempted to do so, she suffered the consequences, as Anne Hutchinson’s story testifies. When Anne Hutchinson began holding meetings in her home in the late 1630s to review John Cotton’s sermons, he approved of the practice, saying that “these private conferences did well to water the seeds publicly sown.”²²² However, the climate of Mrs. Hutchinson’s meetings soon changed. Although women kept silent at the meetinghouse, the informality of Mrs. Hutchinson’s parlor invited questions; “Thus she moved step by treacherous step, from unadorned reiteration of Cotton’s {97} sermons to incautious exegesis of their doctrinal substance.”²²³ Soon, men became interested in her meetings, and she was forced to hold two weekly meetings. The attendance rose to eighty persons per meeting, with businessmen and servants side by side. Thus, she began to overstep her bounds, and the action caused Cotton’s grandson to write years later: “A poyson does never insinuate so quickly nor operate so strongly as when women’s milk is the vehicle wherein ‘tis given.”²²⁴

219. Morgan, 43.

220. *Ibid.*

221. *Ibid.*

222. Everett H. Emerson, *John Cotton* (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1965), 115.

223. Emery Battis, *Saints and Sectaries* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1925), 111.

224. *Ibid.*, 101.

Of course, the events leading up to the excommunication and banishment of Mrs. Hutchinson did not center solely upon the fact that she was a woman, but many of the statements made at her trial are directed to this fact, and do reveal the Puritan attitude toward women, and their involvement in theological issues.

In stating the purpose of his investigation of Mrs. Hutchinson, Governor Winthrop said:

you have spoken divers things as we have been informed very prejudicial to the honor of the churches and ministers thereof, and you have maintained a meeting and an assembly in your house that hath been condemned by the General Assembly as a thing not tolerable nor comely in the sight of God nor fitting for your sex.²²⁵

Mrs. Hutchinson was convicted of sedition and charged with breaking the Fifth Commandment, "which commands us to honor Father and Mother, which includes all in authority,"²²⁶ because she had assumed the role of "a Husband than a Wife, and a Preacher than a Hearer; and a Magistrate than a Subject."²²⁷

Thus, the Puritans were instructed to "Be lovers of order, ... learn to know it that you may love it... Whatever is done against the order that God has constituted is done against God."²²⁸ Though the words were spoken by a Puritan, the meaning is Calvin's. Both recognized that God had declared men the earthly authority for women. When a woman does not submit to this authority, it is rebellion against God. Both Calvin and the Puritans hold that, out of respect for man's authority, a woman can never teach a man.

The Puritan emphasis upon the covenant relationship of marriage and the significance of the family is lacking in Calvin. Calvin stresses biblical narratives which throw light on the subject, such as the creation narrative and the story of the women at the tomb. Certainly, this was the basis for {98} the Puritan doctrine, but references to these biblical accounts is rarely made in their writings.

225. Larzer Ziff, *The Career of John Cotton* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 135-36.

226. Battis, 192-93.

227. Morgan, 19.

228. *Ibid.*

Both Calvin and the Puritans noted that woman is a necessary good, not evil. Both saw woman as an indispensable companion to man, but Calvin seems to give more credit to woman's intelligence. He encourages her to study, and sets no limits upon what she should know. However, the Puritan husbands endeavored to "make things easy" for their wives, assuming that their intelligence applied to secular matters only. Perhaps this is being unfair to the Puritans, but this attitude seems to be the rule rather than the exception. The exception is Jonathan Edwards, who shapes his ideas according to his wife's influence, and has her write about theological concerns, later to incorporate the work as his own.

For both the Puritans and Calvin, women were valuable witnesses for Christ. They are not to be treated as slaves, but should willingly submit themselves to man, as he has been placed in authority over her.

If it is, as Calvin and the Puritans claim, a question of authority, and not culture, then the answer remains the same today. Our knowledge about the biological components of the sexes may change; our opportunities for the education and employment of women may change; the whole of society may change; the grass may wither, and the flowers fade, "But the word of our God stands forever."

THE PURITANS AND SEX

Edmund S. Morgan

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Henry Adams once observed that Americans have “ostentatiously ignored” sex. He could think of only two American writers who touched upon the subject with any degree of boldness—Walt Whitman and Bret Harte. Since the time when Adams made this penetrating observation, American writers have been making up for lost time in a way that would make Bret Harte, if not Whitman, blush. And yet there is still more truth than falsehood in Adams’s statement. Americans, by comparison with Europeans or Asiatics, are squeamish when confronted with the facts of life. My purpose is not to account for this squeamishness, but simply to point out that the Puritans, those bogeymen of the modern intellectual, are not responsible for it.

At the outset, consider the Puritans’ attitude toward marriage and the role of sex in marriage. The popular assumption might be that Puritans frowned on marriage and tried to hush up the physical aspect of it as much as possible, but listen to what they themselves had to say. Samuel Willard, minister of the Old South Church in the latter part of the seventeenth century and author of the most complete textbook of Puritan divinity, more than once expressed his horror at “that Popish conceit of the Excellency of Virginitie.”²²⁹ Another minister, John Cotton, wrote that

Women are Creatures without which there is no comfortable Living for man: it is true of them what is wont to be said of Governments, *That bad ones are better than none*: They are a sort of Blasphemers then who despise and decry them, and call them *a necessary Evil*, for they are *a necessary Good*.²³⁰

229. Samuel Willard, *A Compleat Body of Divinity* (Boston, 1726), 125, 608-13.

These sentiments did not arise from an interpretation of marriage as a spiritual partnership, in which sexual intercourse was a minor or incidental matter. Cotton gave his opinion of “Platonic love” when he recalled the case of

one who immediately upon marriage, without ever approaching the *Nuptial Bed*, indented with the *Bride*, that by mutual consent they {100} might both live such a life, and according did sequestering themselves according to the custom of those times, from the rest of mankind, and afterwards from one another too, in their retired Cells, giving themselves up to a Contemplative life; and this is recorded as an instance of no little or ordinary Vertue; but I must be pardoned in it, if I can account it no other than an effort of blind zeal, for they are the dictates of a blind mind they follow therein, and not of that Holy Spirit, which saith *It is not good that man should be alone.*²³¹

Here is as healthy an attitude as one could hope to find anywhere. Cotton certainly cannot be accused of ignoring human nature. Nor was he an isolated example among the Puritans. Another minister stated plainly that “the Use of the Marriage Bed” is “founded in mans Nature,” and that consequently any withdrawal from sexual intercourse upon the part of husband or wife “Denies all reliefe in Wedlock vnto Human necessity: and sends it for supply vnto Beastiality when God gives not the gift of Continency.”²³² In other words, sexual intercourse was a human necessity and marriage the only proper supply for it. These were the views of the New England clergy, the acknowledged leaders of the community, the most puritanical of the Puritans. As proof that their congregations concurred with them, one may cite the case in which the members of the First Church of Boston expelled James Mattock because, among other offenses, “he denied Coniugall fellowship vnto his wife for the space of 2 years together vpon pretense of taking Revenge upon himself for his abusing of her before marryage.”²³³ So strongly did the Puritans insist upon the sexual character of marriage

230. John Cotton, *A Meet Help* (Boston, 1699), 14-15.

231. *Ibid.*, 16.

232. Edward Taylor, *Commonplace Book* (manuscript in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society).

233. Records of the First Church in Boston (manuscript copy in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society), 12.

that one New Englander considered himself slandered when it was reported, “that he Brock his deceased wife’s hart with Greife, that he wold be absent from her 3 weeks together when he was at home, and wold never come nere her, and such Like.”²³⁴

There was just one limitation which the Puritans placed upon sexual relations in marriage: sex must not interfere with religion. Man’s chief end was to glorify God, and all earthly delights must promote that end, not hinder it. Love for a wife was carried too far when it led a man to neglect his God:

... sometimes a man hath a good affection to Religion, but the love of his wife carries him away, a man may bee so transported to his wife that hee dare not bee forward in Religion, lest hee displease his wife, and so the wife, lest shee displease her husband, and this is an inordinat love, when it exceeds measure.²³⁵ {101}

Sexual pleasures, in this respect, were treated like other kinds of pleasure. On a day of fast, when all comforts are supposed to be foregone in behalf of religious contemplation, not only were tasty food and drink to be abandoned, but sexual intercourse, too. On other occasions, when food, drink, and recreation were allowable, sexual intercourse was allowable too, though of course only between persons who were married to each other. The Puritans were not ascetics; they never wished to prevent the enjoyment of earthly delights. They merely demanded that the pleasures of the flesh be subordinated to the greater glory of God: husband and wife must not become “so transported with affection, that they look at no higher end than marriage it self.” “Let such as have wives,” said the ministers, “look at them not for their own ends, but to be fitted for Gods service, and bring them nearer to God.”²³⁶

Toward sexual intercourse outside marriage the Puritans were as frankly hostile as they were favorable to it in marriage. They passed laws to punish adultery with death, and fornication with whipping. Yet they had no misconceptions as to the capacity of human beings to obey

234. Middlesex County Court Files, folder 42.

235. John Cotton, *A Practical Commentary ... upon the First Epistle Generall of John* (London, 1656), 126.

236. *Ibid.*

such laws. Although the laws were commands of God, it was only natural—since the fall of Adam—for human beings to break them. Breaches must be punished lest the community suffer the wrath of God, but no offense, sexual or otherwise, could be occasion for surprise or for hushed tones of voice. How calmly the inhabitants of seventeenth-century New England could contemplate rape or attempted rape is evident in the following testimony offered before the Middlesex County Court of Massachusetts:

The examination of Edward Wire taken the 7th of october and also Zachery Johnson. who sayeth that Edward Wires mayd being sent into the towne about busenes meeting with a man that dogd hir from about Joseph Kettles house to goody marches. She came into William Johnstones and desired Zachery Johnson to goe home with her for that the man dogd hir. accordingly he went with her and being then as far as Samuell Phips his house the man over tooke them. which man caled himselfe by the name of peter grant would have led the mayd but she oposed itt three times: and coming to Edward Wires house the said grant would have kist hir but she refused itt: wire being at prayer grant dragd the mayd between the said wiers and Nathanill frothing-hams house. hee then flung the mayd downe in the streete and got atop hir; Johnson seeing it hee caled vppon the fellow to be sivill and not abuse the mayd then Edward wire came forth and ran to the said grant and took hold of him asking him what he did to his mayd, the said grant asked whether she was his wife for he did nothing to his wife: the said grant swearing he would be the death of the said wire. when he came of the mayd; he swore he would bring ten men to pul down his house and soe ran away and they followed him as far as good[y] phipses house where they mett with John Terry and George Chin with clubs in there hands and soe they went away together. Zachy {102} Johnson going to Constable Heamans, and wire going home. there came John Terry to his house to ask for beer and grant was in the streete but afterward departed into the towne, both Johnson and Wire both aferme that when grant was vppon the mayd she cryed out severall times.

Deborah hadlocke being examined sayth that she mett with the man that cald himselfe peeter grant about good prichards that he dogd hir and followed hir to hir masters and there threw hir downe and lay vppon hir but had not the use of hir body but swore several othes that he would ly with hir and gett hir with child before she got home.

Grant being present denys all saying he was drunk and did not know what he did.²³⁷

The Puritans became inured to sexual offenses, because there were so many. The impression which one gets from reading the records of seventeenth-century New England courts is that illicit sexual intercourse was fairly common. The testimony given in cases of fornication and adultery—by far the most numerous class of criminal cases in the records—suggests that many of the early New Englanders possessed a high degree of virility and very few inhibitions. Besides the case of Peter Grant, take the testimony of Elizabeth Knight about the manner of Richard Nevars's advances toward her:

The last publique day of Thanksgiving (in the year 1674) in the evening as I was milking Richard Nevars came to me, and offered me abuse in putting his hand, under my coates, but I turning aside with much adoe, saved my self, and when I was settled to milking he agen took me by the shoulder and pulled me backward almost, but I clapped one hand on the Ground and held fast the Cows teatt with the other hand, and cryed out and then came to mee Jonathan Abbot one of my Masters Servants, whome the said Never asked wherefore he came, the said Abbot said to look after you, what you doe unto the Maid, but the said Never bid Abbot goe about his businesse but I bade the lad to stay.²³⁸

One reason for the abundance of sexual offenses was the number of men in the colonies who were unable to gratify their sexual desires in marriage.²³⁹ Many of the first settlers had wives in England. They had come to the new world to make a fortune, expecting either to bring their families after them or return to England with some of the riches of America. Although these men left their wives behind, they brought their sexual appetites with them; and in spite of laws which required them to return to their families, they continued to stay, and more continued to arrive, as indictments {103} against them throughout the seventeenth century clearly indicate.

Servants formed another group of men, and of women too, who could not ordinarily find supply for human necessity within the

237. Middlesex Files, folder 48.

238. Middlesex Files, folder 71.

239. Another reason was suggested by Charles Francis Adams in his scholarly article, "Some Phases of Sexual Morality and Church Discipline in Colonial New England," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 26: 477-516.

bounds of marriage. Most servants lived in the homes of their masters and could not marry without their consent, a consent which was not likely to be given unless the prospective husband or wife also belonged to the master's household. This situation will be better understood if it is recalled that most servants at this time were engaged by contract for a stated period. They were, in the language of the time, "covenant servants," who had agreed to stay with their masters for a number of years in return for a specified recompense, such as transportation to New England or education in some trade (the latter, of course, were known more specifically as apprentices). Even hired servants who worked for wages were usually single, for as soon as a man had enough money to buy or build a house of his own and get married, he would set up in farming or trade for himself. It must be emphasized, however, that anyone who was not in business for himself was necessarily a servant. The economic organization of seventeenth-century New England had no place for the independent proletarian workman with a family of his own. All production was carried on in the household by the master of the family and his servants, so that most men were either servants or masters of servants; and the former, of course, were more numerous than the latter. Probably most of the inhabitants of Puritan New England could remember a time when they had been servants.

Theoretically no servant had a right to a private life. His time, day or night, belonged to his master, and both religion and law required that he obey his master scrupulously.²⁴⁰ But neither religion nor law could restrain the sexual impulses of youth, and if those impulses could not be expressed in marriage, they had to be given vent outside marriage. Servants had little difficulty in finding the occasions. Though they might be kept at work all day, it was easy enough to slip away at night. Once out of the house, there were several ways of meeting with a maid. The simplest way was to go to her bedchamber, if she was so fortunate as to have a private one of her own. Thus Jock, Mr. Solomon Phipps's Negro man, confessed in court

that on the sixteenth day of May 1682, in the morning betweene 12 and one of the clock, he did force open the back doores of the House

240. On the position of servants in early New England see *More Books* 17 (September 1942): 311-28.

of Laurence Hammond in Charlestowne, and came in to the House, and went up into the garret to Marie the Negro.

He doth likewise acknowledge that one night last week he forced into the House the same way, and went up to the Negro Woman Marie and that the like he hath done at severall other times before.²⁴¹ {104}

Joshua Fletcher took a more romantic way of visiting his lady:

Joshua Fletcher ... doth confesse and acknowledge that three severall nights, after bedtime, he went into Mr Fiskes Dwelling house at Chelmsford, at an open window by a ladder that he brought with him. the said windo opening into a chamber, whose was the lodging place of Gresill Juell servant to mr. Fiske. and there he kept company with the said mayd. she sometimes having her cloathes on, and one time he found her in her bed.²⁴²

Sometimes a maidservant might entertain callers in the parlor while the family was sleeping upstairs. John Knight described what was perhaps a common experience for masters. The crying of his child awakened him in the middle of the night, and he called to his maid, one Sarah Crouch, who was supposed to be sleeping with the child. Receiving no answer, he arose and

went downe the stayres, and at the stair foot, the latch of the doore was pulled in. I called severall times and at last said if shee would not open the dore, I would breake it open, and when she opened the doore shee was all undressed and Sarah Largin with her undressed, also the said Sarah went out of doores and Dropped some of her clothes as shee went out. I enquired of Sarah Crouch what men they were, which was with them. Shee made mee no answer for some time, but at last shee told me Peeter Brigs was with them, I asked her whether Thomas Jones was not there, but shee would give mee no answer.²⁴³

In the temperate climate of New England it was not always necessary to seek out a maid at her home. Rachel Smith was seduced in an open field “about nine of the clock at night, being darke, neither moone nor starrs shineing.” She was walking through the field when she met a man who

241. Middlesex Files, folder 99.

242. Middlesex Files, folder 47.

243. Middlesex Files, folder 52.

asked her where shee lived, and what her name was and shee told him. and then shee asked his name, and he told her Saijing that he was old Good-man Shepards man. Also shee saith he gave her strong liquors, and told her that it was not the first time he had been with maydes after his master was in bed.²⁴⁴

Sometimes, of course, it was not necessary for a servant to go outside his master's house in order to satisfy his sexual urges. Many cases of fornication are on record between servants living in the same house. Even where servants had no private bedroom, even where the whole family slept in a single room, it was not impossible to make love. In fact many love affairs must have had their consummation upon a bed in which other people were sleeping. Take, for example, the case of Sarah Lepingwell. When Sarah was brought into court for having an illegitimate child, she related that one night when her master's brother, Thomas Hawes, was {105} visiting the family, she went to bed early. Later, after Hawes had gone to bed, he called to her to get him a pipe of tobacco. After refusing for some time,

at the last I arose and did lite his pipe and came and lay doune one my one bead and smoaked about half the pip and siting vp in my bead to gine him his pip my bead being a trundell bead at the sid of his bead he reached beyond the pip and Cauth me by the wrist and pulled me on the side of his bead but I biding him let me goe he bid me hold my pease the folks wold here me and if it be replyed come why did you not call out I Ansar I was posed with fear of my mastar least my master shold think I did it only to bring a scandall on his brothar and thinking thay would all beare witnes agaynst me but the thing is true that he did then begete me with child at that tim and the Child is Thomas Hauses and noe mans but his.

In his defense Hawes offered the testimony of another man who was sleeping "on the same side of the bed," but the jury nevertheless accepted Sarah's story.²⁴⁵

The fact that Sarah was intimidated by her master's brother suggests that maidservants may have been subject to sexual abuse by their masters. The records show that sometimes masters did take advantage of their position to force unwanted attentions upon their female servants.

244. Middlesex Files, folder 44.

245. Middlesex Files, folder 47.

The case of Elizabeth Dickerman is a good example. She complained to the Middlesex County Court,

against her master John Harris senior for profiring abus to her by way of forsing her to be naught with him:... he has tould her that if she tould her dame: what cariag he did show to her shee had as good be hanged, and she replied then shee would run away and he sayd run the way is befor you: ... she says if she should liwe ther shee shall be in fear of her lif.²⁴⁶

The court accepted Elizabeth's complaint and ordered her master to be whipped twenty stripes.

So numerous did cases of fornication and adultery become in seveneenth-century New England that the problem of caring for the children of extramarital unions was a serious one. The Puritans solved it, but in such a way as to increase rather than decrease the temptation to sin. In 1668 the General Court of Massachusetts ordered:

that where any man is legally convicted to be the Father of a Bastard childe, he shall be at the care and charge to maintain and bring up the same, by such assistance of the Mother as nature requireth, and as the Court from time to time (according to circumstances) shall see meet to Order: and in case the Father of a Bastard, by confession or other manifest proof, upon trial of the case, do not appear to the Courts satisfaction, then the Man charged by the Woman to be the {106} Father, shee holding constant in it, (especially being put upon the real discovery of the truth of it in the time of her Travail) shall be the reputed Father, and accordingly be liable to the charge of maintenance as aforesaid (though not to other punishment) notwithstanding his denial, unless the circumstances of the case and pleas be such, on the behalf of the man charged, as that the Court that have the cognizance thereon shall see reason to acquit him, and otherwise dispose of the Childe and education thereof.²⁴⁷

As a result of this law a girl could give way to temptation without the fear of having to care for an illegitimate child by herself. Furthermore, she could, by a little simple lying, spare her lover the expense of supporting the child. When Elizabeth Wells bore a child, less than a year after this statute was passed, she laid it to James Tufts, her master's

246. Middlesex Files, folder 94.

247. William H. Whitmore, ed., *The Colonial Laws of Massachusetts. Reprinted from the Edition of 1660* (Boston, 1889), 257.

son. Goodman Tufts affirmed that Andrew Robinson, servant to Goodman Dexter, was the real father, and he brought the following testimony as evidence:

Wee Elizabeth Jefts aged 15 ears and Mary tufts aged 14 ears doe testyfie that their being one at our hous sumtime the last winter who sayed that thear was a new law made concerning bastards that If any man wear aqused with a bastard and the woman which had aqused him did stand vnto it in her labor that he should bee the reputed father of it and should mayntaine it Elizabeth wells hearing of the sayd law she sayed vnto vs that If shee should bee with Child shee would bee sure to lay it vn to won who was rich enough abell to mayntayne it whether it wear his or no and shee farder sayed Elizabeth Jefts would not you doe so likewise If it weare your case and I sayed no by no means for right must tacke place: and the sayd Elizabeth wells sayed If it wear my Caus I think I should doe so.²⁴⁸

A tragic unsigned letter that somehow found its way into the files of the Middlesex County Court gives more direct evidence of the practice which Elizabeth Wells professed:

der loue i remember my loue to you hoping your welfar and i hop to imbras the but now i rit to you to let you nowe that i am a child by you and i wil ether kil it or lay it to an other and you shal have no blame at al for I haue had many children and none have none of them.... [i.e., none of their fathers is supporting any of them.]²⁴⁹

In face of the wholesale violation of the sexual codes to which all these cases give testimony, the Puritans could not maintain the severe penalties which their laws provided. Although cases of adultery occurred every year, the death penalty is not known to have been applied more than three times. The usual punishment was a whipping or a fine, or both, and perhaps a branding, combined with a symbolical execution in the form of {107} standing on the gallows for an hour with a rope about the neck. Fornication met with a lighter whipping or a lighter fine, while rape was treated in the same way as adultery. Though the Puritans established a code of laws which demanded perfection—which demanded, in other words, strict obedience to the will of God, they nevertheless knew that frail human beings could never live up to

248. Middlesex Files, folder 52.

249. Middlesex Files, folder 30.

the code. When fornication, adultery, rape, or even buggery and sodomy appeared, they were not surprised, nor were they so severe with the offenders as their codes of law would lead one to believe. Sodomy, to be sure, they usually punished with death; but rape, adultery, and fornication they regarded as pardonable human weaknesses, all the more likely to appear in a religious community, where the normal course of sin was stopped by wholesome laws. Governor Bradford, in recounting the details of an epidemic of sexual misdemeanors in Plymouth, wrote resignedly:

it may be in this case as it is with waters when their streames are stopped or dammed up, when they gett passage they flow with more violence, and make more noys and disturbance, then when they are suffered to rune quietly in their owne chanel. So wickednes being here more stopped by strict laws, and the same more nearly looked unto, so as it cannot rune in a comone road of liberty as it would, and is inclined, it searches every wher, and at last breaks out wher it gets vente.²⁵⁰

The estimate of human capacities here expressed led the Puritans not only to deal leniently with sexual offenses but also to take every precaution to prevent such offenses, rather than wait for the necessity of punishment. One precaution was to see that children got married as soon as possible. The wrong way to promote virtue, the Puritans thought, was to “ensnare” children in vows of virginity, as the Catholics did. As a result of such vows, children, “not being able to contain,” would be guilty of “unnatural pollutions, and other filthy practices in secret: and too oft of horrid Murthers of the fruit of their bodies,” said Thomas Cobbett.²⁵¹ The way to avoid fornication and perversion was for parents to provide suitable husbands and wives for their children:

Lot was to blame that looked not out seasonably for some fit matches for his two daughters, which had formerly minded marriage (witness the contract between them and the two men in *Sodom*, called therefore his Sons in Law, which had married his daughters, Gen. 19. 14.) for they seeing no man like to come into them in a conjugall way ... then

250. William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation* (Boston, 1912), vol. 2, 309.

251. Thomas Cobbett, *A Fruitfull and Usefull Discourse touching the Honour due from Children to Parents and the Duty of Parents towards their Children* (London, 1656), 174.

they plotted that incestuous course, whereby their Father was so highly dishonoured....²⁵² {108}

As marriage was the way to prevent fornication, successful marriage was the way to prevent adultery. The Puritans did not wait for adultery to appear; instead, they took every means possible to make husbands and wives live together and respect each other. If a husband deserted his wife and remained within the jurisdiction of a Puritan government, he was promptly sent back to her. Where the wife had been left in England, the offense did not always come to light until the wayward husband had committed fornication or bigamy, and of course there must have been many offenses which never came to light. But where both husband and wife lived in New England, neither had much chance of leaving the other without being returned by order of the county court at its next sitting. When John Smith of Medfield left his wife and went to live with Patience Rawlins, he was sent home poorer by ten pounds and richer by thirty stripes. Similarly Mary Drury, who deserted her husband on the pretense that he was impotent, failed to convince the court that he actually was so, and had to return to him as well as to pay a fine of five pounds. The wife of Phillip Pointing received lighter treatment: when the court thought that she had overstayed her leave in Boston, they simply ordered her “to depart the Towne and goe to Tanton to her husband.” The courts, moreover, were not satisfied with mere cohabitation; they insisted that it be peaceful cohabitation. Husbands and wives were forbidden by law to strike one another, and the law was enforced on numerous occasions. But the courts did not stop there. Henry Flood was required to give bond for good behavior because he had abused his wife simply by “ill words calling her whore and cursing her.” The wife of Christopher Collins was presented for railing at her husband and calling him “Gurley gutted divill.” Apparently in this case the court thought that Mistress Collins was right, for although the fact was proved by two witnesses, she was discharged. On another occasion the court favored the husband: Jacob Pudeator, fined for striking and kicking his wife, had the sentence moderated when the court was informed that she was a woman “of great provocation.”²⁵³

252. Cobbett, 177.

Wherever there was strong suspicion that an illicit relation might arise between two persons, the authorities removed the temptation by forbidding the two to come together. As early as November 1630, the Court of Assistants of Massachusetts prohibited a Mr. Clark from “cohabitation and frequent keepinge company with Mrs. Freeman, vnder paine of such punishment as the Court shall thinke meete to inflict.” Mr. Clark and Mr. Freeman were both bound “in XX£ apeece that Mr. Clearke shall make {109} his personall appearance att the nexte Courte to be holden in March nexte, and in the meane tyme to carry himselfe in good behaviour towards all people and espetially towards Mrs. Freeman, concerneing whome there is strong suspicion of incontineney.” Forty-five years later the Suffolk County Court took the same kind of measure to protect the husbands of Dorchester from the temptations offered by the daughter of Robert Spurr. Spurr was presented by the grand jury

for entertaining persons at his house at unseasonable times both by day and night to the greife of their wives and Relations &c The Court having heard what was alleaged and testified against him do Sentence him to bee admonish’t and to pay Fees of Court and charge him upon his perill not to entertain any married men to keepe company with his daughter especially James Minott and Joseph Belcher.

In like manner Walter Hickson was forbidden to keep company with Mary Bedwell, “And if at any time hereafter hee bee taken in company of the saide Mary Bedwell without other company to bee forthwith apprehended by the Constable and to be whip’t with ten stripes.” Elizabeth Wheeler and Johnna Pierce were admonished “for their disorderly carriage in the house of Thomas Watts being married women and founde sitting in other mens Laps with their Armes about their Necks.” How little confidence the Puritans had in human nature is even more clearly displayed by another case, in which Edmond Maddock and his wife were brought to court “to answere to all such matters as shal be objected against them concerning Haarkwoody and Ezekieell Euerells being at their house at unseasonable tyme of the night

253. Samuel E. Morison and Zechariah Chafee, eds., *Records of the Suffolk County Court, 1671-1680*, *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 29 and 30: 121, 410, 524, 837-41, and 1158; George F. Dow, ed., *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts* (Salem 1911-1921), vol. 1, 274; and vol. 5, 377.

and her being up with them after her husband had gone to bed.” Haarkwoody and Everell had been found “by the Constable Henry Bridghame about tenn of the Clock at night sitting by the fyre at the house of Edmond Maddocks with his wyfe a suspicious weoman her husband being on sleepe [sic] on the bedd.” A similar distrust of human ability to resist temptation is evident in the following order of the Connecticut Particular Court:

James Hallett is to returne from the Correction house to his master Barclyt, who is to keepe him to hard labor, and course dyet during the pleasure of the Court provided that Barclet is first to remove his daughter from his family, before the sayd James enter therein.

These precautions, as we have already seen, did not eliminate fornication, adultery, or other sexual offenses, but they doubtless reduced the number from what it would otherwise have been.²⁵⁴

In sum, the Puritan attitude toward sex, though directed by a belief in {110} absolute, God-given moral values, never neglected human nature. The rules of conduct which the Puritans regarded as divinely ordained had been formulated for men, not for angels and not for beasts. God had created mankind in two sexes; He had ordained marriage as desirable for all, and sexual intercourse as essential to marriage. On the other hand, He had forbidden sexual intercourse outside of marriage. These were the moral principles which the Puritans sought to enforce in New England. But in their enforcement they took cognizance of human nature. They knew well enough that human beings since the fall of Adam were incapable of obeying perfectly the laws of God. Consequently, in the endeavor to enforce those laws they treated offenders with patience and understanding, and concentrated their efforts on prevention more than on punishment.

254. *Records of the Suffolk County Court*, 442-43 and 676; John Noble, ed., *Records of the Court of Assistants of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, 1901-1928), vol. 2, 8; *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*, vol. 22, 20; and a photostat in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, dated March 29, 1653.

PURITANISM AND MUSIC

James B. Jordan

In 1934, one of the most noted musicologists of the twentieth century, Percy A. Scholes, published a work entitled *The Puritans and Music in England and New England: A Contribution to the Cultural History of Two Nations* (Oxford University Press, reprinted 1969). This book proved to be an exceedingly devastating piece of historical revisionism. Prior to Scholes's research, it had been universally assumed among educated persons that the Puritans were artistic and musical Philistines of the lowest order. Scholes's massively researched work demonstrated that, on the contrary, the Puritans were among the most musically enlightened and progressive elements of their society.

No examination of Puritanism and music, therefore, should ignore Scholes's work. At the same time, Scholes's research was so comprehensive and persuasive, that no subsequent writer has taken up the subject at any length. Cyclone Covey, in 1951, attempted to refute Scholes's thesis and show that the Puritans were really musical and artistic Yahoos after all.²⁵⁵ As Irving Lowens points out, however, Covey's attempted refutation of Scholes was itself rapidly demolished, so that Scholes' research stands as the definitive repository of information and interpretation of Puritanism and music.²⁵⁶

For this reason, the first part of this essay will consist entirely of a summary of much of Scholes's 450-page book. Any reader interested either in Puritanism or in music is, however, encouraged to obtain a copy of *The Puritans and Music* for himself. It is written in a discursive, humorous style, and is very enjoyable reading. Moreover, Scholes's seventeen indices, covering thirty-six pages, make his book exceedingly

255. Cyclone Covey, "Puritans and Music in Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 8 (1951): 378-88.

256. Irving Lowens, *Music and Musicians in Early America* (New York: Norton, 1964), 26.

useful as a reference tool. As a treatment of Puritan artistic culture, it belongs on the shelf of every historical scholar.

The Charge Against the Puritans

At the outset of his book, Scholes provides a long list of quotations from musical histories, general histories, and encyclopedia articles, all of which {112} assert that the Puritans hated music and legislated against it (7ff.). Unable to find evidence that this was the case, Scholes located the source of these calumnies in the work of one Rev. Samuel Peters.

Peters, born in Connecticut in 1735, was ordained in London in 1759 as a minister of the Church of England, returned to America in 1768, and took charge of churches in Hartford and Hebron, Connecticut. He maintained a strong loyalist position, so that in 1774 his house was invaded by a crowd of two hundred Whigs, who charged him with holding anti-American communication with England and with other crimes against popular feeling. He published a pamphlet on the Boston tea question, fled to Boston and then to England, was in 1794 elected Bishop of Vermont, but never consecrated, returned to America in 1805, and after 1817 was living in poverty in New York, where he died in 1826. (17)

While an exile in England, in 1781 Peters published *A General History of Connecticut by a Gentleman of the Province*. The legend of the “blue laws of Connecticut” begins with this book. Scholes peruses Peters’s book and finds a number of remarkable assertions.

... his *chef d’oeuvre* is his vividly worded description of Bellows Falls (on the Connecticut River, in the territory that in Peters’s day was mostly wilderness, but is now Vermont State); here “the water is consolidated by pressure, by swiftness between the pinching sturdy rocks, to such a degree of induration that no iron crow can be forced into it.” This water, he says, is “harder than marble...”

It is in Peters’s fertile ground that first sprouts the fable that early Connecticut had a Blue Law of this startling tenor: “No woman shall kiss her child on the Sabbath or a fasting day...”

It is Peters who tells the story of “an Episcopal clergyman, born and educated in England,” who was fined for “combing a decomposed lock of hair on the top of his wig” on the Sabbath day, and (also on that day) “making a humming noise which they called whistling.”

It is Peters again, who set on foot the story that “The Rev. Thomas Hooker and his associates, by infecting Bibles” had, “to the eternal infamy of the Church policy,” contrived to spread smallpox among the Indians and so “swept away the great Sachem Connecticut and laid waste his ancient kingdom”—which, I understand, is the only record in history of the existence of the said “great Sachem.” (18)

It is, of course, with Peters’s fabricated law against music that we are concerned:

No one shall read Common-Prayer, keep Christmas or Saints-days, make minced pies, dance, play cards, or play on any instrument of music, except the drum, trumpet, and jews-harp. (19)

In order to make his lie believable, Peters had to include the drum and trumpet, essential to war and ceremony. The Jews-harp was so commonly used in trading with the Indians, that Peters had to include it as well. {113}

The laws of Connecticut at no period make any reference whatever to music, mince pies, dancing, or card-playing. Indeed, Scholes makes the following observation regarding them:

They are not cruel; they are even a good deal less rigorous than the laws of England at that period, and infinitely less so than the laws of England two centuries later, when the number of capital offences had gone up from about thirty to over two hundred. And if they were to be compared with the contemporary laws of France or of any one of the German or Italian States I believe they would be recognized as, for their date, marvellously humane. (14)

The laws of Virginia were as blue, if not bluer, than those of Connecticut (293ff.).

Why “Blue”?

Scholes in an interesting appendix explains the origin of the term “blue laws.”

Curiously, however, it looks as though “blue” in the sense in which it appears in the expression “blue laws” arose out of a use of the term “true blue.” In Butler’s *Hudibras*, a satire upon Puritanism, we find:

For his religion it was fit
To match the learning of his wit;
‘Twas Presbyterian *true blue*.

The connexion seems to come from Scotland, where the Covenanters wore blue in opposition to the royal scarlet of the other party. They had a text to support them in this, as in everything: “Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe a ribband of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them” (Numbers 15:38–9).

In fact blue was a sign of a chosen people and that is how the Scottish Presbyterians then looked upon themselves—as some do still.

Hence “blue” for Presbyterian, and from this for “Puritan.” (376–77)

Musical Instruments in New England

It is sometimes pointed out that wills and testaments in New England make no mention of musical instruments prior to 1700. Scholes uncovered one exception to this, a “treble viall” included in a will in 1664 (33). Scholes demonstrates, however, that this lack of mention proves nothing about the presence or absence of musical instruments. Furniture, with the exception of beds and mattresses, is almost never mentioned either; yet it surely existed (34). Moreover, the Puritan immigrants, not being of the wealthiest class, and having to bring only the minimum necessary for life in the New World, doubtless were not as well supplied with musical {114} instruments as they had been in Old England. Additionally, it is noteworthy that in the wills and testaments of this period in Cambridge, England, there is no mention of musical instruments either (35). Apparently, instruments were not customarily included in wills as separate items.

There is, however, other evidence to show that there were indeed musical instruments in New England. Samuel Sewell’s diary records his shopping for a virginal at “Mr. Hiller’s” (36). Anne Bradstreet, in her poetry, frequently refers to musical instruments (37ff.). Moreover, Samuel Sewell’s love for music and for instrumental music is seen all through his diary, which commences well before the year 1700. He must have had some contact with instrumental music, therefore; and of course, as a Puritan of the Puritans, Sewell’s love for music demonstrates that strict Puritans had no objection to musical instruments (41ff.).

Scholes points out that the first set concert performed in England, of which we have record, was “one at which the Puritan Protector entertained the Puritan Parliament” in 1657 (49). Similarly, the first concert of which there is record in North America took place in Puritan Boston in 1731 (50).

Dancing

One of the most attractive features of Scholes’s book is its breadth. Once involved in defending the Puritans in the area of music, he could not resist defending them in other areas as well. In the area of dancing there are two questions to be asked: whether the Puritans forbade dancing, and whether they allowed unmixed dancing but forbade mixed (man with woman) dancing. John Cotton, at least, was clear on both points:

Dancing (yea though mixt) I would not simply condemn. For I see two sorts of mixt dancings in use with God’s people in the Old Testament, the one religious, Exod. xv, 20,21; the other civil, tending to the praise of conquerors, as the former of God. I Sam. xviii, 6,7.

Only lascivious dancing to wanton ditties and in amorous gestures and wanton dalliances, especially after great feasts, I would bear witness against, as great *flabella libidinis*. (58)²⁵⁷

Cromwell had mixed dancing, continuing until five in the morning, at the wedding of one of his daughters; and John Bunyan included an episode of joyous mixed dancing in book 2 of *Pilgrim’s Progress* (60–61.). John Knox “said that he did not utterly condemn dancing provided those who practised it did not neglect their principal vocation, and did not dance for the pleasure they took in the displeasure of God’s people” (64).²⁵⁸ In 1708 Cotton Mather complained about the dancing school in Boston, {115} which seemed to him hardly worth the money spent on it compared with more serious pursuits; but Mather did not condemn dancing out of hand, and his reference shows that Puritan Boston had a dancing school (65–66).

Some writers have charged Puritan Boston with outlawing mixed dancing because of an incident surrounding a dancing teacher, one

257. Scholes takes this quotation from Hanscom’s *The Heart of the Puritan*, 177.

258. Scholes is quoting the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Francis Stepney. Stepney was not a reputable person, and during the years 1685–86, Increase Mather and other preachers spoke against him, publishing *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing*. This tract did condemn mixed dancing, on the basis that it was sexually exciting and tended to effect violations of the seventh commandment. Scholes summarizes,

One or two things are evident from this Boston tract. Firstly the tales we have heard of dancing standing under legal prohibitions are wrong, for if that were the case why attempt to put it down by all this long-winded argument? Secondly, any objections made only applied to mixed dancing. Thirdly, even this was a great deal practised, and that by good New England people. “Some good men think it lawful,” admit the ministers; some “Church-Members in N.E.” have “sent their Children to be practitioners or Spectators of mixt Dancing between young Men and Maidens”; and “Such dancing is now become customary among Christians.” (72)

Scholes notes that, of course, objection to the sexual implications of mixed dancing is not limited to the Puritans by any means. Moreover, “the suggestion I receive from my studies of the subject is that, whilst in a decent section of society (such as that in England frequented by Hutchinson and Whitelocke) mixed dancing was unexceptionable, yet in another section it was customarily made an opportunity for impriety” (70).

It remains to note that during the height of the Puritan rule in Old England, “the first of the eighteen editions of Playford’s famous *English Dancing Master*” was published in 1651; this work contained not only the music for country dances, but the rules for dancing them. Playford’s wife advertised that she had a dancing school (5, 75).

In 1661 a memorial was published for one Susanna Perwich, a young girl who had died tragically at an early age, and who was regarded as a model Puritan young woman. In praising Susanna’s virtues, the writer states (in Scholes’s summary):

She also sang “most sweetly” and was “a most curious [skillful—J.B.J.] Dancer;” yet (note this!) though she danced at home she “would not be prevailed with to go to Revels or Dancing Balls.” Her performance was “frequented by strangers from all parts not only in England but in foreign nations.” With all this she was modest—“could not endure to hear her own praises.” (160)

From this we get some idea of what dancing was like among the Puritans. It was an art taught to children, like playing the virginal and lute, and it {116} could be used for good or for ill, and in either public or private performance.

Other Puritan Mannerisms

Scholes points out that the Puritans dressed no differently from any other Englishmen. “Portraits of the Puritan gentry seem to show them attired just as are the Cavalier gentry—including long hair” (104). John Owen, the preeminent Independent theologian (and flute player), when vice-chancellor of Oxford under Cromwell, was normally seen “hair powdered, cambric band with large costly band-strings, velvet jacket, breeches set round at knee with ribbons pointed, and Spanish leather boots with cambric tops” (105).²⁵⁹

As regards games and sport, Scholes knows “of no evidence that the Puritans were against games as such” (107). His wide reading turned up no evidence of such hostility. The charge against the Puritans, Scholes ascribes to the following:

I am convinced that a great part of the legend of Puritan hatred of amusements comes down from the time when the English Puritan (using the term in its widest sense) opposed the *Book of Sports*. This was a declaration issued by James I in 1617, which enacted that on Sundays, after divine service, “no lawful recreation should be barred.” It specified dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsun-ales, morris-dances, &c. A condition of the permission to take part in these enjoyments was that the participant should have previously attended church. James sent out an order to the clergy of the whole of England to read the declaration from their pulpits, but this aroused so much opposition that he withdrew the command.

Sixteen years later (1633) Charles I, inspired by Archbishop Laud, republished the declaration and insisted on its being read. Many of the clergy were severely punished for refusal, and great bitterness remained. Some ingeniously obeyed both King and conscience by solemnly reading the declaration as ordered and then after it the fourth commandment, “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy,” adding, “This is the law of God; the other the injunction of man” (Neal’s *History of the Puritans*).

259. This description is from Anthony Wood’s *Life and Times*.

Eleven years after this, the Puritan element being in parliamentary control and Charles fighting for his life, the “Long Parliament” ordered that every one possessing a copy should deliver it up to be burnt by the public hangman.

By one of those gentle twists that are so much more effective than a downright lie, all this has been represented as showing the antagonism of the Puritan to fun and harmless pleasure. This is nonsense. Nobody alleges that the gay Pepys considered lute playing wrong because on Sunday, 21 October 1660, he wrote in his Diary: “To-day {117} at noon (*God forgive me*) I strung my lute, which I had not touched a great while before.”

Although there was conflict between the Puritans and non-Puritans as to Sunday sports it is quite an error to credit any one party in State or Church with the exclusive practice of severity as to Sabbath-breaking in general. (305–6)

As far as I have been able to discover, the Puritan attitude to recreation in general was exactly the same as that expressed in the long-popular *Whole Duty of Man*. This, though it appeared during the Protectorate (1657), is a thoroughly Anglican publication...

The section on “Recreation” lays it down that they must (1) be lawful, (2) be used with moderation, (3) not “divert us from our more necessary employment,” and so forth. Above all, they are not to lead us to forget that the most important use of our time is that of “making our calling and election sure.” Puritan and High Anglican were at one on this subject: *there was, in fact, no special Puritan attitude to recreation, any more than there was one to art.* (312–13)

Scholes also produces five pages of discussion to show that there was nothing exceptional about Puritan names for children. Praise-God Barebones was the only man carrying such a name. Their names were the normal names of the period, and of today as well. Bunyan’s *Book for Boys and Girls* includes many Biblical names, though no unusual ones; and also includes “Ralph, William, Henry, Dorothy, Frances” (114).

While King James I so hated tobacco that he wrote his famous *Counterblast against Tobacco*, Scholes reminds us that “Cromwell smoked; so did Milton. So did many Puritans” (158).

Music in Puritan England

Old England, not being in the same wilderness conditions as New England, was in a much better position to enjoy a musical culture.

There is abundant evidence of Puritan involvement in music in Old England, though naturally the evidence of musical culture centers on activities in the large cities, not in small rural towns. Remembering that New England consisted of small, rural communities, Scholes remarks:

I do not think it out of all question that some day chance or research may bring to light evidence of the existence of some madrigal-singing or viol-playing group in Plymouth, Salem, or Boston, though I must say that, although we know that in England itself that kind of musical activity was at the period extremely common, the written or printed proof of its going on in towns so small as those then were is not easy to attain. If, as so often stated, the New England Puritans feared and detested musical performance we should find evidence of it in sermons and legal enactments, but if, on the other hand, they loved such performance, they might do quite a lot of it without leaving much trace behind them. (119) {118}

“Wealth, culture, and leisure were necessary conditions in those days for the production of fine music, and New England had none of these” (126). Old England, however, did. Musical publication flourished during the Puritan regime in England, as it had never before. The father of British music publishing, John Playford, “was the first regular music publisher Britain ever had and his activity began with the period of Puritan control of the country” (131). Besides the printing of music, much more circulated in handwritten copies.

The Fancies, Consorts, etc., in the Music School, Oxford; at Christ Church [Oxford]; at Dublin (Marsh’s Library) and elsewhere, must be counted by *thousands*. They were mainly composed at this time; Charles II detested Fancies, and they quickly fell out of favour after the Restoration. (135)²⁶⁰

Of course, Puritan rule tended to clean up the many dirty or bawdy songs of the day. John Hilton had been organist of the Parliament’s Church, and also one of the Parish Clerks. In 1644, Parliament ordered the organ taken down, though Hilton continued to receive his salary and to serve as Clerk. In 1652, Hilton published “his celebrated collection of canons, catches, and rounds, called *Catch that catch can*; the compositions were mostly by himself” (135).

260. Scholes quotes Henry Davey, *History of English Music* (1921 ed.), 255.

A point of a little interest lies in the nature of the words of Hilton's publication. Any one who has studied the seventeenth-century catches knows that their words are in many instances unprintable to-day. The Purcell Society, engaged in the preparation of its costly folio edition of Purcell's catches for the use of serious students, has felt obliged to change the words of many examples. Hilton, either because of fear of Puritan interference or from some natural or parish-clerkly preference for propriety, has erred very little in this direction. A number of the catches are bibulous, but those that could to-day be considered at all "improper" are very few. And about thirty (say a quarter of the whole) are sacred "Canons and Hymnes." I think that if any one were to study the character of the words of the Playford publications first during the period of Puritan control and then after the Restoration he would find a considerable general decline in decency. (136)

As a matter of fact, there was a good deal more musical freedom in Puritan England than in many other nations. Susanna Perwich, mentioned above, "enjoyed the services of the best musical professors" (162). Her estate in life can be contrasted with the situation in Italy during the same period. In 1686 the Cardinal Legate managed to outlaw the teaching of music to women. "Severe penalties were threatened to any heads of families who dared to admit into their houses any music-masters or musicians to teach their daughters or any of their womenkind" (162).

Scholes devotes fifty-five pages simply to a survey of the many aspects of {119} musical culture in England during the Puritan rule. He finds evidence of musical apprenticeship, music in taverns, and many other musical activities. The most gifted violinist of the age, Thomas Baltzar of Lübeck, came to England in 1655 and, preferring England's opportunities to those on the Continent, remained there throughout the remainder of the Puritan era, unquestionably for the good of his career (278). The Puritan Parliament, though it did away with professional church musicians, made certain that none such dispossessed would be impoverished (281-82). There was even, in 1657, at the height of Puritan control, a "Committee for the Advancement of Musicke" (282-83).

Cromwell

Oliver Cromwell was one of the great music lovers of his age. The story is told of James Quin, a senior fellow of Christ Church, who had lost his position there. His friends introduced him to Cromwell, who “heard him sing with very great delight, liquor’d him with sack, and in conclusion said, ‘Mr. Quin, you have done very well, what shall I do for you?’” (137). Quin wanted his position restored, and Cromwell restored it to him.

John Wilson, a fervent Royalist, was appointed professor of music at Oxford in 1656, at the height of Cromwell’s power. Wilson immediately published a volume of choral music which was strongly royalist, a setting of twenty-seven of the Psalms of David, adapted to the times and put in the mouth of Charles I. Cromwell made no move against him for this (139ff.). Scholes reminds us of “Cromwell’s doctrine, laid down when an appointment was objected to, ‘*Sir, the State, in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that suffices*’” (141).

Notice has already been made in this paper of Cromwell’s favorable view of mixed dancing, and of his sponsorship of the first set concert in recorded English history. Scholes devotes several pages to a discussion of music at Cromwell’s “court” (137–49). He also reminds us that Cromwell enjoyed horse racing (387) and that “Cromwell’s apartments at Hampton Court were adorned with paintings of Mantegna and others, and his gardens with ‘bronze statues of Venus and Cleopatra and marble ones of Adonis and Apollo’” (6). Cromwell was no Philistine.

Bunyan

Nor was John Bunyan. We have mentioned the mixed dancing in *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Scholes devotes an appendix of seven pages to a discussion of Bunyan’s flute, violin, and music chest (384ff.). There is, he notes, strong evidence to support the story that Bunyan cut a flute out of a leg of his prison chair while imprisoned. {120}

Some writers have tried to make Bunyan out as an enemy of music based on some passages in his autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. In his early days, Bunyan had liked to practice bell-

ringing and dancing on the Sabbath day, and it is this which he repented of, as recounted in his autobiography. Scholes comments:

Dancing, bell-ringing, &c., then, in *Grace Abounding*, which is a description of Bunyan's own spiritual struggles, implied Sabbath breaking, and his repentance for having, as he thought, broken the Fourth Commandment. His *Pilgrim's Progress* allusions show that to dancing, as such, he had no objections; his *Grace Abounding* allusions show that to dancing, as it was practised and practicable at that date in the English villages he objected strongly. (308)

As for bell-ringing:

And in his *Book for Boys and Girls* Bunyan recurs to his early pastime of change-ringing and turns it to spiritual account, comparing its practitioners to the Powers of the Soul. (308)

Scholes goes on to note that there is no evidence that the Puritans had any objections against the English custom of ringing the changes on the bells. There was plenty of work for the bell-founding industry in England during the Puritan regime (309).

The Organ

The Puritans did not believe that congregational singing in worship should be accompanied by musical instruments. Since the organ was associated in many minds with the imposition of "Romish" practices by Archbishop Laud, reaction against the organ was natural, and sadly many organs were destroyed in the early days of the Civil War. The creation of the disciplined New Model Army by Cromwell in 1644 put a stop to most of this wanton destruction. Cromwell was partial to the organ, and Cromwell had an organ installed at his palace at Hampton Court (229–36).

Scholes comments:

I do not believe that any normal Puritan objected to the *presence* of an organ in a church; it was the implication that it was going to be used in worship that horrified him. The Puritan looked upon the organ as a secular instrument, but he did not look upon the building as sacred; he had no special reverence for any "meeting-house" as such, and would not object to musical recreation being taken in it; one meeting-house was as good as another to him, provided it was big enough, and had a good stout pulpit, with a desk that would stand the preacher's fist. (238)

If the organ was not to be used in public worship, it could be used in the privacy of the home, and could be used there to accompany psalms. This {121} *seems* inconsistent, but here is John Cotton's opinion, followed by Scholes's assessment:

"Nor do we forbid the private use of any instrument of musick there withal [i.e., with Psalms—J. B. J.]; so that attention to the instrument does not divert the heart from attention to the matter of song."

I rather think that what I have above called inconsistency is to be explained by the Puritans looking upon public song as a rite and private song as a recreation—a pious recreation "for solace and comfort," as Sternhold and Hopkins would say (247)

The Theater

The Puritan attitude toward the spoken theater and toward the acting profession was, of course, not entirely positive. The Puritan objections to the theater were "largely based upon the allegations of indecency and profanity" (197). The Puritans were not unique in making this objection. "Half a century after the Puritan Parliament stopped stage plays in England the Bishop of Arras issued a manifesto against the drama ..." (197). "The French Church in the eighteenth century 'refused to all players the marriage blessing ...'" (198).

There was never a moment from the fourth century downwards when some or other of the leaders of the Church were not fulminating against the stage, and there was nothing the seventeenth-century Independents, Presbyterians, or Baptists could say on that subject which had not been said over and over again, with full Puritan emphasis, by the early fathers and the dignitaries of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. (198)

Scholes quotes Professor Henry Morley's summary of the decline of the stage:

The Puritans began war against plays chiefly because they were first acted on Sundays. After that cause of contention ceased, there remained no very substantial ground of offence. Shakespeare wrote for audiences that represented fairly the whole body of the English people. But when the matter of the plays lost wholesomeness there was a gradual desertion of the playhouses by men who represented no small part of the best life in England.... In Ben Jonson's relation with the stage we find vigorous illustration of this process of decay. He

could not refrain from expressions of contempt for audiences (201–2)

Scholes points out that during much of Western history the acting profession has been characterized by flagrant and gross immorality. Scholes himself was brought up in an evangelical home, and recalls that although he was never allowed to attend the theater, yet the reading and the acting of plays in school and locally at church bazaars was not objected to. “Thus the theatre (*not* the play) and the actors’ profession (*not* acting) had with us a bad name” (207). Professor Edward Dent, an expert in the history {122} of opera, corroborates Scholes’s remarks as follows: “As regards the theatre, I think you are absolutely right in what you say; people nowadays don’t realize what the theatre and the theatrical profession were before about 1890. It was changed mainly by the Bancrofts and Irving, I think” (207–8).

What about the theater during Puritan times? Was there any justification for Parliament’s outlawing of it?

When the Puritan régime ended and Charles II came at last to his throne, the loyal city of Oxford burst out into a festival of rejoicing. Mr. Falconer Madan ... gives a list of plays acted during the ten days, 3–12 July 1661....

Mr. Madan says that not one of these plays would be tolerated for a minute on the modern stage (and consider what *is* tolerated on it!). (210)

Of course, the stage of 1979 is far more degenerate than that of Madan’s 1931. Some of the plays acted during the ten days of celebration bore these titles:

All’s lost by Lust
Mad World
Two Merry Milkmaids
Rape of Lucrece
Spanish Lady or the Very Woman
Rump (210)

Departing from our summary of Scholes’s book for a moment, it may be well to make one further notice regarding the English theater. It may well have been the case that Puritan objection to the theater was founded on more than merely moral considerations. The theater may have been the “church” of an alien, enemy religion. The remarkable

research of Frances A. Yates has turned up evidence of a connection between the English theater, and English actors, and the neo-Hermetic, semi-occultistic “Rosicrucian” movement of the early 1600s. More work, as she notes, is needed on this subject:

I would hold it out as an inducement to those who might be thinking of undertaking detailed research into the literature of the Rosicrucian furore in Germany that it is possible that such research might reveal a connection between the activities of English actors and the spread of “Rosicrucian” ideas. Ben Jonson, too, in one of his masques (*The Fortunate Isles*, 1625) suggests a connection between “Rosicrucians” and actors, in a passage in which he shows remarkable knowledge of an out-of-the-way publication of the Rosicrucian furore....²⁶¹ {123}

The Hermetic-“Rosicrucian” religion was anti-dogmatic, mystical, magical, and stressed the unity of all religions. It was the antithesis of Puritanism, and it was advocated in England in the theater.²⁶²

Returning to Scholes’s account, “the fact that plays, though not publicly performed, were yet sometimes to be heard in private, and that they were freely published, should be noted” (194). Scholes is able to prove four performances of masques during the Puritan regime, under the Cromwellian Protectorate.

Opera, as a matter of fact, indeed *daily* opera (5), was introduced into England during the Puritan era. “I know of no evidence that any Puritans objected to it (though some may have done). What *is* known is that the Puritans in power winked at it, to say the very least, and that some of the most influential of them definitely gave it their fullest possible support” (195, 203ff.).

Fox and the Quakers

The Puritans were no different from any of their Christian contemporaries in their attitudes toward art and music, save on the point of instrumental music in church worship. Who, then, hated

261. Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 142–43. The connection between English actors and the Rosicrucian furore is discussed throughout the book.

262. Cf. Frances A. Yates, *Theater of the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); and also Yates, *Shakespeare’s Last Plays* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

music and art during this period? Did anyone? The answer is yes, the Quakers hated the arts.

George Fox, founder of the Quaker movement, states: "I was moved also to cry out against all sorts of music" (52). A Quaker tract by Solomon Eccles, formerly a professional musician, gives further evidence of the Quaker fanaticism. "Examination of the book (not easy, for in many passages it is little better than a madman's incoherent ravings) shows that the phrase 'the Musick that pleaseth God' is to be taken in a purely mystical or symbolical sense—the music of the soul" (53). Eccles, like most of the Quakers, was a pharisaical troublemaker, fitting the description of Proverbs 30:11–14, and was banished from Boston in 1672. He had a practice of entering Christian churches and deliberately disturbing worship by making shoes in the pulpit area (53). Sympathy for early Quakers is largely misplaced; it was those who put up with their continuous rebellion who should be sympathized with.

Eccles's book is written in dialogue form. The Quaker musician explains that he had held to a variety of religious opinions before discarding Biblical religion for the "inner light." At each stage, Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, Antinomian, he could practice the art of music. It was only when he became a Quaker that he repented of this sin (53). George Fox had written that music "both in its acquisition and its practice" is "unfavorable to the health of the soul" (380). Scholes has this to say about Fox: {124}

To any reviewer who finds it difficult to shake off those odd notions of Puritan severity that have unfortunately become proverbial, the view of the Puritans taken by their vigorous opponent George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, may be commended. See his *Journal* (Chapter X in the "Everyman Edition"); it looks back on "the old Parliament's days" as days of ribands and lace and costly apparel, wakes and shows, "sporting and feasting with priests and professors" (so Fox was wont to call the Puritan clergy). That is his idea of what he called "the Presbyterians' and Independents' anti-Christian times." Of course Fox exaggerates (he was the last person to know how to do justice to an opponent, the meekness of the later Quakers assuredly deriving from some other source), but the exaggeration is not one that any man could make if the Puritan mind and conduct had been according to the legend that has come down to us. (110)

With this quotation we conclude our survey and sampling of Percy Scholes, *The Puritans and Music*. Our attention must now focus on the music of Puritan worship.

Puritan Worship Music

The singing of hymns was not allowed in Puritan worship. Psalms and paraphrases of other Scripture portions alone were allowed. In church, singing was to be in unison, but part singing was enthusiastically cultivated in homes.²⁶³ The psalms, whether sung in unison in church or in parts in the home, were regarded with great reverence:

Even the tunes were sometimes regarded as holy, so that men put off their hats, and put on a great show of devotion and gravity, whenever psalm-tunes were sung, though there were not one word of a psalm.²⁶⁴

John Cotton allowed for solos to be sung during the worship service, if anyone had a psalm he had written. The congregation was to go along in spirit, and say "Amen."²⁶⁵ Evangelism included the spread of music. John Eliot prepared a versification of the psalter in Algonquin and had it bound in his Indian Bible. Increase Mather commented that the Indians enjoyed singing the psalms, and that some were quite accomplished at it.²⁶⁶

Psalmsbooks of New England

The background of New England psalmody is diverse. The Pilgrims who settled at Plymouth used the Ainsworth Psalter, which was heavily influenced by the Genevan or French Psalter. The Puritans of Massachusetts {125} Bay and other New England colonies initially used Sternhold and Hopkins, which also was influenced by the French.

The Genevan or French Psalter was first issued in 1539, not containing all the psalms by any means, and was reissued from time to time

263. Lowens, *Music and Musicians*, 27.

264. Thomas Symmes, *The Reasonableness of Regular Singing* (1720), cited in Leonard Ellinwood, *The History of American Church Music*, rev. ed. (New York: Da Capo, 1970), 14.

265. John Cotton, *The Singing of Psalms a Gospel Ordinance* (1647), cited in Ellinwood, 15.

266. Ellinwood, 12.

until by 1562 it had reached its final stage. The definitive edition was that of 1551, when the basic structure and concept had fully been worked out. The texts were by Marot and Beza. Clement Marot wrote forty-nine, and Theodore de Beze the remainder.²⁶⁷ Many of the melodies were written by Louis Bourgeois. It is not known who composed the rest, though they are ascribed to a certain “Pierre,” thought to be a Pierre Dubuisson, a musician about whom nothing is known save that he was choirmaster at Geneva.²⁶⁸ In all there were 125 tunes employing 110 different meters.²⁶⁹ This great diversity of meter reflects the creativity of Marot and Beza, and especially reflects their French background. The great variety of Troubadour and Trouvere meter comes to expression in the French Psalter.

The Scottish Psalter of 1564 took thirty-one tunes from the French; but these were virtually all discarded with the appearance in 1650 of a much simpler Scottish Psalter, which continues in use to this day.²⁷⁰

The English Psalter in wide use after the Reformation was that of Sternhold and Hopkins, also called the Old Version. The English had a great tradition of versifying the Bible. Glass lists 123 rhymed editions of the complete psalter made in England between 1549 and 1885. Prior to 1549 there was also much activity:

The English metrical Psalm was also an outcome of the early practice of popularizing almost every literary production by rhyming. It commenced in the reign of Henry II, when a paraphrase of the Gospel histories appeared....²⁷¹

In Chaucer’s day the proverbs were almost all in use in rhyme. In 1553, Christopher Tye issued “The Actes of the Apostles translated into English Metre.” There was even a common meter recension of “Paradise Lost”!²⁷² The Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter was issued in

267. Waldo S. Pratt, *The Significance of the Old French Psalter*, Papers of the Hymn Society of America, vol. 4 (Springfield, OH: Hymn Society of America, 1933), 9.

268. Waldo S. Pratt, *The Music of the French Psalter of 1562* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 62.

269. *Ibid.*, 26.

270. *Ibid.*, 73.

271. Henry A. Glass, *The Story of the Psalters* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1888; reprint ed., New York: AMS Press, 1972), 7.

1562. Its producers had been exiles in Geneva during the reign of Mary, so some French influence can be seen. In all the Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter used forty-six tunes,²⁷³ {126} employed seventeen meters,²⁷⁴ and took over thirteen tunes from the French.²⁷⁵ By far the majority of the psalms in the English Psalter were in ballad meter, usually called “Common Meter,” which employed alternating lines of eight and six syllables.²⁷⁶

The Ainsworth Psalter was used by the Pilgrims at Plymouth from 1620 to 1692, when they switched to the Bay Psalter. Henry Ainsworth, a very highly educated Puritan Separatist who is best known as an outstanding Hebraist, was “teacher” for the group of Separatists who settled in Holland. His translation and versification of the psalms appeared in 1612 in Amsterdam.²⁷⁷ He made use of “the gravest and easiest of the French and Dutch Psalmes” as well as of the English ones.²⁷⁸ The Dutch Psalter was simply a translation of the French. Out of thirty-nine tunes,²⁷⁹ nineteen are traceable to the French Psalter.²⁸⁰ There are fifteen different meters.²⁸¹

The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay did not use the Ainsworth Psalter, but brought Sternhold and Hopkins with them.²⁸² Very shortly, however, there was underfoot a move to replace it with a better version. The producers of Sternhold and Hopkins had not been Hebraists, and the Puritans were quite adamant that the psalms they sang should be as

272. *Ibid.*, 7–8.

273. Hamilton C. MacDougall, *Early New England Psalmody* (Brattleboro, VT: Stephen Daye Press, 1940; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo, 1969), 8.

274. Lowens, 19.

275. Pratt, *Music of the French Psalter*, 73.

276. MacDougall, 9.

277. Waldo S. Pratt, *The Music of the Pilgrims* (Oliver Ditson, 1921; reprint ed., New York: Russell and Russell, 1971), 7–8.

278. *Ibid.*, 13.

279. *Ibid.*, 14.

280. Pratt, *Music of the French Psalter*, 73. Pratt’s study of the Ainsworth Psalter much predates his study of the French, and the latter corrects the former at some points.

281. Pratt, *Pilgrims*, 14.

282. Henry W. Foote, *An Account of the Bay Psalm Book*, Papers of the Hymn Society of America, vol. 7 (Springfield, OH: Hymn Society of America, 1940), 4.

close to the original meaning of the text as possible. Sternhold and Hopkins was not literal enough, so in 1636 a committee was set up to produce a better version. Of the men assigned to the committee, three seem to have done the bulk of the work: John Eliot, Richard Mather, and Thomas Welde.²⁸³ When in 1640 the Bay Psalm Book was issued, it was the first printed book published in British North America. Acceptance was rapid throughout the Bay, though the church at Salem, which had adopted Ainsworth's more literal version, did not switch until about 1667.²⁸⁴ By 1773, the Bay Psalm Book, also titled "The New England Psalter," had gone through thirty editions in America, twenty-two in Scotland, and eighteen in England.²⁸⁵ The first edition contained no music, but referred the singer to Ravencroft's edition of the psalms {127} for appropriate tunes.²⁸⁶ This first edition used only six meters, one of which was the popular French one consisting of twelve 8's (used for Psalm 68, the battle hymn of the Huguenots). Common Meter was used for 112 psalms.²⁸⁷ This first edition was so literal and rough in its versification that there was general dissatisfaction, and the third edition, of 1651, provided smoother texts and also added paraphrases of other Scripture portions besides the psalms. This edition reduced the number of meters to five.²⁸⁸ The ninth edition is the earliest known to contain music, though there is evidence that a previous one may have.²⁸⁹ However many tunes may have been employed in the churches during the earlier colonial days, this ninth edition (1698) fixed the number at thirteen.²⁹⁰

283. *Ibid.*, 4–5.

284. *Ibid.*, 7.

285. MacDougall, 31.

286. Richard G. Appel, *The Music of the Bay Psalm Book*, I.S.A.M. Monographs no. 5 (New York: Institute for Studies in American Music, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, 1975), 1.

287. *Ibid.*, 3.

288. Lowens, 31–32.

289. *Ibid.*, 34ff.

290. Appel reprints the 1648 edition, in a photocopy of the original and in a modern typeset (see note 286).

We may also make mention at this point of the *New Version* of the Psalms, issued in 1696 and authored by Tate and Brady. There was general reluctance in New England to adopt this version, because the Bay Psalm Book was so familiar. Samuel Sewell, in 1720, notes that at a meeting in the schoolhouse they sang from “Tate and Brady.”²⁹¹ By the mid-eighteenth century the New Version had replaced the Bay Psalter in most churches. Reluctance to change music is natural and has posed problems for every reform the church has ever attempted. An amusing episode in connection with the introduction of Tate and Brady highlights this problem.

A maid in the household of Tate’s brother, refused, however, to sing the new psalms saying: “If you must know the plain truth, sir, as long as you sung Jesus Christ’s psalms I sung along with ye; but now that you sing psalms of your own invention, ye may sing by yourselves.”²⁹²

The Decline of Singing

The psalms were sung in unison, without instrumental accompaniment, in the worship services of the churches; but they were often sung in parts in the home and on social occasions. The rationale for avoiding instruments was that the New Testament nowhere commands it; but it is generally acknowledged—by those who favor instruments—that the {128} real reason for eschewing instruments was out of reaction against Rome. The arguments for unison singing were more pragmatic.

Ordinary music-lovers will need the melody pitched in medium range and will wish to sing the melody. Calvin was right in sensing that the strength of the music lay in the melody.

A smaller section of a congregation, but the musically intelligent part, will want to sing in parts, which means that the treble part must be pitched high, too high for the ordinary voices to be comfortable.²⁹³

How much variety was there in the singing? Since the Puritans and Pilgrims held that all the psalms should be sung “in course,” that is,

291. W. Thomas Marrocco and Harold Gleason, eds., *Music In America, An Anthology* (New York: Norton, 1964), 22.

292. *Ibid.*, 21.

293. MacDougall, 120–21.

working in sequence through the complete psalter from Psalm 1 to Psalm 150, they must have known at least as many tunes as there were meters in their psalters.²⁹⁴ There were fifteen different metrical patterns in Ainsworth, and seventeen in Sternhold and Hopkins, but the Bay Psalm Book employed only five. As the seventeenth century wore on, variety of tunes declined as the new generations lacked the musical training of the initial settlers.

There is every evidence to indicate that the psalms of the Reformation were initially sung in a fast and lively fashion. Chase cites Shakespeare to this effect.

Shakespeare, in *The Winter's Tale*, has a character say, "But one Puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to hornpipes." Now, the hornpipe was a lively dance, and the singing of a psalm to it would make it no less lively. Even if we are not to take Shakespeare's quip literally, the point remains that early Puritan psalm singing gave an impression of liveliness and vigor, which was turned to scorn and ridicule by the enemies of Puritanism.²⁹⁵

John Cotton confirms this, as he writes:

For neither the man of sinne ... nor any Antichristian Church have had any hand in turning Davids Psalms into English Songs and Tunes, or are wont to make any Melody in Singing them; yea, they all reject them as *Genevah Gigs*; and there be Cathedrall Priests of an Antichristian spirit, that have scoffed at Puritan-Ministers, as calling the people to sing one of *Hopkins Jigs*, and so hop into the pulpit.²⁹⁶

By the time of the "Singing War" of the 1720s this was no longer the case. The singing had slowed down to a crawl, and this is often ascribed to the effects of the practice of *lining out*.

When a psalm or hymn is lined out, a deacon or precentor sings the line rapidly and then the congregation follows him, singing at their own speed. {129} This is done to give out the words to illiterate people. The effect of it is to slow down the singing of the music. Lowens summarizes the seventeenth-century practice in New England:

Thomas Symmes wrote about the Plymouth Church that "till about 1682, their excellent custom was to sing without reading the line." In

294. Lowens, 19.

295. Gilbert Chase, *America's Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 16.

296. *Ibid.*

view of the difficulty of the Ainsworth tunes, the fact that the Pilgrims did not “line out” for more than 60 years after the foundation of their church is a pretty good indication of their continuing musical literacy. Among the Puritans, however, “lining out” seems to have been commonplace as early as 1647, when John Cotton referred to the practice as a necessary evil so that those “who want either books or skill to reade, may know what is to be sung, and joyne with the rest in the dutie of singing.”²⁹⁷

The quality of singing in the churches had declined to such an extent that in 1720 a “Singing War” broke out. The opening gun was fired by Thomas Symmes in that year in his *The Reasonableness of Regular Singing, or Singing by Note*. Symmes and his associates complained that the singing was raucous, ugly, incredibly slow, and unsuited for the praise of God. Only a handful of tunes were known, and the singing of these bore little if any relation to the actual melodies. Sometimes the congregation would begin singing one tune and by the end of the first stanza be singing another, because the singing was so slow and so unrelated to the music that confusion resulted. Symmes, Thomas Walter, John Tufts, Nathaniel Chauncey, and Cotton Mather, all ministers of the gospel, called for a return to singing by note, called “regular” singing since it involved singing by a rule. Some of the advocates of regular singing noted that those opposing them were Anti-Regular Singing (A.R.S.), and referred to them as ARSes.²⁹⁸

The reaction was what might be expected, since people are very loathe to change music. Those defending the usual practice did not publish their arguments, but we have a number of considerations offered by Chase on their behalf. He notes this slow style of singing has its own idiom, and has recurred throughout human history. He refers to it as the Early New England Folk Style.

Summarizing the characteristics of the Early New England Folk Style as described by contemporary writers: the singing is very slow: many grace notes, passing notes, turns, flourishes and other ornaments are used; pitch and time values are arbitrarily altered; there is a lack of synchronization among the voices; everyone sings as best pleases himself.²⁹⁹

297. Lowens, 18.

298. *Ibid.*, 19.

The fact that only six or eight tunes were in use is no caveat in terms of this type of music: {130}

This small inherited repertory of tunes provided a firm foundation for the improvisations and embellishments of the folk style. There was a core of unity with scope for endless variety.³⁰⁰

Often the development of this type of singing is ascribed to the circumstantial ignorance of the American colonists. In those early days, the people were too busy to pursue musical training, and thus the ability to read music was lost and an oral style developed. This, however is not correct, because the same type of development occurred in Scotland and England.³⁰¹ Chase gives his assessment as follows:

My belief is that regular “singing by note” and the lively pace called for by the vigorous and varied tunes of the early psalters prevailed in New England, as in England and Scotland, until the spread of lining-out opened the door for the introduction of the florid style. The custom of lining-out in psalmody necessarily interrupted the free flow of the music and caused a slackening of the pace. To this may be added the natural tendency of some persons in an untrained and undirected group to sing more slowly than others—to take, as it were, their own time. This could have the effect of slowing up the whole group, but it could also have a more important effect in permitting the more skilled, or the more ambitious, or the bolder members of the group to indulge in the embellishments to which we have so often referred. The late G. P. Jackson aptly called this “a compensatory florid filling in.” And why, it may be asked, did they indulge in these embellishments? Simply because they enjoyed it, because it was fun.³⁰²

Chase is arguing that musical style is in a sense neutral. In terms of the antiphonal nature of the lining-out pattern, and in view of the oral nature of the singing (i.e., musical illiteracy), this style of singing was natural, and in terms of itself, quite musical. With this musical assessment we have no quarrel. The development of plainsong during the Middle Ages doubtless must be explained in similar terms, though in

299. Chase, 30.

300. *Ibid.*, 31.

301. *Ibid.*

302. *Ibid.*, 38.

this case the florid embellishments of the oral style were eventually written down and standardized.

There is, however, the question of whether this type of singing is best for the purpose of worship. We should like to enter the following caveats, and though we phrase them dogmatically to save space, they are offered more as food for thought than as the final word on the matter.

1. The purpose of worship is not entertainment, although worship is not incompatible with pleasure. This slow type of singing is characterized by a passive, reflective, and almost hypnotic state of mind in the singer. We postulate that worship should be active, engage the mental faculties as well as the others, and thus that this style of singing is not best suited to that end. {131}

2. Very few stanzas of any psalm or hymn may be sung in this manner. This also reduces the mental, theological, and thus spiritual level of worship.

3. It is noteworthy that in times of great revival in the church, as at Pentecost and at the Reformation, there is a great release from the bondage of sin and fear, and consequently great joy and strength. This comes to expression in music characterized by vigor. This is why Reformation music, in its original meters and tempos, is so lively, rhythmic, and forceful. Periods of spiritual decline have resulted in three musical effects:

- a. a great slowing down in the vitality of singing,
- b. many people ceasing from singing altogether, and
- c. a growth of childish ditties as popular hymnody, replacing strongly theological hymns and psalms.

That the period we are discussing was one of religious and spiritual decline no one denies. It was followed by the Great Awakening. Thus, we should like to take exception to Chase's explanation for the change in musical style. There were spiritual reasons for the decline, in addition to the side-effects of the practice of lining out.

The Reformation of Singing

It is now of interest for us briefly to look at the solution to this problem which was proposed and instituted by the musical reformers. This solution was the singing school. Symmes had noted that according to 1 Chronicles 15:22, an important Levite named Chenaniah had estab-

lished singing schools in Israel in David's time. This Symmes and his friends proposed as the solution to New England's distress.³⁰³ Before the 1720s, the only way to acquire musical training was to go to college at Harvard. There were neither books nor schools to train laypersons in the proper way of singing or in the way to read notes. The first instruction book published for this purpose, apparently in 1721, was John Tufts' *Introduction to the Singing of Psalm-Tunes*.³⁰⁴ This was followed by a book by Thomas Walter on the same order. Eventually the singing school became an important center of social life in New England, and continued such for over a hundred years. Classes usually met once or twice a week, for two hours or so, and for three months.³⁰⁵ Those who enjoyed singing, after graduating joined local singing groups. In this way, the old New England Folk Style was replaced by a return to the quick-paced singing by note of the original Puritans. {132}

Concluding Observations

The impoverishment of church music among the Puritans was due to three factors. *First*, the theologians of the Puritans had decided that the singing of the New Testament churches was required to be in unison and unaccompanied by any musical instruments. There is, of course, not the slightest hint of such a rule in the New Testament itself. The argument against the use of musical instruments in church worship was based largely on a Neoplatonic theology which postulated that the use of physical, material substances in worship was somehow inferior to the use of the human voice. God had allowed the use of physical, material musical instruments during the Older Testament period, because the people living then were more primitive than New Testament believers. The human voice alone was sufficiently spiritual (otherworldly) to be acceptable in the purified worship of the New Testament.

303. David P. McKay and Richard Crawford, *William Billings of Boston* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 19–20.

304. Lowens, chap. 3, is an in-depth look at Tufts's work.

305. McKay and Crawford, 20.

This, of course, is nonsense. The human voice is every bit as much a physical, created entity as is any musical instrument. Moreover, there is no hint in Scripture of any denigration of the physical, material world. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body shows that Christianity, in opposition to Neoplatonism, affirms the goodness and eventual restoration of the physical, material world.

Hostility to musical instruments in worship was actually a reaction against the rampant abuse of worship in the Church of Rome and in the Anglican Church. Worship services could become little more than concerts. The primacy of worship and the primacy of the verbal text in sung music were often not respected by church musicians. Music became entertainment; and a polyphonic choral style, resulting in several different words being sung at the same time, obscured the texts.³⁰⁶ The unison style and the elimination of instruments were designed to get rid of these abuses.

In terms of what Scripture actually allows for, however, we must say that the Reformers and Puritans threw the baby out with the bath. Scriptural reform would have dictated that musical instruments be used only to accompany singing, and perhaps to set the mood for worship. Scriptural reform would have dictated that choral performances be intelligible to the ears of the assembled worshippers.

The *second* reason for the impoverishment of worship music, in the New World, was simply that conditions on the frontier did not make cultivation of the fine art of public worship very feasible. At the same time, however, conditions were not as primitive as we sometimes think, and as a factor in the impoverishment of music, this must be taken as of lesser significance. {133}

The *third*, and most important, reason for the decline in worship music was the loss of spiritual vitality, a loss rectified only at the Great Awakening. It is the Spirit who is the “Lord and Giver of life,” and it is He who gives life and liveliness to music as to all things else. Times of reformation in the faith have been times when lively music has been wedded to profoundly Scriptural words. While the later Puritans continued to sing the profoundly Scriptural words of the Psalter, they lost the vitality of Spirit-filled singing. The sorry practice of lining out only

306. See Scholes, 214ff.

worsened the situation. The proper corrective, when it came, was the singing school.

The singing school was an epistemologically self-conscious attempt to renew and enhance the vitality and beauty of worship. The advocates of the singing school were not impractical mystics, waiting for the Spirit to “do something.” They developed a program to rectify the serious worship problems in the churches, trusting the Spirit to bless their reformation. The results were all they could have wished for.

The modern conservative, Biblical churches are faced with the same problem. In a sense, the problem is the opposite of that faced by the singing school reformers, in that our churches do have lively music, but lack any profundity in the words being sung. The liveliness of our music is generally only an entertainment. How many of our churches have a “hymn sing” on Sunday nights? Many. On what basis are the hymns selected, we may ask? I should like to answer that they are selected almost solely for their entertainment value. The proof of this is that only one or two verses are sung. If the *words* were what is important to the singers, then all the verses would be sung. But it is not the words that are important, but the music and the beat. Is this not all too often the case?

The Spirit of Truth seems to be quenched in the churches, and a human spirit of merely emotional entertainment has replaced Him. The music in the churches becomes more and more simply a copy of the current humanistic fads and styles.

We can learn from the singing schools, if we are willing to do so. What is needed in our day is a self-conscious approach to the music of worship. More to the point, what is needed is a return to the serious, theologically profound texts of the hymns of an earlier day, and in particular of the Psalms. Ideally, the churches should declare a moratorium on hymn singing until all 150 Psalms have been learned thoroughly. (This is only an ideal, of course.)

If the churches were to set aside time, perhaps during the evening service, for the consistent, rigorous, regular teaching of the singing of Psalms, so that our churches were filled with people who had the whole book of Psalms memorized, who can say what reformation the Spirit might be pleased to bring in our midst?

THE CHANGING VIEWS ON DEATH IN PURITAN NEW ENGLAND, 1630–1730

Gordon Geddes

“For more than fifty years together,” the aged Michael Wigglesworth told Increase Mather from his deathbed in 1705, “I have been laboring to uphold a life of Communion with God, and I thank the Lord, I now find comfort in it.”³⁰⁷ Such was the death of a Puritan saint. Preparation for death was a major part of the Christian life in seventeenth-century Christendom. A fearful fascination with death and decay which had marked the late medieval and renaissance periods lingered on in seventeenth-century New England. Death was a monster of frightful mien, and a lifetime of preparation for dying, Cotton Mather continually insisted, was scarcely sufficient. In part this anxiety concerning death was countered by a well-established ritual of dying. More important for Wigglesworth, his Puritan faith provided answers to the meaning of life and death and provided the assurance to face death and dying. That assurance, however, had not come easily. In his college diary Wigglesworth had written of fearing death.³⁰⁸ It was his lifetime of labor, trial, and testing that led to the death of comfort. The guilt and the need of youth remained and even intensified, but so did the assurance. Years after his college days Wigglesworth wrote that he approached the Lord’s Table

Not only to Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the World, but to Converse with Christ, & feed upon the Flesh & Blood of the Son of God; ... that I might Live by Him Spiritually & Eternally, might have Life in more abundance; a Life of Comfort, an increase of Grace, and Spiritual Strength. I did therefore Believe, and I do still

307. Cotton Mather, *A Faithful Man, Described and Rewarded* (Boston: Printed and Sold by T. Green, 1705), 27.

308. *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653-1657: The Conscience of a Puritan*, ed. Edmund S. Morgan (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 89.

Believe, ... That Jesus Christ is mine, with all His Benefits, as surely as the Bread that I eat, and the Wine that I drink; & that He will nourish my Soul to Eternal Life, Amen.

“I was,” he wrote of that occasion, “Really Sensible of my absolute Need of Him, and Perishing condition without Him.”³⁰⁹ His early egotism and busy-ness {135} had been replaced by resignation and patience, by a confidence not tainted with “security.” This was the goal of Puritan spirituality, the prescribed preparation for death.

Following death was the funeral. The Puritans removed the sacramental structure attached to the funeral by the medieval church, but the funeral remained infused with religious significance. The family and the home replaced the priest and the church in the conduct of the funeral. It served to honor the dead and to inter the body. It also served to focus and direct the needs of the mourners. The funeral elegy played a role in handling grief. Another formal expression of mourning was the funeral sermon. Cotton Mather rode out to Malden in 1705 following Michael Wigglesworth’s death to console a bereaved congregation. “Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life (Rev. 2:10),” was his text, and Wigglesworth was his example.³¹⁰ Yet dealing with the death of others, especially of close loved ones, raised for many Puritans questions and tensions as penetrating as those raised by contemplation of one’s own death. Finally, the Puritans related the significance and meaning of the individual’s death to that final completed victory over death promised by Christianity at the end of time. The meaning of death was ultimately found not in a biological event but in the goal of creation—the glory of God.

The concepts and practices of death in early New England derive from several sources. Cotton Mather once defined the founders of New England as Englishmen belonging to a “generation of Godly Men, desirous to pursue the Reformation of Religion, according to the Word of God, and the Example of the best Reformed Churches.”³¹¹ In the

309. Mather, *Faithful Man*, 44.

310. *Ibid.*, 1.

311. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana; or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England; From Its First Planting, in the year 1620, unto the Year of Our Lord 1698*, 2 vols. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), vol. 2, 26.

Bible, Puritans found their rule of faith and life, their supreme authority in all areas of thought and action.³¹² Interpretation of Scriptures was in the tradition of the “best Reformed Churches.” The Reformed movement embraced a far wider field than the Geneva of Calvin. The influence of Rhineland reformers {136} had been strong in England, and by 1630 the French, Scottish, and Dutch churches offered a wealth of experience both theological and practical for English Puritans to draw on.³¹³ Puritans were Englishmen. Perry Miller estimated that, taking Puritan culture as a whole, “about ninety per cent of the intellectual life, scientific knowledge, morality, manners and customs, notions and prejudices, was that of all Englishmen.”³¹⁴ Should the Puritans have accepted that percentage, they would have done so with rejoicing that the reformation in England had proceeded so far as to bring that 90 percent of English culture into compatibility with the law of God. That England was a Christian nation and that the Church of England was a true church, albeit in need of reform, they had no doubt.

Another major source of the Puritan view of death was one Cotton Mather and his fathers thought they had repudiated. For sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformers, purification of the church meant primarily removing abuses and corruptions summed up in the word “popery.” Their attack on the medieval church was concentrated theologically in the areas of soteriology, or the doctrine of salvation, and of ecclesiology, or the doctrine of the church. Changes in these areas radi-

312. See the Westminster Confession of Faith, chap. 1, and the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 3. The New England clergy, prompted in 1648 by the General Court, adopted the doctrinal statements of the Westminster Assembly then meeting in London. This included the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. They drew up their own *Platform of Church Discipline* based on congregational principles. See the preface to the *Platform* in Williston Walker, ed., *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, with an introduction by Douglas Horton (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1969), 195, and Walker’s comments on 185. In 1680, again following their English counterparts, the clergy adopted the English Congregationalists’ Savoy Confession of 1658, itself the Westminster Confession with but a few minor changes. See Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 420–21, and Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol. 2, 180–81.

313. Leonard Trinterud, “The Origins of Puritanism,” *Church History* 20 (March 1951): 37–57.

314. Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., *The Puritans*, 2 vols., rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), vol. 1, 7.

cally affected certain ideas and practices concerning death. But physical death had long been treated with the other final events posited by Christianity—the second coming, the resurrection, and the last judgment—the theological area designated eschatology. This area the Reformers did not reevaluate in the same thoroughgoing manner. They took over eschatology in its medieval form, purged only of doctrines obviously incompatible with the major thrust of the reformation, primarily, the doctrines of purgatory and prayer for the dead. But the field as a whole was not reconsidered in terms of the basic reformed principle of *sola scriptura*.³¹⁵ The Puritan concept of death, then, was a Christian view, based primarily on a biblical foundation, with alien traditions and philosophies impinging more than the Puritans would have suspected at particular points.

Death is central to the Christian drama. “But we see Jesus,” wrote the author of Hebrews, “who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” He partook of flesh and blood “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,” in order to “deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”³¹⁶ Through the passion of Christ, {137} death, the last and greatest enemy, is conquered, and the “first-fruits” of that victory, Christ’s resurrection, is demonstrated.³¹⁷ The final victory, however, is reserved for the end of time, at the second coming and the last judgment. All things, including now death, are in subjection to Christ, but, the author of Hebrews continues, “now we see not yet all things put under him.” The Christian thus must live by faith, “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”³¹⁸ He lives in a time between the resurrection of Christ and the second coming, and between his own conversion and his death. Death is conquered, but all men, even the elect, must still die.

315. James P. Martin, *The Last Judgment in Protestant Thought from Orthodoxy to Ritschl* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), 5-7.

316. Hebrews 2:9-15, A.V. of 1611.

317. 2 Corinthians 15:20.

318. Hebrews 2:8; 11:2.

In another sense, the believer had already died, and his baptism was a symbolic burial with Christ. “For ye are dead,” the Apostle Paul had written, “and your life is hid with Christ in God.”³¹⁹ “I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,” Jesus told Martha when she affirmed that her dead brother Lazarus would rise again in the resurrection at the end of time, “and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”³²⁰ “And this is life eternal,” Jesus prayed, “that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”³²¹

Life and death for the Christian, then, are much more than biological phenomena. Life, in its basic meaning, meant a state of communion with God. Death meant a state of separation from God. “Remember the end of your life,” the younger Thomas Shepard wrote to his son in 1672, “which is acoming back again to God, and fellowship with God; for as your great misery is your separation, and estrangement from him, so your happiness, or last end, is your return again to him.” Man had been created for a life of communion with God, but through sin a separation had occurred. The Puritan goal was the reestablishment of that primal communion through Christ. “Because,” Shepard continued,

there is no coming to God but by Christs righteousness, and no Christ to be had but by faith, and no faith without humiliation or sense of your misery, hence therefore let all your Prayers, and tears be, that God would first humble you, that so you may fly by faith to Christ, and come by Christ to God.³²²

Original sin brought death into the world. This death, the punishment for sin, as William Ames explained, “is a miserable privation of life,” a {138} separation of man from God. It “is not the annihilating of the sinner, whereby the subject of misery being taken away, the misery itself should be taken away.” The expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden, which “contained a symbol or Sacrament of Life,” was thus an

319. Colossians 3:3.

320. John 11:24-26.

321. John 17:3.

322. Thomas Shepard, “A Letter from the Revd Mr Thos Shepard to His Son Att His Admission Into the College 1672,” *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 14 (1912): 192-93.

image of this death.³²³ In addition, according to Samuel Willard, the word “death” was used in Scriptures “to express all those evils, whether of sin or sorrow, unto which Man is exposed.” The curse of Genesis 2:17, “For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,” must be understood as “comprehending them all.” In every evil and misery there was something of death. It was necessary, therefore, to speak of various kinds of death. Only in a “restrained and vulgar” sense did it refer to the death of the body. Death embraced “the inchoations of all miseries in this world” of time, the passage to the world of eternity, and the consummation of those miseries there. “Thou shalt be always dying, dying, till thou are perfectly dead,” Willard concluded, for “the miseries of this life differ not from those that follow, so much for kind, as degree.”³²⁴

God in His mercy had moderated the onslaught of death in this world both physically and spiritually. Spiritually, there were “reminders of Gods Image” in both the understanding and the will and hence “a certain force of natural conscience” and a “certain inclination unto good.” Sin and misery were hindered by “meanes both politicke and oeconomicke.” Physically, man had still “space, and commody of life, granted to him by the goodness of God,” and “although the Creatures were subject to vanity and a curse, for the sin of man,” certain remainders of dominion over the creatures allow them to “supply the necessities of mans life.”³²⁵

But beginnings move toward consummation, and the consummation of death was the “highest degree of the punishment appointed, and to endure forever.” This was eternal death, eternal separation from God, in which “the incorruptibility of the damned is their immortality in death, and to death.” Spiritually, man was then “separated wholly from the face, presence, and favour of God,” from which followed “the greatest and eternall hardning in evill, and despaire of good.” Man was

323. William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawne Out of the holy Scriptures, and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method* (London: Published by order from the Honorable the House of Commons, Printed by Edward Griffin for Henry Overton, 1642), 64.

324. Samuel Willard, *A Complete Body of Divinity* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1969), 223-24.

325. Ames, *Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, 71-73.

also “delivered into the power of the Devill” and to the “fulnesse of terrors of conscience”—that “worme, perpetually gnawing”—and to “fulnesse of sinne.” Physically death was consummated first by the separation of the soul from the body and second “by casting the soule and body into Hell, or that place which {139} God hath prepared, for the extreame torments of sins.”³²⁶ It was this larger meaning of death that John Cotton found “so much the more bitter than the death of the body.”³²⁷

In a natural, physical sense, death was the end of life. But in a theological perspective, physical death only marked the completion of a death begun at conception, and the end of a life that in its natural state had never known real life at all. When a man searched the depths of his heart, John Cotton wrote, he found there the bitterness of sin, “and that even above death.”³²⁸ The fear of physical death, Increase Mather explained, was often “worse than the thing itself, but it cannot be said so of the Wrath of God, or of death when it comes armed with that Wrath” against sin.³²⁹ It was a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

The meanings of life parallel the meanings of death. The “life of the soul” in the “presence and favour of God,” according to John Cotton, “is more sweet and precious than the life of the body.”³³⁰ But this life of communion with God, because of the fall into sin, was possible only through the mediation of Christ, and then only for the elect. God had “out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life” through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. These, in time, received an “effectual calling” and were enabled to “embrace Jesus Christ.” The “benefits” of election included first justification, an act of God pardoning sin by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness; and sanctification, a process of renewal in the image of God in which the saints were “daily dying to sin by virtue of Christ’s death” while at the

326. *Ibid.*, 75-76.

327. John Cotton, *Exposition of I John* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), 22.

328. *Ibid.*

329. Increase Mather, *Meditations on Death, Delivered in Several Sermons* (Boston: Printed and Sold by Timothy Green, 1707), 16.

330. Cotton, *Exposition of I John*, 22-23.

same time “daily rising to newness of life, by Christ’s resurrection.”³³¹ The corruption caused by sin prevented the completion of this new life through Christ in this present world. But that “glorification” could be discovered in its “beginnings” as surely as “beginnings” of death. “Oh! how graciose is God to his poor Servants yt gives us in ye Land of or Pilgrimage such blessed entertainment,” wrote William Goffe after noting that the Lord “was pleased very graciously to appear in his ordinances.” He had “feasted in ye house of God; oh, yt I might dwell yrin forever.”³³² In this present life there was “a {140} lively expectation of glory, from the assurance and shedding abroad God’s love in our hearts, working joy unspeakable.” Physical death conducted the believer into the world to come, where there would be

full fruition of glory, whereby being made complete and perfect in holiness and happiness, we enjoy all that good eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard, in our immediate and eternal communion with God in Christ.³³³

Perfection, fulness, completion—these were possible only after death. They were not to be sought in otherworldly mysticism or in antinomian enthusiasm. Those moments would and should come when the Holy Spirit would fill the heart with love and joy—a realized eschatology—but this was not the goal, only the promise. Death, which sent the unregenerate to eternal damnation, promised for the believer fullness of life. Moreover, a powerful strain in Puritan piety and in the Bible from which the Puritans drew inspiration focuses for completion on the communal fulfillment of all things in Christ at the end of time. Then the church, that organic community knit together with love, described by John Winthrop on board the *Arabella* as a model of Christian charity, would be fully realized. The eschatology concerned with the fate of the soul at death is of necessity individualized and spiritualized. But the eschatology of the truly last things—of the great last judg-

331. Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 20, 31-35; Thomas Shepard, *The First Principles of the Oracles of God*, in *The Works of Thomas Shepard, First Pastor of the First Church, Cambridge, Mass.*, ed. John Albro, 3 vols. (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1967), vol. 1, 347.

332. William Goffe, “Journal of Colonel Goffee,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st ser., 7 (1863): 282.

333. Shepard, *Works*, vol. 1, 347.

ment, when death and the devil are consigned to eternal perdition, of the resurrection of the body and its reunion with the soul, and of the consummation of the marriage of the Lamb of God to His bride, the completed church—this eschatology pictures a communal and total fulfillment.

From the perspective of communal eschatology, the most crucial event in the life of each person was his effectual calling or conversion, which turned him once for all from death to life. Physical death remained a “great change” but became a minor sub-drama in terms of the overall production. “He that believeth on [the Son of God] is not condemned,” Jesus told Nicodemus, “but he that believeth not is condemned already.”³³⁴

The medieval eschatology the Puritans inherited, however, focused on the event of death as the most crucial experience. Death brought the individual immortal soul, regarded as the essential person, to a personal judgment before God and from thence to complete salvation, purgation, or damnation. The resurrection, the last judgment, and the completion of the church were treated as formal appendages to these earlier events occurring for each soul. They were indeed felicitous but not essential.³³⁵

Communal eschatology was revived as a living and vital aspect of faith by early New England Puritans, but was never fully integrated with other {141} beliefs. It depended largely on the view of the church and of the millennium held by many of the first generation leaders. Their efforts at purification of the church, they believed, were preliminary preparation for the coming of a millennium of blessing and prosperity for the church, a period prophesied in the Bible as preceding the second coming of Christ. They failed to effect these ecclesiastical changes in England. Often they were literally driven out of the English kingdom. Yet once the decision to emigrate to New England had been made, the Atlantic crossing took on the positive character of a mission. “The worke wee haue in hand,” John Winthrop told his compatriots in mid-passage, was a reformation of religion. It was

334. John 3:17.

335. Martin, *Last Judgment*, 23–27.

by a mutuall consent through a speciall overruleing providence, and a more then an ordinary approbation of the Churches of Christ to seeke out a place of Cohabitation and Consorteshipp vnder a due forme of Government both civill and ecclesiasticall.³³⁶

A purified religious order required a purified civil order, yet the goal of their mission remained the same as in England.

The end is to improve our Hues to doe more service to the Lord the comforte and encrease of the body of christe whereof wee are members that our selues and posterity may be better preserved from the Common corrupcions of this euill world to serue the Lord and worke out our Salvation vnder the power and purity of his holy Ordinances.³³⁷

The Lord had entered into covenant with the Puritans on their mission. The exile was also an errand for the Lord: “for wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty vpon a Hill, the eies of all people are vpon us.” Life was more than an individual pilgrimage toward death and heaven. The “euill world” must be contested on all fronts, socially, politically, and economically as well as spiritually. God would also deal with them communally. Winthrop ended his sermon paraphrasing the warning and the blessing Moses had delivered to the Children of Israel as they stood on the borders of the Promised Land. The typological significance of Winthrop’s example was not lost on his audience. The choice before them, according to this covenant promise, was life and good, or death and evil. If they served God, they would prosper; if they forsook Him, they would perish.

Therefore lett vs choose life,
that wee, and our Seede,
may line; by obeyeing his
voyce, and cleaueing to him,
for hee is our life, and
our prosperity.³³⁸ {142}

336. John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity,” in *Winthrop Papers*, vol. 2, 1623-1630 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931), 293, 295.

337. *Ibid.*

338. *Ibid.*

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. Conversion, still conceived as a turning from death in sin to life in Christ, became less a realized eschatological event and more a necessary preparation for death.

Whatever the weight placed on death as an eschatological boundary, the act of dying continued to be perceived in its late medieval framework. The Puritan doctrines of election and preservation of the saints could do much to relieve spiritual distress at death. Assurance of salvation lay less in the subjective response of the believer than in the Christ who had accomplished it. Puritan theologians held that reliance on subjective proofs of conversion either during life or at death was presumptuous. It led to “security” and was a form of reliance on personal worth or works in meriting salvation. To rest one’s assurance wholly on the accomplished work of Christ was the difficult task of Puritan spirituality, and often required long years of effort to achieve. It meant that death, already portrayed as a potentially terrifying event, often retained for the dying Puritan many of its late-medieval horrors.

Boundaries of Death

In the medieval eschatology the Puritans inherited, death was the major eschatological boundary. Eschatology was individualized and spiritualized, with the individual immortal soul, regarded as the essential person, brought at death before God to be judged according to the state of the soul when death overtook it. As mentioned earlier, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection, the last judgment, the completion of the church, and the restitution of all things—these end events were but formalized appendages and affirmations of events occurring at the death of each person. The Puritans never changed the basic structure of this eschatology of death. To do so would have required

evaluating anew the essence of personhood, the nature of the soul, and the importance and meaning of the resurrection. Protestant Reformers never did this.³³⁹ They did, however, revamp completely other areas of the theological structure. In the hands of the first generation of New England Puritan leaders, these reconstructions did much to increase the importance of eschatological boundaries other than death. {143} The Puritan doctrine of salvation (soteriology), of the church (ecclesiology), and the millennium (a part of eschatology) provided a basis for changing the view of man and death and reevaluating the role of death in the larger scheme of God's history. Instead, those aspects of early Puritan faith which added eschatological weight to events and boundaries other than death were the ones to change.

In Christian thought, death is only one of the great eschatological moments. For Puritans, the term, "the Lord cometh," applied to several events of blessing and judgment.³⁴⁰ Christ came to the believer at election, in his conversion, and other occasions of assurance or judgment. Roger Clap one night lay in bed considering his spiritual state,

And God's holy Spirit did witness (I do believe) together with my Spirit, that I was a Child of God; and did fill my Heart and Soul with such a full Assurance that Christ was mine, that it did so transport me as to make me cry out upon my Bed with aloud Voice, He is come, He is come.³⁴¹

Christ came also at the believer's death and at the second coming preceding the resurrection and the last judgment. Anne Bradstreet described Christ's coming at these times as a bridegroom—a metaphor the Puritans found used in the Bible and which they applied in a variety of ways to explore the believer's relationship to Christ. Her poem, written in old age, "As Weary Pilgrim," catalogued the trials and tribulations of life and yearned for release. Her soul would enjoy bliss, her body await the resurrection:

Oh, how I long to be at rest
And soar on high among the blest.

339. Martin, *Last Judgment*, 27.

340. Shepard, *Works*, vol. 2, 416-18.

341. Roger Clap, *Memoirs of Roger Clap, 1630* (Boston: Printed and Published by David Clap, 1844), 25-26.

This body shall in silence sleep,
Mine eyes no more shall Ever weep,
No fainting fits shall me assail,
Nor grinding pains my body frail,
With cares and fears ne're cumb'ed by
Nor losses know, nor sorrows see.
What though my flesh shall there consume,
It is the bed Christ did perfume,
And when a few years shall be gone,
This mortal shall be clothed upon.
A corrupt carcass down it lays,
A glorious body it shall rise.
In weakness, and dishonour sown,
In power 'tis raised by Christ alone.
Then soul and body shall unite
And of their Maker have the sight.
Such lasting joys shall there behold
As ear ne're heard nor tongue e're told. {144}
Lord, make me ready for that day,
Then come, dear Bridegroom, come away.³⁴²

Sometimes the marriage to Christ was seen as consummated in this life. John Norton argued that “as a Spouse is first married to the person, i.e., her Husband, before she enjoyeth any conjugal communion with him: so, we first by faith receive the person of Christ, before we are made partakers of the benefits of Christ, bestowed upon Believers.” John Cotton wrote of a similar consummation, more vividly portrayed, with the church as the subject:

The publiek Worship of God is the bed of loves; where, 1. Christ embraceth the souls of his people, and casteth into their hearts the immortal seed of his Word, and Spirit, Gal. 4.19. 2. The Church conceiveth and bringeth forth fruits to Christ.³⁴³

342. Anne Bradstreet, *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Jeannine Hensley (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1967), 294-95.

343. Quoted in Edmund S. Morgan, “The Puritan’s Marriage with God,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 48 (1949):109-110.

Thomas Shepard made the Christians' life on earth the betrothal to be consummated with the wedding at death:

And if he be yours, and his love yours, see it, that you may trample on the neck of death, and triumph over Hell, and the Grave, and long to be with the Lord, and love the appearing of the Lord, and go away with joy unspeakable and full of glory out of this world, as to your Wedding.³⁴⁴

Again, the church was likened to the bride, with the Day of Judgment to be "our Marriage day." Edward Johnson anticipated that moment:

That glorious resurrection-day, the glorious nuptials of the Lamb: when not only the Bridegroom shall appear to his Churches both of Jews and Gentiles, (which are his spouse) in a more brighter aray than ever heretofore, but also his Bride shall be clothed by him in the richest garments that ever the Sons of men put on, even the glorious graces of Christ Jesus, in such a glorious splendor to the eyes of man, that they shall see and glorifie the Father of both Bridegroom and Bride.³⁴⁵

Anne Bradstreet's metaphor, then, was a common one for Puritans to use, and her concluding line, "Then come, dear Bridegroom," could apply to both death and the resurrection. Conversion, moments when heaven seemed to break in upon earth, death, and the second coming were all moments of eschatological significance. Not all, however, were of equal significance, and the meaning of death for the Puritans was in part determined by the weight they gave it as an eschatological boundary. {145}

The Protestant emphasis on justification by faith alone led reformers to eliminate many Catholic doctrines and practices surrounding death. The moment of effectual calling, when God's eternal election became chronologically realized in the life of a saint, was itself the passage from death to life. Man was then saved from sin, and from the power of sin in death and hell. Man's present fallen state placed the sinner "in a corner of hell," Thomas Shepard preached, "thou hangest but by one rotten twined thread of thy life, over the flames of hell."³⁴⁶ The first-genera-

344. Shepard, *Works*, vol. 2, 78.

345. Edward Johnson, *The Wonder-Working Providence of Sions Saviour in New England*, ed. J. F. Jameson (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1959), 271-72.

346. Shepard, *Works*, vol. 1, 134-35.

tion New England ministers seldom preached on death, hell, or the last judgment as such. But they preached a great deal on sin and conversion, and like Shepard, they focused these later events and future realities onto the present situation.³⁴⁷ For the drama of sin and redemption embraced a wide range of reality, and led man from the beginnings to the end of time. “All men living nakedly considered in themselves, have lost all power to do anything that is good”; they “sit in darkness, and the shadow of death,” according to Shepard,

and hence look upon a man quite forsaken of God in Hell, there you may see as in a lively looking-glass what every man living is when the Lord leaves him: he can blaspheme him, he cannot love him, he can contemn God, he cannot esteem him: He can wish there were no God to punish him, he cannot submit unto God, though he leaves the most heavy load upon him, and you see not your selves untill you see your selves here, and see your selves thus.³⁴⁸

If a man would not hold up this looking glass now, the day would come when it would be held before him:

So that if you do maintain enmity against him, he may let you alone, you may live in health, and die in peace, in the eye of man, and in thine own eyes too: Yet there is a day coming he will break out of Heaven with a shout, and appear in the clouds in the amazing Glory of his Father, with all his mighty Angels, and all the dead shall hear his voice, and you shall appear before him with this body, when the Heavens shall burn round about him, and the earth shall tremble under him, and all guilty eyes mourning and wayling because of him. Then you shall know what ‘tis to despise him, and with, oh that I had loved him, Rev. 1:7. You that say you love him, yet by an impenitent heart pierce him, you shall wayl, even so, Amen. Men do not see an end of these things, nor the Glory of the Lord another day. Hence creatures are loved, and the Lord of Glory is loathed.³⁴⁹

Nothing would be revealed then that a man might not now know, only what was now inward and spiritual would then be public and absolute.
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347. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 37–38; Miller and Johnson, *Puritans*, vol. 1, 288–89.

348. Shepard, *Works*, vol. 2, 51.

349. *Ibid.*, 43.

As the sinner could have full sight of his sin and anticipate its completion in eternal destruction, so the recipient of God's grace enjoyed now a fellowship with Christ which awaited only a future consummation. John Cotton described the "marvelous efficacy of the spirit of Grace in the dayes of the Gospel" by means of a metaphor of a river. The Christian first wades, then walks nearly covered, and finally swims in the "rivers of God his grace":

But yet goe another thousand Cubits, and then you shall swimme; there is such a measure of grace in which a man may swimme as fish in the water, with all readinesse and dexterity, gliding an-end, as if he had water enough to swimme in; such a Christian doth not creep or walk, but he runs the ways of Gods Commandements; what ever he is to doe or to suffer he is ready for all, so every way drenched in grace, as let God turn him any way, he is never drawn dry.³⁵⁰

Death did not break the continuity of the believing life. The great gulf was crossed at conversion; death was a "great change" but only a transition within a movement begun earlier. In describing the glory of the saints in heaven Jonathan Mitchell reflected the spirit of the early New Englanders. The "essence of the Happiness of Heaven," he wrote, was "full fruition or enjoyment of God; perfect, glorious and full communion with God, the God of Glory, God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." This enjoyment

we have some little taste of here, but being there in perfection, it makes up perfect blessedness for mans blessedness lies in fruition of God the chief Godd, whom he was made for, and in whom is that infinite fullness of all good, and that is able to satisfie and make happy the soul of man, and to be the endless joy thereof.³⁵¹

To see God meant for Mitchell to "see his Glory, and enjoy the pourings out of his love & goodness," for, he added, "seeing is oft used for enjoying in Scripture." This communion with God in heaven was first "a clear vision or sight of the Glory of God by the understanding, no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face." Here was the theologians' beatific vision of the immortal soul. But secondly, and

350. Quoted in Miller and Johnson, *Puritans*, vol. 1, 318.

351. Jonathan Mitchell, *A Discourse of the Glory To Which God hath called Believers by Jesus Christ* (Boston: Printed by B. Green, 1721), 19-20.

here Mitchell waxed poetic, it was a communication including also the will and the affections. It would be

a taking in, closing with, and drinking down the sweet of the love and goodness of God, which the Lord will let out unto the soul, and fill it with, to its everlasting joy, delight & fullest satisfaction, ... The love and goodness of God, being poured forth and communicated in the sweet and lively sense of it, (as will then be fully and perpetually, which we have but a little taste of here,) will be a River of pleasure, which the soul will be drinking of to all Eternity. Hence all the liking {147} and delightful affections, (love, joy, desire, delight) will be acting to the highest upon God, and filled full with him, and then ravished always with his love, and enlarged to praise, bless, and glorifie him, and sing forth Hallelujahs for ever.³⁵²

The “full-bodied” enjoyment Mitchell portrayed seems to be more in accord with the resurrected body of Pauline theology than with the immortal soul of the scholastics.

After 1660 it was discovered by Puritan ministers that “nothing hath a greater tendency to awaken unto repentance,” to “rouse Sinners and quicken Saints,” than preaching on the subjects of death and the last judgment. Here were “things awful and affecting in themselves, and framed to reach men’s fears and persuade them by the terrors of the Lord.”³⁵³ Only a heart of stone could remain unpierced by such answers, they felt. Along with the development of the jeremiad preaching social judgment was a proliferation of sermons devoted to the individual judgment of death and the last judgment—sermons designed to arouse the listener on an individual level. Such themes can be found in the sermons of the founding generation, but, as is also true of the jeremiad, without the same intensity and only as part of a larger context. The founders preached often of grace and the means of conversion while their successors taught preparation for death and judgment. Bernard Groethuysen’s study of Catholicism in bourgeois areas of eighteenth-century France found the clergy there also resorting to

352. *Ibid.*, 21–23.

353. Increase Mather, *The Greatest Sinners Exhorted and Encouraged To Come to Christ, and that Now Without Delaying* (Boston: Printed by R. P., 1686), 3; John Webb, *Practical Discourses on Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell* (Boston: Printed by J. Draper, 1726), ii.

sermonizing on death and hell to maintain a hold on an increasingly secular bourgeois audience.³⁵⁴ Edward Johnson had called to people fully engaged in the spiritual battle to look to the external earthly battle as well.³⁵⁵ By the eighteenth century it seemed that even the spiritual battle was in danger of being neglected. The clergy looked to those areas of theology which most startled the listener from his security.

The result was a subtle shift in the importance of individual conversion in the larger history of salvation. In emphasis but not in doctrine, experientially but not logically, conversion instead of being present salvation from sin became a present preparation for death. The stress moved to the results of sin in death and judgment. Death became again the major transition in the Christian life. The passage from this world to the next became focused not on a spiritual reality at conversion but the passage {148} of the soul to heaven at death. The loss of continuity in the believer's life was attended by a restricted view of the blessedness of the soul at death. Increase Mather, in his old age, delivered a series of sermons titled *Meditations on the Glory of the Heavenly World*. In his preface he mentioned Mitchell's discourses on heaven and wished that they could be reprinted in Boston. Yet when Mather discussed the beatific vision it was in a far different spirit from his predecessor. "Mental knowledge," he wrote, "is in the Scripture Expressed by Vision," whereas Mitchell had found the equivalent of vision to be enjoyment. "It is an Intellectual Vision of GOD which Saints in Glory are Blessed with," Mather continued, "He is seen with the Eye of the Understanding." Compared with Mitchell's, Mather's vision is strictly cerebral. "There is an Intellectual Knowledge of GOD, in which the Essence of Happiness does consist.... And nothing short of that can make the Rational Creature happy." Instead of the ravishment of God's love attending the vision of the understanding, Mather is content with a negative condition: "Nothing will make a man happy, but that which will make him Impeccable; that is incapable of Sinning." In Mather's heaven, "the Beatifical Vision will be attended with that Happiness."³⁵⁶

354. Bernard Groethuysen, *The Bourgeois: Catholicism Vs. Capitalism in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968), chap. 5.

355. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 270-71.

Historians have traced the movement in New England from Puritan to Yankee, from utopian communes to provincial towns. The Puritan theological inheritance of a spiritualized and individualized eschatology was at odds with the communal emphasis of the early settlements. In early church confessions, such as Salem’s “Direction for a Public Profession” of 1629, reference to the state of the soul after death is simply omitted and the believer’s membership in the body of Christ stressed:

That all true Believers being united unto Christ as the Head, make up one Misticall Church which is the Body of Christ, the members wherof having fellowship with the Father Son and Holy-Ghost by Faith, and one with an other in love, doe receive here upon earth forgiveness of Sinnes, with the life of grace, and at the Resurrection of the Body, they shall receive everlasting life.³⁵⁷

This does not mean that the blessedness of the elect soul in heaven immediately after death was denied, only that the emphasis was elsewhere. The individual was a member of a community which had work to do on earth and a future in heaven. The churches in New England were no mere way-stations, shuttling souls to heaven. They were representatives of the invisible church of all the saints, from creation to the present, and their mission on earth was to subdue the world to the kingship of Christ. In addition, the New England churches soon attempted to build a membership {149} of visible saints, not being content with simply joining together mere professed believers. The closeness of the scrutiny is suggested by Winthrop’s account of founding a new church in Dorchester in 1636:

The reason was, for the most of them (Mr. Mather and one more excepted) had builded their comfort of salvation upon unsound grounds, viz. some upon dreams and ravishes of spirit by fits; others upon the reformation of their lives; others upon duties and performance, &c.; wherein they discovered three special errorrs: 1. That they had not come to hate sin, because it was filthy, but only left it, because it was hurtful. 2. That, by reason of this, they had never truly closed with Christ, (or rather Christ with them,) but had made use of Him

356. Increase Mather, *Meditations on the Glory of the Heavenly World* (Boston: Printed by Benjamin Eliot, 1711), 237-39.

357. Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 121.

only to help the imperfection of their sanctification and duties, and not made him their sanctification, wisdom, &c. 3. They expected to believe by some other power of their own, and not only and wholly from Christ.³⁵⁸

This innovation in membership led to later difficulties and conflict, but it did serve to unify the church and give a sense of continuity between living members and those who had died.³⁵⁹ Edward Taylor ended his series of poems on “Gods Determinations touching his Elect,” expounding the theme of “The Joy of Church Fellowship rightly attended”:

In Heaven soaring up, I dropt an Eare
On Earth: and oh! sweet Melody:
And listening, found it was the Saints who were
Encoacht for Heaven that sang for Joy.
For in Christs Coach they sweetly sing;
As they to Glory ride therein.

Pilgrims would indeed arrive alone at the city, being denied by time and place the chance to ride in such splendor.

Some few not in; and some whose Time, and Place
Block up this Coaches way do goe
As Travellers afoot, and so do trace
The Road that gives them right thereto
While in this Coach these sweetly sing
As they to Glory ride therein.³⁶⁰

The particular view which most early New England leaders held of the church’s mission was that of postmillennialism. Most of the clergy migrating to New England had been influenced by a line of thought in English Puritanism which looked for a thousand-year outpouring of the Spirit and extension of the church throughout the world prior to

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

359. Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, 5 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961-65), vol. 1, 222-23.

360. Taylor, *The Poems of Edward Taylor* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1960), 458-59.

the second {150} coming of Christ. New England leaders believed that by establishing “a place of Cohabitation and Consortship under a due form of Government both civill and ecclesiasticall” they were working toward bringing in the millennium.³⁶¹ The same motives were behind much of the mission work among the Indians, and accounts for New England’s interest in the conversion of the Jews. The chapter “Of the Church” in the Savoy Declaration adopted in New England expresses the general framework of this view:

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 of 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, peaceable and glorious condition than they have enjoyed.³⁶²

Details concerning these events were often quite detailed and technical. Edward Johnson spoke more enthusiastically than most, but his view of the New England errand was shared by many.

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 wildered indeed in the Wilderness; so now it was needfull, that the Churches of Christ should first obtain their purity, and the civil government its power to defend them, before Antichrist come to his finall ruine: and because you shall be sure the day is come indeed, 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,

361. *Winthrop Papers*, vol. 2, 295. On Puritan millennialism see Aletha Gilsdorf, “The Puritan Apocalypse: New England Eschatology in the Seventeenth Century” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1964); Peter Toon, ed., *Puritans, the Millennium, and the Future of Israel: Puritan Eschatology 1600 to 1660, A Collection of Essays* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1970); and Ernest Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America’s Millennial Role* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

362. Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 396. Cf. Q. 191 of the Westminster Larger Catechism.

having a neer dependency one upon the other, especially at this time.³⁶³

The New England people had merely “retreated to a place of greater safety, where they waited for a fresh opportunity to ingage with the main battell of Antichrist, so soon as the Lord shall be pleased to give a word of command.” In view of the imminent victory, the intervening period for the soul after death was of slight importance: {151}

Thus far of the Battell of Antichrist, and the various success: what the issue will be, is assuredly known in the generall already. Babylon is fallen, the God of Truth hath said it; than who would not be a Souldier on Christs side, where is such a certainty of victory? Nay I can tell you a farther word of encouragement, every true-hearted Souldier that falls by the sword in this fight, shall not lye dead long, but stand upon his feet again, and be made partaker of the triumph of this Victory.³⁶⁴

Here the state of the soul after death, of major importance in a spiritualized framework, is passed over quickly—they “shall not lye dead long”—in the light of the work at hand and the final and glorious victory of the entire church. In addition, this world and the next were brought into intimate connection.

When Johnson wrote his history of New England, he headed and structured the chapters according to the founding of New England churches and towns, even though much space was devoted to elegaic stanzas on prominent individuals. How different the approach and spirit of Cotton Mather in his *Magnolia Christi Americana*. Christ had “procured and preserved in all ages visible” a people for himself, and the best history was that revealing God’s “wondrous Providence” to that people, “their calamities, their deliverances, the dispositions which they have still discovered, and the considerable persons and actions found among them.” It would be Mather’s endeavor to write of

the planting and forming of Evangelical Churches, and the temptations, the corruptions, the afflictions which assault them, and their salvations from those assaults, and the exemplary lives of those that Heaven employs to be patterns of holiness and usefulness upon earth.³⁶⁵

363. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence*, 270.

364. *Ibid.*, 271.

365. C. Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol. 1, 28-29.

He speculated if whether this example shown, New England's purpose was fulfilled and its candlestick might not soon be removed. As he concluded his tome, "God knows what will be the END."³⁶⁶ Mather's *Magnolia* has been called "the greatest Jeremiad of them all," a genre created by Michael Wigglesworth.³⁶⁷ Growing up under the tutelage of the most prominent leaders of New England and absorbing their vision of a city on a hill, Wigglesworth measured the New England of his maturity with that goal and elucidated "God's Controversy with New England." Wigglesworth had also catechized both Englands with the expectation of the "Day of Doom." From these themes of a world and a society falling under judgment, he had turned his versifying to the personal affliction of saints who must suffer in such an environment. His *Meat Out of the Eater*, a long series of poems, {152} was designed for God's children, to "Prepare them For, and Comfort them Under the Cross." Cotton Mather picked up Wigglesworth's themes. In the form of the biography and the funeral sermon, he found a way to celebrate New England saints, those afflicted children of God, while at the same time maintaining God's controversy with the society as a whole.

One of the key problems confronting the Mathers was the failure of the churches to maintain their strength in a growing society. The special requirements the founders had built to hedge the church in from an evil world by the latter half of the century were serving to keep potential members out. Solomon Stoddard in the Connecticut Valley and Benjamin Colman at the Brattle Street church abandoned the early New England way, returning to the usual reformed practice of admitting professed believers who were not scandalous of life, and dropping the requirement for a special experiential confession of the workings of grace in the soul. This to the Mathers was anathema. Yet as they strove to stem the tide, they used methods which diluted the ways of the fathers. Cotton Mather emphasized the life of the individual saint more than the community of the church in his profusion of jeremiads and funeral sermons. He drew on the image of the Christian life as an inter-

366. *Ibid.*, I, 27; vol. 2, 580.

367. Peter Gay, *A Loss of Mystery: Puritan Historians in Colonial America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 65; Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, 30.

nal pilgrimage of the soul through a world of woe, of opposition, and of weariness. "This World," he wrote,

is our Wilderness, and we meet with many Hardships in this horrid, howling, roaring Wilderness: Yes, but let us under all, encourage our selves, by thinking on, The Land flowing with Milk and Honey, whereto we are hastening every day.³⁶⁸

Death in the wilderness of the world had a significance not known in the city on the hill. Moreover, Mather's views of the millennium shifted from a period of blessing initiated by the progressive work and development of the church to a period initiated by a personal and cataclysmic second coming at the beginning of the millennium.³⁶⁹ The mission of the community was thus lost, along with the continuity and purpose earlier accorded the church's activity in the world. The division between this world and the next was widened in both space and time. Death increasingly served as the bridge.

For some of the clergy, this increased distance and the loss of an earlier fervor seemed advantageous. Schooled in the decorum and restraint of the age of reason, men like Benjamin Colman sought emotional restraint and refinement in both their language and their style of living. They opposed Cotton Mather's pietism which led him more and more to seek spiritual ravishing on the floor of his study and to look for the triumph of the church in the world through an apocalyptic stroke from heaven. {153} Colman, on the other hand, sought meaning by participating in a world and society divinely ordered by rational law. "The Beauty of the Universe," he held,

of the natural and moral World, the Usefulness of things in it and the Felicity of the Creatures, depend upon the excellent Order that GOD has constituted.... Decency and Order go together, and so do Order & Right. Everything is beautiful and right in its time and order.... The whole Law of God to us is comprehended in this one word Order.³⁷⁰

The world was a pleasant place for Colman and even more separate from the next. He, too, made death the great dividing point between

368. C. Mather, *Death Made Easie*, 16-17.

369. *Ibid.*, 57-58.

370. Benjamin Colman, *Death and the Grave Without Any Order* (Boston: Printed for John Phillips and Thomas Hancock, 1728), 9.

this world and the next, the most important boundary for which men must prepare.

The time of death and of judgment was unknown. Colman wished to “check a criminal Curiosity to know things which God has kept secret.” “Some Good Men have been too Curious and Positive in fixing the Periods of Revolutions that are prophesied of,” Colman noted, speaking perhaps of the Mathers, “and have been rebuked for their bold Conjectures, by living to see themselves confuted.”³⁷¹ For Colman it was enough to watch expectantly for death:

Watch therefore: For your own Judgment can't be far off; and what is it to us if the general Judgment Day be many Ages off, since the Day of our Death is certainly very nigh. A few Days more and our State will be unalterably fix'd for Eternity.... We ought always in our Thoughts to join the Judgment with Death, treading on the Heels of it. And then verily the Judge is at the Door, and we should live as those that in a little time are sure of being before him.³⁷²

As in the late-medieval church, so in New England, death became the chief eschatological event, the most important boundary. This was true for Cotton Mather and Benjamin Colman, for both the pietist and the rationalist elements into which the New England Way split. But by making conversion more consciously a preparation for death and heaven, men with both views removed more of death's terrors and made it more of a glorious adventure for the saint to pass through.

Seventeenth-century Puritans had but barely broken away from identifying the self at death with the body as well as with the soul. For this reason they carved death's heads on their tombstones. In the course of the eighteenth century the death's head as the image of the deceased was replaced {154} on New England tombstones by the soul effigy. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, established in Christian thought in the Middle Ages, steadily gained in importance at the expense of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The communal thrust in the city on the hill deflected this trend in New England

371. Benjamin Colman, *Practical Discourses on the Ten Virgins, Being a Serious Call and Admonition to Watchfulness and Diligence in Preparing for Death and Judgment*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Printed by Rogers and Fowle, 1747), 340-41; Gilsdorf, “Puritan Apocalypse,” 217.

372. Colman, *Ten Virgins*, 343.

for only a short time. In the eighteenth century, it advanced rapidly. In 1825, editing John Winthrop's journal, James Savage noted with amazement how his rude forebearers had accepted as literal a resurrection which was so obviously but a primitive way of referring to what all rational men knew as the immortality of the soul.³⁷³

373. Winthrop, *History*, I, 217.

FROM COVENANT TO CONTRACT

Pietism and Secularism in Puritan New England, 1691–1720

Gary North

Samuel Willard, commenting on the eighth commandment, summarized the Puritan concept of property rights, as of 1705, in all its ambivalence: “... every man hath power of disposing whatsoever estate he holds in his own right, according to the rules of discretion....”³⁷⁴ The right to *own* property carries with it the right to *disown* property, but only “according to the rules of discretion.” The problems of Puritan economic theory had been associated with this very task—discovering these rules and translating them into formal legal propositions that could actually be enforced—and Willard’s lengthy discussion did little to set forth any new approaches that might produce solutions to this basic economic problem. Men should not oppress one another in their economic transactions; servants should not demand high wages; conscience should set the limits of all demands made upon servants—the employer’s conscience.³⁷⁵ *Frugality* and the *golden rule*: here were Willard’s basic solutions to the economic dilemma.³⁷⁶ John Winthrop would have recognized and approved of Willard’s familiar formula. Unfortunately, the formula was even less enforceable in 1705, when Willard preached this sermon, than it had been in 1640.

Stewardship and Ownership

The terms of the stewardship doctrine never changed in Puritan expositions. “All that we have,” warned Cotton Mather, “is but a loan from the great God unto us.”³⁷⁷ The loan from God: here is the tradi-

374. Samuel Willard, *A Compleat Body of Divinity* ([1726] 1969), 695.

375. *Ibid.*, 696.

376. *Ibid.*, 697.

tional stewardship theme which goes back at least as far as Salvian the Presbyterian's fifth-century sermons. But the loan is revocable: unless men remain good stewards, wrote John Danforth, God will see to it that they will no longer be stewards of anything.³⁷⁸ Obviously, no person is absolute lord over {156} his estate; the absolute rights of ownership, being derivative from God's ultimate ownership, cannot therefore be absolute.³⁷⁹

The Puritan concept of ownership parallels the Puritan and medieval concept of sovereignty. On this point, Puritan sermons did not disagree, from 1630 to 1730. No human person or institution can claim absolute sovereignty. This false claim was the very essence of the Church of Rome's pride, all Protestants maintained, and Puritan commentators were careful to remind their flocks of this fact. All human sovereignties are limited; we live in a world of plural sovereignties. Each institution and each individual has claims upon other men and institutions. No man is autonomous in any sphere of life, including the economic sphere. The problem came, as it had come in all Christian systems of casuistry, in assessing the limits on any person's rights and duties in any particular sphere of life. The boundaries are always fuzzy, but in the third generation of New England, they began to be erased. Where Christian principles could no longer set the limits of sovereignty, secular principles intervened.

Increase Mather returned to another ancient theme: Adam's title to the earth prior to the Fall of man. After his transgression, argued Mather, Adam forfeited his claims to heaven and earth. Both claims belong to the elect through the mediatory work of Christ on the cross. Nevertheless, in this unredeemed world, the heathen still can claim his civil rights. Mather's arguments echoed Augustine's, who attributed to civil law the rights of private property.

Others have a civil right to what they enjoy. God gives them leave to enjoy earthly blessings; they have them with God's permission and

377. Cotton Mather, *Durable Riches* (1695), 13. Cf. Samuel Moodey, *The Debtors Monitor* (1715), 19; Peter Thatcher, *The Fear of GOD Restraining Men from Unmercifulness and Iniquity in Commerce* (1720), 16.

378. John Danforth, *The Vile Prophanations of Prosperity by the Degenerate* (1704), 9.

379. Willard, 708.

allowance. Like as a malefactor has bread and water allowed unto him until the day of execution comes, so God allows earthly blessings to wicked men, that they cannot properly be said to be usurpers in the enjoyment of them.... It is not their using these blessings, but using them otherwise than they should have done, for which they shall be condemned.³⁸⁰

Samuel Willard followed Mather's line of reasoning on this point: "Ungodly men have a true civil right to the share of good things, which God bestows upon them in this life."³⁸¹ Willard based his conclusion on a consideration of God's common favors toward mankind as a whole.³⁸² God's word has confirmed them in their rights to their property, and so long as they keep within the bounds of civil righteousness, their claims to private property are as good as the claims of the godly. "And though God may, yet men may not, lawfully make a seizure of their estates on the score of their being {157} pagans, idolaters, or strangers to the gospel covenant."³⁸³

Common grace therefore works simultaneously for the short-run benefit and the long-run destruction of the ungodly. They have property rights as condemned prisoners have bread and water. But during the period of time which God gives them to work out the implications of their ethical rebellion, other men may not interfere with their property. Only when they violate civil law—a law-order which limits all men, whether saints or sinners—can other men act to limit the unbeliever's limited but legitimate economic sovereignty. The Puritan doctrine of *common grace* (or common favor) leads directly to the idea of *equality before the civil law*. The cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 grants the right of personal responsibility to all men during their time of life on the earth. Since they are responsible before the civil law, they enjoy all the civil rights of the community. One of the basic requirements of the modern capitalist order—equality before the civil law—was thus provided by Puritan theology.

380. Increase Mather, *Sermons Wherein Those Eight Characters Commonly Called the Beatitudes ...* (1718), 98. [Cited hereafter as *Beatitudes*.]

381. Willard, 688.

382. *Ibid.*

383. *Ibid.*

Whether saint or sinner, the mere possession of property rights must not be understood as legitimizing acts opposed to *equity*—the laws of God: civil and moral, internal and external—so civil law therefore is necessary to retard social disorder and disputes. “Prudence” directs this or that division of property, not specific rules in the Bible or in nature. However, general rules do exist, an unalterable “rule of justice.”³⁸⁴ The problem Willard did not face is the means by which this unalterable rule could be defined concretely and transformed into *positive civil law*. All that we can glean from his essay is that the original ownership, federally through Adam, does not imply equal shares of distribution.³⁸⁵ On this point, his contemporaries were unanimous.

The hostility of Cotton Mather against all forms of *gambling* was in part based upon the doctrine of stewardship. Naturally, no one is supposed to grow wealthy through play, but this is not the crucial argument.³⁸⁶ The key is the *misuse of God’s property*: “When God has bestowed an estate upon a man, for him to make it a question whether he shall have it or no, and refer unto the shuffling of a card, or the casting of a die, whether it shall be his own or not, such a man steals from himself, and from his family, and from those whom God has directed to spend his revenues on.”³⁸⁷ Games of chance are theologically reprehensible in a universe utterly devoid of any contingency. All things belong to God; all events take place within the framework of God’s providence and historical decree. Wealth and {158} personal responsibility are not to be viewed as the products of a chance universe. Men live in a world completely bounded by God’s providence. The stewardship principle does not operate in a cosmological vacuum.

Time is the scarcest of all resources in the Puritan outlook. Therefore, the diligent use of time is basic to the life of all men, but especially the redeemed saint.³⁸⁸ Time is the means of performing our duties,

384. *Ibid.*, 688-89.

385. *Ibid.*, 689.

386. Mather, *A Flying Roll ... the Crime and the Doom of the Thief declared* (1713), 14. The words “flying roll” stem from the judgment passage in Zechariah 5:1-4.

387. *Ibid.*

388. Mather, *A Brief Discourse on the Necessary Properties & Practices of a Good Servant* (1696), 48.

wrote Mather: we are “to do good and get good.” Honoring God is what we must do, while the enjoyment of God is what we must get.³⁸⁹ Time is ultimately precious in this life: “The shriek of a poor man going out of the world sometimes has been, A world of wealth for an inch of time. Certainly it is wisdom to prevent such things as these.”³⁹⁰ Time must be seen as irrevocable; we are accountable for its use.³⁹¹ Idleness is forbidden: “No man so fully and foully falls into the possession of the Devil as the idle man.”³⁹² The theme is a familiar one in Puritan sermons, but Mather used the language of commerce to drive home his point: “Let us discern our time, and make none but good bargains about the time.”³⁹³ In short, said Mather,

We must be at some cost, and that some charge for it, if we would not be ill-husbands of our time. We must pay down either money or money’s worth for it; we must forego and undergo many things for it. Many things must we give up, that our time so may be well employed.³⁹⁴

Mather’s sermon, *Honesta Parsemona* (1721), is entirely devoted to the theory of the *stewardship of time*; it was a theme which never seemed to tire him, and contemporary theologians were no less enthusiastic. Benjamin Colman, in his 1719 argument favoring the establishment of a weekly, governmentally regulated market in Boston, prefigured Franklin’s “time is money” definition by two decades: “Time is the common talent of all persons, and a very precious one, which it is everyone’s interest to redeem for himself and his family.... Time improved well in our callings is so much money got, so much work done, so much life gained.”³⁹⁵ Lose time, he said, and you throw away money. {159}

Every Puritan commentator focused on the inescapable responsibility of men to allocate faithfully every scarce resource entrusted to them

389. Mather, *Small Offers Towards the Service of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness* (1689), 67.

390. *Ibid.*, 72.

391. *Ibid.*, 74.

392. *Ibid.*, 77.

393. *Ibid.*, 80.

394. *Ibid.*

by God. Unrighteous people as well as the righteous have this ethical burden placed upon their shoulders. But the inability of Puritan commentators to devise *formal rules* of ethical ownership that were distinctively Christian yet legally enforceable marred their attempt to subdue economics as an aspect of the kingdom of God. They searched long and hard for those specific rules that would reflect the universal rule of justice, but these rules proved as elusive as ever. Stewardship's responsibilities, like Calvin's ethical restrictions on economic bargaining and usury, were relegated to the *internal realm of conscience*. This left professing Christians free to interpret the affairs of economics—the allocation of scarce economic resources—according to the more impersonal laws of profit and loss, so long as it could not be shown that their attitude was innately corrupt or that their ultimate goal was economic oppression. It would be always difficult to challenge their following the rules of profit and loss.

The Calling and Economic Rationalization

Cotton Mather stood firm against any encroachments by unscrupulous men who might challenge the official theological inheritance of the doctrine of the calling. Its outline had not changed since the days of Winthrop. Cotton Mather's 1701 sermon, *A Christian at His Calling*, did not deviate from the traditional teaching: men should only undertake ethically legitimate jobs;³⁹⁶ constant prayer throughout the day is recommended;³⁹⁷ life without a particular calling is generally unlawful.³⁹⁸ The calling is a man's means of *servicing other men* in a world where the *division of labor* is necessary for personal survival.³⁹⁹ "And pardon me, if I say, any honest mechanics really are more honorable

395. Benjamin Colman, *Some Reasons and Arguments Offered to The Good People of Boston And adjacent Places, for The setting up Markets in Boston* (1719), 3. [Cited hereafter as *Markets*.] On Franklin's similar assessment of "time as money," see his "Advice to a Young Tradesman" (1748), in the Commager edition of the *Autobiography* and selected writings, 232.

396. Mather, *A Christian at His Calling* (1701), 20.

397. *Ibid.*, 21.

398. *Ibid.*, 39.

399. *Ibid.*

than idle and useless men of honor.... The sin of Sodom was abundance of idleness. All the sins of Sodom abound where idleness is countenanced.”⁴⁰⁰ Whether or not one’s efforts will prosper, however, is completely up to God and His personal intervention; no autonomous laws of the market can guarantee anything:

Oh, don’t imagine that your hands will be sufficient for you without the help of God. And with the help of God, never fear, but your hands {160} will be sufficient for you. Stick to your business, and leave it with God how you shall succeed in your business.⁴⁰¹

Nevertheless, the traditional respect of Puritan commentators for the *orderliness of God’s universe* placed considerable importance on *predictability*. Yes, God’s blessing is always at His discretion; the lesson of Job was basic to the Puritans’ theology. Man does not control or manipulate a sovereign God. Yet diligence does pay off in the long run. With respect to the individual, there is a basic antinomy present in Mather’s exposition, and other Puritan commentators could not escape it. It is that fundamental paradox of the whole concept of God’s covenant: God is sovereign, yet He is bound by the terms of the covenant. Secular reason can see no way out of this paradox: if God is sovereign, He is not limited; if God is bound, He is not sovereign.

Whenever Puritans transferred the language of the civil covenant into the affairs of individual lives, they encountered this problem in a striking way. Deuteronomy 8 and 28 set forth the picture of a collective people. Blessings or trials are promised to a covenanted people. It was a mistake—and Puritans were familiar enough with the book of Job to know that it was a mistake—to transfer the terms of the national covenant to the personal covenant. From John Cotton to his grandson Cotton Mather, Puritans were careful to remind the saints that the outward financial conditions of an individual are not clues to his inward condi-

400. *Ibid.*, 42–43. As he wrote in *Death Made Easy and Happy*, a sermon published in London in 1701, when the manuscript, formerly lost, was rediscovered, “Even Adam in Paradise was to labor; and the Devil, who seduced Adam, is never better kept off, by any child of Adam’s than by the man’s keeping at some honest labor” (45-46). Cf. *An Addition to the Present Melancholy Circumstances of the Province Considered* (1719), in Andrew McFarland Davis, ed., *Colonial Currency Reprints*, vol. 1, 367ff. [Cited hereafter as *Currency Reprints*.]

401. *Ibid.*, 70. Cf. Benjamin Colman, *The Blessing of Zebulun & Issachar* (1719), 10.

tion. Only the long-run condition of a collective people (and no one can be sure how long this is) can testify to the spiritual condition of a majority of its citizens. Thus, honest men could, through the providence of God, be blasted with affliction. No absolute law of prosperity guarantees outward blessings to each diligent saint. In principle, all Puritan theologians knew this. No man can claim God's benefits merely by following the laws of God in an imperfect way; all are totally depraved, and none has a stranglehold on God. It is the heresy of the magician that makes him believe that manipulation of earthly things can bring God's power into play, and Cotton Mather was no friend of magicians.

Yet in spite of the technical precision of their theologies, Puritan ministers slipped on the covenant's finely honed theoretical edges again and again. John Eliot's response to his pragmatic Indian listeners—that if they worked like the English, they would get rich like the English—was within the terms of God's national covenant, but no one could be certain of this in any particular case. But Samuel Moodey's praise of labor's efficacy was so straightforward that Benjamin Franklin was to do no more than paraphrase Moodey's conclusion: {161}

It is the diligent hand that gathers in, because its works are blessed. Nor has the blessing of God (though his common providence may) ever enriched, either the folded hand, or the hand stretched out in deceit or oppression.

And now, not any further, and more particularly to add, how it is most for God's glory, and man's good, that we should help ourselves, that God may help us.⁴⁰²

To put it bluntly, the Lord helps those who help themselves, and Franklin put his aphorisms bluntly. The old problem reappears: whatever is gathered in is blessed when, and only when, it is the product of diligence. Yet through the "common providence" of God, one can gather in through deceit or laziness, but this is not a blessing. Diligence of one man can produce earthly profits or losses; common providence can give the lazy man both profits and losses. Then where is the *predictability* in the economic sphere of life? Only in the sense of a general rule—a *tendency*—could Puritan expositors affirm that

402. Moodey, *Debtors Monitor*, 51.

diligence produces wealth. This, however, is as much as the most sophisticated modern analysis can come up with: a tendency, other things being equal (and we all know they never are precisely equal). By affirming the terms of the covenant, Puritans brought some degree of predictability to the realm of economics. God does not *have* to reward the individuals or societies for obedience, but He *chooses* to. Men do not face a totally capricious universe. But the constant tension between God's sovereignty and the terms of the covenant could no more be escaped than the modern scientist can escape the tension of law and chance, determinism and freedom, or mechanism and personality.

Richard Steele's book, *The Husbandman's Calling*, enjoyed wide popularity in England and New England. Steele's paean to rural life was not really representative of New England's Puritan view of the calling, however, since the New England way emphasized the legitimacy and necessity of all lawful callings. Neither of the Mathers would have written, as Steele did, that "The physician is bred out of the corruption of our manners, the tradesmen live upon one another, but the husbandman lives upon the precious fruits of the Earth, and sustains them all."⁴⁰³ But no Puritan would have taken issue with his view of *riches* as a primary goal of life:

It is a low and base end to get riches, to greaten your prosperity, to over-top your neighbors, to make provision for the flesh. These are poor ends for a rational man, poor ends for a right Christian: A Christian man must have Christian ends. Alas! If riches be thy end, riches shall be thy wages.⁴⁰⁴

Riches, however dangerous, are still fully legitimate. It is all a question {162} of one's *attitude*: "This will not hinder you from a great estate, nor from any true comfort in the possession of it, but keep you from a surfeit, and rescue you from the slavery of a worldling, from being in bondage to your servant."⁴⁰⁵ Since diligence will produce riches, as Steele argued (following Proverbs 10:4), riches as such can hardly be condemned.⁴⁰⁶

403. Richard Steele, *The Husbandman's Calling* (1713), 18.

404. *Ibid.*, 225.

405. *Ibid.*, 255.

406. *Ibid.*, 244.

The ambivalence of Puritan thought between law and grace could not be bridged easily. Benjamin Wadsworth, commenting on this same Proverbs 10:4 passage, drew a different conclusion altogether: the blessings of God are not automatic; diligence does *not*, by definition, produce riches; and therefore men must pray to God specifically for such blessings.⁴⁰⁷ Thus, Puritan thought remained at an impasse: *the processes of a lawful universe would, yet would not, bring riches automatically out of personal diligence*. Riches are attained both by the covetous person, who unlawfully pursues riches as a primary end, and by the lowly, diligent Christian, who merely fulfills his earthly vocation. Are the riches which a man receives a sign of God's blessing or a preliminary to the ultimate curse? Are they godly or covetous riches? Stephen Foster's comprehensive study of the Puritan concept of the calling focuses on this critical dilemma, one which had been a part of Puritan thought throughout the seventeenth century:

It was not that the Puritan ethic somehow "unleashed" covetousness, that it aroused an impulse that went berserk, but rather that when it came to translating the subtle distinctions of the treatises into a working guide for actual conduct, the difference between covetous affection and diligent zeal could be grasped only by a mental contortionist. The more a man sincerely tried to fulfill the ideal, the more he would be forced into self-denunciation.⁴⁰⁸

Richard Bushman's study of Puritan Connecticut points to the same difficulty. He writes that "Puritan preachers could not clearly distinguish laudable industry from reprehensible worldliness."⁴⁰⁹ In other words, "exactly where moderation stopped and excess began, the preacher could not say."⁴¹⁰

Obviously, the simple farmer or busy merchant would not be so skillful a mental gymnast as his pastor; either guilt or lethargy in the face of riches could be predicted. Men being what they are (especially in a Puritan definition), they could be expected to respond to wealth as if it were a sign of favor rather than cursing. Somehow, individuals had

407. Benjamin Wadsworth, *An Essay on the Decalogue* (1719), 104.

408. Stephen Foster, *Their Solitary Way*, 122.

409. Richard L. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee* (1967), ix.

410. *Ibid.*, 24.

to be made to walk the narrow path of moderation—ultimately *internal* moderation—sketched by John Barnard: “The soul may be made our chief concern, and yet a sufficiency of the world be secured to us; but we cannot make the world {163} our greatest business, but it will certainly be at the expense of the soul.”⁴¹¹ The narrow path of moderation was, for Puritan divines, a tightrope ethically. But how moderate is a walk on a tightrope?

A godly man is to care for his trust account from God. Cotton Mather was not a man to let other men sit idly in the face of their responsibilities. Men, he said, are to be rational in business affairs; *calculation* is an ethical requirement: a man has to know where his business is going. “It is a very dangerous and therefore a very culpable thing, for people to let their business to go on from year to year, in muddy uncertainties. There are no wise people, but what will be fond of often feeling whereabouts they are in business.”⁴¹² Men have to settle their annual book of accounts.⁴¹³ Samuel Moodey was no less emphatic: “The merchant has a book, the shopkeeper has a book, the tradesman has a book; wherein they all take up and call or send for, is placed to their account. And are there not as many books to be opened at the last day?”⁴¹⁴

Using Benjamin Colman as the representative of New England’s Yankee calculation, and Richard Steele as the defender of an older, more traditional English rural outlook, it is possible to make interesting comparisons. Colman was a staunch advocate of rational, systematic economic planning. The glory of God is seen in the orderliness of covenantal life. Law, not miraculous intervention, is the basic foundation of godly living.

Would to God that there were manna and quails for the meanest! But that would be to suppose a wilderness state, where there were no fields to plant or reap. We look now to live by the blessings of God on our

411. John Barnard, *The Hazzard and the Unprofitableness of Losing a Soul for the Sake of Gaining the World* (1712), 16.

412. C. Mather, *Fair Dealing between Debtor and Creditor* (1716), 16.

413. *Ibid.*, 17.

414. Moodey, 40.

labor and frugality, and not by miracles. These ceased as soon as Israel came to cities and villages, to inhabit and till and trade.⁴¹⁵

On the other hand, Steele argued precisely the reverse: the best lifestyle is the life lived in terms of the *capriciousness of nature*. “The third excellency of the husbandman is that he lives and depends most upon God.” Rain, cold, and wind assail him in his daily labors. “They are base callings that depend on man (though many cringing courtiers will not think so), but they are royal callings that depend on God. Servants know their wages, but the child depends....”⁴¹⁶ But generally New England Puritan pastors saw the account book as a device for subduing the realm of business to God’s orderly processes, thereby contributing to the expansion of God’s kingdom. Their commitment was to law. God is as much a part of the merchant’s life as the farmer’s, Colman wrote, since God is the ultimate rewarder of {164} all human endeavors.⁴¹⁷ He does not reward men, however, apart from law; any other “reward” is actually a curse.

It was this commitment to the idea of a *regular universe* which made possible the advent of scientific economic thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Loren Eiseley, the prominent anthropologist and historian of modern science, has made the observation that “in one of those strange permutations of which history yields occasional rare examples, it is the Christian world which finally gave birth in a clear and articulate fashion to the experimental method of science itself.” Other factors may have played some role, such as Greek science or the tradition of craftsmanship.

But perhaps the most curious element of them all is the factor dwelt upon by [Alfred North] Whitehead—the *sheer act of faith that the universe possessed order and could be interpreted by rational minds*. For, as Whitehead rightly observes, the philosophy of experimental science was not impressive. It began its discoveries and made use of its method in the faith, not the knowledge, that it was dealing with a rational universe controlled by a Creator who did not act upon whim nor interfere with the forces He set in operation. The experimental method succeeded beyond men’s wildest dreams but the faith that

415. Colman, *Market*, 12.

416. Steele, 27.

417. Colman, *Zebulun & Issachar*, 10-13.

brought it into being owes something to the Christian conception of the nature of God.

While no orthodox Christian would ever have said that God never interferes with His creation—miracles testify to something other than the god of the Deists—Eiseley is basically correct. He is naive, however, when he concludes: “It is surely one of the curious paradoxes of history that science, which professionally has little to do with faith, owes its origins to an act of faith that the universe can be rationally interpreted, and that science today is sustained by that assumption.”⁴¹⁸ Thomas Kuhn’s study, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), shows how faith-oriented modern science has always been and must continue to be.

The Limits on Trade

The danger to the human soul found in trade of any sort was regarded as inescapable by late Puritan writers, as well as by their medieval intellectual forebears. By its very nature, trade is open to exploitation by the unscrupulous. On the one hand, Colman, minister of the Brattle Street Church, which had solid Boston merchants on its rolls, made it plain that both farmers and merchants are endangered by trade, and not simply merchants alone. Both Zebulun (the urban trader) and his brother Issachar (the rural plowman) have strengths and weaknesses, blessings and pains. “Thus equal are Zebulun and Issachar in their gains and pleasures, {165} and their losses and sorrows, as God pleases to distribute the one and the other.”⁴¹⁹ They should therefore congratulate and pity each other. God blesses both and expects thanks from both. On the other hand, even Colman had to admit the exceptional dangers of the city to the man of God. “Our retired inland towns are (I hope) a more humble, meek, sober, temperate people. They should be so, for they are free from many of our temptations, and are more out of the way of evil customs and examples imported by our merchandise.”⁴²⁰ Trading towns do tend toward moral looseness.⁴²¹

418. Loren Eiseley, *Darwin’s Century* ([1958] 1961), 62.

419. Colman, *Zebulun & Issachar*, 17.

420. *Ibid.*, 22.

The foundations of commerce, wrote Peter Thatcher, are 1) private property, and 2) necessity and convenience.⁴²² God governs commerce, and He has rules for it. The Golden Rule should be observed; charity should prevail.⁴²³ No false weights and measures, no oppression: our neighbor's benefit should be our goal. "And whence is the prevailing of such a private spirit, whereby the public is brought to totter, and the weal of it to shake?"⁴²⁴ The evils of idleness, drink, and costly apparel threaten society; cheating, overreaching, and a lack of restitution seem to abound. Men delay to pay their debts.⁴²⁵ Men ignore God's rules at their own and society's peril.

Generations of Puritans had been warned not to buy cheap and to sell dear, and Benjamin Wadsworth continued this tradition. "We should not desire to sell unreasonably dear, nor buy unreasonably cheap.... In buying and selling, we should consult the good of those we deal with, as well as our own; else we don't do, as would be done by, Luke 6:31."⁴²⁶ He listed two dozen *economic evils*, including bribery, unlawful callings, cheating, monopoly, extortion, excessive litigation, excessive indebtedness, overeager pursuit of debtors, false bankruptcy, high-risk business ventures, and a lack of charity.⁴²⁷ It is revealing, however, of his departure from the perspective of the original founders when his solutions are analyzed: *personal* restitution, reduction of enthusiasm for the world, grief over injustice, charity, thankfulness, and a lack of trust in riches.⁴²⁸ No word of advice to the civil authorities, no hope for social reconstruction: the approach is personal, pietistic, and internalized.

Samuel Willard was equally unable to provide concrete legal solutions for economic transgressions. "There ought to be one standard to regulate {166} the prices of things by, if men would observe righteous-

421. *Ibid.*, 20.

422. Thatcher, *Fear of GOD*, 7.

423. *Ibid.*, 8-13.

424. *Ibid.*, 17.

425. *Ibid.*, 17-18.

426. Wadsworth, 108-09.

427. *Ibid.*, 107ff.

428. *Ibid.*, 112ff.

ness in a way of commerce.”⁴²⁹ But Willard never dared to venture exactly what that singular standard might be. How to reduce the flux in value to a common point? *Value* changes according to *circumstances*, yet one standard should rule, “otherwise it is impossible that honesty should be maintained in traffic.” He was not the last economics student to be baffled by this problem.

Perhaps the most significant, and certainly the most surprising, document dealing with the impact of trade in New England was not primarily theological or ethical in intent, but political. *The Humble Address of the Publicans of New England* (1691) was a defense of the local 1689 rebellion against the Andros regime. It broke completely with the jeremiad’s form, even as *A Narrative of the Miseries of New England* (1688) had departed from the jeremiad, although it was probably written by Increase Mather. Like the *Narrative*, the *Humble Address* argued that the king’s counsellors had led him astray, that they were modelling their rule after the French—a rule of arbitrary law.⁴³⁰ Instead of explaining New England’s crisis of degeneration in terms of the paradox of Deuteronomy 8—external blessings that can become snares leading to judgment—the *Humble Address* blames it on the presence of the publicans, those bureaucratic “sharppers” who have infested New England. They have, “by their projects and plodding,” ruined kings and almost the nation. They have used violence and subtlety, “and that in a more particular manner in relation to trade, *the only thing capable to make England great.*”⁴³¹ By interfering with trade, the *Address* said, they interfere with New England’s part in making the English nation great.

The author of this tract apparently viewed New England’s primary role in the English nation as one of commerce. “One of our great unhappinesses is that most of the persons in our government understand little or nothing of trade, *and so they leave it always at uncertainties*; or if they do anything for its interest, *it is commonly by chance*, and not from knowledge or experience of the thing....”⁴³² The quest for

429. Willard, 707.

430. *The Humble Address of the Publicans of New England* (1691), in *Andros Tracts*, vol. 2, 257-58. Cf. *A Narrative of the Miseries of New-England* (1688), 2.

431. *Ibid.*, 250.

legal predictability, i.e., formal legal security, is basic to all market systems that are founded on voluntary contract and economic forecasting, and the *Humble Address* was clearly pressing on the English authorities the need for such formal rationality. Trade should be encouraged through the establishment of non-capricious law, for trade has made the empire great: "... since trade hath flourished she has made many and considerable changes in the world as Empire did. How often has not she made a poor people rich and an ignorant {167} people wise?"⁴³³ By discouraging trade to raise domestic farm prices, English gentlemen have taken England in the direction of economic self-sufficiency, a "project fit for none but savages to propose."⁴³⁴ An autarchic economy is a savage's economy.

What had New England been before the advent of such publicans? Her "blessed theocracy" had approximated God's rules, producing fruit from a barren wilderness, "Insomuch that we have seen these colonies the envy of the tyranny and the glory of England."⁴³⁵ In short, "It was the glorious effects of this government which has rendered that people civilly good, far above all the other English colonies that ever were, for there could be nothing seen but religion, industry, and sobriety..."⁴³⁶ No complaining in the streets, few or no suits of law (and those that there were ended in a few hours or days), no public debauchery, disorders, extravagancy, or Sabbath-breaking could be found in that glorious era of the blessed theocracy. Men of estates flocked to New England, "to a people flourishing in their simplicity, honesty, and integrity, and to whom others were rather indebted, than they in any debt to any."⁴³⁷ A picture of the first generation was presented which could hardly have been matched by the most enthusiastic jeremiad. But then came degeneration: "We must needs confess, when messieurs the publicans began to set up their institutions in New England, they soon turned all things into reverse..." Of course, "all real change comes

432. *Ibid.*, 251.

433. *Ibid.*, 251-52.

434. *Ibid.*, 252.

435. *Ibid.*, 253.

436. *Ibid.*

437. *Ibid.*, 254.

immediately from God to the heart, but artificial ones arise most commonly from the outward circumstances of men; *and the multitude are as they are made.*"⁴³⁸ Now our land is corrupted, debauched, deceitful, "where the people are so corrupted and depraved by the debauchery and malignity of the government that there is hardly any thing can be heard of, but quarrels, contentions, and suits of law..."⁴³⁹ We will soon be like the evil Indies, the author wrote, those debauched plantations, or even worse: like Spain! The principle was clear to the author of the *Humble Address*: "... for it is a maxim which always holds, that trade and tyranny will never agree..."⁴⁴⁰ *Free trade and free men*: it is almost a nineteenth-century rallying cry.

The form of the jeremiad can be seen: a golden age is followed by a fallen, debauched, degenerating age. But the substantive content of the jeremiad is gone: the cause is no longer the degeneration of hearts made fat by God's external blessings, but rather the outside agents who deliberately {168} interfere with the fountain of prosperity, free trade. The formal structure of the jeremiad could apparently be used for other purposes than pietistic calls for personal repentance. The fact that the author could appeal to the virtues of both the Puritan theocracy and unencumbered trade indicates the transformation that had taken place since 1675–76. The ministers could echo the old outlines, but the operational content of Puritan concepts could be easily altered to suit other purposes.

Economic oppression was still subject to scathing condemnations by Puritan theologians, and in familiar terms. The strong are not to take advantage of the weak, lying is prohibited, cheating is forbidden, it is immoral to buy stolen goods, everyone should pay off all his debts as soon as possible.⁴⁴¹ "You sometimes give your word; let that word then be as good as your bond."⁴⁴² Cotton Mather's maxim seems Franklinesque, except that Franklin had no covenantal theology undergirding his theory of verbal contracts. Mather was careful to provide a

438. *Ibid.*

439. *Ibid.*, 254–55.

440. *Ibid.*, 252.

441. C. Mather, *Calling*, 57–58.

442. *Ibid.*, 59.

caveat emptor for the concept of *caveat emptor*: “It is not enough to say, Caveat Emptor, let the buyer look to himself! But it must be said, let the seller also look to it, that he does not oppress the buyer.”⁴⁴³ Anyone who promises something for nothing is a false dealer.⁴⁴⁴ In every exchange the Golden Rule should prevail: each should exchange positions with the other in his own mind as he is making the particular transaction.⁴⁴⁵ There is no invisible, external Smithian hand guiding the market:

That man is indeed in a state of nature, I mean, an unregenerate man, who thinks he may in the general scramble seize as much as he can for himself though it should be never so much to the damage and ruin of other men.... Though perhaps it might be justified by forms of law, yet let it not be done; but let a court of chancery, an equity in our own breast, give a judgment against the doing of it, a thread of charity, as well as of equity, must run through all our dealing with one another.⁴⁴⁶

The invisible hand is *internal*, the “Court of Chancery” in our own breast. Judgment is coming, Mather warned. Evil dealings will not go unpunished:

There seems to be an epidemical resolution in almost all people who can do so, to cast off all rules in buying and selling, even the necessities of life ... to extort upon one another as much as ever they can. In the meantime, the poor must be cruelly pinched. This capital city of the province must lose very many of its inhabitants; those who are {169} not capable of raising the price of what they have, or what they do, as their neighbors can, are ground between the millstones.⁴⁴⁷

Samuel Willard went to considerable lengths to challenge the doctrine of a formally free market. The state has to interfere with free pricing; it is an ethical necessity. The legislator has rules to follow.

443. [C. Mather], *Lex Mercatoria; Or, the Just Rules of Commerce Declared* (1705), 20. The authorship is not certain, but the language is comparable to Mather’s other expositions on economic matters.

444. *Ibid.*, 5.

445. *Ibid.*, 10.

446. *Ibid.*, 11-12.

447. C. Mather, *Concio ad Populum* (1719), 21.

*He ought to have a special regard to right the poor and helpless against their rich and potent oppressors. The mean and despised who have none else to stand up for them, and right them, are exposed to wrongs and injuries, everyone will be ready to crush and tread them under the foot of insolence. These therefore have no other, under God, to make their case known to, but such as have the authority of writing them put into their hands.*⁴⁴⁸

Nevertheless, “unconscionable wages” are as illegitimate as the oppression by the wealthy merchant. The poor are not to become themselves oppressors.⁴⁴⁹ They must be faithful stewards of their master’s goods, including time. The rich, in fact, are not allowed to permit them to live “in as good a garb and port as the rich....”⁴⁵⁰ Frugal living is their ethical task. In no form of trade should men buy cheap and sell dear.⁴⁵¹ “But the great difficulty here is, for such to know how to regulate themselves in this according to the mind of God, and so as to exact righteousness in it...” How do we price our goods? Circumstances determine value over time and place, and yet the common market is not always an ethically safe guide.⁴⁵² The ancient problem reasserted itself: where is the universal rule for ethical pricing? What standard should legislators use in setting prices? Willard, like John Cotton and Thomas Aquinas before him, could not say precisely. The only rule is that old medieval maxim: *moderation*.

What was missing in the economic analysis of third-generation Puritan expositors was the same missing feature in first-generation analysis: the idea of *market regularity*. Puritans believed in a lawful universe, but they had not been capable of applying this presupposition to the sphere of economics. Winthrop had explained the economic crisis of the 1640s in terms of the moral failings of the population. His was a universe of law, but it was a personalized universe in which men’s personal relationship to God and His moral law determined the external events of the world. The Puritans did not believe in the possibility of economic processes operating in the fashion of a mechanism—the

448. Willard, 626.

449. *Ibid.*, 696.

450. *Ibid.*, 697.

451. *Ibid.*, 704. Cf. *An Addition*, in *Currency Reprints*, vol. 1, 372.

452. *Ibid.*, 705.

foundation of modern econometric models. They could not visualize a market that would be a very narrow path, but one hedged in by competitive prices rather than a path suspended above hell {170} with only the thin guardrails of conscience protecting the participants from destruction. Puritan economic thought was still highly personal and medieval; only conscience was left as a restraining factor once the casuistry system had crumbled. They did not visualize the possibility that the product of interacting discrete consciences could be an orderly market based on free entry and competitive prices. They failed to understand what Mandeville and Adam Smith found so remarkable: personal transactions, if numerous enough, produce regularities analogous to the operations of an impersonal machine. Had they grasped this fact, they might not have been pleased, for how can a machine—a social machine—be a part of God's covenant system?

It was not only Puritan clerics in New England who would have found such a defense of a free market incomprehensible or, at best, highly unlikely. The legend of the Boston merchants was too widespread for such a faith to have gone unchallenged. The critics of Boston's economy were not simply limited to a few theologians. Anyone who had read Ned Ward knew how bad things were.

Edward (Ned) Ward, the indefatigable travelogue writer, produced a famous indictment of New England trading practices, *A Trip to New England* (1699). He used exaggeration for effect, but the jeremiads were only proportionately less critical of the practice of the Boston merchants. The saints of New England are Yankees:

The inhabitants seemed very religious, showing many outward and visible signs of having an inward and spiritual grace, but though they wear in their faces the innocence of doves, you will find them in their dealings as subtle as serpents. Interest is their faith, money their god, and large possessions the only heaven they covet.⁴⁵³

And it is a proverb with those who know them, Whosoever believes a New England saint shall be sure to be cheated; and he that knows how to deal with their traders may deal with the devil and fear no craft.⁴⁵⁴

453. Edward (Ned) Ward, *A Trip to New England* ([1699] 1933), 5.

454. *Ibid.*, 7.

Usury came in for the usual criticisms, although not so frequently as one might expect. Puritans had come to grips with the phenomenon of interest early in the seventeenth century, so their concern was in the possibility of oppressing the poor and not interest-taking as such. Moodey even allowed it in cases of loans to the “Devil’s poor”—the lazy, slothful men who refused to labor.⁴⁵⁵ Cotton Mather opposed loans where the interest was deducted at the beginning of the loan, although it was not clear exactly why this is especially evil: somehow it involves taking a return on something not ever borrowed.⁴⁵⁶ But the extent of the impotence of the {171} Puritan ministers to shape the parameters of the market is seen in the testimony of the Boston and Cambridge clergy, *Thirty Important Cases Resolved* (1699). Everything is internalized:

In an idle usury, which is when men so confine themselves to the way of living upon usury, as so to render themselves otherwise unuseful to the public: this is justly become a thing of evil character. But yet in all of these things, the application of the rules of charity is to be left unto a man’s own conscience, which is to be advised from the word of God, with the best helps of understanding that word.⁴⁵⁷

No concrete guidelines were left for men to use. The ministers went so far as to legitimize the use of lottery (forbidden to private citizens) as a means of raising state and local tax revenues.⁴⁵⁸

What, then, was the solution to the problems of economic oppression? One answer recurs in the literature: *restitution*.⁴⁵⁹ But restitution

455. Moodey, 88.

456. C. Mather, *Theopolis Americana. An Essay on the Golden Street of the Holy City: Publishing, A Testimony against the Corruptions of the Market Place* (1709), 24.

457. *Thirty Important Cases Resolved With Evidence of Scripture and Reason* (1699), 52. Perry Miller comments: “While wringing their hands over declensions which seemed to them utterly destructive, the clergy took this shattering revolution in stride, and justified usury (within moderation) on three accounts, each of which had for centuries been employed to condemn it....” *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, 309. The three reasons are the law of equity, the law of parity, and the law of charity. Cf. C. Mather, *Magnolia Christi Americana*, vol. 2, 259-60. On the question of usury in Puritan thought, see E. A. J. Johnson, *American Economic Thought in the Seventeenth Century*, 213ff.

458. *Thirty Cases*, 64, 74–75.

459. Steele, 130ff.; Thatcher, 18; Wadsworth, 112; C. Mather, *Lex Mercatoria*, 37.

is a personal, voluntary response, not a legal necessity. Like the Golden Rule, the other universal solution to deviant economic behavior, restitution is to be applied by individuals, and enforcement is then left to the vagaries of the human heart—the participants' hearts, who always have a vested interest in suppressing the tug of conscience.

Debt was a universal phobia of Puritan thinkers. Cotton Mather made this a central theme of his sermon, *Fair Dealing Between Debtor and Creditor* (1716). Men are not to run into debt thinking they will never have to get out of it.⁴⁶⁰ The faster one escapes from debt, the better.⁴⁶¹ Debt produces guilt.⁴⁶² It is an ethical requirement for debtors to meet the terms of their contracts by paying all obligations on time.⁴⁶³ Only the man of considerable foresight should dare the risks of debt.⁴⁶⁴ What holds for individuals, he asserted, holds for nations. In 1719, after a three-decade period of paper money inflation, Mather turned his attention to the evils of the balance of payments problem in Massachusetts, which he {172} was unwilling to explain in terms of the policies of monetary inflation.⁴⁶⁵ Instead, he followed a line of reasoning more common to mercantilism: people love evil and unnecessary luxuries.

How shall we avoid running into debt unto other countries if we don't moderate our expenses of such things as we fetch from there, and are not able to pay for? Nothing but a frugality can help us; we bleed until death, until the sovereign stiptic be applied unto us.⁴⁶⁶

460. C. Mather, *Fair Dealing*, 15.

461. *Ibid.*, 18.

462. *Ibid.*, 24.

463. *Ibid.*, 18. Cf. *Theopolis Americana*, 25; Willard, 717-18.

464. *Ibid.*, 12.

465. On the advent of monetary inflation in Massachusetts, see William B. Weedon, *Economic and Social History of New England*, vol. 1, 379ff. The high point of the currency in circulation came in 1725, when over £350,000 (colonial) were outstanding; *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957* (1960), 774. The steady issuing of bills of credit by the Massachusetts Assembly is chronicled after 1703 in *Historical Statistics*, 773. Connecticut did not experience anything comparable to the Massachusetts inflation. For a discussion of the role of monetary inflation in creating balance of payment problems, see Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action*, 3rd ed. (1966), 450-58.

He advised individual citizens (though not necessarily the state) to live within their means; unbalanced budgets are a temptation to dishonest gain.⁴⁶⁷ This was also Samuel Moodey's message.⁴⁶⁸ Debt is a great temptation, and some men pay no heed to its dangers. "Instead thereof, they run further and further in, till, at length, they grow desperate; and their consciences, I fear, are seared, as with a hot iron."⁴⁶⁹

Thus, economic affairs are a grave threat to the integrity of all Christians. Yet they are necessary for the community. The consciences of men are the primary barriers to economic oppression; similarly in Calvin's system, conscience served as the judge of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of lending at a profit. The state—meaning local legislatures, but not meddling English civil servants—has some functions in the field of economic regulation, but the principle was left as a mental construct only. Ministers avoided making specific applications. In short, the third generation of New England ministers finally abandoned the discipline of Christian casuistry, at least in the economic realm. (Protestants in England also gave up economic casuistry in these same years: Bishop Joseph Hall, Jeremy Taylor, and Richard Baxter died, leaving no intellectual heirs of comparable note, before the {173} end of the century.) The formal lines between economic *oppression* and economic *efficiency* were too difficult to draw.

The Paradox of Deuteronomy 8

Though Puritan ministers had almost entirely lost their enthusiasm for prescribing specific remedies to be used by the civil government in

466. C. Mather, *Concio ad Populum*, 10. This had become a common mercantilistic line of reasoning in New England by 1720: Miller, *Colony*, 312-13. Cf. *The Present Melancholy Circumstances of the Province Consider'd* (1719), in *Currency Reprints*, vol. 1, 351ff. The author of *An Addition* also calls for frugality and industry, but he couples his appeal with a remarkably accurate explanation of the balance of payments crisis: the expansion of the money supply. To increase exports over imports and to stop the outflow of specie, the money supply must be reduced. *Currency Reprints*, vol. 1, 386ff. Samuel Sewall blamed the extravagance on the paper money itself: *Letter-Book of Samuel Sewall* in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, vol. 2, 6th ser. (1688), 235.

467. C. Mather, *Lex Mercatoria*, 39.

468. Moodey, 17.

469. *Ibid.*, 38.

rearranging the externals of property relationships and economic exchanges, they did not stop calling attention to the threatened judgments of God. The present crises of New England—crises which always seemed to be present—were explained as simply a foretaste of things to come. Deviant economic behavior would inevitably produce a final crisis for New England's society.

Cotton Mather, understandably, was a premier constructor of doom-filled sermons. Unlike his father, he was a chiliast, and, by definition, things had to get worse before Christ's return in glory to establish His kingdom could take place.⁴⁷⁰ It seemed obvious to Mather that the cause of New England's trouble was that men had turned away from the *covenant*. Therefore, "We are to consider the hand of God in all our losses."⁴⁷¹ Furthermore, "Our losses are usually the fruit and sign of God's quarrels. Ordinarily our God is managing some controversy with us, when He comes to loose those things that were comfortable to us."⁴⁷² He claimed that the loss of New England's former abundance stemmed from a lack of thankfulness.⁴⁷³ The fact that the two decades after King Philip's War had been years of economic recovery and expansion did not phase Mather. New England, by definition, was always declining.

470. C. Mather, *Theopolis Americana*, 4ff.; *The Serviceable Man* (1690), 22. It should be pointed out that there were still representatives of the earlier postmillennial optimism in New England. Samuel Sewall was one of these, and so was Samuel Danforth (*An Exhortation to All* [1714], 32-33). Samuel Belcher's election sermon for 1707 was a ringing defense of the eschatology of external triumph: *An Essay Tending to Promote the Kingdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (1707), esp. 4-5, 14. He called Christians to devote themselves to the task of laboring for the kingdom of God: 5, 16ff. It seems doubtful, however, that this was a widely held doctrine. The jeremiads had put too much emphasis on institutional decline, relegating the promises of future triumph (if any) to the last few lines. Chiliasm—the hope for a radical discontinuous historical event, the physical advent of Christ to rule the earth—was more consistent with the ingrained pessimism of the jeremiad.

471. C. Mather, *Durable Riches*, 4.

472. *Ibid.*, 7. Cf. *The Way to Prosperity* (1690), 20. The latter was a 1689 election sermon, no doubt a key one, given the revolutionary circumstances in which it was preached.

473. *Durable Riches*, 13.

Mather had to face the problem of every jeremiad: individual losses, as distinguished from collective catastrophes, need not be the direct results of sin. “God forbid, that every one who meets losses in his estate should be remarkably chargeable with all or any of these iniquities. Nevertheless, {174} losers, consider your ways.”⁴⁷⁴ On the other hand, “A righteous man misses an advantage that is taken by them that make haste to be rich.”⁴⁷⁵ Therefore, by implication, winners should also consider their ways. If everyone is to consider his ways, as Mather wrote elsewhere,⁴⁷⁶ then the external circumstances of economic success or failure are utterly irrelevant as tests of righteousness.⁴⁷⁷ *Conscience* is again the arbitrator, yet consciences, being products of corrupt hearts, are notoriously poor guides to human action, according to Puritan theology, especially in the area of financial dealing and social policy.

Benjamin Colman, following the received outline of the paradox, announced that *prosperity* is often a “means of a people’s irreligion.” Yet it is always God’s blessing which brings prosperity.⁴⁷⁸ Riches, his listeners would normally have concluded, are a means of testing one’s own faithfulness—one’s attitude toward and use of riches—rather than a reward for one’s success in some previous external testing. Thus, the clergy of the third generation held to the doctrine John Cotton had laid down in the 1640s: riches can be a blessing or a curse, given the response of individual men.⁴⁷⁹

The title of John Danforth’s election sermon of 1703, *The Vile Prophanations of Prosperity by the Degenerate*, gave away its thesis. Speaking of the Hebrew nation, he wrote, “The sins of prosperity had brought on them the days of adversity.... Years of calamity and captivity are the genuine offspring of the numerous sins of peace and liberty....”⁴⁸⁰ Prosperity, in the face of rebellion, is a temporary illusion:

474. *Ibid.*, 18; cf. 25.

475. *Ibid.*, 16.

476. *Way to Prosperity*, 25.

477. Willard, 643. Cf. Miller, 283.

478. Colman, *Zebulun & Issachar*, 5.

479. Willard, 653.

480. John Danforth, *The Vile Prophanations of Prosperity by the Degenerate* (1703), 8.

“Prosperity seldom moves until it is sinned away; and if sin in Israel runs high, prosperity is not wont to hold long; it holds until it is no longer useful to them.” In short, “Better is bondage to enemies than liberty in sinning; better is it that Israel be saved and prosperity lost, than that prosperity be saved and Israel lost.”⁴⁸¹ Besides, wrote Samuel Danforth, “when we lose the gracious presence of God, we soon lose both our piety and prosperity.”⁴⁸² Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you; fail to seek it, and all will be eventually removed from you anyway.

Benjamin Wadsworth, citing Deuteronomy 8:18, concluded that men had better give thanks for everything, but especially material success.⁴⁸³ {175}

There is such a thing, Willard wrote, as the “common providence” of God, a providence which is given to sinners and saints alike, as well as “special love” given only to the elect.⁴⁸⁴ Men, if they are elect, will respond in faith to this special love. The response is the test of faith. Nevertheless, although riches need not be a sign of God’s love, “Prosperity is a blessing to be desired (though not insatiably to be grasped after, which is a temptation to sin); this prosperity is one of the promises of the covenant, and we may pray for it....”⁴⁸⁵ Riches allow a man more latitude for good works. But *moderation in rejoicing* is mandatory; without it, we are unfit “for the entertainment of adverse providences,” and we are left without security against them when they come.⁴⁸⁶

All of this, of course, is in contrast to the outline of the *Humble Address of the Publicans*, which argued that New England’s degeneration was not self-generated but imposed. If only the bureaucrats had left men’s property alone, there would have been continuous economic blessings. The optimism of the *Humble Address* is in contrast to the almost universal pessimism of the jeremiads. The solution is simpler—

481. *Ibid.*, 9.

482. Samuel Danforth, *Exhortation to All*, 17.

483. Wadsworth, 114.

484. Willard, 653.

485. *Ibid.*, 709.

486. *Ibid.*, 747.

free trade—and the results are more predictable. Remove the artificial impediments of bureaucratic hucksters, and the natural productivity of godly men will flourish! The specific nature of this proposal, unlike the vague appeals for state intervention and soul-searching found in the jeremiads, must have had considerable appeal to Boston merchants, local artisans, and anyone else who had to deal with the English political appointees who staffed the growing corps of civil service agents. New England might escape, simultaneously, both the haughty bureaucrats and economic degeneration.

Social Mobility

The period from 1690 through 1730 in Massachusetts and Connecticut was one of considerable social change and economic friction. Massachusetts was flooded throughout these years with paper bills of credit issued by the legislature. Connecticut experienced a breakdown of the earlier rural harmony of economic interests, as farmers began to enter the area of trade to compete with local merchants.⁴⁸⁷ Connecticut's population more than tripled between 1700 and 1730, and twice as many towns were founded between 1690 and 1720 as had been founded between 1660 and 1690.⁴⁸⁸ Physical mobility created social mobility; malcontents now had more places to withdraw to.⁴⁸⁹ Consensus tended to collapse in town {176} squabbles. Bushman's comment seems appropriate: "Puritans remained at peace with one another so long as the rights of ruler and subject were well defined and observed by all. When new forces moved men to overstep their bounds, serious

487. Bushman, *Puritan to Yankee*, 107.

488. *Ibid.*, 83.

489. *Ibid.*, 71. On the physical mobility of families in New England, see Philip Greven, *Four Generations*, 266. Greven does not conclude that New England families and towns were marked by instability; if anything, the reverse was true: 268. Lockridge, however, finds very low geographical mobility in early Dedham: *A New England Town*, 64. Only after 1686, he finds, did the population begin to disperse fairly rapidly, and the full effects were felt only after 1720: *ibid.*, 94ff., 139-40.

conflicts were inevitable.”⁴⁹⁰ *Ambition* was the social factor most difficult to control.

Puritan clerics in the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century still clung to the inherited conception of a hierarchical, organic social order which had been prominent throughout Puritan thought in the seventeenth century.⁴⁹¹ Given this outlook, they could not help but experience a sense of failure, as the familiar categories of the hierarchy became less and less applicable to New England’s changing society. Willard’s defense of a world of fixed social orders, with fixed duties and limits for each order, would have been familiar to medieval social theorists.⁴⁹² “Now, as the ground of different orders among men is for the due maintaining of humane societies, that they may be kept in a good state and not turned into a rout ... it is therefore fit that everyone do know his rank and station in it...”⁴⁹³ Understandably, Willard believed that “it is a sin and folly for men to live above their ability...”⁴⁹⁴ There is no use in rebelling against the human condition: “... Dominion and servitude were brought in by the apostasy, and are a fruit of the curse... All servitude began in the curse, but it is so ordered in the providence of God, as it becomes beneficial to mankind.”⁴⁹⁵ But is servitude always beneficial to mankind? That was the crucial, unanswered question.

490. *Ibid.*, 21. Bailyn discusses the upward social mobility afforded to individuals whose callings were connected with trade: *New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century*, 194ff.

491. T. H. Breen has argued that it would be a mistake to see the Court—the political leaders in Massachusetts who were England-oriented, essentially Tory conservatives—“as merely reaffirming older Puritan ideas about social inequality.” Governor Joseph Dudley simply was not another John Winthrop. Breen writes that “a great intellectual gulf separated the first governor of Massachusetts from the eighteenth-century Court. The Court was the product of a secular environment, and its commitment to a rigid social hierarchy was more economic and cultural than religious.” Breen, *The Character of the Good Ruler*, 212. The traditional language of the social hierarchy easily fused with the newer, secular version; the words, though not the theological foundations, were basically the same.

492. Willard, 598. Cf. Miller, 398-99.

493. *Ibid.*, 600.

494. *Ibid.*, 602.

495. *Ibid.*, 613.

“The rich, they are sick of their poor neighbors,” wrote Richard Steele, “and the poor are sick of their rich superiors, and there is a leveling principle in the hearts of the common people that can endure no superior, as {177} there is an ambitious one in great ones to abide no equal.”⁴⁹⁶ Such is the condition of human hearts, but Puritan clerics were unwilling to adopt social mobility as an answer to that malignant theory, leveling. The clergy knew where they stood in such a hierarchy, as Samuel Danforth “modestly” indicated: “As to those in chief rank among us in the state and in the church, my innate modesty forbids me to say much...”⁴⁹⁷ His words no doubt pleased the listeners; it was an election sermon. But the political frictions in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and the constant squabbling over land ownership and control, must have served as a warning that increasing numbers of the population were not impressed with the inherited social hierarchy or its theoretical foundation.⁴⁹⁸ Men wanted, at the minimum, the opportunity to improve their families’ economic positions. Taken in the aggregate, such sentiments were the signs of “disorder” in terms of Puritan social theory. Property has definite, fixed social functions. Ambition was challenging the very structure of society.⁴⁹⁹

Puritan thinkers continued to advocate *sumptuary laws*.⁵⁰⁰ Steele’s essay fulminated against the waste of tradesmen’s fashions, and Thatcher made the same complaint against all extravagant clothing.⁵⁰¹ Men are not supposed to use property in this fashion, or more accurately, on such fashions. The poor are not to imitate the rich in their clothing.⁵⁰²

496. Steele, 81.

497. S. Danforth, 35.

498. Breen, chap. 7.

499. Cf. Bushman, 189ff.; Miller, 399.

500. Robert Middlekauff argues that Cotton Mather finally came to see the futility of preaching about statuses ordained by providence: *The Mathers*, 268-69. He is forced to admit in a footnote that such remarks never did disappear entirely from Mather’s sermons: 410n.

501. Steele, 32; Thatcher, 18.

502. Willard, 697.

Social status had to be *downwardly inflexible*, too. Parsimony and frugality can easily degenerate into covetousness, when “men live beneath their estates and cannot find in their hearts to use them for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind.”⁵⁰³ This is as great a sin as liberality which in turn becomes prodigality.

But these sentiments were simply ignored after 1676. Two brief suggestions were made by the Connecticut Assembly, in 1684 and 1686, to pay closer attention to the 1676 sumptuary law.⁵⁰⁴ No actual sanctions were apparently applied, however. The legislatures no longer tried to enforce that which had obviously become completely unenforceable.

Pietism and Social Salvation

By the 1680s, it was clear to any observant minister that the impact of the clergy in the field of economic legislation was minimal. With the fall {178} of the Massachusetts charter in 1686, and then the establishment of a royal governor under the 1692 charter, the clergy had fewer means than ever of influencing the direction of economic life in the colony. The drift away from sumptuary laws and ethically based pricing continued. The original charter was gone; therefore, the civil covenant between God and His elect people was officially defunct. Some new ways of affirming God’s presence in the affairs of Massachusetts had to be discovered, or failing this, invented.

The new charter elevated the *property qualification for the franchise* to the position once held by membership in a local congregation. Thus, in the area of politics, property was officially stated as being superior to faith and character. Paralleling this development, argues Robert Middlekauff, was a change in Cotton Mather’s own sermon technique.⁵⁰⁵ His emphasis began to shift in the 1690s from the traditional jeremiad of crisis to sermons filled with metaphors of dependence: flying to Christ, nestling in His wings, figures of the shepherd and His lambs. Beauty, sweetness, and experience were the focus of this “new piety,” a tradition which was to culminate five decades later in the aesthetics of conversion of Jonathan Edwards’s *Religious Affectations*, a

503. *Ibid.*, 719.

504. Bushman, 6.

505. Middlekauff, 111.

book crammed with allusions to Christ's sweetness, glory, beauty, and man's experience of tasting joy. The new piety "relegated the intellectualism of the covenant to the trash heap—replacing it with the passionate contention that only gracious experience weighed in the divine scales."⁵⁰⁶ The new birth became Mather's primary concern. "What the believer discovered of his feelings, it implied, was far more important than a detached application of the promises of the covenant to one's own condition. One must be affected, and must experience the energy of Christ, and must concentrate one's entire being towards the advancement of His glory."⁵⁰⁷ The original internal appeal of the Puritan sermon—the denial that external manifestations could be used to discover or measure internal regeneration—now became outspokenly the foundation of the new piety.

In both Edwards and Mather, a peculiar fusion of opposites occurred. A deeply ingrained intellectualism was combined with a sermon technique stressing the nonrational realm of experience and aesthetics. Mather's Newtonianism and Edwards's Lockean outlook stood side-by-side with the language of the "new piety." As each man increasingly regarded nature in {179} terms of more and more autonomous, impersonal processes, each intensified his commitment to personalistic, pietistic experientialism. Rationalism, as Van Til writes, always has a secret treaty with irrationalism.⁵⁰⁸ The steady breakdown of the social and economic legislation, coupled with the secularization of politics, must have served as catalysts for this new, intensely personalistic style of preaching.

To replace the structure of the Holy Commonwealth, Cotton Mather advocated the formation of voluntary Christian societies.⁵⁰⁹ His goal was Christian unity, especially after 1710, when the specifically reform-

506. *Ibid.*, 256. For a more temperate discussion of the nature of Mather's "new piety," see Miller, 403ff. Miller argues that the covenant was still basic to Mather's preaching, but that it had become an atomized, individualistic covenant almost exclusively. The advent of such preaching, he writes, "followed upon a disintegration of the political vision, when true saints had been forced into the shop and the closet" (405).

507. *Ibid.*, 306.

508. Cornelius Van Til, *Apologetics* (1959), 81.

509. Middlekauf, 269ff.

ing societies fell into disrepair.⁵¹⁰ Stephen Foster's evaluation is to the point:

Mather had chosen to replace both minister and magistrate by the P.T.A., by voluntary associations exercising coercive power through the force of public opinion only.... Mather in his own devious way had also wrought the older ideals a fatal blow by substituting a flaccid moralism for the intensity of the Augustinian piety that had originally given Puritanism its energy and strength.⁵¹¹

Personal honesty is the best policy, Mather said. If men would simply be honest, they would bring both economic and spiritual rewards to themselves. Servants should perform their labors honestly.⁵¹² Men in business should regard the demands of honesty; without it, economic losses will surely result.⁵¹³ "Talk of religion without moral honesty! Who would give a straw for such a religion? It is but chaff, and the wind of the wrath of God shall drive it away."⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, "You sometimes give your word; let that word then be as good as your bond."⁵¹⁵ *Contracts*, verbal or written, must be fulfilled. In the progression of the language of contract, Mather served as an effective middleman.

Charitable activities were also basic to a program of Puritan stewardship. In England, as the voluminous researches of W. K. Jordan have demonstrated, the overwhelming bulk of charity from the late fifteenth through the mid-seventeenth centuries was voluntary, and most of this was from Puritan sources.⁵¹⁶ Foster writes: "In New England, by contrast, private charity only supplemented the local rates, voted and paid for by the fellow townsmen of the individual needing relief. Like ignorance and illiteracy, poverty was regarded as an essentially public evil,

510. *Ibid.*, 276.

511. Foster, "The Puritan Social Ethic: Class and Calling in the First Hundred Years of Settlement in New England" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, 1966), 121-23. He softens his language in *Their Solitary Way*, 63.

512. C. Mather, *Good Servant*, 42.

513. *Durable Riches*, 17.

514. *Lex Mercatoria*, 34.

515. *Calling*, 59.

516. W. K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660*. This is the summary volume; two others exist relating to philanthropy at the county level.

remediable {180} at public expense.”⁵¹⁷ Samuel Willard confirmed this assessment when he wrote, “the support of the indigent and impotent belongs not properly and ordinarily to the ecclesiastical, but the civil constitution. However it tells us that none is to be reckoned indigent of common support that hath children or grandchildren that are able to relieve them.”⁵¹⁸ It should be borne in mind that the actual size of the welfare payments was very small, outside of Boston, at least. Watertown in 1671 spent £26; in 1736, only £70. Charlestown spent £35 in 1711; Springfield spent £17 in 1730. Since average living costs in 1730 for a family were probably in the area of £10–12 per year, this did not amount to much.⁵¹⁹ Families served as the primary welfare agency. They did not keep elaborate official statistics concerning the extent of their expenditures.

“Charity must begin at home.”⁵²⁰ Cotton Mather made it clear where the ultimate source of charity must lie and who the ultimate beneficiary must be. We are back to the theory of concentric circles, which Brian Tierney says governed the medieval poor laws. Men must not give away all that they have; prudence has to be exercised. This was a fundamentally Protestant doctrine going back to the early opposition to begging friars, although the same “Protestant” view was also present throughout the Middle Ages. Samuel Moodey was no less emphatic: charity must be selective. Where a loan may produce evil, no one is supposed to provide it; Puritans are not to feed the lusts of others through charity.⁵²¹ However, a primary component of Puritan thought was the belief that liberality in giving would result in blessings, spiritual and temporal. Not only eternal recompense, promised Mather, but also long life on earth. Liberality, he affirmed, “is wonderfully advantageous to them that use it, and this for a long time afterwards.” The implication is clear that “we shall not be losers by our liberality....”⁵²² Piety is eminently practical.⁵²³ But Richard Steele left absolutely nothing to the

517. Foster, *Solitary Way*, 138.

518. Willard, 608.

519. Foster, *Solitary Way*, 137.

520. *Durable Riches*, pt. 2, *The True Way of Thriving*, 18.

521. Moodey, 91–92.

522. *Durable ... True*, 22; cf. 24.

imagination: “You must believe that giving will make you rich. Well-ordered charity makes no man poor. The way to have full barns is to have free hands.”⁵²⁴ A man simply cannot beat Christ as an investment: “Sirs, charity is good husbandry, for it brings a certain and plentiful harvest. Let the man [stand] forth, that can say he was ever a loser by Christ in the long run.”⁵²⁵ One apparently can do quite well by doing good. {181}

These sentiments are not those of New England’s first generation of ministers, although John Downname, the English Puritan, said as much in his 1616 tract, *The Plea of the Poor*. By 1690, a shift in perspective is noticeable: the *pragmatic usefulness of godly behavior* receives increasing attention. In an intellectually competitive world where religious conformity was no longer enforced by the civil government, where grandsons of Puritan founders no longer owned the covenant, where political and religious factions competed for men’s allegiance, a new focus on “practical divinity” was an obvious response to the pressures of the intellectual marketplace. New England Puritans would now have to face some of the challenges that their English brethren had been facing since the Restoration of 1660.

The appeals to men’s consciences were not entirely crass, of course. *Charity of sons to parents* was regarded by Willard as an absolute moral duty.⁵²⁶ The *tithe*, meaning a full 10 percent of one’s income, was affirmed by Cotton Mather to be an absolute minimum.⁵²⁷ Furthermore, there was a general agreement among Puritan divines concerning the necessity of charity in the affairs of *business*. “It is an eternal and a glorious role of charity that in dealing with a neighbor, a man must propose his neighbor’s advantage, as well as his own, and he should not propose to make his own advantage by adding to his neighbor’s misery.”⁵²⁸ One of the foundations of commerce, Peter Thatcher wrote two

523. I. Mather, *Beatitudes*, 135.

524. Steele, 100.

525. *Ibid.*, 102.

526. Willard, 608.

527. C. Mather, *Bonifacius: An Essay upon the Good*, 110-11.

528. *Thirty Cases*, 51.

decades later, is charity.⁵²⁹ But all of this ethical rhetoric pales in comparison to Mather's affirmation in his *Death Made Easy and Happy*:

Accordingly our graces, they are the jewels which will turn to account at our arrival in the other world. We read of these in Prov. 3:15. They are more precious than rubies.... Again, our duties, these are the bills which will do us a good turn when we come into the other world. The apostles, speaking about packs of charity, said in 1 Tim. 6:19: Lay up in store a good foundation. Some choose to read it, a good security. A good foundation was, among the Jews, a phrase for a bill of exchange that will cut. Why, as the acts of charity, so all the acts of piety, are upon a right principle to be abounded in. The promises of God will then be so many bills of exchange for our use. We may have those bills drawn upon the Lord, and He will not protest them on our coming home; no, at the sight thereof, he will pay us those things whereof the merchandise is better than the merchandise of silver. In a word, all that we lay out for God on earth, we shall have infinitely more than the value of it when we come to Heaven. And now, you that are strangers here provide accordingly.⁵³⁰ {182}

John Tetzels, the indulgence salesman of Luther's day, could hardly have put it any more forcefully. Practical divinity is exceedingly practical. By serving the needs of the community, a man serves his ultimate interests.

The Defense of Property Rights

Nowhere in the literature of New England in the late seventeenth century does the commitment to private property appear so forthright as in the defense of the 1689 revolution against the Andros regime. The *Andros Tracts* are filled with this charge against him: he and his fellow English bureaucrats invaded the privileged domain of private property. *The Declaration of the Gentlemen* (1689) complained that they had been squeezed by "extraordinary and intolerable fees extorted from everyone upon all occasions, without any rule but those of their own insatiable avarice and beggary...."⁵³¹ Formal law, the safeguard of property, had been utterly ignored by these corrupt invaders, or so the Dec-

529. Thatcher, 8, 12.

530. C. Mather, *Death Made Easy*, 13-14.

531. *The Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Inhabitants of Boston, and the Country Adjacent* (1689), 3.

laration asserted. *The Revolution in New England Justified* (1691) was equally forthright: “And that the practices of these men have been according to their principles, destructive to the property of the subject, is now to be declared.”⁵³² Increase Mather’s account of the Andros regime was also uncompromising; Andros had “invaded liberty and property after such a manner, as no man could say anything was his own. Wise men believed it to be a necessary duty to use all lawful means to obtain some relief and remedy against those growing evils.”⁵³³ Even the use of questionably lawful means—revolution—seemed appropriate to this staunchest of Puritan leaders.

This defense of the rights of private property made by the New England leaders should not be regarded simply as a crass defense of vested interests. Property represented far more than simply a means of material advancement. Not only was it seen as being fundamental to the expansion of the kingdom of God, and therefore possessing legitimate rights in the economy of God, but private property was also seen as an expression of the *self*. Richard Bushman has stated this quite well:

The spirited opposition to English and Colonial authority when subjects thought their rights violated was a defense of self. Property rights, for example, represented more than physical comfort or social prestige, for property was an extension of the person. Hence the legal {183} safeguards against government invasion of these rights protected the individual as well.⁵³⁴

Nevertheless, the language of the *Andros Tracts* reflected a transformation which was occurring in New England thought: a *process of secularization* was being superimposed on a Christian view of the responsible self. This process had deep political implications from the 1690s onward, as Breen has noted:

The Mathers were much more attuned to the changes that had taken place in New England than historians sometimes admit. They realized, for example, that the language of politics had been transformed

532. *The Revolution in New England Justified* (1691), in *Andros Tracts*, vol. 1, 93. Breen’s book provides an excellent treatment of the impact of the Glorious Revolution on New England’s attitudes concerning the relationship of liberty and property: chap. 4.

533. I. Mather, *A Brief Account Concerning Several of the Agents of New England* (1691), in *Andros Tracts*, vol. 2, 273.

534. Bushman, 20.

during that Glorious Revolution and that the jeremiad rhetoric would be of little use in selling the new charter to the people of Massachusetts. The ministers appealed directly to Puritan pocketbooks, claiming that the 1691 patent protected both liberty and property.⁵³⁵

This fusion of the earlier Puritan defense of property and a Lockean defense of property in terms of personal liberty must have been a compelling intellectual presentation. It was to leave its mark on New England thought from that time on.

Most of the *ancient Protestant casuistry* survived this process of secularization. The same examples of *theft*—the basic crime against property—that could be found in Luther or Calvin were familiar to Puritans of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: moving boundaries, kidnapping, robbery, secret theft, bribery, using public property as one's own, unlawful callings, false weights and measures, cheating, buying cheap and selling dear.⁵³⁶ The *state* was still regarded as the primary enforcing agency in most of these areas. But in the area of internal judgment, in which issues of equity or “fairness” were involved, the *consciences* of individuals replaced the coercive arm of the state as the primary—even exclusive—restraining factor in economic affairs.

Samuel Willard went as far as any Puritan writer in defining just what it was that New Englanders felt they were bound to defend, even at the price of revolution. He affirmed the *exclusiveness of property*, in spite of his insistence that it must be held “according to the rules of discretion.”⁵³⁷ In establishing the rights of property, “God hath ordained that men should have a property in such a portion of these things, which no other particular person can lawfully dispose of at his pleasure, without the free consent of the proprietor, so long as it abides as his; but he hath a dominion over it, as his own proper state...”⁵³⁸ Respect for private property is basic to the {184} establishment of a productive, godly society. One of the crucial tasks of the *political rulers* must be to secure the rights of private property.

535. Breen, 182. Breen provides an introduction to the question of the secularization of Massachusetts politics: chap. 5, “The Politics of Property.”

536. Wadsworth, 107-8.

537. Willard, 695.

538. *Ibid.*, 687.

By all means securing and preserving of men's rights from being invaded, and being disposed of arbitrarily without law. Not but that every man, according to his ability, owes a due proportion to the support of the government whereof he is a member (as will afterwards be considered); but it is fitting that every man should be able to call his state his own, and have the disposal of it according to equity. This is the way to promote industry, which is the readiest course to get wealth in the ordinary providence of God (Prov. 10:4), for every man naturally seeks advantage by what he does, the prospect whereof stimulates him to use industry.⁵³⁹

The rights of private property are not simply to be secured from the excessive intervention of the state or other individuals by means of physical coercion. The rights of property are also to be secured from the *mental encroachments* of envious persons. *Envy* was seen as a direct violation of the laws of God. Willard set forth the requirement for Christian men "not to envy, but to rejoice in the prosperity of their wealthy neighbors."⁵⁴⁰ His lengthy attack on envy stood until quite recently as one of the longest expositions on the subject in American literature.⁵⁴¹ Cotton Mather agreed entirely with Willard's analysis: "It will have no good aspect upon us, if it should be so, that a leveling spirit gets so much head among us, that no man shall be in anything superior to his neighbors, but his very superiority shall make him obnoxious to envious indignities...."⁵⁴²

Few historians or sociologists have paid much attention to the impact of envy on society. A recent exception is the study by Helmut Schoeck. Envy, Schoeck argues, is intimately bound up with a culture's view of *time*, and it has definite implications for the possibilities of economic growth within that society. In a chapter entitled, "The Envy-barrier of the Developing Countries," Schoeck analyzes the effects of envy:

No one can even begin to have rational aspirations for the future unless he has a realistic view of what that future may be; but no such prognosis can be made so long as each member of the group carefully keeps hidden *his* view of the future. Nor can a view that is conducive

539. *Ibid.*, 630.

540. *Ibid.*, 644.

541. *Ibid.*, 750-53.

542. C. Mather, *Concio ad Populum*, 18.

to social and economic development be formed within a group until its individual members are able, in frank discussion, to compare, weigh, and synchronize all their different pictures of the future. It is precisely this, however, which more than anything else is impeded by the ever-present fear that basically everyone, more specially our near neighbor, is potentially envious and that our best defense against it is to pretend complete indifference about the future.⁵⁴³ {185}

Without this *future orientation* of a large proportion of the citizenry, *economic growth* is made much less likely.⁵⁴⁴ There is far less propensity to save, and it is far more likely that a higher rate of interest will prevail, in those societies in which present gratification is highly emphasized, and the future and all that the future can bring are de-emphasized. Institutionalized envy is likely to keep a tribe or culture in a backward economic condition. As Schoeck writes, “No one dares to show anything that might leave people to think he was better off. Innovations are unlikely.”⁵⁴⁵ In short, he concludes, “Ubiquitous envy, fear of it and those who harbour it, cuts off such people from any kind of communal action directed towards the future. Every man is for himself, every man is thrown back upon his own resources. All striving, all preparation and planning for the future can be undertaken only by socially fragmented, secretive beings.”⁵⁴⁶ The opposition of Puritan preaching to the vice of envy should certainly be one of those factors treated by economic historians in any account of the growth of New England’s economy.

Private property was viewed as an *incentive* for human diligence, a legitimately sovereign *extension of self*, a *limited sovereignty* bounded by the needs of government, a *civil right* of all men, and never legitimately divided in equal portions among all men. All property is held in

543. Helmut Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior* (1970), 46; cf. 50.

544. Edward C. Banfield’s book, *The Unheavenly City* (1970), argues that a person’s or a culture’s attitude toward the future determines his or its class. Future-oriented cultures are therefore upper class, while present-oriented cultures are lower class. His analysis indicates that the possibilities for economic growth are greatly determined by whether or not members of a culture are willing to sacrifice present satisfactions in order to achieve economic advancement.

545. Schoeck, 47.

546. *Ibid.*, 50.

stewardship from God; ethical restrictions impinge upon the free use of it, yet the state's role in determining the bounds of proper use was, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, becoming fuzzy in Puritan sermons. Familiar themes remain, however. Property can be a *gift* from God for righteousness, or a *curse* of God unto destruction. Similarly, the lack of it can equally be a sign of blessing or cursing. Private property is based on the division of labor; it is to serve one's neighbor; it is fundamentally for the use of the *family*. But the logic of property can be *theologically autonomous*: a political revolution in terms of property's defense is fully legitimate. Increasingly, arguments in its favor were founded on property's hypothetically *self-justifying reasonableness*.

Benjamin Colman's defense of the mercantilistically controlled market for Boston is almost a paradigm of the new secularization. The familiar terms are present: calling, time-saving, idleness, industry, contentment, and frugality. *Some Reasons and Arguments ... for setting up Markets* (1719) is virtually devoid of the language of the jeremiad, however: judgment, {186} national decline, imminent crisis, the covenant, the golden age of the first generation,⁵⁴⁷ or God. The closest that Colman came to a covenantal term was *providence*, and its context is interesting: "They that are poorer in worldly state should and must give way to the rich. Who but they ordinarily should buy the dearest and best of the kind? Providence means it for them. It is the government of heaven; let us submit to it. God has given into their hand more abundantly."⁵⁴⁸ God defends the legitimate social hierarchy; there are few other references to Him or His work in the essay. Oppression is mentioned, but it is the "terrible" oppression of the "hucksters"—men who go from door to door, offering housewives the opportunity to buy goods in their own homes.⁵⁴⁹

The pamphlet is an impassioned plea for a *controlled market* on fixed days of the week. It calls for the *abolition of open competition* in sales; it rejects the idea that open entry to the homes of Boston really increases

547. He felt compelled to explain why first generation leaders had failed to establish such a controlled market. They were too busy on other projects, but today, he assured his readers, they would favor this recommendation: *Market*, 10.

548. *Ibid.*, 12.

549. *Ibid.*, 6.

men's freedom to buy and sell. Not so, he asserted, for a regulated weekly market in a fixed location would be orderly. Adam Smith's invisible hand of the market was nowhere in sight: "They that will be lawless and disorderly are sure to be in bondage and misery; and they only who come into order can live free and easy."⁵⁵⁰ The language of the Puritan *voluntary covenant* is here used to *challenge* the concept of the *voluntary contract*. Bondage, which was once used by Puritan clerics to describe all life outside God's covenants, is now transferred to the concept of open economic competition. Property, in order to be truly free, must be carefully regulated by the civic authorities.

Three things seem relevant for an understanding of Colman's pamphlet. First, he was still using the traditional language, but it was devoid of theological content or the received form of the jeremiad. Second, his church was made up of the wealthier, more distinguished sort of people, including local merchants who might well have had an interest in controlling the buying and selling of the "unruly" country salesmen. Finally, beyond his congregation, the plea fell on deaf ears: Colman's controlled market was never established, and the hawkers continued to find enthusiastic response from local housewives and the "exploited poor."⁵⁵¹ This application of the language of the covenant was unsuccessful in denying the concept of the voluntary contract, at least in Boston doorways. The Boston housewives were as convinced of the benefits of free trade, as against the infringements {187} of Boston clerics and selectmen, as the merchants and clerics had been as against Andros and his "publicans." If conscience governs economic exchanges, then Boston consciences apparently preferred to buy cheap, whether or not the "hucksters" were selling dear, meaning retail.

The Secularization of Legislation

It is difficult to analyze exactly what attitudes survived from the early Puritan vision of economic legislation through the early eighteenth century. The legislation reveals certain continuities: hostility to drunkenness, and a control of the retailing of liquor; the control of key public

550. *Ibid.*, 8.

551. For an account of the harassment of the peddlers by the civic authorities in Boston, and the ultimate triumph of the peddlers, see G. B. Warden, *Boston*, 53-54.

utilities through the establishment of regulated monopolies; the regulation of weights, measures, and the size of containers; quality controls on production (especially of exported items); the prohibition of unlicensed sales of almost everything, at one time or another, to the Indians; occasional encouragement to the creation of domestic manufactures; zoning laws; laws against idleness; laws against the export of foodstuffs in times of crisis; laws restricting strangers from entering a town as residents, unless unlikely to become welfare recipients. Swine still needed rings in their noses, and their owners still refused to provide them. Private lotteries were still being suppressed, but public ones for revenue purposes were slowly taking their place. There were not yet bingo churches, but the bingo state was, at least in theory, considered legitimate. The external characteristics of many of these laws can be linked directly to the Puritan inheritance. But the motives of the legislators, and the underlying philosophical justification for the specific pieces of legislation, cannot be said with confidence to be the direct product of Puritan preaching. Prime examples are the *restrictions on sales of land*: the old theological requirement was dropped; purchasers could believe whatever they desired, so long as they were not potential welfare cases.

There were some obvious changes in the structure of legislation. The old sumptuary laws never appear after 1675 and 1676. Direct price controls almost entirely disappeared; exceptions were peculiar, such as lawyers' fees and the assize of bread, but few other examples exist.⁵⁵² The final attempt to impose a comprehensive regulation of pricing on the economy came in 1720, when the Assembly passed a bewildering piece of legislation concerning the pricing of *bread*. It divided loaves into four general price categories, twenty-three different weights, and three different types—white, wheaten, and household.⁵⁵³ The reason such a law was regarded as necessary was stated in the preface; it is an archetypal summary of the ineffectiveness of price controls through the ages: {188}

552. *Acts and Resolves of the Province of Massachusetts*, 21 vols. (1869–), vol. 1 (1701), 467. [Cited hereafter as *A & R*.]

553. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 167.

... the act made and passed in the eighth year of King William III, entitled “an act for the due assize of bread,” is found not effectual for the good ends and purposes therein designed, and a little or no observance has been made thereof, but covetous and evil-disposed persons have, for their own gain, deceived and oppressed his majesty’s subjects, more especially the poorer sort....⁵⁵⁴

Finally, the legislature gave up trying. Only with the coming of the American Revolution did the attempt to fix prices directly reappear once again.

The legislatures were not wholly disenchanted with the original founders’ vision of a Holy Commonwealth along Old Testament lines. The Massachusetts Assembly in 1692 reaffirmed the original list of *capital crimes* which appeared in the Body of Liberties of 1641, and most of those found in the Old Testament were present: homosexuality, bestiality, murder, infanticide, witchcraft, idolatry. High treason was also added to the list.⁵⁵⁵ Leviticus 20:11–12 was specifically cited as a supporting reference to the law against incest.⁵⁵⁶ But the Privy Council disallowed the legislation in 1695, and it was not renewed. Rigid *usury legislation* went into the books in 1693. Significantly, no scriptural citations were mentioned to justify the new law. “Forasmuch as the abatement of interest has always been found beneficial to the advancement of trade and improvement of land by good husbandry,” the Assembly decreed a 6 percent maximum rate. All contracts above this were void; a 100 percent fine, plus the loss all goods involved, were imposed as sanctions. However, the law did not apply to “bottomry”—a maritime insurance contract which guaranteed interest to lenders if the ship did not sink or fall to pirates—or loans in kind (which had been prohibited on charity loans in the Bible and in early Protestant commentaries on usury).⁵⁵⁷ This secularization in the defense of the usury prohibition is comparable to the development in English economic thought after 1620, a development chronicled in Letwin’s *Origins of Scientific Economics*: “Nevertheless there can be no doubt that economic theory owes its present development to the fact that some men, in thinking of

554. *Ibid.*, 166.

555. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 55.

556. *Ibid.*, 56.

557. *Ibid.*, 113.

economic phenomena, forcefully suspended all judgments of theology, morality, injustice, were willing to consider the economy as nothing more than an intricate mechanism, refraining for the whole from asking whether the mechanism worked for good or evil. That separation was made during the seventeenth century.⁵⁵⁸ The defense of the legislation—that lower interest rates always create prosperity—was the line of reasoning used by Josiah Child, a secular English proto-economist, in the {189} 1660s.⁵⁵⁹ Child's exposition, like the legislation of the Massachusetts Assembly in 1693, had been entirely secular in this perspective.

In 1696 a market was established in Boston to erase *forestalling*, that ancient practice of holding goods off the market in the hope of creating a shortage and therefore an increase in the commodities' prices. However, the effect was the reverse: by keeping "retailers, hucksters, and traders of the town" from purchasing any goods until afternoon, morning purchasers had to bear the expense of the added inconvenience of traveling to the market on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. As usual, there were exemptions of certain goods: fish, wood, hay, pigeons, milk, cider, peas, fruits, and herbs. It was the failure of the housekeepers and of the hucksters to abide by this legislation which so discouraged Benjamin Colman almost a quarter century later. When a fire destroyed the Town House in 1711, the market ended, never to be revived.⁵⁶⁰ Not only urban purchasers, but country suppliers resented the controls.⁵⁶¹ They had far more faith in their own judgment, as expressed in the open, competitive market, than in either Puritan clerics or town clerks who would try to regulate economic affairs by means of some vague concept of equity. Laws against hucksters prevailed between 1716 and 1726, but an established weekly market, the institutional symbol of domestic economic surveillance, was successfully opposed by a majority of the Assembly.⁵⁶²

558. William Letwin, *The Origins of Scientific Economics* (1965), 158-59.

559. *Ibid.*, 7.

560. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness*, 194.

561. *Ibid.*, 194-95.

562. *A&R*, vol. 2, 47.

Monetary controls became common after 1690, paralleling the increase of monetary inflation. A legal tender law was passed in 1692.⁵⁶³ The export of money or bullion above £5 was prohibited in 1697.⁵⁶⁴ Counterfeiting laws became prominent; triple damages were assessed in the 1700 law, and branding was resorted to by 1703.⁵⁶⁵ In such cases, the victims were to be compensated, and not just the state.⁵⁶⁶

One familiar theme of Puritan preaching had been the necessary evil of *lawyers*. This apparently was as popular after 1690 as it had been in the 1640s.⁵⁶⁷ Legislation in these years reflected this hostility. Fees for service were fixed in 1701. Furthermore, the commitment to substantive justice was legislated. The idea that “every man deserves his day in court, no matter what” was still repugnant to New Englanders: each practicing {190} attorney had to swear an oath not to pursue false claims.⁵⁶⁸ In a piece of legislation which seems incredible in retrospect, any attorney bringing a claim against a debtor had to pay for his upkeep in jail! (It is not clear whether this was limited simply to pre-trial incarceration or not; one suspects that it was so limited.⁵⁶⁹) By 1708, plaintiffs were assigned court costs (including the defendant’s jail expenses) whenever a suit was lost or if it failed to reach the prosecution stage. Sometimes, of course, the plaintiff would not be able to afford the expense of the lost case; Massachusetts legislation solved this difficulty by making his attorney legally responsible for his employer’s embarrassment, and the lawyer had to pay all fees.⁵⁷⁰ The economic impact of such legislation is not difficult to imagine. A potential plaintiff whose economic position in the community was relatively low

563. *Ibid.*, vol. 1 (1713), 720-21: charges made against “hucksters” included the rise of crime and the decay of trade.

564. *Ibid.*, 35-36.

565. *Ibid.*, 306.

566. *Ibid.*, 445, 567.

567. Willard, 718; *Humble Address*, 253; C. Mather, *Way to Prosperity*, 26, and *Flying Roll*, 72.

568. *A&R*, vol. 1, 467.

569. *Ibid.*, (1706), 586.

570. *Ibid.*, 622.

would have found it difficult to hire a lawyer; the risks associated with a defeat in court would have been high for the lawyer, since he was financially responsible for the client in case of his client's bankruptcy. The legislators sought to avoid this situation by imposing a fixed fee for service, and that upon payment of the fee, the lawyer could not refuse employment.⁵⁷¹ Clearly, lawyers had a strong interest in going into politics in order to get such restrictions on their profession removed. A generation later, they were leaders in New England's political life.

Connecticut abandoned its economic controls with astounding rapidity. Some controls were retained; *laissez faire* did not arrive in the eighteenth century. Licensing and quality controls were retained in some instances. Tanners were licensed by the county court.⁵⁷² An import tariff of 2 percent of the retail price of goods was imposed.⁵⁷³ The familiar Puritan controls on liquor were maintained, including price controls on retail sales.⁵⁷⁴ Lawful trading ports were limited in 1702 to eight towns.⁵⁷⁵ A few export prohibitions can be found, although repeals seem as common as new impositions.⁵⁷⁶ Turpentine inspectors were appointed in 1706 to certify quality and see that none was mixed with "earth, stones, or other such deceitful matter..."⁵⁷⁷ But for hundreds of pages in the Connecticut records, only a few regulations on the use of private property appear. Massachusetts, far more ready to experiment, and far more enmeshed in the affairs of trade, produced considerably greater quantities of economic legislation. {191}

There were controls on output and, intermittently, on distribution. But the controls on the sale of land disappeared in most towns after 1700, and price controls were noticeable only in rare instances. The doctrine of *individual responsibility*, coupled with the *sanctity of property*, produced an intellectual environment much less responsive to the early Puritan claims that the affairs of the marketplace should be regu-

571. *Ibid.*

572. *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*, vol. 4 (1692), 83.

573. *Ibid.*, (1698), 167.

574. *Ibid.*, 249-50; *Ibid.*, (1699), 286-87.

575. *Ibid.*, 374-75.

576. *Ibid.*, (1706), 545: the export prohibition on tallow was repealed.

577. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 3.

lated in terms of biblical revelation or an inherited medieval casuistry. Controls there were, but the defense of them was in terms of economic prosperity or community interest. The language of the covenant had almost completely disappeared. Perry Miller's summary is close to the mark:

From 1689, when the Revolution permitted preachers to resume the seventeenth-century injunction, a steady transformation of the theme can be traced, wherein the religious spirit less and less figures as the cause of prosperity, and becomes instead a benediction upon the process to be prized for the advantageous grace it bestows upon wealth, or for the consolation it extends to poverty.⁵⁷⁸

Economic thought had long been the handmaiden of the Holy Commonwealth. Now it was becoming the servant of the secular community—a community whose economic preferences were expressed through the market or the state, but not through the church or the church's ordained ministers. The clerics were asked simply to baptize the intellectual infant, without serious or concerted inquiries into the parents' state of grace—or even their marriage certificate!

Conclusion

But, I hope, it will never be complained that the ministers of the Gospel are by any sinful silence accessory to the transgressions which deny the doctrine of God our Savior among a people that are under peculiar obligations to adorn it. It shall not be complained that the ministers do so confine themselves to preach faith and repentance, that the people forget moral honesty through any default of ours.⁵⁷⁹

Cotton Mather's words, written in 1716, are a testimony to the vision which Mather had of the role of the clergy in New England. Unfortunately, as Perry Miller has shown, it was precisely at this time that the clergy of New England were finally abandoning the preaching of what had once been regarded as the whole counsel of God, and were substituting for it the preaching of "faith and repentance" alone.

For several years the clergy had been evading the major issue in New England economic life, the issue of *inflation*. There seemed to be no agreement among the theological leaders of New England society with

578. Miller, 397.

579. C. Mather, *Fair Dealing*, 2.

respect to the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the land bank schemes or the {192} monetary inflation being pursued by the Massachusetts legislature.⁵⁸⁰ The clergy as a group were unable to formulate concrete policies of economic legislation, nor were they able to recommend anything more than vague general principle to the participants of New England economic life. “When the businessmen themselves, including many professing Christians, divided into hostile armies, the clergy, who had once whipped a Robert Keayne into line, whose advice men like John Hull had sought and followed, had to stand helplessly by, begging both factions to remember charity.”⁵⁸¹ Speaking of the Increase Mather of 1719, Miller writes, “Mather merely sighed that he could no longer ‘meddle’ in these affairs, and advised sufferers to seek consolation in prayer.”

Yet neither he nor his colleagues could abdicate outright; they were still official spokesmen for the social consciousness, and through the jeremiad alone could that consciousness be expressed, although with increasing imperfection. They might be bewildered, and realize that they were unqualified to understand the world of business, but they could not escape the duty of denouncing, and so of tabulating, the outward and visible signs.⁵⁸²

But pietism is not adequate for reshaping the external social and economic life, and the revamped jeremiad, which had been steadily

580. Miller, 314. This unwillingness of the clergy to take an uncompromising stand against the emission of paper money dismayed Samuel Sewall: “As it belongs to the chief magistrate to exert himself to the uttermost to oppose the emission of more bills, so certainly our ministers can never justify their not declaiming against this course so destructive to their country. Indeed, their principal business is preaching the gospel; and the affairs of state are to be left to the management of civil rulers. But when practices prevail that lead into confusion—team with and bring forth a train of scandalous or horrid injustice, infest and bewitch their country with an affectation of gaiety, and an unhealthy way of living, and are likely to be its overthrowing, if persisted—how can they hold their peace without exposing themselves to the censure of the prophet of being dumb dogs that cannot bark?” *Letter-Book*, vol. 2, M.H.S. *Collections*, vol. 2, 238–39. Sewall used that old favorite phrase used by English Puritans against the incompetent preaching of the Anglican clergy, “dumb dogs,” an unmistakable warning against pulpit irrelevance.

581. Miller, 307.

582. *Ibid.*

eroded by the hard realities of New England political life after 1691, could not restore the Holy Commonwealth.

Economics as a separate field of investigation did not exist prior to the seventeenth century. It was a branch of theology or ethics before the advent of early mercantilist pamphleteers. What characterizes “modern” economic thought is its claim to intellectual autonomy. It was a claim denied, *a priori*, by Puritan theologians: no area of human life is autonomous. Ethical neutrality is impossible. But the paralysis of the leaders of the Puritan community, and their inability to provide concrete criteria of legal administration over the affairs of the market, without which social {193} policy cannot impose ethical restraints on men’s economic activities, led to the idea of a neutral science of economics. This science could be used to analyze the implications of social policy, allowing the civil government to redirect the affairs of the market to meet the demands of other institutions besides the Holy Commonwealth. As the commonwealth itself began to be regarded as something autonomous from biblical revelation or a uniquely Christian casuistry, so the market lost its subservience to theology proper and to its corollary, practical divinity.

The thirty years following the establishment of the Massachusetts charter brought a new sense of autonomy to the legislators. If Puritans could do no more than echo either Locke or Aquinas, then there was no compelling reason to give more than a passing nod to the content of Puritan economic preaching. Property requires laws to protect it; if formal legislation is not enacted, then it becomes subservient to the legally substantive whims of the theologian, the bureaucrat, and the tax collector. But the theologian loved to let “circumstances” determine the decisions of the courts, and the bureaucrats, though not ethically motivated in their infringements on private property, were equally a threat. Thus, in the reaction against the Andros regime, the writers of the tracts and the political opponents of Andros created a new social mythology: *formal law* is a necessary protector of private property, and it is necessary to provide a formal legal structure in order to permit New England’s citizens the right of resisting illicit encroachments on their economic goods. But formal legality was a two-edged sword; it could be used not only to limit the activities of bureaucrats, but it could also be used to cut away the increasingly vague “ethics of circumstance” which Puri-

tanism had relied on for generations. Formal legal rules cut away the content of Puritan economic controls. Controls remained, but their content and intellectual foundation were no longer exclusively Puritan, if by Puritan we mean revelational, ethically Christian, based on applied theology, and consistent with the demands of a Holy Commonwealth. The covenant between God and His separated people no longer was prominent in the economic legislation of New England.

Reason and revelation had long been theoretically balanced in Christian epistemology, but when casuistry proved vague, contradictory, or inoperable, reason replaced it with a guide to social and economic policy. The problems of autonomous logic—*whose* logic, according to *what* presuppositions, tending toward *whose* benefit—had not yet become major intellectual problems. Like the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1630, who regarded the Bible as a fully adequate guide to the basic problems associated with social and political life, the eighteenth-century advocates of “reasonable” economic policies assumed that reason speaks with a unified voice. In a transitional era—one in which the {194} burdens of the inherited intellectual and cultural paradigm seem too great to bear any longer—the innovators regard their predecessors as men enmeshed in a tangled web of conflicting policies. The web no longer seems to hang together. Under these circumstances, the innovators are seldom aware of the possibilities for multiple applications of their own philosophical Archimedian point. It makes the task of reconstruction appear far easier than it really is.

2.
**CONTEMPORARY
THEOLOGICAL TRENDS**

M. G. KLINE ON THEONOMIC POLITICS

An Evaluation of His Reply

Greg L. Bahnsen

Introduction

Little observation is required for one to note that Christian ethics today is in a state of meandering confusion. It is all the more noteworthy that sociopolitical ethics in Western nations, especially with respect to matters of crime and punishment, is in a state of perplexing crisis. Does the unfailing word of God set forth any hope and guidance for resolving this confusion and crisis? My own conviction is that it does, and thus I wrote a book which argues for the normativity of the law of God in Christian ethics today (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15–17), maintaining that the Old Testament standing commandments have not been abrogated (cf. Matt. 5:17–19) even in matters of crime and punishment (cf. 1 Tim. 1:8–10; Heb. 2:2). Published in 1977, the book appeared as *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press).

Despite the historic Reformed roots for the sentiments expressed in *Theonomy*, its thesis was, I understood, unpopular in late twentieth-century thought. Indeed, even some Reformed writers today would disagree with it—in particular, I was told, would Dr. Meredith G. Kline, who was a professor of Old Testament. Thus, I avidly studied the writings of Dr. Kline and profited from them in many ways. Dr. Kline is an interesting, thought-provoking, and very creative theological scholar. I admire and respect his talents, even when I cannot agree with his reasoning or exegesis. One area where his theological argumentation appears weak to me is found in his dismissal of God’s law for community life-norms. Consequently, in the course of writing a book in defense of the contemporary authority of those norms, I included a relevant appendix on the contrary thought of Dr. Kline.

It was thus a tantalizing surprise, albeit abnormal in scholarly circles, to hear that the *Westminster Theological Journal* had asked Kline to be the reviewer for my book, much of which had been composed as a master's thesis at the seminary. Many a friend and foe of my thesis were eager to see what Kline would say in reply, expecting the decisive line of objection to be expressed here if anywhere. We were all kept in waiting and suspense for so long that some tried unsuccessfully to obtain copies in advance! *Theonomy* went through its second printing in the spring of 1979, and then {196} finally, in August of 1979, Kline's review appeared (in vol. 41, no. 1, for Fall 1978). It was intended to be thorough enough as to appear in the form of a review article. However, apart from emotional pitch, the article has proven to be anticlimactical as a theological argument. My purpose here will be to analyze and evaluate what Dr. Kline has written, thus hoping to advance and clarify the current debate for interested readers who wish to examine both sides of it in a serious and responsible fashion. (References to Kline's article hereafter will appear simply as numbers in parentheses corresponding to pages in his article.)

In a real sense, Dr. Kline has not offered a "review" of my book, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, at all. The reader is not told the purpose and thrust of the book, not told how the book progresses, not told the main line(s) of argumentation, not told its theological significance, etc. The book has nine major sections, the first six of which (well over half) focus on the validity of the Old Testament law for the New Testament Christian—over against the claims of dispensationalism, antinomianism, secularism, etc. Not a word is given in reference to these opening six sections. Instead, Dr. Kline narrowly attends only to section 7 of the book (with passing remarks concerning appendix 2). And even then he does not "review" this one section of the treatise, but directly launches a frontal attack upon it.

Yet strangely enough, he still does not hit the issue head on. The book offers numerous arguments from Scripture in favor of theonomic politics and sets forth numerous problems to be resolved by those repudiating theonomic politics (so many, in fact, that John Frame's review in the *Presbyterian Journal* for August 31, 1977, called it "overkill"). However *not one* of these positive arguments and polemical challenges is answered or even considered by Kline—indeed, even the

specific critique of his own position is ignored. It is inadequate for Kline to overlook the case that has been made *for* theonomic politics if he wishes to attack the position and promote a contrary one.

When all is said and done, Kline offers only three arguments against theonomic politics: (1) the argument for discontinuity based on Israel's uniqueness as a redemptive type and as a holy nation, (2) the "name-of-the-Redeemer" argument, and (3) the argument that Deuteronomy 13 is an embarrassment to evangelism. The first is the main line taken against theonomic politics, but as it turns out this argument is built upon a conspicuous misrepresentation of my position, employs unscriptural inferences, and completely ignores the extensive rebuttal given to it already in the pages of *Theonomy*. The other two arguments are quickly dispatched as resting on ambiguity or misconception. (I return to these arguments below.)

Much of what Kline has written is also irrelevant to the theonomic thesis as I set it forth in my book. He admits as much in saying that his concern is not with this particular publication as such, but rather with "the Chalcedon {197} school" and its "related" publications (172). Thus he takes time to criticize North's article on common grace (178, 188–89). However, it is simply a notorious fallacy to attack a person's position on the basis of what his friends may or may not have said! Moreover, a large portion of Kline's article attends to the question of postmillennialism (178–86), which is thoroughly irrelevant to my case for theonomy in either private or public behavior (as I explain at some length in my reply to Aiken Taylor, "God's Law and Gospel Prosperity," distributed by the session of St. Paul Presbyterian Church, 5125 Robinson Rd., Jackson, MS 39204, esp. 37–38). Amillennialists and premillennialists can be theonomists, and many are. The theonomic issue is not eschatological, and thus much of what Kline has said is not germane to the debate at hand. It amounts to a diversion.

Fallacies and Misrepresentations

Perhaps the unhappiest aspect of Kline's article is its ready use of the ugliest forms of fallacious reasoning: ridicule, sarcasm, character assassination, name-dropping, and caricature. Although his opening sentence speaks snidely of my "over-heated typewriter," a reader who notes the vehemence of Kline's article can readily decide for himself

whose typewriter has become overheated. Speaking of “the Chalcedon disturbance” (189) and its “wasted potential” (172) is likewise ridicule rather than reasoning.

When Kline says that according to my theory, the Lord’s view of Israel’s request for a king was mistaken and unjust (176), and that to accept theonomy one must read the Old Testament as a “historicized myth about Everynation” (178), he is setting up a ridiculous straw-man to beat down. A remark like, “God’s response was not informed by the insights of the doctrine of theonomic politics” (176), is not analysis but simply sarcasm. To such statements no rebuttal is necessary because they cannot be taken seriously anyway.

Kline speaks unfairly of fellow Christians when he alleges that Chalcedon “crusaders agitate with cult-like fanaticism,” being “censoriously disruptive of the Reformed community, ecclesiastic and academic” (172). There is no evidence of this—while there *is* evidence of such disruption from those who have wished to discomfit or suppress theonomists in churches and schools. But the relevant point is that none of this is germane to the truth or falsity of the thesis under consideration. Similarly, Kline’s outlandish accusation that Chalcedon depreciates the Savior’s love to the perishing world and the patient gathering of the elect out of the nations (186) because it is far more interested in capital punishment (187) is unbecoming. I genuinely take an interest in, support and promote, and participate in evangelism and missions; I rejoice in Scripture’s promise of prosperity in this area (*Theonomy*, 422ff.). To allege that I have a surpassing interest in capital punishment simply because I have written on {198} the subject is absurd. One could as foolishly allege that Kline depreciates the deity of Christ since he has written on other subjects.

Another fallacious ploy utilized by Kline is name-dropping. He claims that *Theonomy* resumes the program of Rushdoony’s *Institutes of Biblical Law*, and that many of the criticisms of the latter made in John Frame’s review of it apply equally to me (172). Makes it sound like Frame stands with him against theonomy! But a few errors have been made. First, the text of *Theonomy* was complete and in the printer’s hands at least a year and a half before Rushdoony’s *Institutes* appeared. Second, I read and almost completely agreed with Frame’s review of Rushdoony before the *Westminster Theological Journal* printed it.

Third, Frame *also* reviewed *Theonomy*—very favorably. Fourth, Frame’s ethics syllabus makes it clear that he does *not* stand with Kline against theonomy. But even if Frame’s name could be employed against my thesis, it would be argumentatively irrelevant to the truth or falsity of the thesis. In a similarly fallacious way Kline attempts to enlist Van Til’s reputation against theonomic politics—on the slim ground that Gary North once criticized Van Til’s generalization about common grace (189)! Names aside, as both Frame and Van Til would say, Scripture alone must remain our Reformed standard of truth. (Kline’s weak suggestion that I try to drop Van Til’s name in favor of my distinctive political ethic is a real mistake; one can compare my quote from Van Til on the epigraph page of *Theonomy* with page 37 to see how and where Van Til is employed—quite before the issue of political ethics comes up. Note also page xvii for my admission of differences with my mentors.)

Finally, Kline advances some significant misrepresentations of what my position actually is. These can easily mislead the reader and can make Kline’s task easier than it actually should be. Of course, criticism of positions that I do not really hold are futile. The most important misrepresentation is found in Kline’s main argument against theonomic politics (*viz.*, that according to me Israel and her government were not unique); it will be taken up in my discussion of that argument. Other false portrayals should be noted as well.

Contrary to Kline (172, 174), I do not contend that the civil magistrate is to enforce *all* of the Mosaic laws (see *Theonomy*, 381–82, 388, 399, 436, 493; *n.b.* “not every sin is a crime”). Nor do I say, as Kline alleges, that the ceremonial law is exempt from the Mosaic law’s remaining normativity (175); I say that in a sense it has not been repealed but confirmed (see *Theonomy*, 48–49, 81–82, 207, 209–10, 212, 215, 492). Kline is also mistaken to claim that I “equate” the priestly-cultic sphere of Israel with “the church of the new covenant age” (176). Nothing like that will be found in my book for the simple reason that I do not think they can be strictly equated. Still an analogy holds (e.g., Heb. 13:15; 1 Cor. 9:13–14), {199} and a contrast between religious cult and civil government can be seen in both Old Testament Israel and the modern world—without equating the Old Testament priestly-cultic sphere with the New Testament church! Kline’s sugges-

tion as to the significance of my use of the expression “Old Testament” (viz., that it infers that the form of the kingdom has not changed from Old Testament to New Testament) is purely speculative (181–82); by that expression I simply wanted to stress the unity of the one covenant of grace throughout Scripture. When Kline says that I am reluctant to accept the New Testament teaching that the typological pre-messianic form of the holy kingdom is now obsolete, wanting the state structure of the kingdom to be virtually the same in all ages (181–82), he is engaging in pure fabrication. I say nothing of the sort in my book. I am more than willing to call the older covenant “obsolete” (209, 213), completely “past” (194), and not to be returned to (134; cf. 136, 189–94). And I have no jealousy whatsoever for the state-kingdom *structure* of the Old Testament. Kline also misrepresents, through obscurity in his rehearsal of it, my view of the church’s relation to the kingdom in the New Testament (millennial) age (180). Related to this, when I speak of Christ’s “moral rule”—in contrast to the premillennialist’s notion that Christ will be physically present and use military rule—Kline alters this to a “general moral sway” in the hearts of the elect (180–81), thereby putting an unnecessarily derogatory construction on my statement. Finally, Kline unsuccessfully attempts to portray me as unfair to himself, claiming that I speak of laws being validated through change—even though I criticize him for speaking of revision which fulfills a law (173). But the comparison is ruined by misrepresentation. I do not speak of change in a law as validation; rather, I say that ceremonial laws once and for all kept by Christ are thereby fulfilled and made inoperative (not revised). Kline is criticized for slippery semantics precisely because he calls “revision” the fulfillment of a law.

The cumulative effect of these significant misrepresentations should not be minimized. Reading the article by Kline *without* these caricatures creates a different impression.

Scripture and Confession

Kline’s most negative words against theonomic politics are found in his denunciation of it as unbiblical. I have not simply come to another interpretation of the scriptural text than he has! I have not merely made a mistake in applying the words of the Bible. Far worse. Only the most severe words of deprecation are felt suitable by Kline for my

“aberration” (173). It would seem that he feels I have virtually wrested the Scriptures to my own destruction; he cannot exaggerate enough his accusation that the theonomic thesis is anti-biblical. He calls it “a delusive and grotesque {200} perversion of the teaching of Scripture” (172) which has been rejected as “manifestly unbiblical” by virtually all students of Scripture (173). Its error, he continues, is no less extreme or serious than dispensationalism’s (173) and “must be repudiated as a misreading of the Bible on a massive scale” (175). The “false theory of theonomic politics in effect sets itself in autonomous opposition to the voice of God in his word” (189). The “blatantly unbiblical results” which theonomic politics inevitably produces afford a “startling warning of the utter falseness” of the thesis (188). If anyone should think Kline has unintentionally overstated his opinion these many times, he wants to make himself very clear to his reader: “What we are talking about here is not something illusively subtle or profound, but big and plain and simple” (175). In my “obfuscation of the lucid biblical picture” (176), I miss what is “simple, obvious, all-important” and “clear” in the Bible (177). Kline charges that I manage to miss a “simple message ... written large across the pages of the Bible so that covenant children can read and readily understand it” (176). In his estimation, I can hardly be a child of the covenant. My “delusive and grotesque perversion” of the Bible must be evidence that I am either a dangerous heretic or someone virtually devoid of common intelligence.

But come now. Could things *really be that extreme*? Can Dr. Kline be taken at his word here? Is he perhaps continuing his already observed tendency to appeal to the “obvious” at crucial and critical junctures in his theological reasoning or argumentation (cf. *Theonomy*, 576)? Is this proof or pontification?

What the reader cannot afford to miss is this fact. Despite the harsh denunciation of theonomy as anti-biblical, Kline does not offer even one passage of Scripture that directly contradicts or refutes the theonomic thesis. For all of his intense and extensive condemnation, he has not given the slightest evidence from Scripture against the viewpoint of theonomic ethics! It hardly seems appropriate for him to make so much of the charge that theonomy is anti-biblical when he makes so little of Scripture in trying to refute it. We have maximal rhetoric with minimal evidence.

What is additionally noteworthy about Kline's adamant condemnation of the theonomic thesis is that he elsewhere freely acknowledges that it is the perspective of the Westminster Confession of Faith (173–74). One might expect that he would have been a little more reserved in disagreeing with his Confessional standard. Certainly our creed is fallible. But one does not usually diverge from the standard with vehemence, calling its viewpoint “manifestly unbiblical” and “a delusive and grotesque perversion of the teaching of Scripture”—as Kline calls the theonomic thesis. Great respect is *prima facie* expected in considering the Confession's teachings, and one departs from them cautiously. It surely should seem odd to Dr. Kline that if theonomic politics is as anti-biblical as he claims, it is embodied {201} in the Confession of Faith! After all, the framers of our Confession are reputed for their precision and adherence to Scripture. Even when they are found to have erred, do we really want to say that the error is so gross that any covenant child should have detected it? The very fact that the Westminster Standards are theonomic in outlook should make one wary of Kline's *extreme* condemnation of the position. The presumption will be that the Confession is correct unless Dr. Kline can demonstrate otherwise—from an exegesis of Scripture itself as the *primary* standard of truth. Kline calls for an amendment to the (allegedly) faulty formulation of the Confession (189) rather than reconsidering the possibility that the theonomic thesis might have something biblical to say for it. However, the church should remember that the one calling for this Confessional revision has not set forth scriptural grounds for it, and that in the past this same author has been so bold as to argue that “the Old Testament is not the canon of the Christian church” (*Structure of Biblical Authority*, 99). It is little wonder that he would not want the church to acknowledge the moral standards of Old Testament law in social ethics. The extent of emendation that would be required to rid the Westminster Standards consistently of theonomic thrust would be more than Dr. Kline realizes.

It turns out that even Kline is uncomfortable with his deviation from the Confession, and he makes certain efforts to abate the significance of it. He first claims, quite erroneously, that the theonomic elements in the Confession “have been subjected to official revision” (173). But this is not at all true. The American revision pertained only to a subsection

of the chapter on the civil magistrate, aiming to reinforce disestablishment and the rejection of Erastianism (see *Theonomy*, 527–37, 541–43). There was no revision of the declaration about the law of God or its use in the catechisms (i.e., the strictly theonomic elements of the Confessional Standards). Thus we find that Kline goes on to suggest, half-heartedly, that perhaps by analogy the change of 23.3 in the Confession implicitly changes the meaning of 19.4 (174). But that is extremely unlikely. In the first place, the American Presbyterians were insistent on consistency and were precise regarding details; had they meant for 19.4 to be altered, they would have directly altered it and left nothing to imagination. Secondly, if the aim of the revisers was to expunge the theonomic thesis from the Confession, then they would hardly have overlooked the explicit chapter on the law of God when they came to revising the Confession! Kline’s proposal that the revision was a “patchwork” job that left inner tensions (174) or ambiguities (173) is challenged by the same two considerations which I have just offered, and it is undermined by the fact that an alleged “inner tension” is created only by bringing an anti-theonomic bias to the Confession in the first place. Assuming that the revision left the Confession committed to theonomic politics (consistent with the historical {202} period for the Calvinists) but opposed to the establishment principle of religion (consistent with American church-state sentiments at the time), one can readily understand the revised Confession (explicated by the unrevised catechisms) without a feeling of any great inner tension.

What’s Left

If we were to go back and strip away from Kline’s article everything that has been observed to be irrelevant to his debate with my book, everything that is fallacious in reasoning, everything that misrepresents my position, everything that serves his extreme denunciations of my position, and everything about the side issue of the Confession, very very little of his original article (perhaps less than a third) would be left for us to consider. By trimming away the needless excess, we can finally get down to the real substance of his disagreement with the position that civil magistrates should obey and enforce the objective revelation of God’s law as it addresses matters pertaining to social morality. As mentioned in the introduction above, Kline offers three

arguments against this position, but *answers none* of the arguments from Scripture *in favor* of it. Kline's three objections can now be analyzed.

The Key Argument: Israel as a Type and as Holy

The foremost argument put to use against theonomic politics is, in summary, that it contradicts the redemptive-restorative nature of the nation Israel (177). Kline argues that the biblical distinction between the kingdom of God—that is, Israel's kingdom as a redemptive, theocratic prototype of Christ's redemptive kingdom—and the kingdom of the world is such that the function of enforcing the Mosaic covenantal laws belonged only to Israel's king and not to all civil magistrates (177). Thus, the discontinuity between old and new covenants is not done justice (173). Closely allied with this alleged mistake in *Theonomy* is the failure, according to Kline, to take account of Israel's distinctive holiness as a kingdom set apart from others by a special redemptive covenant unto the Lord (177)—a distinctive identity that belonged not only to the cultus of Israel but to the total social-political-cultic entity.

Here we find what Kline thinks is so *very obvious* to every covenant child, but which theologians *completely obscure and miss* in reading the Bible. Israel was a unique nation, being a type of Christ's redemptive kingdom and being a holy nation set apart by God's electing love. Kline specifically says that theologians deny that Israel is a type of the redemptive kingdom of Christ (175–76), do not perceive the typological nature of the Old Testament theocratic kingdom (181), say that Israel as a kingdom was just another civil government of the world (176), and deny Israel's distinctive holiness as a kingdom set apart by a special redemptive {203} covenant unto the Lord (177). Indeed, theonomic politics “compels” a denial of the holy status given to Israel (178) and simply cannot acknowledge the typological-redemptive nature of Israel as a geopolitical kingdom (175).

I want to belabor the point so that there will be no misunderstanding. As incredible as it may seem, what Kline says is wrong with the theonomic thesis is that it denies that Israel was a redemptive type and a holy nation. Here is the “radical fault” (175) and “major failing” (177) of the thesis. Let me use his own words verbatim; one should notice well what Kline claims that I say or would say about these subjects:

One radical fault that undermines the whole Chalcedon position is the failure to recognize that the socio-geo-political sector of the Israelite kingdom of God was a part of the total system of kingdom typology. (175)

[Bahnsen] is evidently saying that Israel as a geo-political kingdom is *not* ... a type of the antitypical kingdom of Christ, the Redeemer-King. (175)

Bahnsen says that Israel as a kingdom was just another civil government and Israel's king just another civil magistrate. (176)

Bahnsen says that God's kingdom Israel was just another civil government. (178)

According to Kline, since I deny that Israel was a redemptive type and holy nation, I actually "equate" ordinary civil institutions of the world with the Israelite theocratic kingdom (176, 178).

Reply:

This argument by Kline is a scholarly lapse which ought to have been reconsidered before publication. So much can be said in response that I will number the considerations I wish to urge upon the reader.

(1) *Where* in *Theonomy* do I *deny* that the Israelite kingdom was a redemptive type and holy nation? *Where*? This is just a large misrepresentation of my theological position. For all of Kline's relish in claiming that I deny the obvious truths that Israel was a redemptive type and holy nation, the reader will not find one sentence to that effect in all of *Theonomy*. And the reason why there is a dearth of evidence to support that portrayal of my perspective is that I just do not deny that Israel as a kingdom was a redemptive type of Christ's kingdom and was a holy nation by God's redeeming election. Kline has shot his largest theological cannon at a straw man. *Theonomy* nowhere asserts an *equivalency* between Israel's king and all other civil magistrates. It nowhere loses sight of the distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. Dr. Kline has not managed to give an accurate picture of his opponent's views. {204}

Although I was not writing a book centering on the discontinuity between Israel and the nations or the subject of typology, my sentiments are still clearly mentioned in these areas. Numerous types and foreshadows are spoken of in *Theonomy* (e.g., 42–43, 48–49, 141–42, 153, 185, 188, 207–13, 214–16, 226–27, 229–30, 437–38, 450, 465,

492)—including the typology of the promised land (203, 510, 513) which figures largely in Kline’s polemic. I speak of the gospel in the Old Testament (187), say that the Old Testament referred to Christ (195), that all of its covenants point to Christ (499). The exodus and possession of the promised land are said to be a time in Israel’s history “replete with redemptive typology of Christ and His saving economy” (464). I refer to the “thorough-going pattern of foreshadowings of the New Testament reality to be found in the Old Testament” (577), and I assert that the artistic and pedagogical designs of typology “inherent in the Scripture certainly must not be ignored” (456)! According to *Theonomy*, one would learn that the relation between the Old Covenant and the New is that of foreshadow and reality, anticipation and realization, expectation and fulfillment (188, 215, 227, 253).

In particular, I speak explicitly of the “Old Testament typological kingdom” with special reference to its political aspect (418–19), of the typological value of the positive commands (such as holy war, 581), Israel’s rulers (348), the king’s actions (408–9), and the typological and pedagogical value of the Older Testament penal sanctions (457). I say that the Old Testament system was a “model” (419), that Christ is the reality of which the Old Testament kingdom was the type (418). I clearly state, “With respect to typology it might be suggested that Israel as a nation is a type of the church of Christ. There is certainly scriptural warrant for that comparison” (455). Dr. Kline only loses credibility by telling his readers that I deny the redemptive typology of Old Testament theocratic Israel, even its geopolitical aspects.

It is just as incredible that I deny the holy status of Israel as a nation. I assert that the Old Covenant aimed to constitute Israel as a holy nation (185). I speak of God’s unique covenantal blessing and redemption of Israel (339), of the unique deliverance of the elect people (355), and a unique redemptive purpose with Israel (356). The written revelation given to Israel is said to be a special blessing (341). I indicate that Israel was to be a holy people (356), and this “holiness” or “separateness” was stressed by the law (209, 213). Indeed, the national separation of Yahweh’s bride, Israel, from the Gentiles is called the shadow of which the spiritual separation of Christ’s bride, the church, is called the reality (209–10).

I nowhere “equate” Israel’s king with those of ordinary civil governments. Nor do I overlook the differences between the Old and New {205} Covenants. I speak of the “legitimate and noteworthy discontinuities between Older Testament Israel and a national government today” (431). The special treatment given Israel and her kings is key-noted: while God was king over the nations, He was the covenant King *in* Israel (330), and He intervened in Israel’s history “in a special way” to indicate who should be king under Him (321, 406). Discontinuity between the kingdom of God as type and as reality is mentioned (418–19), and as an example the methods of advancing the kingdom are said to be different with the coming of Christ’s redemptive kingdom (418–19, 575). One will look in vain for any justification of Kline’s false portrayal of my theonomic view of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation.

(2) Kline’s second oversight in urging against theonomic politics these truths about Israel’s status as a redemptive type and holy nation is that the *kind of arguments* constructed from such truths are *already* answered in *Theonomy*. Kline insists that I have overlooked the obvious, but it turns out that the tables are actually turned. Kline wants to argue against the theonomic responsibility of the civil magistrate on the basis of typology, categorizing Old Testament political laws with the ceremonial laws, and the intrusive uniqueness of the theocracy. However, each one of these argumentative moves has previously been refuted in *Theonomy*. The attempt to liken the civil law to the ceremonial law is answered on pages 449–54. The attempt to dissolve the magistrate’s theonomic responsibility by typology is answered on pages 455–58. The attempt to undermine that theonomic responsibility on the basis of theocratic considerations (427–32), the redemptive uniqueness of Israel (339ff.), or considerations of intrusion (464–65, 580–84) are each answered. Kline is urging arguments which have already been refuted in my book. He not only misrepresents my position, he does not answer the rebuttal given to his own arguments against the position.

(3) It seems to me that a logical fallacy lies at the heart of Kline’s attempted argument against theonomic politics and accounts for his inability to portray the position accurately. Kline wants to emphasize the discontinuities between Israel and the nations, Israel and the New

Testament kingdom. Theonomic politics points out that there is a continuity to be found between Israel and the nations, Israel and the New Testament kingdom—namely, *a continuity of moral standards, private and public*. It seems that Kline reasons in this fashion: since theonomic politics argues for a continuity, it must deny *all* discontinuity (hence Kline’s portrayal of me as saying that the theocratic king is equivalent to any other civil magistrate, etc.). Likewise: since redemptive typology and holy election set Israel apart from other kingdoms of the world, there should be *no* continuity found between Israel and the nations (hence Kline’s rejection of the theonomic responsibility of the civil magistrate). These would be extremely {206} hasty generalizations. The fact that two things have one or more things in common does not imply that they have all things in common, just as the presence of one or more differences between them does not imply that they are completely different. A *combination* of continuities and discontinuities can characterize the relationship between two things. Therefore, the fact that someone recognizes the common geometrical shape of the Bible and the phone book does not prove that he sees no difference in the contents of the books! In the same way, the fact that someone recognizes the common moral standard between Israel and the nations does not prove that he denies any uniqueness to Israel (say, as a redemptive type and holy nation). Kline *appears* to have written his critique without due regard for the fallacy of sweeping or hasty generalization.

(4) Kline’s argument is open to a rather obvious *reductio ad absurdum*. He has reasoned that the “socio-geo-political sector of the Israelite kingdom of God was a part of the total system of kingdom typology” (175)—not just a portion of the kingdom was typological, such as temple or cultus, but the entire kingdom itself (176). Therefore, he reasons, the sociopolitical laws, being part of the “total system of kingdom typology,” ought not to be followed today in the age of the Messiah’s antitypical kingdom (177). One should now stop and remember that the laws given to Israel to regulate sexual relations, for instance, were also just as much a part of the kingdom established by God—a “total system of kingdom typology”—as the political or ceremonial laws mentioned by Kline. Following his *proposed pattern of reasoning*, we should conclude that the sexual laws of the Mosaic code are not to be honored in this day of Messiah’s antitypical kingdom. Anyone

who insists that bestiality is contrary to God's permanent and objective moral standards is—on Kline's view—*ipso facto* denying the status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation! But surely this is unacceptable. Being “a part of” (Kline's ambiguous words, 175) a kingdom which is typological-as-a-whole of the coming kingdom of Christ does not disqualify a commandment as a universal and abiding moral standard, or else Kline's argument proves *far too much*.

(5) It turns out, then, that both Kline and theonomists acknowledge the status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation. This observation does not separate them. What does? Kline apparently feels that this unique status of Israel *implies* that her sociopolitical laws are not normative for other nations, past or present. The reader will notice that throughout Kline's review of my book, he does nothing more than appeal to this unique status of Israel as a datum. He nowhere *completes* the argument by showing how the premise of Israel's unique status implies that her sociopolitical laws are not binding on any other nation. Nor does he guard against *reductio* counterarguments or explicate ambiguous metaphors such as “part of ... a total system of typology.” Everything points to the conclusion {207} that Kline feels the implication is so “obvious” as to need no further comment. Theonomists, on the other hand, do not think that the unique status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation implies that God has a double-standard of morality, one for Israel and one for others (regarding sex, economics, truth, life, politics, or what have you). That is, theonomists do not think that Israel's properly recognized unique status implies a discontinuity in moral standards between Israel and the nations, past or present. Who is correct, Kline or the theonomists? Does the status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation imply continuity or discontinuity as to moral standards? The only standard for answering this question is, not someone's personal opinion or a favorite textbook in biblical theology, but the word of God alone. Scripture itself often delimits what the doctrinal implications of its teachings are. For instance, Scripture teaches that Christ was both God and man. If some theologian reasons that the deity of Christ implies that He could not hunger or die, then we need only point to the scriptural teachings about His hunger and death to disprove the alleged implication. Likewise, if Kline argues that the (“obvious”) *implication* of the biblical

teaching about Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation is that the Mosaic sociopolitical laws are not normative outside of Old Testament Israel, then we need only test this implication by the teaching of the Bible. Should the Bible teach that those laws were and are normative outside of Old Testament Israel, Kline's implication would be decisively disproved. Now it turns out that a good portion of *Theonomy* is given over to demonstrating that the Bible teaches the normativity of the Mosaic sociopolitical laws outside of Old Testament Israel. Kline renders not a single answer or explanation for all of the evidence which has been adduced against his proposed implication. The examples of Sodom, Nineveh, the expulsion of the Canaanites, David's intentions, Ezra's praise of Artaxerxes, Daniel's experience in Babylon, the prophetic rebukes of the nations, the wisdom literature, the "man of lawlessness," the testimony of Paul in court, Romans 13, etc., are all strong disproofs of Kline's implication. Thus, we must conclude that his argument is unbiblical as to its reasoning and implication. The status of Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation does not imply *in biblical perspective or logic* the discontinuity of moral standards between Israel and the nations, past or present. The Mosaic law (by which all men are condemned, says Romans 1–3) was a *model* for all nations to follow (Deut. 4:6, 8).

(6) Kline's attempt to work through his argument against theonomic politics is crippled by its dependence on false portrayals of the theonomic position. He claims that I cannot acknowledge the typological-redemptive nature of Israel's sociopolitical laws and still hold that they are binding, for I hold that the typological-redemptive nature of the ceremonial laws implies that they are abrogated (175). However, he misconstrues my position here. {208}

I hold that the ceremonial laws are still *normative* (as explained earlier) but observed *in Christ* by the New Testament believer. Thus, the attempted display of inconsistency fails for obvious reasons. (Lest anyone think that Kline's point can be restated in a way that accurately portrays my position—e.g., if the typological-redemptive nature of the ceremonial laws means they are inoperative but observed in Christ, why could not the typological-redemptive nature of the sociopolitical laws mean that they too are inoperative but observed in Christ?—it should be recalled that the attempt to treat Old Testament civil laws in

the same way as ceremonial laws has been answered in *Theonomy*, 449–54).

Furthermore, it is *not at all clear what Kline means* by saying that the sociopolitical laws of Israel had a “typological-redemptive” nature. That they had a typological value has already been acknowledged, but that they were “redemptive” is uncertain. At one point he explains that Israel’s political kingdom was *part of a total system* of kingdom typology looking ahead to the *redemptive* kingdom of Christ (175). In this sense his argument has already been refuted. At another point he suggests that Israel’s civil laws were *themselves* “expressive of the restorative-redemptive principle”—*just as much as the cultic laws*—because the political aspect of Israel’s life was part of the ceremonial-typological dimension of God’s kingdom (175 & n. 4). Of course, this is an unacceptable and unbiblical proposal. The Old Testament ceremonial law was designed to propitiate the anger of God and reconcile Him to the sinner (e.g., the sacrifices), to facilitate the very presence of God in the congregation’s midst (e.g., the temple), to present the people cleansed before God (e.g., circumcision, cleansing rites), and to symbolize the separateness of the redeemed from the world (e.g., dietary laws, prohibitions on kinds of mixing), etc. The civil laws of Israel served none of these essentially redemptive and restorative purposes. For instance, the execution of a rapist did not reconcile the sinner with God, make him ceremonially clean, serve the temple, or separate Jew from Gentile. In this second sense, then, Kline’s claim that the civil laws were “redemptive” is just not true to the Bible; they do not foreshadow the saving work of the Messiah in any scriptural sense or suggestion. Thirdly, Kline explains his claim that the civil laws were “redemptive” by saying that Israel’s political kingdom was a *redemptive product* (176). In this sense, his suggestion would be true but irrelevant to the kind of argument in which the suggestion is used against the theonomic thesis. The theonomist considers the ceremonial law redemptive or restorative because it brought salvation from the punishment due to sin—*not merely because it was included in the ways of a people who were the redemptive product of God* (i.e., delivered from Egyptian bondage). Thus, no inconsistency can be shown along this line, as if the “redemptive-product” ceremonial laws are deemed inoperative today but the “redemptive-product” {209} civil laws are deemed operative. Dr. Kline

has equivocated on the sense in which the sociopolitical laws are said to have a “redemptive-typological” nature.

Kline’s attempt to work through his argument about the holiness of Israel as a nation is undermined again by his false portrayal of the theonomic position. According to him, the biblical distinction between the holy and the common has been rendered pointless and meaningless (178). But why? Because theonomists, allege Kline, “equate” the ordinary civil institutions of the world with Israel’s theocratic kingdom (178) and say that God’s kingdom Israel was just another civil government (178). Yet Kline falsely *infers* that equation from *Theonomy* and does not take it from the position at all. He is criticizing a premise found in some *other* perspective than that of theonomic politics! And just because theonomists do not equate the king in Israel with any other civil ruler, Kline’s sharp references to the request for a king in the days of Samuel and to the Davidic covenant are pointless (176). I agree with the suggestions of Edersheim, Hengstenberg, O. T. Allis, F. F. Bruce, and others that the evil of the Israelite request for a king did not lie in the kingship *per se*, but in the motivation and attitude of the people, and I have no trouble acknowledging the uniqueness of the Davidic covenant’s king who was—by positive commandment, not standing law—to perform the typological act of building the house of God. Nothing here is contrary to theonomic politics.

(7) In conclusion, it must be clear by now that *Theonomy* never said or even implied what Kline attributes to it. I do not deny, but gladly affirm, the typological value of Israel’s king and political laws, nor do I overlook the distinction between Israel as a holy nation and the other political entities as common nations. With my other Reformed brethren, I do not identify God’s kingdom with a local, geopolitical institution today, and I would identify the King in this kingdom only with the ascended Christ. However, I would certainly disagree with Dr. Kline if he felt that these facts settle the ethical question of the theonomic responsibility of non-Israelite civil rulers. Not only were Israel’s king and political laws *unlike* those of other nations (e.g., the kings and laws of the other nations did not, except with rare exception, typify the coming kingdom of Christ; Yahweh was enthroned in Israel but over the nations), they were also *like* those of other nations. There was discontinuity *and* continuity. It is the latter (continuity) that *Theonomy*

takes up as a subject. Like all rulers and laws, Israel's kings and commandments addressed historical problems of government, performed common political functions, dealt with preconsummation issues of crime and punishment. God's law was *not* given exclusively as a foreshadow of consummation (remember, no explicit statement of Scripture speaks of the law in this way anyway); it also rendered impartial *justice* in preconsummation situations. And common to {210} *all* civil rulers is God's demand for justice in their proceedings. Indeed, all civil magistrates are to be "ministers of God" who punish "evildoers." Questions of typology and unique holiness aside, the ethical question of justice must be faced by all those who rule among men. Where can God's minister (be he Nero or David) find the standards of justice which will enable him to punish genuine evildoers? The notion that God has a double standard of justice is not only ethical nonsense, it is reprehensible to everything the Bible tells us of His character and actions. *Theonomy* indicates that the justice of God—even for civil, temporal affairs—is revealed in His law, constantly communicated by general revelation and given written expression (progressively) in the Old Testament—most pointedly in the Mosaic law. Christ did not intend to have the slightest stroke of that law altered (Matt. 5:17–19). Moses said that the nations should imitate the law given to Israel as a geopolitical unit (Deut. 4:6, 8), and God held the nations (e.g., Sodom, the expelled Canaanites, Artaxerxes) accountable to the objective and universal standard of His law. *In this respect*—moral standards, even for socio-political affairs—*Israel was very much like every other civil institution* on earth, and the very holiness of Israel's law made it a common standard of justice for the nations.

Dr. Kline must recognize upon reflection (as I am sure he does) that the holy/common distinction he wishes to use is *qualified* in Scripture (relative, a matter of degrees)—not categorical (absolute, without degrees of comparison). Israel as a nation had a special holiness, to be sure, over against the reprobate nations. Yet the divine law revealed to Israel was holy as reflecting the very character of God (Lev. 20:7–8); as that character did not change from nation to nation or time to time, the holiness expressed in the Mosaic law was objectively normative for all nations at all times. If justice is to be established in the earth, then even the remotest nations will need God's law (Isa. 42:4); God did not view

Israel's unique holiness as somehow disqualifying the nations from coming to Israel to hear the declaration of the law from Zion (Isa. 2:2–4). All the earth is to worship the Lord in holy array (Ps. 96:9), and the Lord reigns over the nations upon His holy throne (Ps. 47:8). The whole earth is in some sense holy unto the Lord, and it is a disgrace for any people to violate the standards of holiness and sin against God (Prov. 14:34). In the days of God's universal reign, the holy/common distinction will be least pronounced, for even the horses' bells and every ordinary kitchen pot will be "holy unto Yahweh" (Zech. 14:20–21). What we observe in Scripture, therefore, is that the unique typological value and holiness of Israel's kings and law did not cancel out the *common standards of justice* between Israel and the nations as expressed in the law. Contrary to Kline's pattern of ethical reasoning, elements of discontinuity did not wipe {211} out all traces of moral continuity. As Paul says, *both Jew and Gentile* are found to be under the *requirements of the law* (Rom. 1:32; 2:12, 14–15, 17–23; 3:9, 19–20, 23).

An Equivocation: The Name-of-the-Redeemer Argument

In his hurry to dispatch the theonomic approach to the political ethics, Kline seizes upon an isolated and generalized statement in *Theonomy* which he treats as inconsistent with the theonomic outlook. I said that "the state does not operate in the name of the Redeemer," for the *church* is the agency of God's saving mercy (426). Kline takes my expression, purports to agree with it, and then concludes that, accordingly, the state cannot enforce the first four commandments of the Decalogue, since they require proper worship of the God who identifies Himself in the preamble as the Redeemer (179). According to Kline, this alleged inconsistency in the theonomic outlook really destroys the whole position. To say that the state does not operate in the name of the Redeemer is to allow "a decisive difference" between Israelite kingship and the civil magistrate outside of Israel, and the "obvious implications" of this difference "will sooner or later" require the rejection of theonomic politics (180).

Kline moves a bit too hastily here to the argumentative kill. In the first place, his argument rests on a conspicuous equivocation on the expression "operate in the name of the Redeemer." He takes my expression, forgets the sense which I have given it in context, substitutes his

own sense for the expression, and then asserts that I am inconsistent in using the expression! At best we find here little more than a verbal dispute. When I said that the state does not operate in the name of the Redeemer, I was drawing a general distinction between an agency of mercy and an agency of justice (i.e., between the church and the state). By the phrase, I meant that the state and the church have different aims and different methods: the state does not promote the gospel, the church does not use the sword (see *Theonomy*, 426 again). By not “operating in the name of the Redeemer,” the state does not enforce a profession of saving faith. That is what I meant. Now what *Kline wishes to mean* by the expression is that the state does not enforce any law revealed by God as the Redeemer. These are clearly different senses for the expression under consideration! Only by reading into the expression a conception which is contradictory to the theonomic thesis can Kline allege that the use of the expression ultimately disproves the very thesis I have been setting forth.

Now Kline may wish to argue that only *his* conception of the meaning of this expression is “the correct” one. But if that were true (forgetting the false theory of language the assertion entails), then he would simply show that I have incorrectly used an expression—not that theonomic politics has been undermined! {212}

Notice further that Kline’s approach to this matter again *proves far too much*. If commands which are revealed by God as Redeemer are not to be valid or enforced outside of theocratic Israel (and possibly the church), then *none* of the ten commandments would be authoritative outside of Israel (and the church)—which is clearly unbiblical.

Further, the reader should note that Kline’s idea that commands revealed by God as Redeemer are inapplicable outside of Israel (and the church) rests on a faulty understanding of *distinctions*. (Philosophers for ages have discoursed on the kinds and importance of distinctions—for instance, distinctions of reason, of reality, of modality, etc.) A father is distinct from a husband, even though they be the same person; the morning star is distinct from the evening star, but they are not different planets! The Creator is distinct from the Redeemer, but these titles or functions pertain to the same divine being. To assume that the justice of the Creator could be different from the justice of the Redeemer is something Dr. Kline should have to argue at some length, for thereby

he appears to destroy the unity and simplicity of the one, living and true God.

Alleged Inconsistency: Deuteronomy Thirteen and Evangelism

Kline's third and final argument against theonomic politics is that it creates "a contradiction within God's preceptive will" (188). How does it do so? Well, theonomic politics claims that the sociopolitical law of God is normative today, and that would mean enforcing Deuteronomy 13, which requires execution for those who engage in a false religion—which would in effect destroy the church's mission field (187). Thus, claims Kline, God's commission to the magistrate would stand in "unmanageable tension" with His commission to the church (186). In short, Deuteronomy 13 is inconsistent with evangelism.

This is the poorest of Kline's arguments, it seems to me. *Theonomy* already shows that capital punishment is not genuinely incompatible with evangelistic concern (447-49), and Kline acknowledges that the treatment of this subject is successful (187)! Thus, the argument has already been answered, by Kline's own admission. The only issue to resolve now is the question of *what kinds of crimes require capital punishment*, and according to *Theonomy*, only God's law can decide.

However, Kline claims that the inconsistency he has tried to pin on theonomic politics "does not reduce to the general question" of whether support for capital punishment is consistent with evangelism (187). But why doesn't it? Kline does not say. He gives no explanation for this *prima facie* error on his part. The general question of the compatibility of capital punishment with evangelism is precisely the background to the particular question of the compatibility of capital punishment for rape (or murder, or kidnapping, or public idolatry, or any other particular illustration) {213} with evangelistic concern. Deuteronomy 13 raises in a *particular* instance the *general* question. That seems obvious. But Kline denies it. Why? Unhappily for his readers, he never explains his counterintuitive reasoning for us. We are never told why Deuteronomy 13 is a completely different kind of instance—why *it is* inconsistent with evangelism, but (say) Exodus 21 or Genesis 9 is not.

Perhaps it is because Kline feels that execution for idolatrous subversion (Deuteronomy 13) is—unlike execution for rape or murder—exe-

cution for precisely the reason that the church should evangelize: namely, unbelief. But that would not be true to biblical teaching. Kline will hold either that the crime referred to in Deuteronomy 13 is an *indicator* of unbelief (thus showing that the criminals involved need evangelizing) or that Deuteronomy 13 actually calls for execution for the alleged crime of *unbelief itself* (thus destroying the church's mission field *just because it is* a mission field). In either case, he would be making quite a mistake in his thinking. Rape and murder are just as surely *indicators* of unbelief as is the crime described in Deuteronomy 13; consequently, if Kline feels it is inconsistent to support both evangelism and execution for the crimes of Deuteronomy 13, then he should likewise feel it is inconsistent in the cases of rape and murder. Deuteronomy 13 would thus *not* be a special case, as Kline has portrayed it.

Therefore, we are left with the hypothesis that Kline feels that Deuteronomy 13 requires execution precisely for unbelief itself—unlike the other biblical requirements of execution for rape, murder, etc. This might account for his contention that Deuteronomy 13 is, unlike other cases, contradictory to evangelism—that the state's commission would be in a head-on collision with the church's commission. However, if Kline's assumption is that Deuteronomy 13 requires execution for unbelief itself, then his argument is simply built upon a false premise. This portion of the law of God prescribes a penalty for *solicitation and seduction to idolatry* (Driver, *I.C.C.*, 150) which, under the circumstances, amounted to treason, revolt, or rebellion (Kline, *Treaty of the Great King*, 84–86) and thus applied to “urban revolutionaries” whose subversive treason undermined the constitution of the state (Craigie, *N.I.C.O.T.*, 222, 226); the law has analogies with prohibitions of sedition in other Near Eastern treaties, such as that from Esarhaddon. Matthew Henry correctly observes that such a law allowed for the preservation, but not the propagation, of true worship. Calvin makes the important observation that not until a positive religion is established in the society and received by public consent would such a law come into play (*Harmony*, vol. 2, 75); in a well-constituted polity, profane men who subvert its religion and break forth into rebellion are not to be tolerated (77–78). Rushdoony explicitly points out that such a law would not apply to a missionary situation (*Institutes of Biblical Law*, 39). The relevant {214} point here, though, is that the law does not—

contrary to the supposed assumption in Kline's argument—execute men simply on the grounds of unbelief itself. Rushdoony openly declares, "It should be noted that Deuteronomy 13:5–18 does not call for the death penalty for unbelief or for heresy." It turns out, then, that Kline is incorrect to think that Deuteronomy 13 requires the civil magistrate to destroy the church's mission field *just because* it is a mission field of unbelief. Accordingly, Kline is wrong to portray it as in "unmanageable tension" with evangelism.

The weakness and fundamental error of Kline's argument can be seen in another way. Essentially, he argues that the sociopolitical law of God cannot be deemed valid today since its validity would create a contradiction within God's preceptive will, being inconsistent with evangelism. Upon reflection, it will dawn on the reader that this argument presupposes the *absence* of evangelism in the Old Testament period, for Deuteronomy 13—which cannot be squared with evangelism today according to Kline—would have created a contradiction within God's prescriptive will for evangelism during the period of its undisputed validity. However, it should be obvious to any student of the Old Testament that the Israelites needed to be called to faith and repentance (e.g., Deut. 30:8; Josh. 24:15; Lev. 5:5; 16:29–31; Deut. 10:16; Ezek. 18:30–31) and needed to witness to their children (e.g., Deut. 6:7, 20–25). Proselytism was an Old Testament reality (e.g., Ex. 12:48). Indeed, a salient mark of the Old Covenant was that in it one needed to call upon his neighbors and family to "know Jehovah" (Jer. 31:34). If the Old Covenant period was devoid of evangelism, what are we to make of the conversions of Rahab, Ittai (David's loyalist), or the northern sojourners at Hezekiah's great passover feast (2 Chron. 30:25)? What should we make of David's felt obligation to witness among the nations (Ps. 18:49), his prayer that salvation would be known among all the nations (Ps. 67), or his confidence that all the ends of the earth would be converted (Ps. 22:27)? How can we understand the missionary thrust of the prophets (e.g., Isa. 2:2–4; 19:25; 40:5, 9; 42:6; 45:22; 49:6; 56:7; 66:19; Zech. 8:23; cf. Ps. 68:31; 85:92)? If evangelism was absent in the Old Testament period, how do we account for the ministries of Elijah to the Sidonian widow, the servant girl to Naaman's wife, Jonah in Nineveh, or John the Baptist at the Jordan? It is simply incredible to hold that evangelism was not present in the Old

Testament period or part of God's prescriptive will during that time. But if that is so, then according to Kline's reasoning, Deuteronomy 13 created a contradiction within God's prescriptive will—an "unmanageable tension." To be consistent with his argument against theonomic politics, then, Kline would have to reject the validity of Deuteronomy 13 during the *Old Covenant* era *as well as* today—which we all admit reduces the argument to absurdity. If Deuteronomy 13 was consistent with evangelism in the Old Testament, it certainly can be {215} deemed consistent with evangelism in the New Testament, and that is how a theonomist sees it.

Conclusion

Dr. Kline has given a critical reply—not a review—to *Theonomy* as it touches on sociopolitical ethics. Very little of his reply is actually germane to the debate between us on this score. Dr. Kline has omitted to answer *any* of the positive biblical and theological arguments set forth in *Theonomy* and has failed to produce any biblical passages or arguments *contrary* to theonomic politics—all the while admitting that the Confessional presumption is in favor of that position.

Getting down to the heart of the matter, Dr. Kline offers three polemics against theonomic politics. His argument from Israel as a redemptive type and holy nation misrepresents me as overlooking these truths, fails to consider rebuttals in my book against arguments which attempt to build on these truths, and commits the logical fallacy of hasty generalization. I have observed that, if anything, his argument proves too much, employs an unbiblical pattern of theological implication, and cannot be worked out without caricaturing the perspective of theonomic politics. Even given the biblical uniqueness of Israel as a kingdom, what she held in common with the nations was *the objective, universal, and permanent standard of God's justice, revealed in His holy law*.

Dr. Kline's argument from my statement that the state does not operate in the name of the Redeemer simply rests upon an equivocation and is thus fallacious. This argument was also seen to prove too much if anything. Finally, Dr. Kline's argument that theonomic politics—by following Deuteronomy 13—is inconsistent with evangelism is unexplained. Apparently it rests upon faulty reasoning about other capital

crimes and evangelism, or it depends on a mistaken understanding of what the law punishes according to this passage. Moreover, the argument proves too much again, implying that evangelism would need to be absent from the Old Testament will of God.

Consequently Dr. Kline has not offered a valid or cogent argument against theonomic politics, nor has he defended non-theonomic politics against the many biblical arguments which have been set forth in my book. The expected decisive line of objection has failed to materialize.

Addendum: Kline's Critique of Postmillennialism

Although Kline's polemic against postmillennialism is not logically or theologically relevant to his debate with me over sociopolitical ethics, some readers may be interested nonetheless in a brief response to this aspect of his article as well.

1. According to Kline, the postmillennialist does not really have a millennial {216} fulfillment for the visible kingdom of God prophesied in the Old Testament (179–81). Why not? In short, Kline claims that this prophesied kingdom is a geopolitical institution operating in the name of the Redeemer. Now the state does not operate in the name of the Redeemer, the visible church is not geopolitical, Christ's moral influence is not institutional, and a merger of the nations with the church is contrary to their separation as taught in the New Testament. Hence nothing is left to fulfill the prophecies.

Let it first be observed that Kline may be misconceiving the *visibility* of the millennial kingdom's prosperity which I stress. This visibility is set over against amillennial notions of such a spiritual (inward or intermediate state) and diminutive (permanent remnant) "reign" that it could virtually be ignored or unacknowledged by the world and never have a widespread influence in the affairs of ordinary life. The enemies of Christ will be aware that they have been put under His feet as a footstool (Ps. 110:1–2; Acts 2:33–36; Heb. 10:12–13; 1 Cor. 15:24–26), and the number of the redeemed will be noteworthy (Ps. 22:27; Isa. 9:7; 11:9; Matt. 13:31–32; Rom. 11:11–15, 25–26).

Next, Kline may be reading *into* the Old Testament prophecies the very features which he accuses postmillennialists of omitting. In particular, he imposes an institutional conception on the kingdom, and he

erroneously reads the geopolitical feature of the kingdom literalistically.

In the end, however, the question remains whether the postmillennialist has any fulfillment for the kingdom prophecies of the Old Testament. Obviously my answer is that he does. As Kline quotes me, this fulfillment is found in “Christ’s established kingdom on earth” (180). This kingdom is the active, supernatural, redemptive, and sovereign authority and reign of God in Christ which delivers men from eternal destruction, breaks the power of evil, brings covenantal blessing, and extends the dominion of the Lord throughout their lives, and which operates to overcome everything which is hostile to the divine rule. The kingdom is the dominion of Christ, the exercise of His sovereign authority (Matt. 6:33; 12:28; 28:18; Rev. 12:10). Its domain or realm includes the present world (Matt. 13:24–30, 38, 41), and its ultimate territory—after the destruction of Satan, the resurrection of the saints, and the separation of wheat and tares or sheep and goats—will be the new heavens and earth wherein righteousness dwells (Matt. 13:43; 25:34; cf. 2 Pet. 3:12–13). The kingdom was established at the coming of Jesus Christ (Matt. 12:28; Luke 17:21) with power to bless and punish (Mark 9:1); it was appointed by the Father unto Christ (Luke 22:29). Its consummation is yet future (Matt. 6:10; Gal. 5:21; 2 Pet. 1:11), when after His victory Christ will deliver the kingdom up to the Father again (1 Cor. 15:24–28). At present the established but unconsummated kingdom is growing (Matt. 13:31–33) as men receive it {217} in humility (Mark 10:15) and bring forth its fruit (Matt. 21:43). Although the “kingdom” is not synonymous with the “church” (e.g., Acts 8:12; 19:8; 28:23), the kingdom does create and work through the church (Matt. 16:18–19) for its advantage (Eph. 1:20–23). Thus the kingdom, entered through new birth (John 3:3, 5) by the redeemed already (Col. 1:13), is essentially and positively speaking righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17) and can be identified with believers in whom the Lord rules (Rev. 1:6; 5:9). However, the presence of the kingdom prior to the consummation does not mean the elimination or absence of unbelievers who resist the word and authority of Christ (Matt. 13:36–43). Because of them and their spiritual leader, Satan, the entering of the kingdom can entail suffering for the saints (Acts 14:22; 2 Thess. 1:5), who deem the kingdom worth any price (Matt. 13:44–46). As

indicated already, the kingdom is presently growing—in numbers and influence; the King is drawing men to Himself and extending His dominion through them. The kingdom will become quite large and transform all things (Matt. 13:31–33) as many are saved (Rom. 11:12–15, 25–26) and Christ gains preeminence in all things (Col. 1:13–20). It will come to dominate the kingdom of this world (Rev. 11:15) through the making of the nations Christ’s disciples and teaching them to observe His commands (Matt. 28: 18–20). When men enter the kingdom they are delivered from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13), work for the kingdom (Col. 4:11), and produce the fruit appropriate to Christ’s dominion (Matt. 13:23; 21:43). They have the dominion of Christ come to expression in all aspects of their lives and behavior; the kingdom is entered for righteous living (Matt. 5:19–20), with the result that God’s will comes to be done on earth (Matt. 6:10). Accordingly, our faith overcomes the evil influence of the world (1 John 5:4–5), the saints exercise authority over the nations (Eph. 2:5–6, with Heb. 1:3; Rev. 2:26–27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4–6), Satan’s house is progressively spoiled (Matt. 12:29), and Christ subdues all of His enemies (1 Cor. 15:25).

The preceding brief rehearsal of the postmillennial concept of the kingdom can, I believe, accommodate the prosperity prophesied by the Old Testament—both its spiritual and cultural dimensions. (The reader will want to note well at just this point that the postmillennialist, while applying many prophecies of prosperity to the preconsummation kingdom on earth, does not deny for a moment that some Old Testament prophecies pertain to the consummation of all things.) Kline’s criticism that the postmillennialist has no genuine fulfillment for the Old Testament prophecies is thus found to be completely baseless and futile. Ironically, it is just because amillennialism cannot accommodate the prosperity of the Old Testament expectation—the vast number of converts and their righteous influence in all areas of life, from ecclesiastical (Mal. 1:11) to sociopolitical (Isa. 42:4), or the {218} visibility of Messiah’s victorious dominion (Ps. 72)—that Kline’s amillennialism has no millennial fulfillment of the prophesied kingdom in the Old Testament, needing to project its realization—despite inappropriate features such as national divisions, warfare, oppression, injustice, and death—into the eternal state. Kline’s criticism is unwittingly self-destructive.

2. The same kind of self-destructive criticism is found in Kline's accusation that postmillennialism employs a wooden literalism which is unappreciative of prophetic idiom conditioned and limited by its typological model (181–82). This is an odd charge to make in light of the way in which postmillennialists, past and present, have insisted on interpreting Old Testament prophecy according to New Testament guidelines (e.g., the promised land was typological of a spiritual kingdom—Gal. 3:16; Eph. 1:14; Heb. 11:8–10, 13–16; 1 Pet. 1:4–5) and on taking account of metaphorical language in the Old Testament prophets (e.g., Isa. 11:6–9 does not have a zoological referent; cf. Isa. 2:2–4; 9:6–7). Even Kline cannot take seriously the charge that postmillennialists are literalists; he recognizes nonliteralistic interpretation in their writings. Consequently he revises his criticism. Having begun with the false premise of literalism in postmillennialism, Kline takes nonliteralistic interpretation in postmillennialism as evidence of *inconsistent* literalism (182)! This kind of misrepresentation, projection, and then attack is futile polemics. Moreover, Kline's one example of this alleged "inconsistent literalism" is somewhat startling. When I cite Micah 4:2, taking the reference to Jerusalem ("Jehovah's mountain" and "house") nonliterally for the kingdom of God to come, but taking "many nations" literally as the Gentile peoples, Kline charges me with hermeneutical inconsistency (182). As surprising as this may be, Kline says everything in the verse must be taken non-literally if anything is. Even "the nations" must be viewed as symbolic (one's strained imagination must query, "symbolic of *what?*"). However, this is completely unfaithful to common biblical patterns of interpretation. Often enough in Scripture someone, taken with denotative literalism, is said to do something or have something done to him, described figuratively or symbolically. In Jeremiah 51:63–64, for instance, "Babylon" is quite literally the political empire, but the sinking to the bottom of the Euphrates River like a stone is only symbolic of its downfall. This is *not* inconsistent hermeneutics. In Isaiah 9:1–2 "Zebulun" and "Naphtali" are literal, while the shining "light" is figurative; if this is inconsistent hermeneutics, then Matthew was guilty of it (Matt. 4:12–16). In Zechariah 13:7 the subject is figurative ("the sheep"), and the predicated action is literal ("shall be scattered"), as we see in Matthew 26:31; this can hardly be deemed inconsistent literalism. Similarly, in Amos 9:11–

12 the “nations” (Gentiles) are literal, even though the rebuilt “tabernacle of David” is {219} figurative, as Acts 15:14–18 makes clear. What Kline calls inconsistent literalism in my interpretation of Micah 4:2 thus turns out to be a common biblical pattern of interpretation. One is still left wondering what alternative interpretation for “nations” Kline is suggesting.

In bringing his criticism, Kline falls into misrepresenting me again. He says that I take “nations” in the sense of civil governments as such in Micah 4:2, and he intimates that I embarrassingly omit the obviously figurative references to “the mountain of the Lord” (182). This is misleading. I cite Micah 4:2 to demonstrate the anticipated rule of God’s law *outside* of Israel—that is, among the Gentile nations (*Theonomy*, 428–29); the application to the civil magistrates of the Gentiles is taken from other passages altogether. The omission of the words referring to the mountain of Jehovah was simply for the sake of brevity; the similar words of Isaiah are readily quoted elsewhere without any felt need for censoring (see *Theonomy*, 192–93). Kline is again merely knocking down a straw man.

The most damaging observation to be made about Kline’s criticism of postmillennialism for “wooden literalism,” however, is that in the end *he* is actually the literalist! It turns out that he—not the postmillennialist—insists on suppressing prophetic idiom taken from the then-operative typological model of the Old Testament, for he teaches that the “institutional framework” of the Old Testament prophecies and their “geopolitical” feature *must* be taken literally, *rather than* expunged through figurative interpretation. Consequently, says Kline, these kingdom prophecies—interpreted literally as to their institutional and geopolitical characteristics—necessarily apply to the eternal state after the consummation (182–83, cf. 180, 185). Ironically then, it is evident that all the while that Kline is accusing postmillennialism of literalism, he is actually the literalist. His criticism has again turned out to be self-destructive.

3. Misrepresentations which belittle my position, make it a straw man, and assail my Christian character are so replete that, as the reader examines Dr. Kline’s polemic against my postmillennial position, I would have him fully aware that I *wholeheartedly reject* the following positions and attitudes attributed to me by Dr. Kline (some mentioned

already above): that the Old Testament Israelite king is equivalent to civil magistrates elsewhere (179); that the church on earth is to be identified with the kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament (180); that the kingdom is merely the general moral sway in the hearts of the elect (181); that I do not perceive the typological nature of the Old Testament kingdom (181); that I de-emphasize and devalue the consummation victory and glory (185; cf. *Theonomy*, 486); that I demean evangelism and the saving of individual sinners, grumble at it without social and political impact, and have a depreciatory attitude toward the church's outreach with the Savior's love to a perishing {220} world (185–86); that I make the Holy Spirit's building of the worldwide church of Christ for two thousand years tantamount to surrendering the world to the devil (186); and that I expect only a fleeting and superficial conversion of the nations at the very end of history (186). The use of obvious caricature only suggests that one's own position is so weak as to call for this form of rebuttal.

4. Finally, Kline's main theological objection to postmillennialism is that it entails a premature eclipse of the order of "common grace" (183) and thereby attributes unfaithfulness to God (184). Of course, this mention of "common grace" is theological shorthand, a generalization for certain dogmas entertained by Kline. If postmillennialism contradicts Kline's notion of common grace, this will only be fatal for postmillennialism—and a genuine contradiction to the divine faithfulness—if Kline's notion of common grace is taught in the inspired Scripture. Kline never shows us that it is. It is dubious that he could show such a thing, given the internal contradictions within his notion of common grace and given the apparently unbiblical implications of his notion. However, until he attempts to refute postmillennialism from the passages of Scripture which he takes to buttress his notion of common grace, we will not be able to say for sure. And until he attempts this kind of refutation, biblically minded postmillennialists need not feel any pressure to alter their position.

Kline's notion of common grace deserves at least short inspection. Essential to the order of common grace, according to him, is the institution of the common state which—"unlike the nation Israel"—has a mixed citizenry of holy and non-holy (183). This is hard to believe. Israel's citizenry was without admixture of non-holy elements? God's

faithfulness in preserving an order of common grace means He must see to it that a non-holy citizenry exists somewhere? Kline also says that common grace means that a people's experience of temporal prosperity and adversity is not proportioned to their obedience to God—as it was in Israel—but is unpredictably determined by an inscrutable divine sovereignty (184). Israel did not enjoy common grace (cf. Gen. 8:21–22)? Israel always deserved exactly what she experienced in blessing and always fully experienced the cursing that she deserved? Non-Israelite people or societies cannot generally predict that things will go better for them in this life if they obey the voice of God rather than spurning it? (cf. Ps. 34; Prov. 14:34; Matt. 6:33; e.g., Lev. 18:24–27; Deut. 8:19–20; Ps. 2:10–12; Jonah 3; Hab. 2:12; Rom. 1:18–32; etc.). Since temporal suffering is meted out to the disobedient in the church (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:28–34), thereby intruding the principles of the final judgment into preconsummation history, are believers deprived of “common” grace by enjoying God's *special* grace? Is this grace at all? One begins to reel under the confusions and inconsistencies in the syndrome of dogmas which go under Kline's title of “common grace.”

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It is not at all clear why Kline thinks that the widespread acceptance of the gospel around the world and the progressive sanctification of men and their societies would “deprive” unbelievers of God's “principle of commonness in the bestowing of temporal benefits” (184). This seems to be based on my passing comments (taken from Scripture) that kings and nations perish for resisting the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which Kline takes to be equivalent to an enforced submission of the world nations to Christ's government (183). Kline wants to know how these nations perish if not by holy war on the part of converted nations, the church taking up the sword, or direct divine plague; he suggests that Deuteronomy 13 must play a role here (187). In the first place, submission to Christ's kingdom is not physically enforced at all according to biblical postmillennialism (cf. 2 Cor. 10:4); the sword is not part of the church's armor (cf. *Theonomy*, 414–21). Holy war was only by direct and positive divine instruction, thus being precluded today (cf. *Theonomy*, 525–26, 581, 583). Immediate judgment from heaven is not taught as a postmillennial expectation, and the error of applying Deuteronomy 13 to the perishing of unconverted nations has been dis-

cussed previously. My passing reference to Isaiah 60:12—the slim reed on which Kline leans his extended polemic—was intended to convey the truth that nations which indulge in lawlessness and adhere to the darkness of rebellion against the truth of God have no sure defense (Ps. 127:1), are ensnared by death (Prov. 13:13–14), and will perish in the way (Ps. 2:12; Prov. 29:18), either through their own internal corruption (e.g., Rom. 1:18–32) or God’s historical judgments to overthrow their power (e.g., Rev. 13–18). I do not think that such suffering for disobedience is contrary to any *biblical* conception of common grace.

Therefore, Kline’s “insuperable theological objection” to postmillennialism turns out to be without cogency or force. Not only is his conception of “common grace” internally confused and unconfirmed by God’s word, it is not even clear why he thinks that postmillennialism is irreconcilable with it. Overall, his attack has misfired.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

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:

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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