

# RELIGIOUS DESTRATIFICATION IN THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY ERA

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## PURITANISM EMERGENT

Religion in itself evolves in tandem with social change, therefore serving different purposes at different times. The

sensitivity of religious organization to social environment is manifest in gradations between egalitarianism and hierarchy. The most hierarchical religions are germane to regions of high population density, whereas egalitarian religions develop in primitive, frontier, or countercultural conditions. High demographic density entails hierarchical organization; a religious laity, having become too remote from clerical contact, becomes susceptible to competing cultural ideas. Clerical hierarchy is the organization of its clerics that most efficiently penetrates as far as the parishioners on the periphery; the ascent to a religious monarch prevents the lesser clergy from deviating from the religious doctrine so as to destroy the religion intensively. Without hierarchy, the religion could be destroyed extensively, in that the same clerisy would be too outnumbered for the task of affecting the peripheral laity.

Hierarchy stabilizes the social status of the wealthiest by sustaining through patronage those not so well off. Puritanism, Anglicanism, Quakerism, and Catholicism could predominate in relative degrees, under different conditions, in the largest colonial cities. As hierarchical religion involves commercial patronage, it was completely unsuccessful in frontiers. The Dutch Reformed Church, the Church of England, and the Quakers might have prospered better if their ecclesiastical consistories had not been confined to Europe. Such hierarchical religions were inherently conservative, in support of existing government. Relatively primitive religions such as Presbyterianism, Methodism, Puritanism, and Baptism were countercultural, representing the resentment of discountenanced population groups of remote areas or lower economies. An undeveloped region in a frontier does not have its own upper class because it neither needs nor sustains sophisticated social functions; such a region is democratic because the labor of development is uniform to all individuals. The labor is wholly concentrated in simple activities such as building and growing; the constrained diversity of occupations

does not provide opportunities for highly paid serialized functions. The Baptists, Presbyterians etc. were later frontier immigrants; their creeds did not allow for patronage, and as later-day immigrants, they had no patronage from the earlier and more conventional population groups on the seacoasts. The egalitarianism of emergent religions, predicated on penury without lines of patronage, cohered through a non-hierarchical collective form of self expression.

Emergent religions within a developed society, on the other hand, are egalitarian because they are muted protests against an insuperable social hierarchy. According to circumstances an established religion may not so much constitute a hierarchy, as lean on another hierarchical structure already in place. Catholicism had been the original and core social hierarchy of Europe, but when its power came to be substantially superseded by secular hierarchies, it adjusted itself with the least loss of power not by contending against secular hierarchy, but by transforming itself to be the religious support of the secular hierarchy that was most imitative of Catholic hierarchy; the Anglican Church adopted the same maneuver vis-à-vis England.

The primary instance of egalitarianism, Puritanism, in its emergence a countercultural rebellion against the Anglican Church, surreptitiously subverted its professed egalitarianism with secular hierarchical structures. Why? The idea of the *covenant*, a cornerstone of Puritanism, had been taken from the usage of this term in the New Testament. The Bible's reticence about bishops functioned to justify the Puritan repudiation of the actual Anglican Church. The covenant, to the contrary, conveyed that a group of people would convene and choose for themselves a minister, whom they would just as informally depose.<sup>1</sup> The depiction implied that the clerical structures of the Catholic and Anglican churches had no

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Philbrick, Nathaniel; Mayflower, Penguin Books, London, 2006, p. 9.

foundation in the Bible, and that furthermore a priest or minister of a religious group had no further claim to election than the members of the group to whom he very contingently ministered.

One of the factors for the earliest development towards Puritan hierarchy had been dread of England. Charles I and his Archbishop William Laud had tried to evacuate dissenters from England, but there was a persistent desire, especially on the part of Laud, to exterminate Puritanism in the place to which it had escaped. The English boroughs engaged in foreign commerce tended to be Puritan, and William Laud had inferred that the native English Puritanism might be sustained from its new base in New England. Aware of the possibility of English invasion, the New England Puritans strengthened their resistance to any external interference.<sup>2</sup> In consequence the earliest Puritans had aspired to a homogenously Puritan population in New England, out of fear that dilution of the Puritan element with many non-Puritans would disable capacity for legislation necessary to preserve Puritan culture. This fear had already played out during the time the Puritans had lived in Leiden; the Pilgrims migrated to New England precisely due to their perception that Puritanism could not persist long when exposed to a marketplace of ideas.

The colonial New England governments were consequently designed as theocracies, in which religion presided over secular authority. This appears in three stages: 1) The egalitarianism of Puritanism was most conspicuous while based in England, under the immediate hostility of English-Anglican government; 2) Colonial Puritanism retained its egalitarianism in the settlement period when secular colonial government was too weak to unify the Puritans. 3)

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<sup>2</sup> Breen, T. H.; Persistent Localism: English Social Change and the Shaping of New England Institutions, The William and Mary Quarterly, third series, 32, 1975, p. 8.

Commonly characteristic of Catholicism, Anglicanism, and ultimately Puritanism, was an alienation of its hierarchical social power from church to secular government. The third article is the most mysterious. It is easy to explain how or why secular government wrested social power from its progenitor the church, but this is not the present inquiry. The present curiosity concerns the willingness of the church in each instance to cede a large part of the social power to a separate, secular authority.

In a primitive collectivity, here the case of Puritanism, an emergent religion within a mature society, religion does the very first work of unifying the community. The greater social community, i.e. English society, is already united; the unification in question concerns that of individuals who are in the greater society, but are disaffected, and need to create a community from their own interests insofar as such interests conflict with those of the greater society. Egalitarianism animates an emergent religion because, functioning as the protagonist of an oppressed subcultural group, the religion organizes at cross-purposes to those of civil society. Consequently the hierarchical order, that is, the conventional prestige that those individuals have by virtue of position in the greater society, is now irrelevant and obnoxious within the context of the emergent religion. Since the members are militating against the established social hierarchy, they cannot use their relative positions of prestige borrowed from that hierarchy, against each other. Such a religion cannot be authoritarian because the emergent religion is motivated against the adverse authoritarianism of the greater society.

The hostility between metropolitan and provincial government in England had catalyzed the emergence of Puritanism; emergent religious organization is inherently countercultural. It could not initially form a hierarchy because it derives its power from challenging the authoritarianism of the antecedent social hierarchy. Because the accumulated

power of counter-organization was unsupported by the majority of the greater society, Puritanism had to take the form of religion, not, for instance, politics or economics. The counter-organization had to be religious because the members of the group, bereft of the hierarchical powers of conventional society, could not infuse social strength from their positions in the greater social harmony.

If members in a counter-group attempt a commercial or political insurgence, the dominant social hierarchy crushes them immediately. As emergent religions consist of individuals who will be swept aside if they voice substantive counterproposals, a diaphanous issue, such as religious belief, becomes the principle of organization. Because religious belief is too much on the fringe of the verifiable to excite violent reprisals (obviously not reliable), it can germinate social movement during a period in which social forces would immediately crush the insurgency in the case that the deviance was too clearly noticed for what it was.

An emergent religion is pretextual. Religious belief has the structure of a hypothetical: if you believe this, then you should do this. Only the first half of the hypothetical is propounded; the apodosis might not be explicitly expressed until fifty years later, and the proposed logical connection of protasis and apodosis might be forever obscure until a proponent dares to expound the implication. The religious belief can be adequately argued and disputed without any recourse to terms of political or economic consequences. Anabaptism, for example, one of the most ferociously persecuted religious denominations, proposed that infant baptism was invalid because the infant had no cognition of what it was to which it was being committed. Why should a population be excessively terrorized at the thought of adult baptism? Buried under this apparently whimsical dispute was the premise that baptism concomitantly made the infant a subject, or citizen, of whatever country in which he was born,

so that infant baptism served the purpose of fixing the infant's nationality. Anabaptism originated in Germany, shortly after the *cuius regio, eius religio* settlement (1648). It was a period in which Germany, divided into hundreds of tiny independent principalities, heir to all the petty wars, intrigues, and conspiracies employed by every petty prince to dispute and annex the duchy of his neighbor.

The religious freedom of *cuius regio, eius religio* consisted in the freedom of the prince, not his subjects, to decide the religion, and the prince had only the loyalty of his subjects to protect himself against the incursions of neighboring princes. A Protestant/Catholic prince could not afford to rule a Catholic/Protestant population. Anabaptism broadcast the barking inconsistency of Martin Luther, who at one time advocated the justification by faith, which released the individual from any mundane authority vis-à-vis his immediate relation to God, and at another time his unqualified allegiance with the German Princes, against the peasants, in the event of the Peasants' War (1524-25). It was essential for the Prince, not the subject, to decide the religious faith of his subjects, for Protestantism could not be of the least possible value for the German princes protecting Luther, if their *de rigueur* commonality of religious confession between Prince and subject did not guarantee the Prince a military and tax base that always went where he went. This was a highly inauspicious moment to propound that each individual, not his sovereign, should have power to decide over his baptism. Anabaptism threatened to dissolve the solidarity between princes and their peasants.

Yet, the practical consequences of this creed never came into discussion during the whole period of the attempt to exterminate the Anabaptists; the entire process was able to be carried out securely within religious terminology. The opposition to a religious belief does not need to explicate the practical implication of the belief, and may not even need to be

aware of its practical implications, while successfully arguing against it. The religious articles of a conventional, established religion are so very finely concordant and symbiotic with the over-all structure of a society, that it would be immediately apparent to the theological protagonist of the status quo that the deviant belief of an emergent religion is pernicious to the stability of the society as it actually exists.

Religion serves as a way to counter-organize when civil government is strong enough to unify society, and its opposition is too vulnerable to seek, overtly, to fragment that social unity by political dispute. Puritanism initially sheltered itself from destruction by the overwhelmingly more powerful Anglican Church and English monarchy through a persistent claim to be the loyal vanguard of the same Anglican Church, to be the true Anglican Church. Puritanism had been an emergent religion, but at the same time felt too vulnerable to dispense the blandishment that it was a benevolent reformation of Anglicanism. Only after Puritanism had failed in the attempt to seize control of the Anglican Church, did it retire to New England, and it did not relinquish its claim to be the reformation of the true Anglican Church until long after it had colonized New England. In the earlier phase of the Puritan migration, there persisted the Puritan assertion of its Anglicanism. In this tortuous phase the New England Puritans had waited for an opportunity in which they could leave New England, return to England, and establish themselves as the true Anglican Church. At a later phase it was gradually decided that Anglicanism was irremediably damned and only thereupon did the Puritans earnestly attempt to dissociate themselves from Anglicanism. A religion that emerges within a preexisting society undermines it, but civil society may eliminate the countermovement without difficulty if it appreciates the threat in time. If on the other hand the religion survives the transition, it can then proceed on the majestic pathway from parasite to predator; it attempts to model

greater society after its principles and quickly supplies the main social hierarchy. The English Civil War and the abortive Protectorate exemplify this sort of transformation.

The conventional religion did, however, perceive the danger in time. Puritanism survived Anglican persecution only because it moved to the American settlement in a twelve-year long mass migration. Puritanism could not have afforded the risk of disclaiming its pretension to be the reform, not the repudiation, of Anglicanism, for so long as it was in England, where Anglicanism was established. At the time of the migrations, in the reign of James I, it was illegal for Anglicans to break off from the Anglican Church; on this ground the Pilgrims had been called what they called themselves: Separatists, and as Separatists they were manifest outlaws.<sup>3</sup> It was illegal for them to be Separatists, but emigration was also illegal for them; under such circumstances finance and legal protection for the Mayflower had been difficult.

When the members of a religious organization grow to a power that cannot be arbitrarily liquidated, the religious position translates into political organization with unconcealed advocacy concerning issues that would break up the status quo. Every strain of Protestantism was inherently a leveling religion. It was ultimately egalitarianism that constituted the irreconcilable difference of Anglicanism and Puritanism.

## **PURITANISM THEOCRATIC**

In the same phase as Puritanism became more radical, in disclosing its definitive separation from the Anglican Church, it became internally more conservative. In its English context rebellious and avant-garde vis-à-vis the Church of England, once the transplantation to New England had brought Puritanism out of the reach of Anglicanism, Puritanism

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Philbrick, Nathaniel; Mayflower, Penguin Books, London, 2006, pp. 11-11.

thereupon became all that was conservative about New England.<sup>4</sup>

Conservatism connotes a positive allegiance of the religion with the society in which it is embedded. Its maximum instance is that of a civil government that is virtually the direct product of the religion, with the consequence that the primary *raison d'être* of government is preservation of the religion.<sup>5</sup> Such was the happy condition of the Puritan quasi-theocracy. But *theocracy* is a word that would be a *terminus horrendus* to the Puritans, who ferociously rejected the Catholic division of the laity and clergy, following which the clergy was closer to God. In Puritanism, following the Biblical covenant, minister and layman were interchangeable. In its early theocratic phase, Puritanism had substituted for civil government as the unifying force in the primitive conditions of colonial settlement. The Puritan community became initially theocratic when it began to vest some of the church's powers in its incipient secular government.

The minimal instance of conservatism is that of a religion whose primary aspiration is support of government, in the hope that government would protect religion, as was the condition of the Anglican Church. Under such conditions religion is necessarily hierarchical; such a church survives only from government support, and mirrors the hierarchy of the social order. During its infancy in England, Puritanism had combated the hierarchical principle of the Church of England, quite vociferously in its denunciation of episcopacy. But an inconsistency within Puritanism emerged following the New England migration: *saints*. Upon the theocratic settlement of New England, Puritanism formulated religious qualifications

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Johnson, Richard R.; *Growth and Mastery: British North America, 1690-1748*, p. 294.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; *Jonathan Edwards A Life*, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 31.

for residency and civil participation on the inhabitants; a man had to become a “saint” before he was allowed full rights of social participation. To become a “saint,” one needed to have an ecstatic experience (revelation, epiphany, etc.); then one had to persuade successfully a committee of church elders, in a public, oral test situation, that the ecstasy was a genuine, orthodox religious experience that convinced the individual of all the religious beliefs that were held in common by the church elders. The idea of a “saint” exhibited the exclusionary characteristic of Puritanism; in effect an elect father would produce an elect son, and no one else would be elect; this practice should have preserved the unitary cohesion of the Puritan group.<sup>6</sup>

The logicality to be found in this arrangement derives from the Catholic Church. As with several other religions, the ceremony is more decisive in Catholicism than what the person, inwardly, thinks; at the very least this is valid in its contrast with Protestantism. The Catholic Church had forbidden the laity to read the Bible, and had forbidden its translation from Latin, whereas the Protestants had translated it into every vulgar language and enjoined its votaries to read it every day. The individual had a duty to understand the Bible. But herein Christianity had come to understand the problem of privileged access: the individual must have the right understanding of the Bible, not merely conformity to the prescribed outward actions, but how is the church to know whether the parishioner’s inner understanding is correct? Only the subject can know what he is thinking; the mental state of one individual is never apodictically observable to another. A major aspect by which Protestantism distinguished itself from Catholicism was its intense concentration on the inner life of the individual; Puritanism in particular demanded

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<sup>6</sup> Saevan Bercovitch, ‘The Typology of America’s Mission’, *American Quarterly*, 30, (1978), p. 142.

**an intensely introspective, self-testing scrutiny from all of its Parishioners. The relative nonchalance with which the English Puritans executed Charles I stemmed from their certainty that the hierarchy and patriarchy of England were anathema; there was no such thing as a “great person” whom one should trust, not even the King or the Pope. In consequence of this repudiation of the “great man,” the puritans called for every individual, indelibly sinful and probably destined for Hell, to submit himself to collective control, in which all Puritans in the community (i.e. not an individual, who would be as fallible as the person spied on) would spy on or supervise every Puritan taken singly. In this manner the examination of the elders for the authenticity of the individual’s revelation was an affirmation of individual introspection, rather than of subjecting the person to the judgment of a “great man.”<sup>7</sup> The idea of testing an individual was conceived as a means to save the person from self-deception or hypocrisy. This procedure was supposed to offset the Catholic satisfaction with ceremony.**

**This configuration, testing for sainthood, was so logically incoherent that it had to generate hypocrisy and other defects. Within the Protestant framework that the priority of individual conscience is the lodestone of any Protestant denomination, it seems a bit odd that an individual should be tested for the authenticity of his revelation according to whether the “revelation” is in agreement with the religious convictions of other people. Given justification by faith, a person’s revelation by definition transcends any secondary evidence such as the Bible, natural science, or the instruction of other individuals. The requirement that an individual replicate the religious ecstasy of Paul of Tarsus or Martin Luther in order to be a civil servant seems to be a bit pretentious. The irrefutability of revelation consists in its**

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Walzer, “Puritanism as a Revolutionary Ideology” *History and Theory*, 2 (1964), p. 89.

derivation from an ineffable experience, a source that antecedes the resources of human communication. The subject of the experience ought to trust the deeper rather than the shallower authority, and therefore, presuming the authenticity of the revelation, be impassive to the opinions of people testing or listening to him.

It would therefore be irrational for the saint to submit himself in the first place; if his experience is genuine, then he is bound to discount adverse opinions; if he accommodates contrary opinion, then his experience must be inauthentic, or he has hypocritically betrayed a commitment that makes any posterior social commitments untrustworthy. What could account for the Puritan capacity to cherish such a conceptual inconsistency? In the tradition of the Catholic Church, there were no mundane benefits available to an individual by virtue of being a saint; the Catholic Church canonized a person as a saint only long after the person had died. In the theocratic phase of Puritanism, becoming a saint was a preliminary qualification for achieving any of the more responsible social callings, thus imposing on the individual an egotistical interest in becoming a saint. The Puritan notion that saints could be routinely churned out regularly enough to populate the civil service, as if bringing a university graduation ceremony across the stage, derogates the august Catholic notion of what it was to be a saint. In Catholicism the Pope canonized a saint after death; in Puritanism one had to become a saint to qualify for the position of village dog-catcher.

Nevertheless, it was not absurd for the clerical committee to test a candidate for sainthood, although it should have been absurd for the candidate to submit. The Puritan Church recognized that an individual, no matter how enthralled with his revelation as he may be, could be the victim of delusion; it was reasonable for them to attempt to discern whether the ecstatic experience was authentic or psychotic. The notion of a *living* saint, or a *visible* saint, is an incipient construction of a

hierarchy, indeed a heavy-handed reinforcement of the theocratic form of society, in which only officially recognized saints of the church would occupy secular offices. Solomon Stoddard had advocated accessibility of the Lord's Supper to all who had been baptized: open communion. The major premise was the Calvinistic principle that it is impossible to know which humans are members of God's Elect. The attempt of a church to separate the elect from other humans was an arrogation. The church exists because there are people who sought Christian salvation, and refusing admittance was a repudiation of the only purpose the church could have.<sup>8</sup> In fact Stoddard's solution called for synodical administration of Puritanism, which was germane to Presbyterianism but antithetical to Puritanism.

Stoddard's position, named the *Instituted Church*, was not adopted by the Puritans, who remained faithful to their counterposition, that clerical authority should never rise above the parochial *congregation*. The view opposite that of Stoddard comprised the notion of sainthood; a person should be allowed to communion (Lord's Supper) only if he had gone through the process of becoming a saint: conversion (personal epiphany) plus the process of persuading the church elders of its authenticity. The ideal of this process had been to divide the elect from the unregenerate, to the effect that saints, and saints only, would congregate in the *visible church*. Stoddard's premises against this exclusionary provision had been 1) that it was ultimately impossible to discern whether a person was elect in God's eyes; and 2) full communion should be universally available to provide the broadest chances for salvation.<sup>9</sup> It followed from Stoddard's position that the elect

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<sup>8</sup> Paul R. Lucas, "An Appeal to the Learned": The Mind of Solomon Stoddard" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 30 (1978), p. 264.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 122.

and unregenerate would exist together in the visible church, and that the difference should be indiscernible.

The Puritan notion of *sainthood* amounts to a frontal contradiction of its own prior repudiation of episcopacy: one individual is better than another. On the one hand Puritanism colonized New England to escape extinction in England; New England Puritanism dictated exactly how civil government should be, either to prevent dissipation by non-puritanical colonial immigrants or to resist subsequent efforts by the Anglican Church to exterminate Puritanism. On the other hand, Puritanism had been an egalitarian, anti-episcopal religion which denied higher authority from a professional religious clergy, and therefore wanted to keep clerical office undistinguished.

Its specious solution had been to prohibit the Puritan Church from dictating or interfering in civil government, while protecting the primacy of Puritanism by strictly controlling the occupants of all government positions; hence the formulation of Puritan saints. In early societies at the emergent division of government and religion, high religious office and high secular office are quite interchangeable. There is a special qualification of this in early Puritanism; ministers and governors were cleanly separated, thus saving its repudiation of Anglican hierarchy, but the elite Puritans were extremely careful to guarantee the homogeneity and interchangeability of ministers and governors. In the Puritan instance, it was the ministers who kept the strict upper hand over the governors. The New England colonies did not constitute a theocracy in that ministers or others in the operation of the church were not allowed to be government officials nor directly command matters of civil government, but was theocratic in that the state existed to serve the church, and as a condition for employment state officials had to guarantee their religious orthodoxy to the clerical authorities.

**This secular ordination was necessary from the primary interest of colonial Puritanism. It was evident that the same New England region could be swamped by non-Puritan immigrants, with the effect of ruining the Puritan power. It was necessary to guarantee that all inhabitants of New England would be Puritan, simply to avert Puritan extinction from other-denominational inundation. Even civil government in New England could, hypothetically, abandon its religious commitment, and turn against the interests of its Puritan progenitor. If Puritanism transferred its power to its secular government, it was imaginable that the government would use this power adversely against the religion, when the religion no longer had the power it had conceded to retaliate. By testing the individuals for sainthood, Puritanism was trying to protect itself against a delayed reaction when it would not, as it did now have power to reform the situation. The idea of sainthood should have upheld the Puritan affirmation of separation of church and state, while guarding against a potential reversal. Religion dictated at second hand what the civil government had to be, while attempting to keep the church divided from government, so as not to re-acquire characteristic it detested in Catholicism.**

**Theocracy was to persist as a chronic disturbance in Puritan development. Its initial ability to unify society started from the perception of Anglican England was a menacing enemy. In the early Puritan phase the New Englanders sought self-preservation by presenting themselves as loyal Englishmen, lovers of the Crown, etc., but had covertly cherished their self-predication as an independent commonwealth.<sup>10</sup> New England had concretely prepared for open war against England, a hundred years before the American revolution; James I had prepared warships to**

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Brown, Robert E.; *Middle-Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-170*, Harper Torchbooks, N.Y., 1969, p. 167.

devastate the New England Puritan community. The impending war was very narrowly averted only because King James had to divert his military power to fight the Bishops' War in Scotland.

It was a happy error that egalitarianism was propitious in the event of the wilderness settlement; simplicity and equality functioned to bind a society as yet too primitive to need contrastive social classes. The "happy error" consisted in the original coalescence of egalitarianism for holding forth against Anglicanism, and yet, once in New England, it fulfilled an unanticipated purpose: coherence in a wilderness. All colonial religious migrations were atavistic; they attempted to perpetuate a way of life that had become impossible in their original circumstances by relocating in utterly alien circumstances. By having moved into a wilderness to isolate themselves from contemporaneous influences, however, Puritans forfeited the irritations that galvanized the original aspirations and confronted themselves with problems that required wholly divergent responses.<sup>11</sup> The incipient colony benefited from egalitarianism, but as the community grew the Puritans ineluctably developed a hierarchy justified by reference to ancient Hebrew patriarchalism.

The New England Puritans would not have countenanced the conception of their society as a theocracy. The successive growth of an emergent religion eventually accumulates enough social capital to brachiate into a church and a civil government, at which time the civil government gradually assumes more of the powers of communal unification. Typically, the motive force of this phenomenon, especially in the case of a Christian religion, is to distance the church from the exertion of violence and ostracism that is ingredient to maturation of the society. Delegation of violence to a secular

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<sup>11</sup> Zuckerman, Michael; *The Fabrication of Identity in Early America*, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 34, 1977, p.194.

organization serves to dissociate the violence of social structure from the responsibility of a religion that gains its prestige from the profession of peace and love. Government gradually supersedes powers that are germane to, but which might gradually compromise, religion.

Egalitarianism perfused the original settlement of New England and its early civic organization. But this was an exclusionary egalitarianism. Only individuals in strict religious conformity enjoyed this equality, whereas those of deviant religious belief were banished. Puritanism never accommodated to the subsequent stages of community development by promoting inclusion of later, non-Puritan groups into this equality.

## **PURITANISM CONVENTIONAL**

The manner of Puritan propagation foreboded the Great Awakening (1730s). The early New England Puritan Church managed internal dissent by allowing dissenters to hive off to a new church founded upon whatever nuance had motivated the dissent. Multiplication of local churches was inevitable as land and population expanded, but minute diversities of doctrine dividing parish churches had not been inevitable. Doctrinal diversification cohered with Puritan emphasis upon the priority of individual conscience, a principle which in arguing the doctrinal separation from the Anglican Church had been essential. Puritanism did not have a Church Council or synod such as might have regulated the erection of new churches or have synthesized the doctrines of the dispersed parish churches. In keeping with egalitarianism, the Puritan Church had only *congregations*, that is parochial assemblies of the parishioners of each church taken separately, to employ or relieve a minister, or decide on points of creed. Puritanism did not allow clerical authority to ascend beyond the congregations of the members in the parish church. There was no further

external regulation.<sup>12</sup> Roger Williams and his establishment in Providence, Rhode Island (1636), and Anne Hutchinson were results of this Puritan liberality; instead of being executed or otherwise incapacitated, the New England Puritans allowed distressing heretics to jump over to the other side of a puddle and found new local churches.

The liberality herein coheres well with the English origins of Puritanism, when Puritans had originally asserted their loyal striving to purify the Anglican Church. The formulation was an affable invitation to negotiation and reconciliation between Anglicans and dissenters, but it could otherwise have been interpreted to have been an insidious attempt to pervert Anglicanism from the inside. Anglicanism adopted the latter interpretation. John Laud had made the atmosphere sufficiently treacherous and implacable for the Puritans, though still asseverating their loyalty, that they fled to the New England colonies. The behemoth Anglican Church, suppressing any dissenting church, was sufficient to unite all Puritan congregations in common fear. The unity in common fear obviated a need for the dissenters to achieve unity by formulating a common creed. Fear alone constituted sufficient unity against English society. The Puritans had, quite sincerely, not wanted to defect from the Anglican Church, and in consequence had never wanted to consolidate a definition of what a “Puritan” was. Unified confession was all the more superfluous because the term “Puritan” was not a Puritan formulation; it had been coined as a derogatory term by the Anglicans to deprecate the dissenters. The dissenters gradually adopted the originally derogatory term to denote themselves.

Original Puritanism was non-doctrinal. Irritations in the English environment had motivated the countercultural religious movement. Resentment had originated from the

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12 Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 31.

**coercive Poor Rates, by which the centralized Anglican Church was collecting tax revenue to support the poor, partially justifying itself by taking over the same laudable process of the Catholic Church it had supplanted. The local parishes, however, had disposition neither over the collection of poor rates nor how the revenue was expended. The earliest revolt against the Anglican Church concerned the right of the local parishes to collect their own poor rates and dispense them locally according to their own judgment. The relative lack of doctrinal motivation in the origin of Puritanism was, however, immediately concealed by disguise in more dignified Calvinistic terminologies such as conscience, free will, election, predestination, etc.**

**The Anglican Church had its own inconsistencies to protect. Thomas Cromwell had recommended to Henry VIII that he break ties with the Catholic Church. Cromwell had been strongly Protestant; in consequence he carried out a regime of iconoclasm, destroying the ceremonies, statues, stained glass windows etc. that were part of Catholicism. The English people were traumatized; revolt started in Northern England, and Henry had to fear for his throne. He pacified the people by re-introducing, one after another, all the elements of ceremonial Catholicism, until there was no difference between Anglicanism and Catholicism, except for the Pope. The people were pacified, but some of those who desired authentic reform had become deeply disappointed with the Church of England, the mirror image of the Catholic Church.**

**Henry VIII's confiscation of all church property entailed that the Catholic Church could not continue its care for the poor; the Church, not the State, had traditionally supported the poor. The priests, nuns, monks, and the poor, now suddenly dislocated, constituted a strong indictment against Henry's tactic. To maintain its honor, the English Reformation had to show that it could substitute for the social welfare that Catholicism had previously provided. Inasmuch as Henry had**

put himself in the place of the Pope, the care of the poor became secular, an action of government rather than of religion. Poor-relief was delegated to the Anglican Church, but it was now secular in that the Poor Rates were a national tax, centralized in London. The monarchy could not have atomized poor relief to the parochial level, which would have given the appearance that the monarchy had reneged on a responsibility that Catholicism had supported. As it was impossible to circumvent Anglican oppression deriving from the Poor Rates, Puritans emigrated to New England. Dispersal of Puritan creeds was a natural result of emigration because *Puritanism* had in the first place been a linguistic illusion. The singular, collective term *Puritanism* suggested the denotation of a homogenous group, but in reality it denoted mutually discordant groups that were unified only in the rejection of Anglicanism.

Only after the tentative break from the Anglican Church, and after the migration to New England, would a unified doctrine have been useful to the Puritans. But such a centralizing creed never consolidated; the colonial Puritan theologians of subsequent generations used reference to books and articles to define their positions, but they never proceeded to compose a unified confession. It was partially due to this infirmity that in a later colonial phase the Puritan and other churches errantly invited or allowed itinerant Great Awakening figures to preach to their communities, although such itinerants generally had the effect of deeply damaging the Puritan and other colonial churches to which they had been invited to preach.

As above, irreconcilable disagreement in an early Puritan congregation was solved by letting the dissentient group found a new parochial church. The device of expelling dissenters from the parochial church preserved its creed from alteration by foreshortening internal discord, but, in allowing the dissidents freedom to hive off, increased the risk that the

dissenting opinion might survive. This peculiar method of resolving internal tension manifests one of the internal inconsistencies in the history of Protestantism; freedom from papal dictation had been a fundamental desideratum, but on the other hand the much vaunted freedom of conscience threatened to disband any consensus in a religious community.

The half-way covenant reveals the decay of congregationalism. Early colonial Puritanism was embodied in a universal homogeneity of religious belief, but the diminishing dread of England allowed the submerged differences within the laity to surface. Gradually some members of the community did not bother to become “saints;” they remained “unregenerate.” At this point the Puritan leaders tried to maintain unity by *establishment* of the Puritan Church; all members, whether regenerate or unregenerate, would be required by statute to pay taxes for support of the church. Thus the full population would protect the church from extinction by agnosticism; nonconformists would continue to support the church by their tax payments. The contradiction with the Puritan principle of freedom of individual conscience made this coercive solution inoperable, since Puritan leaders such as John Cotton refused to force individuals defecting from the church to pay for the church.<sup>13</sup>

Reconciliation of internal discord would have been much more effective for exterminating a provocative idea; the device put in its place, preempting the possibility of internal alteration of its ideas as might ensue from debate, merely delayed the moment to the long term, when the dissenting idea, having incubated longer, would eventually generate much more powerful discord in a denomination. The Puritans managed to avoid building hierarchy, which would have been

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<sup>13</sup> Rutman, B. Darret; *God's Bridge Falling Down: Another Approach To New England Puritanism Assayed*, The William And Mary Quarterly, third series, 19, 1962, p. 415.

capable of adjudicating and hopefully of pacifying conflicts, but, doing without a hierarchy, inadvertently allowed the deviant faction to persist as a remote frontier parish. The priority of individual conscience was strengthened at the cost of the capacity of Puritanism to structure society.

Stronger hierarchy in the Puritan community could have established a religious court to resolve differences; such an approach had a long tradition both in Protestantism and Catholicism. The denomination “Puritanism” never established an episcopal council to secure doctrinal uniformity across individual churches. Puritanism, later to be called Congregationalism, was able to maintain its high level of intolerance, as in the expulsion of dissenting groups, by offsetting expulsion with a high degree of tolerance, insofar as one parochial Puritan church did not compel the creed of another parochial Puritan church.

It was a very delicate minuet. Puritanism would persist as Protestantism only if it preserved its position on the priority of individual conscience, but the liberal deviations in the actual practice of individual conscience might have quickly scrambled the Puritan faith into a meaningless hodge-podge. The tendency to chaos might have been reined in by exercise of some unitary confession of the faith. However, commitment to the priority of individual conscience could not be relaxed, for without individual conscience, no substantial ground would distinguish Puritanism from Anglicanism. If confessional uniformity were imposed heavy-handedly, the freedom of conscience in Puritanism would have ceased to distinguish Puritanism from the Catholic ideal of humble obedience to hierarchical dictation from Rome.

It is interesting to observe how this ambivalent idea of exclusive equality reacted upon disconnection from its precondition, religious conformity. None of the irritations from which Puritanism originated had ever existed in New England. If in the wilderness settlement the formative English factors of

**Puritanism ceased to exist, how could the religion have persisted? Dread of Anglican intolerance tout simple constituted religious homogeneity in the colonial Puritan groups through their common combative ideals: equality and simplicity. Such ideals achieved realization in New England; the Puritan method of non-commercial land distribution had never been an actual tradition in England. The Levellers and Diggers of the Cromwell period intended such an approach to land tenure, but they were also Puritans, and the great English panic at their communistic ideas resulted in their extermination long before they could put such ideas into practice. Otherwise, English landed property was commercial and very hierarchical. In 17th century colonial Puritanism, young people received, without purchase, land tracts on which to develop farms. This was essential to maintaining the communalism and equality of the Puritan culture; Puritanism would quickly collapse if this practice had been abolished. The New England parochial Puritan church distributed equal portions of land to each family, although relatively prominent Puritans received modestly larger apportionments. The land had not been allowed subsequently to aggrandize through commercial exchange; land speculation was not allowed, and nothing such as a great estate owner came into existence in New England. By 1730, large land holdings were coalescing, and the original Puritan communities were running out of neighboring frontier land by which it could continue its practice of homesteading. As land consolidated, fewer people owned land; eventually class antagonisms developed between the wealthy and the penurious.<sup>14</sup>**

**Commercial farming, appearing first in the oldest, seaboard regions, was the only form of agriculture that had the potentiality to come under the influence of Britain.**

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 150.

**Commercial agriculture, through its dependence on a foreign market, was the only agriculture that would have been able to induce economic inequality. Since Britain prohibited the export of agricultural products from New England, social stratification advanced more quickly in the mid-seaboard colonies and southern colonies. The commercial prohibition arose from the climatic similarity of New England with England; it was feared that New England agricultural produce, being the same as that of England, would depress the prices of English agriculture, whereas importation from the middle and southern colonies was congenial because the imports were vendible, while not cultivable by English farmers. The agriculture and fishing of New England was exported to Africa and the Caribbean, not England.**

**The English agricultural prohibition retarded social stratification in New England and inadvertently fostered the egalitarianism of Puritanism. Nevertheless, hierarchy is ultimately irrepressible perhaps because of its biological roots. Puritanism in the period of settlement had been able to preserve equality because it was the only religion in New England. But egalitarianism, a strongly countercultural feature, eventually created friction between the religious community and the religion's secular progeny. The egalitarianism had its substance from a mixed civil and religious life divided into small communities guided by parish churches and town meetings. When agriculture gradually became a factor in the development of New England, those who could capably use the market channeled their profit into land purchase, and thereby displaced landholders who could not commercialize.**

**The origins of this phenomenon were not agricultural. The agricultural transformation was not primarily from agricultural factors. New England had become the hub of colonial commerce because New England was the closest landing point of English colonial navigation; the capital that**

bought land was that of the New England merchants, not the agriculturalists. Despite the prohibition against marketing agriculture in England, the optimal navigational accessibility of New England to England eventuated in Boston's having become the British commercial nexus for all of the colonies; trade routes for consumer goods, starting in New England extending overland into the middle and southern colonies, predominated over nautical commercial supply directly between England and the middle and southern colonies. The first communities were on the seaboard, and seaboard agriculture engaged in external trade of the Boston merchants was bound to generate pecuniary wealth.

The merchants primarily responsible for capitalizing New England agriculture did not themselves become farmers; they preempted frontier land, and sold it to settlers. New England farming was an activity in which forbearance from a decision was in itself, ineluctably, a substantive decision, in that the land holding of subsistence agriculture would eventually become too expensive to be financed by the crop it yielded. The value of land bid up from commercial profit gradually exceeded the twenty-year accumulated value of the land's agricultural produce, at which point it would be uneconomical for a subsistence farmer not to surrender his land to the market. Subsistence farming was indispensable to Puritanism; the shift to commercial agriculture, or to any other large scale of commercialism, would gradually erode Puritan theocracy.

The secularization of New England hierarchy was accelerated by British colonization policies. For as long as labor shortage had been the principal threat to British colonization, Britain used religious tolerance as an inexpensive means to lure colonial migration. In the early New England colonial period, the allowance of English religious emigration inadvertently abetted emergent religions. In later periods of settlement the offer of religious refuge and British colonial citizenship to any Europeans wanting to escape religious

persecution in their home countries served as an inexpensive device to populate British colonies without suffering a depletion of native British population. European immigration in effect brought the commercial hierarchy into the foreground by having irreparably scrambled the original religious hierarchies of the New England settlement.

England had virtually expelled its own deviant religious groups to the colonies, and actively recruited deviant religious groups from other European countries, while to one degree or another outlawing religious deviance in native England. British religious tolerance of colonial migration does not signify that Britain lacked a naïve and intolerant religious faith. England for centuries struggled to enforce native religious uniformity, although its emigration policy indifferently promoted religious diversity on its colonies. The European immigrants in the British Atlantic colonies were granted the “rights of an Englishman,” but such immigrants were not allowed to emigrate from the English colonies to England, nor were the “rights of an Englishman” allowed to bear validity anywhere but in the colony of settlement.

How is this apparent inconsistency internally consistent? In England religious uniformity would preserve the utility of Anglicanism for the preservation of the British state. Given religious uniformity, the prestige of political and religious office would continue to be commensurable and interchangeable, thus preserving the priority of the elite group. Religious diversity would disorder the social scale of precedence; Anglicanism would cease to comprehend all who were aristocrats. If diverse religious groups could more or less equally contend for government position, the Anglican Church would lose its power to preserve status quo, and hence lose its utility for the State. On the other hand, religious diversity did not carry any of these threats in British colonies, inasmuch as anything colonial was a priori precluded from influence on native British government. Edmund Andros’ campaign against

**New England Puritanism allows two interpretations: either the destruction of the New England Puritan theocracy was an oblique step towards propagation of Anglicanism into New England, or England may have simply wanted to foster religious pluralism.**

**England had previously allowed religious pluralism in correspondence with the preponderant demand for colonial migration. Subsequent to 1700 the preponderant contingency became that of English uniformity in the colonial economy and government. Urgency for colonial migration had subsided when natural growth after 1700 would have maintained positive colonial growth even if there had been no further migration. As the colonies matured, their viability became less contingent on labor shortage than on the cultural affinity of the colonists with the native English. The colonial immigrations of diverse European groups had jeopardized British-British colonial consanguinity. The Great Awakening occurred as the English were tentatively venturing a first step in the direction of colonial uniformity in the Church of England.**

**It seems that the Andros motive was conversion of the New Englanders to the Anglican Church rather than pluralistic toleration. Refinement of English policy consisted in a shift from the desirability of colonial population growth to that of a colonial social hierarchy consonant with the needs of English social hierarchy. The successful degradation of the native English commoners, especially the labor class, had enabled England to triumph in international commerce. The misery of the English labor class translated into English capacity to undersell other European nations in manufactured products. *Translated* connotes that England did not desire per se that its labor class should be miserable. European mercantilism theorized that a successful export economy entailed high population density that would provide impoverished labor amenable to low wages. Low wages**

enabled low prices by which commodities might prevail in foreign markets.<sup>15</sup> What was *per se* desirable was the low wage cost, which made possible the low prices favorable to British export. The poverty of the British commoner was an unintended side-effect, but this consideration was limitlessly outweighed by the achievement of low export prices. Similarly, degradation of the rights of colonials, who were likewise regarded as a contemptible, ancillary part of British society, might have augmented international British competitive superiority.

Aggravating the class differences in colonial society ought to have weakened colonial capacity for a unified negotiating position with England. If a colonial aristocracy had solidified, it would have developed affinity with England rather than with its cognate colonial commoners, because persistent reference to England would have stabilized their claim to privileged position. Unfortunately, the colonial upper classes, though English, derived entirely from the lower classes of England, not its aristocracy. The English, though desiring class hierarchy in the colonies, were vehemently unwilling to put the colonial upper class on an equal footing with the English aristocracy. The alienation resulting from this snobbery put the colonial upper class, against probability, on the side of the colonial commoners; usually people put priority on their class divisions over their national identities.

In order to invigorate the dwindling affiliation between mother country and colony, England had considered establishment of Anglicanism in the colonies.<sup>16</sup> Timothy Cutler, the rector of Yale University, announced his Anglicanism in 1709; Yale University, like Harvard, had been a bulwark of

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<sup>15</sup> McCoy, Drew R.; "Benjamin Franklin's Vision of a Republican Political Economy for America," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 35, (1978), p. 612.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 86.

**Puritanism against Anglicanism. In the same year the royal governor of Massachusetts, Samuel Shute, proclaimed his Anglicanism. Both had been Puritans. These events electrified the apprehension that Anglicanism might take over Puritanism from the inside, and establish a pan-colonial social conformity with England under establishment of the Anglican Church. Being an ancient church different from Catholicism virtually only in having the King of England in the place of the Pope, it was an organization designed for steep class hierarchy. Anglican establishment would have re-enacted the English social hierarchy in the colonies; it would have put the colonial proto-aristocracy solidly on the side of the British aristocracy, versus the colonial commoners.**

**Henry VIII had managed to unify the English nationally, by his design of the Church of England; the scheme had worked splendidly. Following the Puritan hiatus of the Civil War and Protectorate, at the Restoration of 1660 the Anglican Church was re-established in England, and Clarendon's Code was improvised to persecute and suppress religious nonconformity. The royal revocation of the Massachusetts Bay Charter in 1684 abolished the Puritan theocratic control of the colony. Sir Edmund Andros arrived from England as the royal governor in 1686; the Puritan establishment stalwartly refused the institution of an Anglican Church in Boston, at which point Andros forcibly confiscated a Puritan meeting house to use for Anglican services, and had a full Anglican Church built.<sup>17</sup> The Anglican Church, in Britain, per se strenuously pressed for appointment of a colonial bishop; Parliament entertained an initiative to appoint a resident Anglican bishop for the colonies. An Anglican bishop being a state official, reinforcement of a colonial Anglican hierarchy would have**

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<sup>17</sup> Sidney E. Mead, "From Coercion to Persuasion: Another Look at the Rise of Religious Liberty and the Emergence of Denominationalism", *Church History*, 25 (1956), 326.

wonderfully strengthened the pro-English element of the colonial upper class. Anglican religious uniformity would probably have prevented the Revolutionary War.

The prior egalitarian Puritanism of New England deprecated individual economic aggrandizement because economic stratification would ruin the solidarity of the religious community. Only religious solidarity could have sufficiently unified resistance to the ever present Anglican English intention to subvert New England Puritanism. Since Anglican intolerance had originally motivated the New England migrations, the descendants of the New England settlement might easily react very militantly to any new movements of the Anglican bugbear. Parliament was ambivalent between the possibility of a colonial Anglican unification, all lovey-dovey with England, and colonial revolt. Anglican establishment would vivify anxiety that Anglicanism would repeat its religious repression of England; non-Anglicans would be taxed for support of the Anglican Church, and suffer exclusion from government, law, medicine, and academia. Parliament apprehended that colonial revolt would be the more likely consequence. Parliament ultimately forbore from establishment.

Egalitarianism was the ultimate root of the series of Puritan traumas. An aristocratic English woman's comment, that the new nation suffered from a most horrid equality, is endlessly quoted for its humorousness. Perhaps the use of her comment for the sake of humor has concealed an extremely weighty issue therein expressed. Is it plausible that any society could survive without hierarchy, as opposed to America, a society always full of pretenses to equality, where however hierarchy was substantially as strong as it was in England? The colonies had more or less formulated this into an ideal. The Puritan Church had lost its possession of government by having been severely compromised in events connected with its commitment to egalitarianism. Roger Williams (1636) allowed

**all religious sects into Rhode Island; Anne Hutchinson divided the Boston Puritan church with her antinomianism; the half-way covenant was formulated; the Boston Charter was revoked (1684); the half-way covenant was formulated (1662); Boston was forbidden to expel non-Puritan missionaries; the Anglican Church was forcibly introduced in Boston (1686); the Anglican Church had been introduced in Boston, and the Anglican Church had established a center for colonial missionaries, not to convert Indians, but to convert Puritans. Offensively, the Anglican missionary center was built just at the entrance to Harvard College. Boston was forbidden to expel non-Puritan missionaries, Non Anglican denominations were forbidden to send Christian missionaries to the Indians.**

**The root of Puritan debilitation had been the half-way covenant. A Puritan, though an active parishioner, could not participate in government unless he had been a saint. However, the Puritans, as good Calvinists, subscribed to the impossibility of knowing whether someone is of the elect, destined for salvation. So, the Puritan notion of a saint was altered to that of a *visible saint*, which meant that to all human appearances a person seemed to be one of God's elect. This harked back to Anabaptism. Infant baptism had been repudiated by the Anabaptists because of the infant's non-cognition of the commitment therein. All Puritans were baptized at infancy, but a baptized Puritan was as such not yet a full member of the Puritan Church. There were two, only two, sacraments in the Puritan Church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Puritans worked on Christmas day and Easter day, for instance. It was only when a Puritan could partake of the Lord's Supper that he was a Puritan in the full sense. The sacrament of "The Lord's Supper" amounted to adult baptism; without the Lord's Supper, the baptized Puritan was not a full communicant of the church. This seems to give credit to the Anabaptist position, that a person could become a true**

**Christian only when he was cognitively committed to the creed. Until the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the baptized Puritan was not a communicant of the Church. The recipient of baptism who had not participated in the Lord's Supper was baptized "half-way," being as such a candidate for becoming a communicant, but not yet such: hence the "half-way covenant."**

**The Puritans had monopolized New England through the half-way covenant. Some Puritans, together with non-Puritans in the population, were indifferent. Posts of government and higher social roles were closed to the unbaptized. In 1631 the general court of Massachusetts ratified an ordinance that no man could be a "freeman," i.e. someone of independent employment, if he were not a full member of a Puritan Church, i.e. a saint.<sup>18</sup> Higher social roles were unavoidably numerous, and such offices, though secular, had to be occupied exclusively by communicating Puritans, so that Puritanism could protect its monopoly of society and government. Because of the apathy of large numbers of Puritans towards receiving the Lord's Supper, the communicating Puritan population became progressively too small to occupy all of the offices. In response the saints were made to occupy pluralities of posts, so that other religions would not get a foothold in the New England community. However, the Puritan communicants received the offices of society only resentfully, because of the excessive labor of plural office holding. The active Puritan population was swiftly diminishing because people were not having themselves made "saints." Either the Puritan Church would have to amplify the number of communicants, or it would have to concede its controlling grip on society.**

**Evidently the power of Puritan faith was flagging. Increasing numbers of parishioners were ignoring the process**

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<sup>18</sup> Brown, B. Katherine, *Freemanship In Puritan Massachusetts*, The American Historical Review, 59, 1954, p. 868.

of sainthood, which the church regarded as indispensable to ensure the persistent viability of the Puritan doctrine. Under the half-way premise, the infant baptism of an individual was the qualification by which he could be a candidate of the Lord's Supper and hence be a full member. The question was whether the child of unregenerate parents could be eligible for acceptance to the Lord's Supper, or whether the parents' failure to become full members invalidated the infant baptism, or neglect of having their children baptized, cancelled forever the child's candidacy for admission to the Puritan Church.<sup>19</sup>

It is at this point that the problem of the half-way covenant exerted its pressure. The Synod of 1662, under the influence of Solomon Stoddard, recommended that children of unregenerate parents have a "half-way" membership in the Puritan Church, so that they would retain the option of becoming full members of the church despite the fact that their parents were not. This "half-way" covenant, however, sustained the requirement that the individual demonstrate a religious epiphany or revelation that comported with the creed of the Puritan Church.<sup>20</sup> A coercive measure against the non-communicants had been discrimination against their children; if the parents were not communicants because of the omission of the Lord's Supper, then the children would also be excluded from full membership, and hence undergo exclusion from the better callings of society. This sort of repression had a very long tradition in England and Anglicanism.

However, continuance of such an English ecclesiastical tradition would be extremely stupid in New England. If the child of a non-communicating adult were excluded from baptism and social participation because his parents had not

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<sup>19</sup> Rutman, B. Darret; *God's Bridge Falling Down: Another Approach To New England Puritanism Assayed*, *The William And Mary Quarterly*, third series, 19, 1962, 408-421.

<sup>20</sup> E. Brooks Holifield, *The Renaissance of Sacramental Piety in Colonial New England*, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 29 (1972), p. 36.

partaken of the Lord's Supper, then the Puritan population would diminish by geometric progression, since all children of the parents and all children of the children of the parents etc. would all be non-Puritans. This idea was instituted at the same time as the Puritans wanted to monopolize the New England population, when they were fully apprehensive of the consequences of non-Puritan immigrants co-occupying the territory. The intensity of Puritanism existed best when Puritans were under intense threat from outside. When the Puritans were still living in England, protecting themselves from a government intent on destroying them, or in the early colonial period, when an English invasion to obliterate New England Puritanism, an individual Puritan would see great value in becoming a saint and receiving the Lord's Supper, because full admission to the group would appear to give him much better protection than if he were an isolated outcast of English society and of the Puritan community at the same time. The intention of England to destroy all Puritans had at the moment of William Laud been an active reality, and afterwards was not out of the question. One or two generations later, when such dread had become remote from the imagination, what motivation could passionately move the Puritan to affirm his fidelity to this group?

It would be necessary to recruit the children of the non-regenerate if the Puritan Church was to populate all the higher social positions. If the current repression was not threatening enough to induce the parents to become full members, then huge chunks of the general population would be dissociated, forever, from the interests of the Puritan Church. It became a pressing problem whether to allow baptism to the children of non-communicating parents, or whether such children should be eligible for adult baptism despite the defection of the parents.

It should be noticed that either one of the alternatives would weaken the power of Puritanism. The countermeasure

against Puritan degeneracy could influence a non-communicating member only from economic consequences; the child would have no opportunity to improve his lot, insofar as he would be excluded from office or other public acceptance that would provide social integration. If to the contrary the child were eligible for adult baptism, then the only palpable reprisal against a non-communicating parent would lose its teeth. Reversal of the countermeasure would encourage more people to defect, since their defection would not jeopardize their children. Evidently, however, the reprisal was not effectively keeping the laity within the fold, and the reprisal was cutting off the rapidly multiplying progeny from the Puritan Church. Eventually, the reprisal was inverted: the half way covenant provided that a child could have the opportunity of becoming a full communicant, even if his parents were not. But this solution was still a severe threat to Puritanism, because the communicating adult population would then undergo virtually no penalty for defection. The original stricture had been to motivate the full covenant of the parental generation, which was dwindling; relief would eliminate the last force acting against the dwindling of active Puritan laity.

The Great Awakening could be interpreted as a reaction; its original stimulus, at the hands of Jonathan Edwards, had been an idea of "revival." After passing through Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), the formulation of the half-way covenant (1662), the antinomianism of Anne Hutchinson, the religious pluralism of Roger Williams, the Salem witch-hunt, the abrogation of the Boston charter, the establishment of the Anglican Church, and the dispersal of interests through commerce, Puritanism had lost its original counter-cultural character; compromise forced it to become conventional.

Among other connotations, the Salem Witch-Hunt (1692) signified a panicked effort to purify the community from subversive thinking; it was an effort to guarantee that Puritan

rigorism would expel deviant ideas. Anne Hutchison was expelled, and Roger Williams was expelled, although they were ultra-Puritans, more Puritan than the mainstream of Puritanism. Non-Puritan proselytizers had been outlawed from New England; initially those who attempted to preach were expelled, but Boston then legislated capital punishment for non-Puritan missionaries who returned after having been expelled. Such extravagance signified defeat. In Roger Williams' Providence, the immediate neighbor of New England Puritanism, all Christian denominations were welcome, and the British Crown had privileged Rhode Island in appreciation of this liberalism. The Crown in 1663 conferred a charter on Roger Williams' Rhode Island colony, with "full liberty in religious concernments," apparently to counteract the efforts of Massachusetts Bay to impose Puritan theocracy on the whole of New England.<sup>21</sup> Rhode Island finalized the impossibility of sequestering Puritan laity from other religious ideas. Puritanism became anxious about its capacity to maintain hegemony. The Boston Charter was abrogated (1684). When in 1682 the Anglican Church was established in Boston, the Crown compelled Massachusetts to tolerate other religions.

British legislation against the Puritan social monopoly catalyzed the shift from Puritan to Yankee New England. By the 1730s, Puritanism in New England was largely in defeat. The dilution New England Puritanism coincided with abandonment of the church-centered egalitarian distribution of land; from this point on speculators, i.e. the oceanic merchant class, were allowed to buy and market land.

Because the earliest civil society of Puritan settlement was weak, those individuals who were comparatively wealthy paid

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<sup>21</sup> Sidney E. Mead, "From Coercion to Persuasion: Another Look at the Rise of Religious Liberty and the Emergence of Denominationalism", *Church History*, 25 (1956), p. 326.

for infrastructure such as roads, schools, etc. and gathered prestige from doing so; this was not entirely dissimilar from the ancient Greek financial institution of the liturgy. Such prestige had been informal, and the infrastructure which they built they controlled like private property. Private conflicts over control of government did not emerge until that point at which civil society matured enough to differentiate a town government that disposed over a public finance. As infrastructure came into public ownership, the proprietors who had previously built and owned infrastructure now privately maneuvered through control of government to continue in control of publicly owned infrastructure, as they had controlled the same infrastructure in the status of private property. Conflicts centered on taxation, compulsory labor requirements for roads and other public improvements, and most importantly on land policies.<sup>22</sup>

Because stratification in civil government was not the same as that of religion, the original religious criteria in New England came to be gradually eclipsed by the hierarchical criteria of real material interests. Those with participation in the public infrastructure financed through taxation and those without such participation came in conflict, resulting in a hierarchy that was supposedly not to be found in their egalitarian church confession. Property owners in civil society composed an informal oligarchy in civil government. The Puritan forbears had been “saints,” and the progeny were now Yankees.

There was a transition from theocratic Puritanism to Yankee mercantilism as the signs of prestige shifted. The religious ascendancy of the Puritan Church had depended on

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<sup>22</sup>Conflicts between oligarchy and the others then developed concerning taxation, land distribution, and labor on infrastructure. Cf. Poulson, Larry W.; *Economic History of the United States*, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1981, p. 132.

its creed of rough equality; the surrender of land apportionment to land speculation signifies that the mercantile class, although descendants of the Puritan community, had crystallized a new identity that weakened Puritan government by splitting the colonists into groups with conflicting economic interests. With the increasing wealth of the merchant class and the agricultural areas coming into association with commercial wealth, a greater percentage of total wealth was possessed by the rich.<sup>23</sup>

By the 1730s one was able to defy preferences of the Puritan Church without losing social position. The distribution of free land grants had been conducted during the period of Puritan ascendancy, when the church ideals of simplicity and equality prevailed; land speculation began when religions other than Puritanism cohabited New England. The root of the new causal cascade was that Puritanism did not extend its idea of egalitarianism to comprise non-Puritan groups. The courts of Massachusetts and Connecticut started to create new towns not by apportioning land to settlers but by selling land to speculators.<sup>24</sup> Land speculation had not arisen from commercial agriculture, which was too insignificant to produce substantial capital. Boston merchants used profits from external commerce to invest in land speculation on the western frontiers of Massachusetts, when no other group had a source of investment capital; the new settlers thus bought their land from speculators, now without legal or Puritanical limits on aggrandizement. In this manner economic stratification was posterior to religious stratification.<sup>25</sup> Capital for land

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Poulson, Larry W.; Economic History of the United States, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1981, p. 119.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Poulson, Larry W.; Economic History of the United States, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1981, p. 132.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Louis M. Hacker; The Triumph of American Capitalism, Columbia University Press, 1947, p. 108.

speculation had come from the New England merchants. Evidently land values would increase because of population growth; it was a reasonable venture for a merchant, though not a farmer, to preempt frontier land and parcel it off to agricultural families in need of more land. An opposition between court and country parties came to a climax in 1728, in which the country party wanted to preserve the Puritan tradition of providing “bills of credit,” by which government would enable impecunious farmers to purchase land; in opposition was Governor Burnet, who threatened to have the Boston charter revoked, again, if the country party persisted in its demand.<sup>26</sup>

Agricultural pioneers had once received their land free, by ecclesiastical distribution; now they were paying mortgages to the merchants and commercial agriculturalists who had preempted frontier land. Population shifted not from urban to frontier areas, as it had previously; it shifted from less to more developed areas. In part this signifies a drift away from Puritanism towards commercialism; the migration trend signified a preference for enrichment over the original commitment to egalitarianism and simplicity. Increasing sectors of the population chose to live in areas where the inequality of wealth was greatest. As each area went through stages of frontier, subsistence, commercial, to urban, economic inequality became greater.<sup>27</sup>

In order to survive, Puritanism had to sacrifice the main evidence of its sincerity: rigorism. Anglicanism had been formed in England to enhance commercial enterprise and social rank. None of the colonial churches that prevailed prior to the Anglican Church could stress simplicity without risk of

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 147.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Poulson, Larry W.; Economic History of the United States, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1981, p. 121

losing parishioners to the Anglican Church; this applied preeminently to New Englanders whose prosperity depended more directly than other groups on collaboration in English commerce. The New Englanders who had tried to produce an egalitarian religious community in a period of relative immunity from England regarded the Anglican Church, with its royal authoritarian structure, as a serious threat to their community.<sup>28</sup> If the Puritan Church had harangued its wealthy members too much, those parishioners might have converted to the Anglican Church. This indeed happened. The Puritan Church had either to accommodate the economic stratification or lose parishioners.

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) powerfully amplified fear of the Anglican Church with the even more powerful fear of the Catholic Church. The Puritan Church had no other recourse but to mitigate egalitarianism, exhibiting the premise that only a hierarchical structure can accommodate an increasing population.<sup>29</sup> As of 1692, the revocation of the Boston Charter, the Puritan Church could no longer command civil government to enforce its policies. The term *congregationalism* had signified the Puritan policy that church matters would be decided *in toto* by the congregation of parishioners of any local church, never by a professional clergy. Loss of the power to direct government led the Puritan leaders, such as John Stoddard, to promote a *Presbyterian* arrangement, in which a collection of church elders would decide on church matters, in the place of the local church congregations, as previously. It was thought that in absence of the unquestioning backing of state power, institution of a new presbyterian organization would be the only way to maintain

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<sup>28</sup>cf. R. C. Simmons, *The American Colonies: From Settlement to Independence*, Longman, 1976, p. 98.

<sup>29</sup>Cf. Marsden, George M.; *Jonathan Edwards A Life*, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 31.

the primacy of Puritanism. Against the hierarchy of the Puritan Church there were other hierarchies that could support deviation from Puritanism. Prebyterian reorganization of Puritanism, never adopted, might at least have maintained at least the religious primacy of Puritanism over other religions. But such a tactic would have been a tremendous betrayal of the original Puritan spirit. In consequence of this omission, however, the presence of other religions ineluctably produced a cacophony of hierarchies, which obviated the transition from religious hierarchy to commercial hierarchy.

By the 1680's the confrontation of the Crown and New England had become peremptory. New England merchants, whose wealth ultimately depended on their trade configuration with England, could not persist in regarding England as the enemy, whereas dread of English aggression had been the mainstay for the cohesion of Puritanism's theocratic government.<sup>30</sup> The merchants tried to ameliorate the threat to their career by recommending that the Bay Colony Charter be abolished; thus government would be converted from the Puritan theocracy to royal government. They had betrayed their cultural forbears in favor of their commercial interest. England instead revoked the Charter, converted to royal government, and abolished the Massachusetts colony by amalgamating it to a new entity: the Dominion of New England. Therein the representative legislature was wholly abolished, and town meetings were outlawed. This was not kindly taken, and George Andros, who was now governor of the Dominion of New England, responded by announcing that all deeds to New England land possession, made prior to his accession to the governorship, were invalid; the tactic was to intimidate the New England population for fear of their

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<sup>30</sup>Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 47.

property so much that no one would dare to stir the pot. The Anglican Church was thereupon established in Boston, and a Puritan meeting-hall had been confiscated to provide Anglican services.

The New England merchants who had recommended royal government in order to overcome their Puritan theocracy now felt deep remorse. As soon as William of Orange was reported to have landed in England, the people of Massachusetts prepared to overthrow Andros and his Dominion of New England.<sup>31</sup> The revolt was composed of discordant groups: theocratic oligarchs and merchants. The Puritans wanted resumption of the old Massachusetts Charter; the merchants wanted revocation of the Dominion of New England, but not the prior Puritan hegemony.<sup>32</sup>

## **GREAT AWAKENING**

The reasons underlying the origination of English Puritanism had never obtained in the colonies. Furthermore, Puritanism had never, in New England or in English context, promoted pre-reformation Christian ideals of poverty and humility. One might errantly infer that, because the Puritans were devout, egalitarian, and simplistic, they upheld a special religious compassion for the poor. In reality Puritanism was a petit-bourgeois world view, quite distinctively intolerant of the poor; Puritans were weavers, artisans, shop-keepers, neither from the destitute nor from the propertied. Puritanism had originated in East Anglia, the region of England prospering most from the growth of textile commerce.

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Leder, Lawrence H.; *The Glorious Revolution And The Pattern Of Imperial Relationships*, New York Historical Society Quarterly, 46, 1965, pp. 204-205.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Leder, Lawrence H.; *The Glorious Revolution And The Pattern Of Imperial Relationships*, New York Historical Society Quarterly, 46, 1965, p. 207.

Catholicism was antithetical to commerce. The New England Puritan accommodation of commerce, however, was not a betrayal of the Puritan spirit, because Puritanism had never been the advocate of the poor. The Puritans had eagerly sought prosperity as much as the Anglicans, basically on the shared Calvinistic premise that prosperity might be a mundane sign of election in the great scheme of predestination. The weak point of Puritan commercial accommodation was not that it was an internal contradiction within the premises of Puritanism, but the external point, that Puritan accommodation could not overcome the inimical attitude of the British establishment to nonconformity. The counter-organization of the colonial Great Awakening had not targeted government, but the religion which had itself previously been counter-organizational.

The Great Awakening had set in just after the Puritan Church had changed into a conventional religion in support of social hierarchy. The original Puritan churches had no steeples, and the pews were either not ordered, or in order according to the clerical eminence of the family. Town meetings took place in the Puritan Churches. The lack of a steeple signified that the church ground was just as profane as any other mundane location. The town meetings were held in the church, not in a separate building, because the church was not sacred. Puritans worked on Christmas day because they regarded a religious holiday as a form of idolatry.<sup>33</sup> Solomon Stoddard sought demolition of the enclosures of the Puritan churches, since fences and gates signified that church ground was sanctified. Stoddard's position was antithetical to that of Cotton Mather, who sought to allow only the elect of God within the church. This ideal of segregation animated Cotton Mather's attempt to distinguish the saints from the reprobates,

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 86.

and exclude reprobates from communion in the Lord's Supper. Solomon Stoddard held to the more Calvinistic thesis, that it is utterly impossible for a mortal to distinguish who is elect from who is damned; he advocated open communion. But the Puritan churches of the 1730s did have steeples, in conformity to Anglicanism, so as to signify that the church was a sacred location, distinguished from other locations. The town meetings were from then on held in the town hall, rather than the church, to highlight the sanctity of the church. The pews in the new Puritan churches were ordered hierarchically according to the economic precedence of the families.<sup>34</sup>

The Puritan Church abandoned its rigorism in order to humor its parishioners, but therein desecrated its principles, whereas the Anglican Church could adopt such parishioners without any hypocrisy vis-à-vis its own hierarchical principles. The early Puritan Church forbade church hymns because there was no prescription for them in the Bible; now, however, the Puritan Church had instituted singing.<sup>35</sup> The early Puritan Church forbade fornication and other sexual activities prior to marriage; the new Puritan Church allowed *bundling*, a practice in which young people not yet married slept together so as to explore all sorts of things short of intercourse.<sup>36</sup> As a developed commercial society needs a hierarchical religion concordant with the economic hierarchy, Anglicanism should have been more appealing than Puritanism. The Great Awakening got started exactly at the moment when Puritanism could no longer assert itself by persuasion, nor enforce

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 186.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 143.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 130.

religious fidelity by coercion.<sup>37</sup> The new leniency of Puritanism had been a passive compromise in reaction to the Anglican Church; the colonial merchant class would be inclined to convert to Anglicanism because Anglican confession would enhance their business sociability with Britain, whereas Puritanism would be repugnant to colonial-British mercantile cooperation.

Religion features as countercultural when it emerges within an already mature civil society. Countercultural religion is egalitarian because it is antithetical to whatever hierarchy already structures civil society. The Puritan creed had been fundamentally the same as that of the Great Awakening of the 1730s; why, then, was the Great Awakening hostile to Puritanism? From the viewpoint of the Great Awakening, the Puritan Church had failed to fulfill its mission. Colonists were alarmed at the possibility of political hegemony posed by the Anglican Church.<sup>38</sup> As all Anglican ministers etc. were government employees supported by secular taxation, Anglicanism was thought to be mortifying what a religion was supposed to vitalize. The jeering of the Puritan Church characteristic of the Great Awakening had been an attempt to expose its hypocrisy rather than to repudiate its fundamental creed. The Puritan Church had become more similar to Anglicanism in the hope that parishioners would not convert to Anglicanism. The emphasis of the Great Awakening on personal experience and sincerity was a denial of the superiority of the socially elite. Hierarchy, ritual, and social

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<sup>37</sup> Sidney E. Mead, "From Coercion to Persuasion: Another Look at the Rise of Religious Liberty and the Emergence of Denominationalism", *Church History*, 25 (1956), p. 329.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 202.

ranking were hypocrisies thought to have terribly overgrown the original Puritan mission.<sup>39</sup>

The Great Awakening was perhaps more a class than a religious movement. Prior to 1689 the antecedent regime of Puritan theocracy was competing against a colonial merchant class for political direction of the colony. The merchants were themselves Puritan, and descendants of rigorous Puritanism, but successful mercantile relations with England were discordant with original Puritan rigorism. The colonial merchants had proposed removal of colonial government from the Puritan establishment to the Crown.<sup>40</sup> Inasmuch as authority and tradition overlay and stunted the original Puritan injunction, the rebellion of Great Awakening was not so much a repudiation of the denominations of this authority, as a call to rediscover the original overgrown intentions. Very much in the tradition of Protestantism, in long term effect the Great Awakening had jeopardized religious stability by its argument in favor of the priority of individual conscience. The Puritan idea of personal conscience had calcified into its opposite; the survival of Puritanism had become dependent on compatibility with the given commercial structures. The inferiority of Puritanism to Anglicanism derived from its ineptitude in hierarchy, as is evident in the half-way covenant and in the doctrinal leniency of Puritan doctrine. The Great Awakening regarded the Puritan division into denominations and parishes in the same way as it looked upon educated clergy, hierarchy, and ritual: as corrupt overgrowths that ossified the vital religious impulse. Puritanism seemed bad only insofar as it had become too much like Anglicanism, which was a much better scaffolding for the wealthy merchant class in its

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 210.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Leder, Lawrence H.; *The Glorious Revolution and the Pattern of Imperial Relationships*, New York Historical Society Quarterly, 46, 1965, p. 204.

collusion with the English merchant class. While Puritanism struggled against Anglicanism by its attempt to imitate some of its commercial favoritism, the Great Awakening came to release the disaffected common people who were not well served by religious ossification.

Perhaps the Great Awakening originated from Puritan hypocrisy. A significant sign of Puritan indolence had been the circumstance that Great Awakening preachers, who had been invited to speak in Puritan Churches, were for the most part English, and were not Puritans. Jonathan Edwards was Puritan; Whitefield was Anglican; Tennent was Presbyterian, Davenport was insane, and Wesley, needless to say, was Methodist.

An emergent religion is a muted protest against society as it is. Since the members of an emergent religion are too incoherent to prevail, the criticism must be inserted insidiously, as a religious ideal for the denomination to which they are preaching. Since the members of an emergent religion are normally at the bottom of society, the religion idealizes equality for them, as equality would constitute higher social standing than their actual position. Puritanism, as the backing of New England social structure, advocated equality, atavistically captured in the memory of its prior situation in England, but perforce accommodated actual inequality in order to keep the membership of the colonial merchant class, the backbone of the commune; in doing so it could not, as it had in England, serve the lower people. But that was a contingent matter. What had been a religion in advocacy for the lower middle class had now abandoned that class in catering to mercantile classes of people on whom its survival now depended. Puritanism was deeply compromised; with the dilution of its religion in the New England population, its legal disempowerment to act ruthlessly against dissenters, and the covert attractiveness of the Anglican Church, Puritanism needed to be conciliatory.

Evangelists such as Whitefield were itinerant; they supervised on parishes and denominations indiscriminately, without any attempt to stake out a new denominational niche for themselves vis-à-vis other denominations. They did however excoriate the insincerity of all the clergies of the religious denominations, with the result that parishioners grew more skeptical and alienated towards their own conventional churches, while the church leadership in a short while regretted its initial accommodation of these British itinerant preachers. The Great Awakening preachers, though invited by the clergy of the denominations to which they preached, assiduously denounced the same clergy as degenerate, to the laity of these denominations.<sup>41</sup> The clergy of all the Protestant denominations continually lost their moral authority subsequently to the Great Awakening of the 1740s. The New England congregations had achieved formal power to dismiss their own minister, as had happened to Jonathan Edwards himself. One of the reasons that Anglicanism wanly survived in the southern colonies, where Anglicanism was a tax supported established church, was that the Anglican parochial vestries could arbitrarily hire and fire their Anglican pastors.<sup>42</sup> This had the short term effect of improving popular relations to the church, as every minister, in dread of losing his employment, ingratiated whatever popular trends were in effect; in the long term it was highly destructive to religion, since the various denominations were quite ready to renege on central doctrines of their denomination in order to keep a hold on fugitive popularity.

From all the Puritan preaching about purity, conscience, and worldliness, the Great Awakening might seem to have

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 210-11.

<sup>42</sup> Brown, Richard D.; Modernization and the Modern Personality in Early America, 1600-1865: A Sketch of a Synthesis, The Journal Of Interdisciplinary History, 2, 1972, p. 217.

concerned itself with people seeking release from their material desires. But if the Puritans interpreted themselves in this manner, they were a bit naive. Pretending to greater purity was the indispensable ground for looking down on others who did not pursue the alleged purity. The call for greater purity was not directed at the protagonists of the Great Awakening, but at the objects of their resentment; it was a massive attack on deference to the status quo elite. It conveyed that the socially elite were neither truly superior, nor deserving of traditional respect, because the elite were not truly elite: they were entangled in mundane ambitions.

The exponents of the Great Awakening were the half-successful, those who had failed to gain social precedence and therefore now condemned those who had. The person who had failed to become prestigious by virtue of wealth could now proclaim his superiority to the wealthy by virtue of his simplicity. The Great Awakening acolyte denouncing himself for having sinned and having been worldly was in reality attacking those who had succeeded in the (sinful) game in which he had failed; it was an insidious attack against the authority and the given social order in which the religious aspirant had failed.<sup>43</sup> The religious aspirant who loudly bewails that he will burn in hellfire forever, because he stole a dime, while not in the least criticizing the person who stole a million dollars, to whom he is addressing his self-condemnation, is in reality condemning his interlocutor.

The Great Awakening did not concentrate on any denomination, but on the hypocrisy of all conventional religions. The multiplication of religious denomination resulting from the Great Awakening weakened religion; it is not a coincidence that the future United States was the first nation to separate categorically religion from government.

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<sup>43</sup>Cf. Johnson, Richard R.; *Growth and Mastery: British North America, 1690-1748*, p. 294.

Since migration was fragmented whereas the colonial elite were homogeneous (English ancestry), the Great Awakening was a counter-organization against the colonial elite. If lower class groups are too weak to form political opposition, the counter-organization uses religious rather than political terminology. Its form was not that of a new church; it was a seduction of the lower class parishioners of any denomination who were ignored in the midst of commercial interest and denominational rivalry which had become the preoccupation of all the denominations.

A deeper interest lurked behind the colonial opposition to Anglican establishment: not to be controlled by any clerical religion.<sup>44</sup> The Great Awakening was a reaction against the British initiative to improve its colonial control through religious uniformity. Colonial ministers of the various denominations were not paid by the government of their locale, except for the Anglican ministers in Virginia. In England the ministers of the Anglican Church were paid servants of the British government. It was reasonable to fear that an established Church of England would have helped to put the colonies under the control of the metropolitan government. Where the Anglican Church was established, the inhabitants had been obliged to attend its services pay taxes for its maintenance.

The Great Awakening was extremely emotional, but did not produce prolonged religious enthusiasm; colonial religion declined after the Great Awakening. At the same time the Anglican Church was advancing; it had been established in half the colonies and the Church was calling on central government to appoint an American bishop.<sup>45</sup> Parliament's

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44 Whitefield founded an orphanage, Bethesda, in Maryland, but it was not in English control. p. 145.

45Cf. Channing, A History of the United States, Volume III, The American Revolution, 1761-1789, p.13.

decision against ordination of a colonial bishop was well judged.

The colonists of the American Revolution did not split along religious lines, nor propound a religious cause, although religion had been the theme of most wars in the two centuries previous. A covert anti-religious element in the Great Awakening might be discerned in the Revolutionary War, one of whose effects was the nearly complete abolition of the Church of England, two thirds of whose clergy left America at the close of the war. Most Anglican parishes were bereft of leadership after the war, so that the most hierarchical of the colonial religions, and the religion most enamored of government symbiosis, was the one most profoundly damaged by the revolutionary war.

Egalitarianism had been vital to the Revolutionary War. The Puritan Church promoted egalitarianism, although it foundered, but the Anglican Church promoted the opposite. The Anglican Church had been strong in tidewater areas such as Boston, New York, and Charles Town, where membership was germane to trade relations with English exporters, in that it was a religion designed for steep social stratification. If on the contrary the following of a church is a small fraction of a total population, the church has no alternative but to glorify human equality. Equality is not necessary in a wealthy region, because the patronage flowing from the elite to lower classes enables cooperation in a religious unity. The Anglican Church had a limited following, and due to the origins and elitism of its doctrine, it could not have resorted to an egalitarian policy ingredient to survival in colonial America. The social stratification of the Atlantic colonies therefore could not reflect in parallel a change of hierarchy within any of the active religions, but it did induce a depletion of parishioners in one denomination in favor of another. The Anglican Church had developed from a much later phase in ecclesiastical evolution, at a point in which a state could enforce the religion on its

people; the immediate colonial disestablishment of the Anglican Church, following colonial severance from the British Leviathan, was unlikely to preserve a religion that sanctified class barriers.

More than independence from Britain, disestablishment signified repudiation of arbitrary taxation; pre-war colonial laws which enforced church attendance on its parishioners and taxation of non-communicating inhabitants for support of its ministers were repealed. In England the Anglican Church had always been state supported; the church was not prohibited following the Revolutionary War, but its finance was made thereafter to be entirely private. The Anglican Church, a symbol of English authority, could not have attracted adherence except for the commercial advantages of loyalty to England. The merchant community would also feel less attraction for it, since following the war the capacity of Anglican confession to ingratiate England would have been a nonsensical motivation.

It is significant that the Anglican Church was disestablished, but not outlawed. While Thomas Jefferson was governor of Virginia, it was noticed that most churches of the colony were Calvinistic rather than Anglican, although in early colonial times the Anglican church had been prevalent. The Calvinistic churches were prevalent, but diverse; no Protestant denomination could reasonably petition for establishment because no particular denomination thereof had a nearly universal following. The Great Awakening, having pulverized the union of state and religion, and the unity of religion, with its emphasis on individual sincerity, had made establishment highly distasteful from purely religious premises. Each of the atomized denominations insisted on religious freedom for

themselves, and would purchase such freedom by condoning the same for different denominations.<sup>46</sup>

The postwar Virginia Constitution, composed by Thomas Jefferson, invoked the abolition of primogeniture and entail.<sup>47</sup> These items were the economic foundation of the Anglican Church; without primogeniture, no aristocracy could persist, and with no aristocracy, there could be no patronage, and without patronage, no Anglican laity. No New England Puritans were communicants due to any undertow of patronage. One would contrariwise discover that the elites of middle and southern colonies would be *sua sponte* Anglicans, while the middle class people in such areas would be Anglican by deferential courtesy to the elite. During the war the lower class colonists, who lived in the same locale and depended on plantation owners or mercantile magnates, did not turn against the Anglicans. It was the back-country patriots (non-Anglicans), without ties of patronage, who opened their attack on the tidewater loyalists, who were apt to be Anglican.<sup>48</sup>

The low economy of the colonial economy had made Anglicanism too contingent to flourish. The condition of infinite land in the colonies powerfully prevented Anglican prevalence. The hierarchical structure of Anglicanism presupposed land scarcity, such as in England, because land scarcity was the precondition of English aristocracy. Entail and primogeniture, though successful in England, could neither form nor protect a substantial American aristocracy because entail could neither deprive non-Anglicans from land

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46 Sidney E. Mead, "From Coercion to Persuasion: Another Look at the Rise of Religious Liberty and the Emergence of Denominationalism", *Church History*, 25 (1956), p. 335.

47 Bernard Bailyn, "Political Experience and Enlightenment Ideas in Eighteenth-Century America", *The American Historical Review*, 67 (1962), p. 345.

48 Cf. Curtis P. Nettles, The Roots of American Civilization, George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1963, p. 681.

aggrandizement nor raise agricultural prices; if Anglicanism was unable to corner the land market, it could not generate class supremacy. It was the preponderance of the proletarian element, needed in the Revolutionary War, that forced the persistence of egalitarianism in the framing of the constitution.

## **CATHOLICISM**

The English identification of her Protestantism with her national survival had for centuries constituted the popular passion of the English in European war, and the same passion persisted in the colonies because of the menacing co-existence of the French and Spanish in North America. It was a Puritan tenet that political action was a legitimate device for the protection of religion; the New Englanders in 1739 sent military assistance to fight Spain, and was very mindful of the persecution of Protestants in 1685 when France felt confident that Protestants could not defend themselves.<sup>49</sup> Both Catholic powers were at the borders of the British Protestant colonial settlements.

Until 1776 Catholics were not allowed to hold office in the colonies. England deprived Catholics of suffrage and office holding from 1689 until 1829.<sup>50</sup> At the Seven Years War, it was perceived that the French intention had been to exterminate the British Protestant colonies. The colonists conceived the wars between the great powers and the derivative colonial wars to be a struggle between Christ and Anti-Christ. The wars of the last two centuries appeared to be a struggle for the survival of the reformation of Christianity.<sup>51</sup> The perception was accurate; if the French had won, at the most lenient, the

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 197.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Kevin Phillips, The Cousins' Wars: Religion, Politics, and the Triumph of Anglo-America, Basic Books, 1999, p. 12.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Marsden, George M.; Jonathan Edwards A Life, Yale, New Haven, 2003. p. 89.

**British colonists would have faced either forced Catholic conversion or expulsion.**

**Nevertheless, immediately following a war that portended the extermination of colonial Protestantism, England allowed establishment of the Catholic Church in Quebec, financed by secular taxation, together with a French bishop and their accustomed French law code. The Quebec Act of 1774 gave the Quebec Catholic Church ownership of its lands, and the French Catholics were given the same civil rights as the subjects of what was a Protestant empire. A Protestant colonial entangled in litigation in Quebec would have to submit to the Catholic legal code of Quebec, the French Catholic province which had just previously attempted to exterminate the Protestant British colonies.**

**This has always been interpreted as a milestone in the progress of enlightenment; certainly it was the opposite of what the French would have done had they won the war. Tolerance of Catholicism was just as much against English as colonial taste; after having fought a war against obliteration by Catholicism, the colonists were outraged at the Quebec Act. Apparently the English, virtually bankrupt by the war, preferred to diminish the likelihood of further war rather than to try to expunge Catholicism. Just as the English made their proclamation against western settlement by the British colonials to preempt the likelihood of Indian wars, they didn't want war with the French colonists, which might re-engage France in a new war with England. Britain did not forbid the Quebec French from further settlement in the region in which they had formally forbidden British colonial settlement, in the area which had been English, not French, territory, until the English had won the war against the French. Immediately following the French and Indian War, England took what had always been English territory and awarded it to Quebec. The Quebec Act (1774) was one of the most forceful provocations of the British colonial rebellion.**

It is supremely important to note that, although the colonists dispossessed the loyalists at the end of the Revolutionary War, they did not expel the Catholics. The new government included the Catholics under their principle of freedom of religion. Expulsion would have appeared within the actual historical milieu a matter of common sense; for a century the colonists had been apprehensive of their own Catholics as a fifth column. During the early colonial wars the tenuously held territories of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, populated by French Catholics, had sworn oaths of allegiance to Britain, according to which the inhabitants remained free to practice Catholicism. Nevertheless, the population turned against the British twice, when there was a prospect that France might re-acquire the territory. In the third instance, at the outbreak of the Seven Years War, Britain forcibly expelled the roughly 7,000 Acadians from Nova Scotia-Newfoundland, enforcing their migration to Louisiana, becoming the “Cajuns,” for the purpose of preempting a third insurrection.<sup>52</sup>

## **PROPRIETARY MARYLAND**

There had been repeated attempts on the part of the colonials to overthrow and eliminate the colony of Maryland when it had been predominantly Catholic. Before the Maryland Charter was granted, Virginia energetically worked to prevent the Maryland grant to Lord Baltimore. The northern Chesapeake had been included in the 1606 Virginia Charter. Since revocation of the first Virginia Charter in 1624, the inclusion of the Chesapeake in Virginia had not been explicitly formulated. Virginia denounced the cession of the Chesapeake to the Maryland charter, since the only official

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Borneman, Walter R.; The French and Indian War, Harper Perennial, N.Y., 2006, p. 58.

document mentioning the Chesapeake had awarded it to Virginia.

Catholicism in Maryland faced a long-term difficulty similar to the early New England Puritan threat: death by dissipation. Although founded as a Catholic colony by a covertly Catholic King, English Catholicism constituted a small population in England, and from inception the allegedly Catholic population was overwhelmingly outnumbered by the Protestant colonists. The only way that the Catholicism could possibly prevail was by virtue of preponderance of capital over population. A countermeasure had been to institute such autocratic powers to Lord Calvert and the Catholic oligarchy that a Protestant majority would never be able to subvert the Catholic supremacy of the colony. Lord Calvert was chartered powers that in England pertained only to the King. The proprietor of the colony had unrestricted rights to appoint all officers of the Maryland government. Lord Baltimore had full powers to raise an army, to crush rebellion in his colony, and make war on the neighboring colonies, on his sole authority. Baltimore instituted his own courts, without right of appeal to England. All writs were issued in the name of Lord Baltimore, not of the King of England. There was no chartered royal review of the laws of Maryland; the charter stipulated that any ambiguity in the meaning of the Maryland Charter must be resolved in the favor of Lord Baltimore.<sup>53</sup> Coming from a King of England who earnestly wanted the same absolutism as the Catholic Kings of Europe, it is not surprising that the King of England would admire the power of such a government to suppress popular insurgence. But the scheme cut both ways. No other government in any of the other Atlantic colonies had

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. Carr, Lois Green; *Sources of Political Stability and Upheaval in Seventeenth Century Maryland*, Maryland Historical Magazine, 79, 1984, p. 59, and following.

such powers in the least comparable to the chartered despotism of Maryland.

The Maryland assembly became the first arena for Catholic-Protestant struggle. In 1660 the assembly became bicameral, of which the upper house was appointed entirely by Lord Baltimore. The lower house was elective, made up of Protestant commoners of petit bourgeois success. By 1676 the upper house was entirely composed of Calverts or Calvert allies entwined in Calvert intermarriage; needless to say, the upper house was almost entirely Catholic. The upper house members also sat on the council, occupied the judgeships of the Maryland courts, and occupied all of the profitable or otherwise powerful offices of the colony.<sup>54</sup>

Government monopoly by the Calvert family persisted through all vicissitudes, up through the 1680s. The Calverts assigned plural office holding plus council appointments only to the members of the extended Calvert family. Apart from the obvious benefit of consanguinary office holding, it served to exclude others who had otherwise achieved wealth and prestige from penetrating government; the inner family office holding of the Calverts precluded others from occupying office. This was one of the instigations of the uniquely colonial idea that representative government should be proportioned to the common population, and that refractory representatives should be subject to popular recall. In several of the Atlantic colonies, plural office holding had demonstrated that it stacked the power of aristocratic parties against any representative power the common people might accumulate in their lower house assemblies.

Calvert insisted on an elective representation of two delegates per county, whereas the Protestant Assembly wanted

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. Carr, Lois Green; Sources of Political Stability and Upheaval in Seventeenth Century Maryland, Maryland Historical Magazine, 79, 1984, p. 60.

four delegates per county. The choice of four elective delegates per county would have undermined the proprietor's capacity to bribe or blackmail the elective delegates, especially from a body that was almost 100% Protestant outside the capital city. The proprietor, Calvert, insisted on personal control over all procedures for the election and convention of the elective delegates, whereas the Assembly wanted pre-established statutes to determine procedures of election and convention. Calvert prevailed; the Assembly was defeated. Cecil Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore, insisted on a three-year license for proprietary veto of any law issued by the Assembly. In fact Cecil Calvert had disallowed assembly statutes several years after Assembly ratification. In 1681 Cecil Calvert had agreed to an eighteen month limit on proprietary nullification, but in 1684 he reneged on his agreement and insisted on a three year limit. Calvert prevailed. Also in 1684 Calvert determined that the courts, not the colonial Assembly, should have the power to determine which laws of native England should have immediate application in Maryland, without process in Assembly. The Assembly of course opposed, and Calvert prevailed. Sedition and its punishment were formulated in terms exclusively to the proprietor of Maryland; reference to the English Crown was excluded from the required Maryland oaths of fidelity. These measures might have temporarily secured the ascendancy of the Catholic minority in Maryland, but throughout England and the other British colonies, the despotic behavior of the Calvert family admonished all of the jeopardy of tyranny that English Protestants discerned in Catholicism; Maryland, with oppressive laws that no other British colony had, vividly symbolized the reality of Catholic tyranny, and the universal English dread of being controlled by a foreign potentate.

The Baltimore colony had attempted to avert Catholic hostility by its policy of religious toleration, but the separation of church and state proved totally ineffective for dampening

**the intra-colonial Catholic-Protestant hostility. The Maryland population was still very small, and most settlers were Protestants. Virtually all landowners and leaders were Catholic. English Protestants had apparently shunned investment in the colony because of its Catholicism, and the Protestants who did inhabit Maryland remained a servile class.**

**A trader, Richard Ingle, re-ignited the contention over possession of the Chesapeake in a long term intention to abolish the Catholic oligarchy in Maryland; he was placed under arrest in 1644 by Giles Brent, the deputized governor of Maryland during the absence of Leonard Calvert. Subsequently to The Cromwell victory of Marston Moor one year later, Ingle returned with letters of marquee authorized by Parliament. Given support by Virginia, he looted the Maryland county of St Mary's and brought Catholic priests and leaders in captivity to England; Leonard Calvert escaped arrest by hiding in Virginia.**

**The Virginian opponents of a Catholic Maryland recruited the influence of London tobacco merchants to petition for rescission of the (Catholic) Maryland Charter. Lord Baltimore had to renounce his Catholicism and repudiate his support of the royalist party; to elude the opposition, in 1747, following the death of Leonard Calvert, the Calvert son appointed a Protestant from Virginia to take governorship of Maryland. Virginia Governor William Berkeley had supported the royalists during the Civil War. Upon the Puritan victory, Parliament appointed a commission to take over government of Virginia, and of these commissioners there was Richard Bennett, who had led the Puritan migration to Maryland, and William Claiborne, a personal enemy of Lord Baltimore. The Puritan migration in itself had been motivated by outrage that any English colony should be officially Catholic. Their constant aim had been abolition of the Catholic government and annexation of the whole of Maryland into Virginia. In 1652 Stone compromised by allowing recognition of the Maryland**

Commonwealth, but insisted on authorization of all writs and other proceedings solely under the name of Lord Baltimore, as Parliament had not rescinded this clause. The Commission thereupon deposed Stone as the proprietary governor, abolished his council, and instituted their own council in its place. However, in 1652 the Commission reinstated Lord Baltimore's officers but prohibited writs issued under Lord Baltimore's name.

From 1652-54 Lord Baltimore appealed to his Maryland Charter to run the courts exclusively in his name (not that of the English government), and ordained that in order to receive a land grant the grantee make an oath of fidelity to Lord Calvert (not the English government). Promptly in consequence Bennett and Claiborne, leading Protestant Maryland colonists, removed Lord Baltimore's officers and appointed an entirely Protestant council, most of whom were Puritans. Baltimore repudiated the action, and ordered Stone to use force to restore proprietary authority. In 1655 Stone led 130 soldiers but was badly defeated. Stone was imprisoned; three of his subalterns were executed.<sup>55</sup> The Commission-appointed government managed Maryland until 1657; in its first assembly it abrogated the 1649 Toleration Act and excluded Catholics from suffrage and office holding.<sup>56</sup>

## **MARYLAND 1689**

The decisions of the Commission were never resolved during the Cromwell Protectorate. In 1657 an informal agreement restored full authority to Lord Baltimore, and

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Carr, Lois Green; Sources of Political Stability and Upheaval in Seventeenth Century Maryland, Maryland Historical Magazine, 79, 1984, p. 56.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Carr, Lois Green; Sources of Political Stability and Upheaval in Seventeenth Century Maryland, Maryland Historical Magazine, 79, 1984, p. 56.

reinstated the 1649 Toleration Act. This action was from the Puritan regime, prior the Restoration. For the following thirty years under the Catholic Kings Charles II and James II this settlement was preserved; in 1689 a Protestant uprising promptly overthrew the Calvert regime in Maryland. The William and Mary regime accepted the revolt and acceded to the petition for alteration from proprietary to royal government. The Attorney General of England initiated the formal deprivation of Lord Baltimore of the Maryland Charter. The Crown assumed direct government of the colony, although Calvert's land title in Maryland was preserved.<sup>57</sup>

Even in the 1670s and 1680s, Maryland population grew from immigration rather than natural increase. It was an English, not a European immigration; population increase was solely of Protestant confession, of people whose standards were highly anti-Catholic.<sup>58</sup> The Church of England was immediately established in Maryland. The Calvert regime did not institute taxes for Protestant churches, though it had for the Catholic Church. On the other hand the Jesuits owned vast tracts in Maryland, acquired from the pretext that Catholic missionaries had brought settlers to Maryland at inception. At one point the Jesuits had attempted to claim the possession of Maryland for the Pope, in the place of Britain. The Catholic Church in Maryland was thus independently wealthy and self-supporting, whereas Protestants, constituting more than 75% of the total Maryland population, were deprived of service and sacraments pertaining to their confession. The Maryland Protestants ascribed this situation to Calvert's anti-Protestantism. The William and Mary reception of the

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Leder, Lawrence H.; *The Glorious Revolution And The Pattern Of Imperial Relationships*, New York Historical Society Quarterly, 46, 1965, p. 209.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Carr, Lois Green; *Sources of Political Stability and Upheaval in Seventeenth Century Maryland*, Maryland Historical Magazine, 79, 1984, p. 59.

Maryland revolt ensued in the prohibition of public practice of Catholicism; all Catholics were deprived of political rights. The Glorious Revolution preserved Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore, in his property rights in Maryland, but deprived the Calvert family of political rights, specifically governorship, until a Protestant should occupy the title of Lord Baltimore.<sup>59</sup>

A serious defect dwelled in the Toleration Act of 1649; although it admitted non-Catholic colonists, it excluded them from suffrage and government. The toleration deployed by the Calverts was an imitation of Stuart tactics; allow religious toleration as a pretext to bring Catholic toleration under the umbrella. There was a shortage of sincerity in the Toleration Act. Since the Toleration Act had permitted the degradation of the Protestant majority, the Protestants, once given power, would see no positive value in religious toleration. Wherever Catholics had options of the upper hand, Protestants were subjected to disabilities, Toleration Act or not. Whenever in power, the Maryland Protestants repealed acts for religious toleration.

In 1684 Charles Calvert, for nine years third Lord Baltimore, left for England to defend the Maryland Charter against William Penn, who was claiming for Pennsylvania territory nominally part of Maryland. The Council members were appointed in the interim of 1684-1689 to be the joint governor of Maryland. The joint personage of the councilors degenerated into a corruption at the expense of the proprietor. Corruption damaged colonial growth; the entire population depended on reliable structures for advancement, but, as previously, the Catholic oligarchy was not mindful of the conditions required by the Protestant majority. Partially due

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Carr, Lois Green; Sources of Political Stability and Upheaval in Seventeenth Century Maryland, Maryland Historical Magazine, 79, 1984, p. 59.

to death, but also dejection, the Protestant council members, who had such positions only by external pressure on Lord Baltimore, abandoned council membership until all but one member were Catholic. The compromise on paper had not worked; despite every countermeasure, Maryland remained a Catholic hegemony.

## **SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE**

The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 excluded Catholics from office on the ground that they refused to disclaim the “Principles of Spiritual Jurisdiction,” according to which Catholics in government office were obligated to govern according to the wishes of the Pope. The Boston Constitution required that anyone entering office sign a document disavowing obedience to any foreign prelate or prince.<sup>60</sup>

Anti-Catholicism having been a very powerful passion throughout the colonial period, what had been intended to be achieved by condoning Catholicism at the birth of the nation, when for the first time nothing obstructed implementation of this passion? The American distrust of centralization had already been engendered in the late colonial period, and, ironically, might account for lenience towards Catholicism. The New England colonists had witnessed for decades how royally appointed governors had been free to impose unjust policies in contempt of the will of the people. It had also been noticed that a side effect of bribery had been accumulation of sycophantic personalities around an autocratic governor. The first, most primitive popular sentiment concerning government had been that limitation of political order at the lowest level of

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<sup>60</sup> New Hampshire, North Carolina South Carolina, and Georgia also restricted office holding to Protestants. Cf. Channing, A History of the United States, Volume III, The American Revolution, 1761-1789, p. 565.

local town meetings could possibly guard against corruption.<sup>61</sup> This was a derivative of the Puritan principle of congregationalism, according to which there would be no higher authority in ecclesiastical decision beyond the consensus of the congregated members of the local parish.

This attitude was a precursor to the instruction of Montesquieu and John Adams: separation of the powers of government. Although centralization might be inevitable, its concomitant tendency towards tyranny might be stalled by the division of mutually contentious powers. Final unity in the monarch appeared to be the ultimate of governmental rationality, since unification and decision in one final point seems to guarantee the coherence of all government acts better than a governmental form cascading from divided and competitive authorities. The colonists, fearing the tyranny of the monarchical ideal, instead adopted what seems irrational: deliberate fragmentation of government, such that one “center” might easily obstruct what was conceived to be the most rational action by another center. If there were not one, but many centers of power, government might be deterred from tyranny, in that the jealousy of other centers of power would immediately combine all of them against any power center which seemed to have arrogated preponderance. Mutual hostility between power centers would guarantee freedom from tyranny. It was quixotic to suppose that expulsion of evidently obnoxious elements would ever successfully transform the whole of society into a homogeneous harmony. Accordingly, the Catholics should be welcomed into the new society to form one more disparate power-center.

The American separation of Church and State exhibited absurdity. Catholicism was perhaps the best model for a state religion, but that was unthinkable. Anglicanism was perhaps

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<sup>61</sup> Schultz, John A.; Representation, Taxation, and Tyranny in Revolutionary Massachusetts” *Pacific Historical Review*, 43 (1974), p. 155.

**intrinsically as good, and had a better practical establishment for this purpose than any other religion, but association with Britain disqualified it. Puritanism was regional, and its internal structure would not serve national hierarchy. None of the colonial religions was sufficiently preponderant for national unification, but if the unity of State and Religion persisted as an ideal, all of the religions would use government to get advantage over the contending religions. The utility of religion is to make the population compliant with government. In the previous centuries the European nations strove for religious uniformity because it would strengthen the viability of the state. Heterodox religion was suppressed because it fomented recalcitrance to the government, as most spectacularly exemplified by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. To renounce the advantages visible in the union of religion and government was to eliminate such struggles, but this elimination consisted in destroying the entire utility of religion to the State. It had been generally assumed until this unique and revolutionary act that no society could exist without religious establishment, because of the premise that a state without a religious foundation would be too weak. One great adventure in the birth of a nation was the defiance of the perennial axiom that a State could not be viable without religion.**

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