

REVIEW ARTICLES

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PURITANISM AND DEMOCRACY

If there are two words hard to reconcile, they would certainly seem to be democracy and puritanism. In all religions, the puritan is one who seeks to separate and distinguish himself from the mass in order to work more effectively for his own personal salvation. The Hippolytus of Greek drama seeks out the forests of Troezen, and the Essene of Israel the grottoes of the Dead Sea. The Pharisee gives thanks that he is not as other men, and Christianity, since its origins, has had its Catharians—the Pure—who have always tended to break with the community of the faithful in order to more surely achieve perfection. All, more or less, according to their own beliefs, paraphrase the esoteric formula which Horace puts into the mouth of the initiate of the Muses—*musarum sacerdos*—*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo*.

Yet history shows us one form of puritanism for which the *vulgus*—the crowd—was an object neither of hate nor repulsion, and justified neither the word *odi* nor the word *arceo*. Three recent books, which complement one another, open new and little-known perspectives on the economic and political values of puritanism. The most considerable of the three is Ralph Barton Perry's *Puritanism and Democracy*¹ but it cannot be separated from R. H. Tawney's earlier work, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*;² and the

1. New York, Vanguard Press, 1944. Pp. xvii+688.

2. New York, Harcourt Brace, 1947.

problems treated by these two are considerably clarified by the portrait of *Cromwell* traced in 1949 by Pierre-Olivier Lapie.³

These three books collectively form an attempt to explain the role played for the past three centuries in the evolution of events on both sides of the Atlantic by a certain conscience labeled "puritan," whose essential preoccupation is with the way the world is going. President Eisenhower's inaugural address of two years ago refers in fact to a basic duty: "In the swift rush of great events, we find ourselves groping to know the full sense and meaning of these times in which we live." Behind such a declaration lie three centuries of unceasing theological efforts to evaluate the proportion of divine will and human freedom in the guidance of events.

If the search for God's designs demands the moral rigors of puritanism, the exercise of human liberties requires the full application of democracy. The developments of the two ideals are inseparable, complex in themselves and in their mutual relations. "Puritan ideals were acquired before and during the colonial period, and democratic ideals before and during the revolutionary period. . . . They originated in the prenatal phase of American life and have predetermined the whole of its later development."⁴

Considered in this way, puritanism is "a system of multiple ideas,"⁵ and its "currents," no less "multiple," are "divergent."⁶ Rich in historical complexes, it is no less fertile in subjective complexes. Puritanism can inspire a whole creed of "idolatrous Americanism,"⁷ to use Professor Perry's phrase. Tawney and Perry agree in criticizing the absolute thesis advanced early in the nineteenth century by Max Weber, who attributed the whole genesis of the "capitalist spirit" to "Protestant ethics" seen from the viewpoint of English puritanism. According to this theory, all of modern economy would be contained in the dogmatics of the Reformation. But, on the other hand, puritanism cannot be reduced to a sterile obsession with prohibitions and rigidities, as in the case of "Santayana's famous book," *The Last Puritan*.⁸

When puritanism officially appeared under that name in 1564, it was a collective term which covered all the opponents of Elizabeth's religion

3. Paris, 1949.

4. R. B. Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

6. E. Labrousse, preface to the French translation of Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. xiii.

7. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

8. See Perry, *ibid.*, p. 64.

policy. The date is important: it is that of Calvin's death and of the first applications of the Council of Trent, which had just ended. Now one of the great voices in this council was that of an English cardinal, Reginald Pole, a cousin of the Queen, who died in 1559 while archbishop-primate of Canterbury and left numerous sympathizers in England. The partisans of a complete reform were afraid that the new queen, too, might be led by his anti-Calvinistic teachings to establish an episcopalian, ritualistic and half-Roman religion of a sort secretly admitted by certain theologians of the Council of Trent, such as Cardinal Borromeo.⁹

The new state church, through its very conception, failed to create that atmosphere of spiritual independence which many were demanding for their personal and social life. Elizabeth's parliament sometimes heard extremely daring appeals for liberty. In 1576 one of its members, Peter Wentworth, said that he considered "freedom of speech and conscience" as a "fundamental law" without which neither the ruler nor the state could be "preserved or maintained." Such is the spirit of the "Tudor puritanism" which Americans exalt as "a chapter in the history of idealism,"—a precursor of their own history.¹⁰

But in fact the puritanism of the time of the Tudors was neither purely Christian, nor purely English, nor purely Protestant. Perry does not deny certain pagan origins of puritanism. Christianity was born into a world over which Hellenism had widely spread its philosophy and its rites of purity. "The term *catharos* also has an intellectual sense, that of clearness, sincerity and truth. . . . The wise man is pure because he tries to understand the nature of the world, that of hate and friendship, the principle of things and the secret of our destinies."¹¹ It was tempting for the Christian to utilize this Greek concept of purity for the accomplishment of a faith which promised the sight of God to the pure in heart, and it was under the Greek name of Catharians that the adepts of this Helleno-Christian syncretism propagated their faith in the West and as far as England. A group of Catharians—called Publicans, doubtless because of their "popular" tendencies—left Guyenne (then English) in 1160 to go to Oxford for discussions with an assembly of bishops, and Bossuet later pointed out that "The Protestants consider that these heretics are numbered among their ancestors."¹² For that matter, the word "puritan" is an exact transla-

9. See *Cambridge Modern History*, "The Reformation," p. 592.

10. See M. M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism, a Chapter in the History of Idealism* (Chicago, 1939).

11. L. Moulinier, *Le Pur et l'Impur dans la Pensée des Grecs* (Paris, 1953), pp. 169, 175 ff.

12. Bossuet, *Histoire des Variations des Eglises protestantes* (Paris, 1688), Vol. II, p. 190.

tion of the word “Catharian,” and the memory of the Greek communities of brothers in purity, the Philadelphi, has remained vivid in America, where its name is perpetuated by the city of Philadelphia.

Furthermore, the puritanism which appeared in England, in a vast flow of tracts, pamphlets and parliamentary speeches against the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity promulgated by Elizabeth in 1559, was itself far from being purely English in origin and nature. Geneva was a great center of religious inspiration not only for the Scottish Presbyterians, but also for numerous English dissenters. In Calvin’s entourage, between 1540 and 1560, refugees from beyond the Channel lived and meditated a potential puritanism in exile. Their mass return, which began in 1560, exactly coincides with the appearance of the puritan movement in England. The correspondence of Theodore de Bèze, Calvin’s successor, shows how attentively the second dictator of the Church City followed and guided the anti-Anglican movements in England and the anti-Catholic movements in Scotland. It was Geneva, and not England, which was to give New England that creed of theocratic democracy which deeply and lastingly marked the development of American democracy.¹³

Finally, it is not a paradox to connect the puritanism of the sixteenth century with a general need for spiritual purification which animated the followers of Rome as well as the partisans of Geneva. “There is a curious likeness in essence,” notes the *Cambridge Modern History*, “though in forms of expression they are poles asunder, between Puritanism and the movement of which Caraffa and Ignatius are the typical representatives in the Roman church.”¹⁴ Puritanism could not escape the immense stir of ideas that constituted European humanism, and if Calvinism made a great impression on it, it also owed much to the Arminian doctrines, which converged with the theology of the Company of Jesus to point to an extension of the role of human freedom in the question of personal salvation.

In 1604 the last of the Tudors was succeeded by the first of the Stuarts. King James, whose mother Mary had been a victim of the puritans of Scotland, outlawed the movement in his Speech from the Throne in the same year. “At my first coming,” he said, “although I found but one religion . . . publicly allowed and by the law maintained, yet found I another sort of religion, besides a private sect, lurking within the bowels of this nation. The first is the true religion, which by me is professed and by

13. Various sources cited by Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 334–49.

14. “The Reformation,” p. 688.

the law established: the second is the falsely called Catholics, but truly Papists: the third, which I call a sect rather than a religion, is the Puritans and the Novelists, who do not so far differ from us in points of religion as in their confused form of policy and parity, being ever discontented with the present government and impatient to suffer any superiority, which maketh their sect unable to be suffered in any well-governed commonwealth.”¹⁵

From that time on, the destiny of the dissenters was to swarm out of England. But this movement itself was complex, like their whole nature. They felt two simultaneous attractions, which must never be dissociated: Holland and America—America to create something new, and Holland to learn something new.

Since 1580 Holland had become the country of refuge and tolerance. As early as 1600 English refugees founded in Amsterdam a chapel which was to become the cradle of the Baptist Church. Expelled by the Bishop of London, William Ames published in Holland his *De Conscientia*, which became a classic for the puritan conscience. At a time when the Church of England was trying to stamp out the practice of money-lending at interest as diligently as it was trying to stamp out witchcraft,¹⁶ the immigrants came to know a country which had its banks and its colonies, and universities which were not afraid of the shock of conflicting ideas.

It was just this conflict of doctrines which led to a venture thus far unknown in the Protestant world of state churches and church-cities: an international synod which brought together in Dordrecht the reformers of England, Scotland, the Palatinate, Hesse, Switzerland, Geneva and Bremen to discuss two opposing doctrines; Calvinism, represented by the theologians of Groningen, known as Gomarists, and Arminianism, a liberal interpretation of man's autonomy which was hostile to the predestinationism of Geneva. Its author, Jacobus Arminius, who had long been a professor at the University of Leyden, had died in 1609, but he had numerous disciples whose ideas could not be displeasing to those who had exiled themselves for the sake of liberty. The Synod of Dordrecht, part of the background of the birth of North America, had a considerable influence on the evolution of American ideas. The synod sought to define the universal significance of the problems at stake; it talked, for the first time in the Protestant world, of an ecumenical council—specifically, of a council “to which all those who might feel themselves wronged by this synod might

15. Quoted by Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

16. Tawney, *op. cit.*, chap. iv, “The Church of England.”

appeal.”¹⁷ It was the Arminians who suffered from being “wronged,” since the Calvinists had questioned their motives, accusing them of “making the choice of God depend on the will of men, of bringing back paganism and disguising Papism.”

Without waiting for the ecumenical council, many Arminians and Arminian sympathizers, Dutch or refugees, preferred to take to the sea. Since the preceding year (1618), on the island of Manhattan, a New Amsterdam had been awaiting an influx of colonists. The Synod of Dordrecht sent it many members—and just at the date (1619) when the English colony of Virginia was founding a parliament. When the famous pilgrims of the *Mayflower* landed in the New World the following year, these victims of the growing absolutism of English royalty found a parliament already established in that distant land. “This transplantation of parliamentary institutions to a colony,” says Jacques Pirenne¹⁸ “marks one of the most important dates in the history of the world.”

The date is important, certainly, but for the sake of contrast it should be confronted with the adventure of the pilgrims of 1620. The latter, members of the poor parish of Scrooby, which had been separated from the Established Church since 1607—their pastor, John Robinson, led his flock—tried Holland before they tried America. It is probable that they no longer found in Holland the tolerance they had counted on, but it is equally probable that in America the ardor of their faith was hardly better understood by the parliamentarians of Virginia. And it is just at this point that one may distinguish the forging of the new bonds between puritans and capitalists which gives the key to the rise of America.

The Virginians were rich, Anglican and conformist. “The form of Virginia society was due to the cult of tobacco rather than to a cult of piety.”¹⁹ The pilgrims of Plymouth were socially and spiritually unassimilable to the Virginian conception of the affairs of this world. How were these two contradictory colonizing forces able to become complementary?

There was the common assimilation of new land and new blood by the absorption of the Dutch colonies (New Amsterdam) and even the Swedish ones (Christina), which were surrounded by the English domain and

17. Bossuet, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 459, and all of Book XIV.

18. *Les grands Courants de l'Histoire universelle* (Paris, 1943), Vol. III, p. 547.

19. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

soon annexed by it. But there was above all—ten years after the arrival of the *Mayflower* pilgrims—the great landing of the colonists of 1630, which followed two events of prime importance: the dissolution of Parliament by King Charles and the foundation of the privileged Massachusetts Bay Company (1629).

Thus the religious faith of the colonists was an undeniable motive for their departure. The religious freedom of dissenters, which had been precarious since 1604, was now directly threatened. What is more, religious faith was associated with a sentiment which was to reappear in American history, a mistrust of Europe. The Old Continent was in the throes of a devastating war which was to last eighteen years more and might have led to the worst—the crushing of Protestantism, even in England and France, by intolerant Catholic powers.

But at the same time the powers of the soul and the heart were helped by the powers of money and production. The Church of England had gradually become Arminian or Latitudinarian toward the problems of capital and investment. The Anglican hierarchy had never admitted the dogmatic conclusions of the Synod of Dordrecht. This was even a cause of the opposition shown to Anglicanism since 1620 by the dissenters who had united under the Edinburgh Covenant, which is the origin of the whole Cromwellian revolution. Nevertheless, these rigorists were to benefit from the canonical tolerance which came more and more to affect practical and everyday life. It was to the Crown's interest to encourage emigration on the part of these ill-balanced Christians, who, though they were bad Englishmen inside the country, might be very good Englishmen outside. Nor were Catholics excluded from the privileges granted colonists; one of their chiefs, Lord Baltimore, gave them lands in Maryland.

Thus a basis for agreement was found. "Liberty was installed by the English colonists of North America under the aegis of the capitalism of the great stock companies."²⁰ Soon an immense literature developed which permitted purity of the soul to be reconciled with business efficiency. The *De Conscientia* of the puritan William Ames developed into Richard Baxter's *Summ of Practical Theology and Cases of Conscience*. As Tawney notes, the book is in essence a puritan *summa theologica* and *summa moralis*, true to medieval models in dialectic method, but its author is well aware that business everywhere depends on credit, and he does not neglect to show the moral qualities which the practice of commerce permits to develop.

20. Pirenne, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 604.

It was in this atmosphere of material and moral security that the colonists, from 1630 onward, began to form little parliamentary republics which compensated, if one may put it this way, for the decline of parliamentary life in Europe. "Each of these little states, created in the wilderness, organized itself around parliaments where elected notables sat. . . . Over this development presided the double tendency of the population, at once businesslike and pietistic."²¹ In 1636 a Boston pastor, John Harvard, founded the college which was to glorify his name and develop into a new Cambridge. In the face of the decadence of the institutions of old England, the colonists worked on a plan for a union of New England under the form of a federal democracy. The treaty which in 1643 federated Connecticut, New Haven and Rhode Island clearly indicates in its preamble the link which it is desired to establish between a certain civic spirit and a certain community of faith:²²

"Whereas we all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and aim, namely, to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the liberties of the gospel in purity with peace." It was in these terms that the three colonies in which puritan thought had evolved the furthest justified their union in the New England Confederation, which prefigured the national development of what was to become the United States.

By then puritanism had reappeared in England, this time in arms, with Roundheads who poked fun at the wigs and curls of the king's conformists. As the tempest rose in fury (to borrow Tawney's image), the forest bent and the oaks broke off.²³ One of the oaks that fell that year was Archbishop Laud, Anglican Primate of Canterbury, so hostile to Calvinism that in Rome there had been talk of making him a cardinal. He was condemned to torture, and the power went to his greatest adversary and opposite, Cromwell, the typical puritan, "the most certain example of that transposition of the metaphysical into the human which provides the strongest motivation of the political man . . . showing that politics has no grandeur unless it is dominated by metaphysics."²⁴

21. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 270.

22. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 334. Academic training and political education are connected. In 1650 a charter was granted to Harvard, second university to be founded in North America (the first having been the University of Mexico, a Spanish and Catholic institution which dates from 1550). An offspring of Cambridge, Harvard was likewise puritan and platonistic. Cromwell studied at Cambridge.

23. Tawney, *op. cit.*, chap. iv, "The Puritan Movement."

24. Lapie, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

Everything was new in the circumstances which in 1649 led the king to the scaffold in Whitehall. What was particularly new was the influence already gained by young English America over her mother country. "The example of democratic and pious institutions had an influence on the development of English political thought in the time of the Protectorate."²⁵ In addition, the disappearance of ecclesiastical jurisdictions after the abolition of the episcopal hierarchy put an end to the last hindrances to the freedom of capital to fructify. The puritans confided these investments to Providence: they colonized America with the Providence Company and all the rich emigration companies whose management they assumed. A remarkable liaison agent between the English republics of America and the new republic in England, their younger sibling, appeared in the person of Roger Williams, who had given the symbolic name of Providence to his foundation in Rhode Island. In the seafaring life, which was coming more and more to represent the atmosphere of liaison between the two Englands, Williams sought striking comparisons to inculcate in the minds of people on both sides of the ocean the fundamental idea of tolerance in public affairs. "The state is a ship whose passengers should be allowed to believe what they like so long as they obey certain rules on which the safety of the ship depends. There is no justification for persecuting Jonah or throwing him overboard so long as he does not annoy his fellow passengers or interfere with navigation."²⁶ Such pithy sayings were effective and remind one of the wit of Franklin.

Williams got his allegories from seamanship. His contemporary, James Harrington, a great European voyager, sought his inspiration in a grandiose alliance between the ocean and the republic and in 1656 published his *Commonwealth of Oceana*, a political novel dedicated to Cromwell and rich in democratic ideas—such as the secret ballot and compulsory schooling—which passed into American life.²⁷ The ocean had become the sea of liberty since the Act of May 19, 1649, by which Parliament declared that "England and all its possessions and territories" would thenceforth constitute a "Commonwealth or Free State."

This expression of the possibility of extending the notion of a republic

25. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

26. Perry, *op. cit.* p. 350. A Lutheran contemporary of Williams, Calixtus of Helmstaedt, saw all Christians, including the Catholics, in the same "communion of the Universal Church."

27. *Ibid.*, p. 185. The strong influence of this work on New England institutions is shown in an article by Raymond Polin, "Economique et Politique au XVII^e siècle: l'Oceana de J. Harrington," in the *Revue française des Sciences politiques* for January–March, 1952. Harrington proposed a senate with broad powers as a guarantee of the republican integrity of his commonwealth.

to large territories was to make a great impression on the little states of New England. For there was no longer in old England an established religion, either in the Anglican or in the Presbyterian form, since Cromwell was hostile to both, but a puritan secularity, of a universally "ecumenical" character, as the pastors of Dordrecht would have said, based on the puritan ideal of service. And this puritanism, embracing all ecclesiastical organizations, could create a political link between Virginia and Scotland.

Now this ideal was presented to little republics which Jacques Pirenne compares rather closely to the Greek colonial cities of the seventh to fifth centuries B.C.²⁸ They were Pythagorean cities, more theocratic than democratic, governed by notables who not only formed an elite on the political plane but were also the elect on the mystical plane. The American republics appeared to be a mixture of a city of the type of Geneva—though they were more Arminian than the Five Articles of Faith adopted by the Calvinist majority at Dordrecht—and the platonic city as it was seen by the masters at Harvard. For the rest—and this increased their resemblance to the antique world—these republics had their slaves: Negroes, sometimes Irish. And they believed themselves "holy communities"²⁹ of the type idealized by the Presbyterian Richard Baxter in his *Holy Commonwealth*, published in 1659.

Cromwell broke this oligarchic Greco-Christian mold in which the American colonial spirit was in danger of becoming hardened. Certainly the Americans kept the cult of the citizen of the antique city-state. They dedicated one of their principal towns to Cincinnatus. In Washington's entourage there was much talk of Pericles, Aristides, Brutus and Cato. But Cromwell was above all an independent, an empiricist. He let an immense revolutionary literature grow up: "The role of the press was considerable, in the form of newspapers or pamphlets. The most talented man to use this new weapon was John Milton. . . . In the eyes of his contemporaries, for the thirty years between 1641 and 1671, Milton was much more a puritan political writer than a lyric philosopher."³⁰ This mass of puritan political writers finally eliminated extremist doctrines—to which the Protector himself, incidentally, was resolutely opposed.³¹

R. H. Tawney compares this mixture of writings to a melting pot, full of ingredients which reacted subtly on one another. Puritanism, he points out, continued to fashion the social order, but was more and more fashioned by it as time went on. The Americans were able to keep abreast

28. Pirenne, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 548.

30. Lapie, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

29. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

of all the spiritual experiences of that strange organism constituted by Cromwell's army. In 1647 the latter published "the Agreement of the People for a firm and present Peace, upon grounds of commonright and freedom." Its authors, the agents of the five regiments of horse, signed "a striking anticipation of the American and French Declarations of the late eighteenth century, embracing: the fundamental law of nature; the institution of the powers of government by voluntary compact among all the people; government subject to the consent of the governed; the reservation of individual liberties, and their protection against the usurpation of government."³²

"All shades of puritan opinion" were represented in this army, whose "Debates" reflect the different political motives of their puritanism.³³ America, where many of Cromwell's "horsemen" went to retire, could reconstruct from these "Debates" all the wealth of a religious inspiration which was never again to dissociate itself from its political and moral structure.

Moreover, in spite of the transcendence of some of his illusions, a sociologist like Baxter clearly showed to what extent puritanism was the doctrine of the middle classes, commercial or liberal, and favorable to the social equilibrium. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 was time after time exploited by the puritan publicists to demonstrate that persecution is incompatible with prosperity because it oppresses and drives out the most industrious workers. And it is in this sense that, according to Tawney, puritanism was the teacher of the English middle classes.

In America puritanism was the educator of the same classes, and its action went even deeper, for the environment of the New World suggested to the Christian colonist the temptation to a Biblical conformism which might easily become pernicious. The natives were too easily assimilable to the Canaanite tribes, condemned by the Eternal throughout eternity. The doctrine of puritanism counselled the colonists to spiritualize the human penetration of the forces of nature and to head off a return to the recourse to natural law. It saw the Creation in Nature and agreed with Blackstone that "The will of [man's] maker is called the law of nature."³⁴

After 1660, the Biblical period ended. The Americans "passed from a 'Bible Commonwealth' into a modern capitalist society."³⁵ Puritanism

32. Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 339-40.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 344. These debates were recently published by Professor A. S. P. Woodhouse.

34. Quoted by Perry, *ibid.*, p. 182.

35. Perry, *ibid.*, p. 317.

served as a mediator in these difficult problems of social evolution. Through it, as Tawney says, the ideas of economic progress found new support in the notion of capital and labor combining in the service of God. Thus puritanism contributed greatly to prepare the way for the commercial civilization which triumphed with the revolution of 1688—a civilization which, in America and England as elsewhere, demanded a conciliation of the views of God with technical and practical considerations and which, to do this, had recourse to “practical divinity.”³⁶

The history of the influence of puritanism on American political customs may be ended here. A religious potential of virtues which reinforce one another—virtues of productivity, liberty, equality—puritanism became the inner agent through which political potentialities flowered in constitutional and governmental realities, no longer exposed to the risk of opposition from other rival movements. The last pages of Lapie’s *Cromwell* forcefully sum up “the inextricable mixture” of religious and political elements which guided Cromwell’s regime and survived it. “If Louis XVI died because he was king, Charles I died also, and perhaps primarily, because he was pope. The two questions, the political and the religious, are mixed in the English revolution. . . . The personal, interior, intimate God of the independents was the one to whom Cromwell listened. . . . If the word politics is taken in its most general sense, if one looks at the Cromwellian hero as a sort of creator, then politics was inspired by divinity. The example of Oliver Cromwell fighting, conquering, legislating under the inspiration of his God is certainly the most notable example of this transposition of the metaphysical into the human which provides the strongest motivation of the political man. England, kneaded by Cromwell’s square thumb, invoked God as its destiny was molded.”³⁷

America had no less plasticity. The independent of Cromwell’s type passed irresistibly from the notion of the independence of the soul to that of the independence of the state. The burgeoning of sects which so complicated the religious map of America in the second half of the 17th century only gave puritanism an equalizing character as a stabilizer, a Leveler—to borrow the term applied to themselves by one of the groups in the vanguard of Cromwell’s party.³⁸ Thus the “after-clap of puritanism” could be

36. *Ibid.*, p. 301. In 1673 Richard Baxter published his *Christian Directory, or a Body of Practical Divinity, and Cases of Conscience*. In Europe, Pascal had just attacked Jesuit casuistry in his *Lettres Provinciales*.

37. Lapie, *op. cit.*, pp. 266–67.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 195–204, “Les Niveleurs.”

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recognized in sects which for us appear as singular as the Millenarists, the Campbellites, the Nazarites, the Adventists, the Shakers, the Quakers, and even the Mormons.³⁹ In fact puritanism, through the complex origins already noted, was not out of place either in societies which were more Biblical than evangelical, nor in groups which were more deistic than Christian. Seeking to serve as a sort of common denominator of so many sects, puritanism prevented them from becoming esoteric—or even occult—to make of them, each in its way, schools of democracy.

From the end of the 17th century, puritanism religious and political position took on a real value in Christianity. Yet it was ignored in Europe. Nothing is so striking in this connection as the juxtaposition of two dates: 1688 and 1693. The first is that of the publication of Bossuet's *Histoire des Variations des Eglises protestantes*. It has considerable documentation, but there is not a word in it about America. Certain phrases sound like puritan sayings: "One scarcely knows in what country one is in, nor whether the people are Christians, when one sees the basis of religion handed over to the temporal authority and the Princes become its arbiters."⁴⁰ The Bishop of Meaux did not suspect that a whole people on the other side of the Atlantic was learning to pray and to think in order to find an answer to the same question that caused him such anxiety.

It was in 1693 that a New England puritan brought the answer. He was William Penn, founder and lawgiver of Pennsylvania, who had studied at the French Protestant academy of Saumur, and whom Bossuet might have met—for Penn mixed with the pro-Catholic entourage of James II as well as with the Quakers. In 1693 he boldly published the first American plan for a democratic peace in Europe, an *Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*, in which he recommended the establishment of a European parliament and a European state.⁴¹

Penn was ambitious. With the parliamentary life which England had just adopted more firmly than ever, he did not hesitate to associate powers as distant in spirit from Britain as Spain, Russia and Turkey. He believed in a European deliberative assembly where Christians and deists might be associated, as were Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Trinitarians and Unitarians in America. He wanted to put the fate of Europe into the hands of Christian charity, freely consulted, placing this above all temporal authorities.

Thus, while one of the greatest students of European religious crises was

39. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

40. Bossuet, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 671.

41. See Lazlo Ledermann, *Les Précurseurs de l'Organisation internationale* (Neuchâtel, 1945).

forgetting puritan America, the latter was affirming its solidarity with Europe. At the end of the eighteenth century, when the Abbé Raynal used the theory of natural environment to charge Americans with degenerating in isolation,⁴² the Philadelphia Society protested violently, explaining that the mind, as master over nature, would be able to remake the country to suit the needs of Americans, thus accomplishing not only a useful work but a pious one, since it would “bring them nearer to the Creator.”⁴³

What is striking in Professor Perry’s broad inquiry into puritanism is that America became the country of revenge for the Arminianism that had been defeated at Dordrecht. In spite of a massive influx of French Calvinists after 1685, the American colonists opposed the theology of liberty to the diverse theories of predestinationism—including the one which Raynal had derived from the sociology of environment—and did so in the same manner as Catholic Europe utilized Molinism against Jansenism.

And there, it seems, is the secret of the harmony of the two apparently contradictory forces born of American puritanism: collective action and individual action. “The puritan creed has repeatedly served as the basis of concerted action.”⁴⁴ The present development of this creed, “turning more and more toward accomplishments of the collective type,” seems to worry the latest great observer of Americans, André Siegfried, in his recent *Tableau des Etats-Unis*.⁴⁵ Will not the individual run the risk of being reduced to impotence? The answer is in this tireless search for inner freedom which, from the time of Cromwell’s independent puritans and the Arminian puritans of the 18th century, has never lost its concern for defining man’s liberties before socializing him, and for making him more deeply conscious of what these liberties mean.

42. Raynal, *Histoire philosophique*, Vol. XVIII, chap. xxxii (Neuchâtel edition of 1783). The author notes that the inhabitants of English America were considered less hard-working than their ancestors and less gifted for the arts. But he does not take the responsibility for this “prejudice,” which he judges “dissipated” by the new era of liberty.

43. Cited by J. Gottmann, *La Politique des Etats et leur Géographie* (Paris, 1952), p. 35.

44. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

45. Paris, 1954.