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The Origin and Early Development of Puritanism

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THE ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF PURITANISM

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CHAPTER I

DEFINITION OF PURITANISM

Much has been written of the history of English Puritanism. This brief examination of the subject purposes no new contribution. It seeks merely to draw together the main events of that phase of English history and to discuss some of the issues involved.

The first problem is one of definition. One scholar has suggested that Puritanism has as many definitions as it has students, with a like distribution of trustworthiness. Therefore, before attempting to define it ourselves we do well to consider the definitions offered by recognized scholars of the movement.

Thomas Fuller, the great English church historian, gives 1564 as the year in which the name "Puritan" first appeared. It originated as a term of "odium and contempt" applying to "such as refused to subscribe to the Liturgy, ceremonies, and discipline of the church."[1] Fuller, however, declines to use the term "because so various are the acceptations thereof." He assembles the various stripes and colorings of the movement under the equally undiscriminating term, "non-conformists."

Arthur Jay Klein finds the term "Precisianist" more suitable for the 1564 reactionists against liturgy, ceremony and vestment. This is the name given them by the contemporary archbishop, Matthew Parker. Klein prefers this term because this group, unlike the Puritans of the

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[1]Thomas Fuller, The Church History of Britain from the Birth of Jesus Christ Until the Year 1648 (London: William Tegg, 1655), II, 540.

succeeding decade, as yet had constituted no attack upon the fundamental structure of the Established Church. Like Fuller, Klein avoids all use of the term Puritan, employing the terms: precisianist, presbyterian and congregationalist to denominate respectively the vestment reactionists, the Cartwright disciplinists, and separatists of all varieties.[2] However, this distinction creates more of a problem than it solves because the terms employed are not mutually exclusive according to meaning. Many precisianists were also presbyterians. Almost all presbyterians were also precisianists. Many congregationalists (which includes all independents and separatists) were both presbyterian and precisianistic. Nor is there a clear chronological division between the terms, as such a definition would imply.

Some scholars restrict the meaning of the term Puritan to the movement beginning about 1570 and generally associated with the leadership of Thomas Cartwright. This seems to us an unwarranted limitation. 1570 marks the beginning of a new phase in the Puritan movement, but hardly the origin of the movement. The principles upon which the disciplinarian controversy is based find their roots in earlier controversies. In fact not a few of the participants were the same men who had been involved in the vestiarian dispute of the preceding decade. And the precipitating factors of both controversies may be traced unmistakably to the same prior influences. As there were "reformers" before the Reformation, so there were "puritans" before Puritanism became an influential religious and political movement.

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[2]Arthur Jay Klein, Intolerance in the Reign of Elisabeth, Queen of England (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917), pp. 131-4.

A study that shares both definitions is that of H. G. Wood. "Puritanism is most simply defined as the movement for church reform whose first great leader was Thomas Cartwright and whose last great leader was Richard Baxter."[3] This historian also suggests a more general definition which covers the movement for further reform of the Church of England from 1559 to 1662. It is noteworthy that even this wider definition marks the Elizabethan settlement as the point of origin of the Puritan movement. "Puritanism is that ecclesiastical ideal which was not definitely adopted by any religious party before the Elizabethan settlement." Wood is careful to point out that the seventeenth century brought a different association of meanings to the term. In that century Puritanism is less an ecclesiastical reform than a socio-political movement which championed constitutional government and political liberty. The seventeenth century historians also applied the term to "those who attempted a greater sobriety of life than was customary in Elizabethan England." These aspects of Puritanism, however, are beyond the scope of our study.

With regard to Wood's definition of sixteenth century, or Elizabethan, Puritanism we note another distinction of importance. He distinguishes between "Puritan" and "Separatist," the former referring only to those who sought to reform the Church of England from within. "The Puritan party consisted of all those who believed in the maintenance of one National Church in England, and who desired that church to be reformed after the model of Geneva."[4] Those who lost hope of reforming the Estab-

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[3] H. G. Woods, "Puritanism," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), X, 507.

[4] Ibid.

lished Church and separated themselves from it, Wood names "Separatists." The importance of this distinction will be seen when we observe the fervency with which the Puritans voiced their loyalty to the Crown and the unwavering conviction they held that, although still popish in things indifferent, the Church of England was the only and true church of God in England.

Much broader definitions of the term Puritanism are advanced by the historians, Brown and Haller. To the latter Puritanism is an attitude of mind, a new and revolutionary way of life, an unstayable and engulfing transformation of the "imaginative ideals, the habits and thought and expression, the moral outlook and behavior of whole classes of people."[5] Haller views the Puritan movement as a cultural upheaval similar to the Renaissance which in the importance of its mood and spirit transcends the boundaries of fixed dates and specific circumstance.

Brown is considerably more historical in his definition but still defines Puritanism as primarily a religious temper and a moral force.[6] He fixes it historically according to dates and persons although he is wondrously free in application. Wycliffe, the Lollards, the Edwardian reformers, the Marian martyrs and the Elizabethan non-conformists are all part of the same overwhelming stream. He is not so much interested in distinguishing between reformers "from within" and reformers "from

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[5]William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism; or, The Way to the New Jerusalem as Set Forth in Pulpit and Press from Thomas Cartwright to John Lilburne and John Milton, 1570-1643 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), pp. 17-18.

[6]John Brown, The English Puritans (Cambridge: The University Press, 1910), pp. 1-3.

without" as he is in defining "the fundamental idea" of the movement. "The fundamental idea of Puritanism in all of its manifestations was the supreme authority of Scripture brought to bear upon the conscience as opposed to an unenlightened reliance on the priesthood and the outward ordinances of the church." Such a definition of Puritanism is too broad since it would include almost everything that was anti-Roman. To a degree even the Established Church was anti-Roman, but it was at the same time studiously anti-Puritan.

One distinction Brown is careful to point out, however, is the difference between Puritanism's ecclesiastical and political significance.

> While in the sixteenth century it i.e. the term "puritan" was descriptive of the men bent on carrying on the protestant Reformation to a further point, in the seventeenth century it became the recognized name of that party in the State which contended for the constitutional rights and liberties of the people as against the encroachments of the Crown.[7]

This distinction is important in a study of the origin of the movement. Puritanism originated as an ecclesiastical-religious reform initiated and carried on primarily by clergymen and theologians which taught, among other things, that under no circumstances were subjects permitted to rebel against their sovereign. The Puritanism of the seventeenth century was neither clerical, nor ecclesiastical, nor religious. It was a socio-political movement which, as far as sixteenth century Puritans were concerned, had gotten out of hand.

Perhaps the most studied definition of Puritanism is that of M. M. Knappen in his book, Tudor Puritanism. The general outline of his definition is stated in his preface:

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[7] Ibid., p. 2.

> The term 'Puritan' is used in this book to designate the outlook of those English Protestants who actively favored a reformation beyond that which the crown was willing to countenance and who yet stopped short of Anabaptism. It therefore includes both Presbyterians and Independents, Separatists and Non-Separatists. It also includes a number of Anglicans who accepted the episcopal system, but who nevertheless desired to model it and English church life in general on the Continental Reformed pattern.[8]

An explanation and defense of this definition is found in the chapter on terminology.[9] Taking lead from G. M. Trevelyan,[10] he states that in his book he has used the term to signify "the religion of all those who wished either to 'purify' the usage of the established church from taint of popery or to worship separately by forms so 'purified'." The author points out that neither creed nor theory of church government was a distinguishing feature. There were Episcopalian and Presbyterian Puritans within the Established Church as well as Congregational and Separatist Puritans without.

Knappen employs this more comprehensive definition because of its historical basis in sixteenth and seventeenth century records and because of its current historical usage. In Tudor and Stuart times the various sub-elements of Puritanism were not yet so meticulously classified as later historians have classified them, much to the confusion of the layman. Independents, separatists, congregationalists, presbyterians were all just "Puritans" in the beginning years of the movement. Current

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[8] M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 8.

[9] Ibid., pp. 487-93.

[10] George Macaulay Trevelyan, England Under The Stuarts (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1949), pp. 50-7.

historical usage seems to agree; the term "Puritan" is the family name of all the sectaries even though in some cases the resemblance between parent and offspring is not apparent. Knappen's diagram of the various divisions of Puritanism includes under the heading "Puritan": Episcopalian Puritans (later the Low Church), Presbyterians, and Independents (also called Congregationalists and Separatists).[11]

In this essay on Puritanism we should like to employ the definition suggested by Knappen. The term 'Puritan' is used to designate those English Protestants who actively favored a reformation beyond that which the crown was willing to countenance. 'Puritanism' refers to "the religion of all those who wished either to purify the usage of the established church from the taint of popery or to worship separately by forms so purified."[12] However, we will consider the "independents" or "separatists" only in their significance to the movement as a whole. The influences which shaped the movement we should like to trace from the beginning of the English Reformation. Our study of the movement itself will be limited to the period of Elizabethan Puritanism, 1559 to 1594. We shall consider the movement primarily from the aspect of ecclesiastical reform, acknowledging the socio-economic, the political and the aesthetic aspects to be beyond our scope.

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[11]Knappen, op. cit., p. 493.

[12]Ibid., p. 489.

CHAPTER II

PRE ELIZABETHAN ORIGINS

The Reign of Henry VIII

There is little agreement among historians as to what might be called the first indication of English Puritanism. To be sure, it is a descendent of the continental Reformation; nevertheless as a distinctly English movement its origin must be placed somewhat later.

The only significant Pre-Reformation foreshadowing of the Puritan movement is seen in William Tyndale. In 1524 he left England for Germany in order to prepare an English translation of the Bible. This act and its attendant implications are regarded by Knappen as the beginning of the story of English Puritanism.

Tyndale was violating both the civil and the ecclesiastical authority of the realm. No one was permitted to issue a translation of the Bible without the endorsement of the Archbishop. Tyndale was going to Germany only because Bishop Tunstall of London had refused him support. Further, Tyndale went seeking the aid and advice of Martin Luther, a heretic in the eyes of both the English bishop and the English king. Finally, the act was a violation of that statute of the realm which forbade ordinary subjects to leave England without royal consent.

Four characteristics of later Puritanism may be observed in Tyndale's act:[1] 1) His struggle for reform did not go beyond the limit of

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[1] M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), pp. 3-5.

passive resistance; 2) He was supported by London merchants - a hint of the role the laity would play in Puritanism; 3) He was going to consult Luther - an indication of Puritanism's dependence upon foreign ideas; 4) The act reflected his devotion to the Bible - Puritanism's great principle of authority. Thus Tyndale becomes the forerunner of English Puritanism.

Significant though this act may be, it is difficult to think of William Tyndale as a Puritan. If by Puritans we mean "those who wished to purify the usage of the established church" we must first establish that church. In a sense all those agitating for reform during the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary were Puritans because they sought a greater degree of reform than the crown was willing to countenance. But the case was an altogether different one under Elizabeth when the "reformed" religion was the established one. In order, therefore, not to confuse the distinct character of the Elizabethan Puritans we should like to consider the pre- and early reformers of the English church as influences toward Puritanism but not Puritans themselves. The necessity of such a distinction will be apparent as we consider the English Reformation. Were we to consider the early reformers Puritan, a detailed study of the entire Reformation would be necessary. As it is, however, we must evaluate the Reformation history in the light of the Elizabethan settlement and choose from it only what is pertinent to Elizabethan Puritanism.

Historians are unanimously careful to point out that Henry VIII's divorce from Katharine of Aragon was the occasion of the English reformation rather than its cause.[2] To be sure, the king's motives in caus-

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[2]J. W. C. Wand, A History of the Modern Church From 1500 to the Present Day (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1930), pp. 41-2.

ing a break with Rome were not altogether beyond suspicion. But even if it is true that Henry was moved to his break with Rome primarily by the strength of his passion for Anne Boleyn,[3] we must be cautious about saying that the English people somewhat indifferently sacrificed their only and true faith upon the altar of their king's lust. A break with Rome was clearly desirable.

Many reasons may be advanced in support of this; we note two which are significant for later Puritanism. The first is the manifest corruption of the church in England as elsewhere. This corruption was universal, spreading from Rome down through the ranks of the lowest clergy. The essentially pagan character of the church is attested by the pre-Reformation popes. Innes points to: Alexander VI - of the notorious family Borgia - "a man who revelled in the practice of every imaginable vice, and shrank from no conceivable crime;" Julius II - "his free living and warlike successor;" and Leo X - "whose morals were not exceptionally lax as compared with those of the average Italian noble, but in all essentials a pagan."[4] These popes were territorial magistrates and were of necessity primarily politicians. And if the spiritual head of Christendom were unworthy of his office corresponding maladies would certainly plague the body. The English clergy was effected equally with that of the continent. Innes says of England, "It is not disputable that the existing corruption was so serious that some kind of Reformation was ab-

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[3]H. W. Clark, History of English Nonconformity From Wicliff to the Close of the Nineteenth Century (London: Methuen and Co., 1911), I, 107.

[4]Arthur D. Innes, England Under The Tudors (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905), pp. 88-9.

solutely necessary."[5] A Reformation so urgently needed and so thoroughly desired could not, when once begun, content itself with halfway measures - a fact significant to the understanding of Elizabethan Puritanism.

Yet more important is the economic factor which Allen suggests was the chief factor of the entire English Reformation.[6] Cromwell's suggestion that Henry throw off the yoke of the pope and make himself the supreme head of the church in England was heard with pleasure. It was primarily the clergy who opposed the king in his divorce. Already in 1530 Cromwell suggested to the king the quickest way to achieve his goal would be to humiliate and subjugate these "servants of the pope." Dixon, the English church historian, tells us that this suggestion "flattered three of the worst passions of Henry's nature: his love of Anne, his love of money, and his love of power."[7] Whereupon Cromwell was elected to begin the task. It has been estimated that at this time about one-fifth of all England was the property of the church.[8] Evidence was gathered by Cromwell's vice investigation (1535) committee to prove to the English people that the monasteries had outlived their usefulness. This was more a pretext than a reason however. "Cromwell boasted that he would make his king the richest in Christendom, and this was the shortest and most pop-

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[5] Ibid., p. 88.

[6] J. W. Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1928), p. 169.

[7] Richard Watson Dixon, History of the Church of England 1529-1570 (Oxford: The University Press, 1895), I, 51.

[8] G. G. Perry, A History of the English Church (London: John Murray, 1900), II, 136.

ular way to do it."[9]

The significance of this for Puritanism is two-fold: first, it introduced the Reformation in such a way that there could be no turning back; second, it immediately established the distinctive character of the English Reformation, giving rise to the church - state problem which England was not to settle without revolution.

With regard to the first fact we must not forget that Henry did not want to break with Catholicism. Clark suggests that as late as 1531 after Henry had formally disavowed the jurisdiction of the pope and had declared himself supreme head of the church in the land, Henry "probably calculated the Roman Pontiff would even yet decide the question of the divorce in the sense he desired."[10] This hypothesis is well founded for it was not until 1533 that Henry had his divorce ratified in Archbishop Cranmer's court. By this time Henry saw the futility of dealing with a pope who was politically bound to favor his wife and he ultimately realized there could be no middle road. Papal excommunication followed to which Henry replied with a decree depriving the pope of all jurisdiction in England both temporal and spirtual. Then came the dissolution of the monasteries.

With this step Henry unknowingly clinched the Reformation. Henry was no friend of Protestantism. To the end of his reign he was above all anxious to prove himself still essentially orthodox in creed.[11] The

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[9]Preserved Smith, The Age of The Reformation (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920), p. 297.

[10]Clark, op. cit., p. 108.

[11]Ibid., p. 110.

foremost example of this is his decree of the "Six Articles" in 1539, making mandatory: belief in consubstantiation, clerical celibacy, private masses for meritorious value, auricular confession, and communion in one kind.[12] Though Henry had himself replaced the pope in England he felt that he had not left the Catholic faith and that his England still belonged to the holy mother church.

But the dissolution of the monasteries undermined him. For as Tawney points out, these "abbey-lands" were not held by the crown but were sold for revenue out of financial necessity.[13] And many land grants were bestowed as favors to insure the support of prominent noblemen in the struggle against Rome. Later under the reign of Mary this proved to be the one anchor of the Reformation which Catholicism could not dislodge.[14] If the Queen could have regained the vast land holdings of the church and presented them to the pope as tokens of England's penitence, the Elizabethan settlement might never have been made. To ask an Englishman to change his religion was one thing, but to demand that he give up his lands was another. Mary's subjects were willing to profess, at least not deny, the Roman supremacy, but their land was their own and neither reigning sovereign nor holy pontiff could wrest it from them. Protestantism was assured. It could bide its time.

The second significant fact of Henry's appropriation of the church

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[12]Daniel Neal, The History of the Puritans or Protestant Non-Conformists from 1517 to 1688; Comprising an Account of Their Principles (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1837), I, 21.

[13]R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1926), p. 139.

[14]Knappen, op. cit., p. 104.

lands is the peculiar character it gave to the English Reformation. Brown states that the basic difference between the Reformation in England and that on the Continent is that the former arose out of the action of the State while the latter began with the people. To this he attributes the fact that as late as 1547 when Edward came to the throne the externals of worship were but little changed - a fact of great importance to the study of Puritanism.[15]

However, the prominence of the state in the English Reformation precipitated another problem and this problem was the central issue of Elizabethan Puritanism. It is the problem of authority in church-state relations. Is the church the servant of the state or is the state the servant of the church. Innes sees the origin of the issue in the nature of Henry's Reformation.

> The fundamental fact, however, which must be borne in mind in the early stages of the Reformation in England is this: that whereas the cause to which both Luther and Zwingli devoted themselves was primarily a revision of dogmas and of the practices associated with them, the work which Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell were to take in hand was the revision of the relations between Church and State--of the position of the Clerical organisation as a part of the body politic; ... Luther's was a Religious Reformation with political consequences: Henry's was a Political Reconstruction entailing ultimately a reformed religion.[16]

The problem of "the position of the clerical organization as a part of the body politic" was the chief problem of Elizabethan Puritanism - it is the problem the Elizabethan settlement was thought to settle. It is significant to note that the origion of the problem is found in Henry's

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[15] John Brown, The English Puritans (Cambridge: The University Press, 1910), pp. 6-7.

[16] Innes, op. cit., p. 104.

coup' d'etat manner of reformation which reformed only those things which he wished reformed and these only insofar as he desired the reform to go. Later when the Reformation came to clergy and laity (under the name of Puritanism) the crown objected because she felt whatever reformation was necessary had already been effected and further reformation was her exclusive prerogative. This was Puritanism's great problem - yet it was the issue scrupulously avoided and which was not settled until the middle of the seventeenth century when Puritanism became a movement political rather than ecclesiastical.

The Reign of Edward VI

It was Henry VIII's constant care to preserve in his kingdom the unity and historicity of religious belief which, like his contemporaries, he regarded as the foundation of political unity. Aside from personal motives his Reformation was effected primarily to free England from all foreign domination, both political and ecclesiastical. It was not, however, designed to cut England off from the historic sequence and tradition of the holy mother church.

> It has sometimes been said that by his action Henry VIII had founded a new Church. That is absurd; neither he nor his theologians believed that in shaking off the administrative claims of the Pope they were cutting themselves off from the communion of the historic Church. Unlike the Continental reformers they took care in fixing the outward constitution of the Church to continue it as it had always been, except for the one fact that they would have no foreign interference. That a breach had occurred between the King of England and the Pope, a breach that involved the people of England, was obvious; but such things had occurred before, and that it was not regarded by Rome as a new departure was shown clearly enough in 1554 when, for a season, she closed the breach that had been made.[17]

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[17] Wand, op. cit., p. 45.

Consequently at the time of Henry's death the Church of England was in all respects, save papal supremacy, orthodox in creed. The doctrine of the Mass is indicative of this. So long as Henry lived the Mass retained its orthodox significance, i.e. that of a propitiatory sacrifice. It was on this very issue that the Lutherans voiced their disagreement with the English Church at the London Conference of 1538.[18] The following year Henry published his very orthodox "Six Articles," one of which maintained that "private Masses [i.e. for the dead] are agreeable to God's law."[19] Not less orthodox were all of the rest of the doctrines of the church. The English Church was schismatic but not heretical as far as the Roman Catholic faith was concerned.

Nevertheless Henry realized that the reforming party was gaining ascendancy and that the subsequent reign would have to recognize them. In the interest of the crown he sought to perpetuate a compromise in the establishment of the official religion. For this reason he had in his will set up a government in which the opposing forces acting with equal strength would produce stability by counter balance. Catholic and reformer were equally represented in the body of testamentary executors which he had appointed to govern the kingdom during his son's minority. Any compromise, however, was a victory for the reformers and under Edward VI the Reformation moved certainly and surely forward, if slowly and moderately under Protector Somerset, then somewhat more rapidly and violently

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[18] G. Constant, The Reformation in England; Introduction of the Reformation Into England, Edward VI (1547-1553) (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1942), p. 9.

[19] Ibid., p. 10.

under the Earl of Warwick.

Our purpose, however, is not to trace the course of the English Reformation. We are not so much interested in the reforming party as we are in those few men who felt it necessary to reform the reformers, the left wing of the reforming party. In this group we see the origin of what later came to be called Puritanism. They are as yet no organized party, but nonetheless their protests are clear, and their influence is felt. The lines that connect them to their Elizabethan brethren are unmistakable. We shall attempt to trace two of these relationships: that of vestiarianism and discipline.

During the first two years of Edward's reign the reformers of all degrees were fundamentally agreed on the necessity of abolishing specifically Roman Catholic practices. That a movement in this direction was the will of the people may be judged by the fact that in the first year of Edward's reign Parliament repealed Henry's treason and heresy laws and his hated Act of the Six Articles.[19] The First Book of Homilies of a Protestant hue and injunctions decidedly "puritan" were issued by the government. These advances were secured by the appearance of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549. It was enforced by an Act of Uniformity which enjoined its use upon all the clergy. The phraseology of the book was carefully framed to admit almost any view or interpretation.[20] Doctrinally, it was a compromise between Romanism, Lutheranism and Calvinism.[21]

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[19]Smith, op. cit., p. 310.

[20]Wand, op. cit., p. 54.

[21]Smith, op. cit., p. 312.

The concerted effort which this initial stage of the Reformation required on the part of the reformers must have kept them in close agreement. Beginning in 1550, however, differences of opinion emerge. The most significantly Puritan of these is associated with a man named John Hooper.

Up to the time of the dissolution of the monasteries John Hooper had been a monk of the very austere Cistercian order at Cleeve, in Somersetshire. Coming under the influence of the anti-sacerdotalist writings of Zwingli and Bullinger he left England in 1545 to live at Strasburg. From 1547 to 1549 he lived at Zurich, in constant touch with Bullinger himself. In May 1549 he returned to England and was appointed Chaplain, first to the Duke of Somerset, and then to the king.[22]

Hooper at once became a very popular preacher and was chosen to deliver the Lent sermons of 1550 before the king. He took this occasion to point out certain "remnants of popery" in the newly enforced Prayer Book and urge revision. Shortly thereafter by the interest of Somerset, although contrary to the wish of the other bishops, he was nominated to the bishopric of Gloucester. However, he refused to be consecrated to office in the vestments customary to the Church of England. He was forbidden to preach but disregarded the ban and after fruitless entreaty by the archbishop he was committed to the Fleet Prison in the early part of 1551. Solitude proved strong persuasion and in less than three weeks Hooper professed to Cranmer his belief that vestments were "things indifferent" to be ordered according to the discretion of the church. On March 8 he was

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[22]John Henry Blunt, The Reformation of the Church of England (New York: E. and J. B. Young and Co., 1882), II, 95-6.

consecrated in full regalia - thereafter wearing the "Aaronic habits" only when required to do so.[23]

It seems a singularly insignificant episode upon which to base the origin of one very important phase in the history of Puritanism. However, it was not mere quibbling over preference of clerical attire. The Romanism of the Church of England has been left virtually untouched throughout the reign of Henry VIII. Reformation in doctrine and ritual had just begun with the Edwardian reign and it was the wish of every reformer that ultimately complete disassociation with the forms of popery might be effected. Certainly the priestly vestments were part of the heritage of Rome and as such should be abolished. But the problem was not that simple. The Church of England wished to cast off her Romanism but in so doing she did not wish to lose her Catholicity or "quality-of-being-the-true-church." It was not the business of destruction they were engaged in but rather the business of renovation. This was the problem of the vestments. Many of the bishops themselves disapproved of the vestments because they were associated with the abuses of Rome. But they also had another significance for the bishops - these vestments had been consecrated to the use of the true and only church. To Hooper, however, on the tip of the left wing, the vestments meant only one thing: a denial of the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and that was to compromise, yes, even to defeat, the Reformation. Hooper was forced to concede, but the issue had been clearly and firmly raised and was not forgotten.

It is interesting to note that of the two prominent contemporary

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[23] Ibid., pp. 96-9.

theologians who alone supported Hooper in his argument against the vestments, one was John a'Lasco, the exiled Polish bishop. For the second significant beginning of English Puritanism centers around this eminent divine who was neither English nor Puritan.

John a'Lasco, an intimate friend of Archbishop Cranmer, was the leader of the Polish Zwinglian refugees in London. He arrived in May of 1550 and sometime thereafter was appointed "superintendent", or presbyterian bishop, of all foreign congregations in the London area. In spite of the determined opposition of the bishops, a'Lasco was able with the King's help to establish a congregation of the Flemish, German and Italian groups under a single Reformed constitution. By 1553 this congregation was so well established that no foreigner could gain English citizenship unless he had made a satisfactory confession of faith to this congregation.[24]

The a'Lasco church had been given the expressed right by the Council "to enjoy, use, and exercise their own rites and ceremonies and their own peculiar ecclesiastical discipline, notwithstanding that they do not agree with the rites and ceremonies customary in our kingdom."[25] One wonders at this unexpected magnanimity toward radical foreigners at a time when the Church of England was exceedingly wary of going too far too quickly in her own Reformation. But according to a'Lasco's own account of the venture there was much method in this seeming madness. A'Lasco states that the purpose of the King and Council in permitting this island of

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[24]Knappen, op. cit., p. 91.

[25]Ibid., p. 90.

radical reform to flourish in the heart of London was to give a preview of the further reform which England would enjoy as soon as the preparations could be made.[26]

The two areas in which a'Lasco's London church were to set the pattern for further English reform were those of church polity and church discipline.[27] In both of these it was typical of the Reformed ideal which the Puritans were to struggle so long and hard to make the official English system. The church government involved a combination of clerical leadership and lay responsibility. The ruling elders were ordained to office for life like ministers and had much the same standing as the clergy. Their discipline provided for examination of the communicant's life by the ruling elders prior to his communing. Excommunication was pronounced by the elders upon the approval of the entire congregation and was equal to social ostracism. Even the clergy were subject to this discipline. Instruction and discipline was the keynote of worship services and all congregational meetings. Congregational gatherings during the week for spiritual edification were also part of the clergy-laity program. Under Elizabeth these "prophesyings," as they were called, grew into an impressive movement and furnished the medium by which much of the Puritan doctrine was spread.

The complete realization of such reform in the Church of England, of course, never came, but the attempt of Edward's reign was not without results. The 1552 Prayer Book shows definite progress along Puritan

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[26] Ibid., p. 91.

[27] Ibid., pp. 92-5.

lines over the First Prayer Book of 1549. It had eliminated the alb and chasuble and had given the sacrament an unmistakably Zwinglian interpretation.[28] It also marks the appearance of the "Black Rubric." This was an express statement that the customary kneeling for the Communion did not imply worship of the elements nor a belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation. It was included as a concession to the protests of Hooper and a'Lasco and John Knox against the practice of kneeling for Communion. These signs marked the way. The direction was definitely toward a reform more Puritan than Anglican. It was rumored that a third and thoroughly reformed prayer book was to follow and certainly the continued support of the young King could be looked for. It seemed that a thorough "purifying" of the Church of England was only a question of time. Then, in 1553, the King, just sixteen years old, died and the hope of the Puritans passed with him.

The Reign of Mary

The reign of Mary Tudor is significant to the history of Puritanism by its reaction rather than its direction. Mary's manifest purpose was to reinstate the Roman Catholic religion as it had been before her father had severed the Church of England from the Pope. She associated Protestantism with the tragedy of her mother's life and the unhappiness of her childhood. Further, her claim to the throne and her very legitimacy were based upon the Pope's decree that Henry's first marriage, i.e. to Katherine of Aragon, was valid and his subsequent relation with Anne Boleyn

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[28] Ibid., p. 95.

adulterous. But more important as a motive for her action is the fact that Mary Tudor, unlike her father and her half-sister, was a genuinely religious woman who had dedicated herself to the task of bringing England back to the true faith.

But in tragic irony her very zeal and consecration killed forever all hope of ever accomplishing the task. In the four years of her reign she had burned 286 Englishmen on the charge of heresy.[29] But instead of causing a return to the Catholic faith, these burnings had exactly the opposite effect. Innes speaks of Mary's persecutions as "the most disastrous example on record of one who with conscientious and destructive persistence aimed at an ideal which her own methods made forever impossible of attainment."[30] Mary sacrificed her heart in what she deemed a sacred cause only to discover that by her own deeds it was irreparably ruined. "These martyrdoms did more for the spread of anti-Roman sentiment than all previous governmental efforts had accomplished.[31]

Certain of the reform measures of Edward's reign were not well received, but in the anti-Catholic reaction of Mary's reign these innovations were somewhat glorified. The First and Second Prayer Books, and the Forty-Two Articles had been hallowed in martyr's blood. Puritan and Anglican united to face a common foe and even the despised radical Hooper, whom Ridley had but a few years before accused of Anabaptism,[32] now en-

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[29]Perry, op. cit., p. 25.

[30]Innes, op. cit., p. 242.

[31]Winston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 413.

[32]Knappen, op. cit., p. 88.

tered by martyrdom into the reformer's company of saints. Within four years Protestantism, even "Puritan" Protestantism, had become a respected religion with its own revered tradition. It was deemed a true faith; the earnestness of it had been tested. Thus Mary's attempt to stop the Reformation had stimulated and assured its progress.

Significant as the Marian persecution was for the work of the Reformers, even more significant was it for the development of the ultra-reformers, the Puritans. For not everyone desired the opportunity of proving his faith in the fire. Some eight hundred clergymen and laymen fled to the continent as soon as the persecution began. It is important to note that they did not find shelter in the Lutheran churches of Northern Germany - indeed, Perry maintains that they sought asylum there and were "churlishly refused"[33] - but in Switzerland, the Low Countries, and the cities on the Rhine, the strongholds of Calvinism and Zwinglianism. This is where Puritanism got its education. It is significant that it was a Calvinistic or Reformed education. It was here that Elizabethan Puritanism was conceived.[34]

Almost the entire body of exiles settled in four places: Frankfort on the Main, Geneva, Zurich and Basel. The first two of these are of particular interest to us for in their history we find the beginnings of each of the three groups of Elizabethan Puritans: the Anglican Puritans, the Reformed Puritans and the Independent or Separatist Puritans.

The advance group of the Frankfort congregation, under the leader-

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[33]Perry, op. cit., p. 252.

[34]Brown, op. cit., p. 10.

ship of William Whittingham, was given the right to share the Weissfrauenkirche which had already been assigned to a French congregation. The grant was given on the condition that the exiles accept the French Confession of Faith and employ an order of service approved by the French congregation to avoid creating offense. The church polity and discipline were modeled after the Reformed pattern of a'Lasco's London congregation. Overjoyed with these generous concessions the Frankforters begged the other emigre' congregations to join them. The congregations at Strassburg (led by Edmund Grindal, later Archbishop of Canterbury) and at Zurich (led by Chambers and Lever) gave indications of joining but on the condition that permission be obtained from the Frankfort magistrates to use the English order of service of the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI. To deny this they felt was to deny the faith which their fellow churchmen were even now suffering for in England. It soon developed that the Frankforters desired the further Reformed order which they were using and the other emigre's desired "to have the face of an English church." Neither would compromise so union was not effected. At this time the Frankfort congregation was joined by John Foxe and another group from England, swelling the pro-English faction to the majority. Soon an open rupture occurred and Whittingham and John Knox (who had arrived before the Foxe trouble) were ungraciously forced out. These two men and the pro-Reformed group then settled at Geneva.[35]

Thus before Puritanism had even come into its own it characterized itself as a house divided. Later under Elizabeth all of the returned ex-

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35 Knappen, op. cit., pp. 118-33.

iles desired the further reform of the English Church but scarcely two agreed on the extent and method of reform. Had the exiles presented a united front upon their return the Elizabethan Settlement would have been forced to acknowledge the Puritan reform. But here at Frankfort divisions were begun and the greatest division, that of Anglican Puritan versus Geneva Puritan, was never closed.

The Whittingham-Knox group arrived in Geneva October 13, 1555. By February of the following year an order of worship and government had been published which was thoroughly Calvinistic, even adopting the Geneva catechism. The Reformed system of church discipline was enforced to determine fitness for church membership and Communion privileges. Weekday meetings for the interpretation of scripture, akin to the later "prophesyings," were also observed.

This group was the largest and most important of the emigre' congregations, claiming, at one time or another, a fourth of all the English exiles. Something of its importance may be judged from the names of later Elizabethan bishops and deans which it included. Thomas Lever, James Pilkington, John Scory, Thomas Sampson, Laurence Humphrey and Miles Coverdale are but a few. It was this congregation which produced the Geneva translation of the Bible - of monumental influence in the strengthening of Puritan laity.[36]

The Frankfort congregation provided the third branch of Puritanism also, that is the Independents. The group that remained after Whittingham and Knox departed was once again torn in strife. The issue, brought to a focus over the distribution of relief money sent over from England,

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[36] Ibid., pp. 134-48.

contested the authority of the pastor as leader of the church. Forty-two of the sixty-two members held that "the church was above the pastor and not the pastor above the church."[37] The document of church polity drawn up by the congregational party at this time held that "the congregation assembled is a particular visible church" and theoretically is the only ecclesiastical unit. Any and all disagreement among the ministers and elders was to be referred to the congregation.[38] Knappen points to this as the beginning of the Independent or Congregationalist wing of Puritanism.

The curse of Elizabethan Puritanism was its lack of unity. The seeds of division were sown among the Marian exiles. In the next chapter we shall see how the Puritan cause alternately rose and fell but never succeeded of its purpose because of its basic disunity.

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[37] Ibid., p. 156

[38] Ibid., pp. 149-62.

CHAPTER III

ELIZABETHAN PURITANISM

The Elizabethan Settlement

The expectation of a change in religious policy with the change in monarchs was widespread but it was uncertain what its extent and character would be. The only prediction which could be made was that England would not continue under the suzerainty of the pope as she had under Mary. It was scarcely conceivable that this daughter of Henry VIII, who owed her very claim to the throne to her father's usurpation of papal authority, and who in the eyes of the pope was illegitimate, should ask Rome's blessing upon her reign.

There was very little indication of the coming policy to be found in the young Queen's personal religous preferences. Religion with her was policy and nothing else.[1] It is a tribute to Elizabeth's cunning or the statecraft of her advisors that the final break with Rome did not occur until 1570, eleven years after her accession. Birt maintains that at the time of Elizabeth's accession the pope "Paul IV, was ready to acknowledge Elizabeth in due course after she had observed the formality of notifying her accession to him."[2] He states that at this time the pope intended to offer no opposition to Elizabeth's claim to the throne. Whether this

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[1]William Pierce, An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1909), p. 6.

[2]Henry Norbert Birt, The Elizabethan Religious Settlement (London: George Bell and Sons, 1907), p. 9.

was actually the case or not, it was the most prudent course at the time for the new Queen to avoid committing herself to a definite policy which would certainly alienate either the Catholics or the Anglicans or the Puritans of her realm.

But regardless of what policies were forming in the Queen's mind, the Marian exiles returned with a naive certainty that now the New Jerusalem would be speedily accomplished. Those of the Geneva congregation wrote to the others asking for mutual forgiveness and desiring "to unite with them in preaching God's word, and in endeavoring to obtain such a form of worship as they had seen practiced in the best reformed churches."[3] This proposal, dispatched by Knox, was however, cooly received. Perhaps it was that the exiles supposed no such political precaution would be necessary since all Englishmen were likemindedly looking forward to a thorough Reformation. It was also that non of the exiles wished to appear to be in sympathy with the author of The First of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women. Although it had been written to prove the unscriptural basis of Mary's rule, it had succeeded in attaching Elizabeth's displeasure also. It was clear that John Knox and his fellow Genevans would never be the favorites of the new Queen.

Lacking a single unifying plan the exiles were at the mercy of a strong-minded Queen. Elizabeth personally disliked the barren and austere religion of the followers of Calvin. To the end of her life she retained

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[3]Daniel Neal, The History of the Puritans or Protestant Non-Conformists from 1517 to 1688; Comprising an Account of Their Principles (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1837), I, 86.

in her private chapel a form of the Mass that was more Roman than Reformed[4] - much to the dismay of the reformers. To her personal dislike of Puritanism was added her instinct of political caution. She was politically conscious of both Romanist and Reformer. Too Calvinistic a Reformation would offend her Catholic subjects. Further, she had no intention of letting Puritan doctrines such as women having no right to rule and just rebellion of subjects against their sovereigns (Knox) gain any strength in England. The Queen was the obstacle in the Puritan's path - and she remained such throughout her reign. Recognizing this the emigre's sought to make what peace they could individually. Collective bargaining had not been possible because of disunity and each man made what terms he could with his sovereign. The brilliant scheme of the Geneva congregation thus broke down for lack of cooperation.

The first Parliament of Elizabeth convened the twenty-fifth of January, 1559, and sat until the eighth of May. It was this Parliament which passed the important Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity. These two acts constitute the foundation of the entire ecclesiastical legislation of Elizabeth's reign.

The Act of Supremacy decreed that every ecclesiastical person must take an oath to the effect that the Queen is the only supreme governor of the realm, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal, and that no foreign prince or prelate has any ecclesiastical or spiritual authority within her dominions. Any person refusing to take the oath was to forfeit "all and every ecclesiastical and spiritual promotion,

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[4]Birt, op. cit., p. 26.

benefit and office, and every temporal and lay promotion and office which he held at the time of refusal."[5] The act also gave the Queen power to appoint commissioners to exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction,[6] which authority gave rise to the court of High Commission. This court, under Whitgift and Bancroft, became the hierarchy's most effective instrument against the Puritans.

The companion Act of Uniformity provided for the uniformity of common prayer and service in the church and administration of the sacraments. Here again all ecclesiastical jurisdiction in matters of vestments and ceremonies was delivered up to the crown. In this act the hand of the Queen is clearly set against the Puritans. A committee of Anglican churchmen and only the milder Puritans (none of the Geneva exiles were appointed) was chosen to review King Edward's liturgy with the instructions "to strike out all offensive passages against the pope and to make people easy about the belief of the corporal presence of Christ in the sacrament; but not a word in favor of the stricter Protestants."[7] Rites and ceremonies were, in her opinion, matters of indifference; and those of the church Rome were preferable to others because they were venerable and pompous and because the people were used to them. This committee went considerably beyond the liberalism of the Second Prayer Book of Edward in their recommendations. The Queen rejected all of these suggestions and

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[5]John Brown, The English Puritans (Cambridge: The University Press, 1910), p. 14.

[6]Henry Gee, The Reformation Period (London: Methuen and Co., 1909), p. 213.

[7]Neal, op. cit., I, 96.

in the final form of the Act of Uniformity forced the acceptance of a book considerably more conservative than the Second Prayer Book of Edward which the committee had already revised because they considered it too conservative. With regard to the forms and vestments the Queen clearly stood much to the right of the most Anglican of her non-Roman clergy.[8] Neal lists a few of the more significant changes the Queen enforced and indicates the extent to which she went beyond the suggestions of the committee.

> Her majesty was afraid of reforming too far; she was desirous to retain images in churches, crucifixes and crosses, vocal and instrumental music, with all the old Popish garments; it is not therefore to be wondered that, in reviewing the liturgy of king Edward, no alterations were made in favour of those who now began to be called Puritans, from their attempting a purer form of worship and discipline than had yet been established. The queen was more concerned for the Papists, and therefore, in the litany this passage was struck out, 'From the tyranny of the bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities, good Lord deliver us.' The rubric that declared, that by kneeling at the sacrament no adoration was intended to any corporal presence of Christ, was expunged. The committee of divines left it at the people's liberty to receive the sacrament kneeling or standing, but the queen and parliament restrained it to kneeling; so that the enforcing this ceremony was purely an act of the state. The old festivals with their eyes, and the Popish habits, were continued, as they were in the second year of king Edward VI till the queen should please to take them away. ... For whereas in that liturgy all the garments were laid aside except the surplice, the queen now returned to king Edward's first book, wherein copes and other garments were ordered to be used.[9]

The appointive power which the Act of Supremacy delegated to the Queen was the instrument which rendered Puritan resistance helpless. Conformity to the accepted vestments and ceremonies was the necessary obli-

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[8] H. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), pp. 169-71.

[9] Neal, op. cit., I, 96-7.

gation which accompanied the appointment. The non-conforming Puritan was faced with the decision to protest by refusing appointment or to conform "for a time" in order that the office gained might be used to effect further reformation. The returning Puritan group lost many of its leaders when they decided with Edmund Grindal, "not to desert our churches for the sake of a few ceremonies, and those not lawful in themselves, especially since the pure doctrine of the gospel remained in all its integrity and freedom."[10] Once appointed they tended to become more conservative under the responsibilities of office. Those who refused appointment as a way of protesting gained little for the Puritan cause and lost much in the way of personal influence. Had they as a body refused appointment on the Queen's terms they might have gained some concession at least, but unity was not their forte.

The final disillusionment of Puritan hopes in the Elizabethan settlement came in the Convocation of 1563. Convocation was the legislative body for the Church of England, serving the same purpose for the formulating of church law that Parliament served in the establishment of civil law. To this body the Puritans submitted a complete program of reform which included among other things use of the Geneva gown, abolition of kneeling at communion, saint's days, and the sign of the cross in baptism. On this occasion the Puritan party actually had a majority present in the lower house. But by making use of their greater number of proxy vote, the royal party defeated the bill by a single vote; fifty-nine to fifty-eight. The Queen's hand was clearly seen and Puritan's hopes that they would receive favors from the crown were finally and utterly dashed. It was clear

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[10]Knappen, op. cit., p. 179.

they must seek support in other camps.

The Vestiarian Controversy

Explicit though the Act of Uniformity was with regard to vestments and ceremonies, it was by no means the final word in that controversy. Many of the returned exiles who had been nurtured in the Reformed Churches of the Continent accepted preferment in the Church without serious regard for its discipline. All of the leading bishops with the exception of Archbishop Parker had taken refuge on the Continent during the persecution of Queen Mary.[11] Both the bishops and the clergy agreed in their dislike of excessive ceremonial requirements. Each advanced clergyman wore what was right in his own eyes and chose what he pleased from the forms of service prescribed in the Prayer Book. By 1561 ceremonial regulations were more observed in the breach than in the rule. Hore describes the situation at this time:

> Some clergymen wore, some refused to wear, the square cap, and some wore a round cap. Some read prayers in the chancel, others in the body of the church; some in surplices, others without. In some churches the Altars were in the body of the church, in others in the chancel, but not against the wall. Some used leavened, other unleavened bread. Some celebrated the Holy Communion in a cope, others in a surplice. Some received kneeling, others standing or sitting. Some baptized in a font, others in a common basin, either with or without the sign of the Cross.[12]

The Queen laid the blame to the bishops for lax enforcement of the Act of Uniformity and the Fifty-Three Injunctions which were published in conjunction with it. She thereupon addressed a letter to Parker direct-

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[11] A. H. Hore, History of the Church of England (London: James Parker and Co., 1895), p. 305.

[12] Ibid., p. 306.

ing him to investigate what diversities prevailed and to take effectual methods for securing uniformity. Parker, in characteristic fashion, began with persuasion. He wrote to Sampson, now Dean of Christ Church, and Humphrey, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, (both returned exiles of evident Puritan sympathies). The point of his letter was that as "things indifferent" the vestment regulations should be adhered to for the sake of order and decency. Sampson and Humphrey agreed that vestments and ceremonies were things indifferent as far as God's commands were concerned. But that did not apply to the situation at hand. The particular vestments they objected to had by consecration and association become the badges of popery and idolatry. They should therefore be abolished. Further, if Parker maintained that they were things indifferent why did he wish to force them upon men whose consciences forbade them to conform. Parker replied that the abuse of the vestments, as was admittedly true of popery, did not destroy their proper use. Consequently those of the historic church should be kept because they were not necessarily bound in superstition and because to change them would mar the decency and order of the church.[13]

Knappen suggests that "by attacking vestiarian nonconformity first, the Queen very cleverly put the costumary aspect of the Puritan controversy in the foreground, obscured the important disciplinary and governmental differences, and made the entire struggle appear a matter of no great consequence, springing from the stubborness of petty minds."[14] The real

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[13]Knappen, op. cit., pp. 188-9.

[14]Ibid., p. 189.

issue was the question of authority in church law and usage. Was the church able to settle its own affairs or could it be compelled against its conscience by the secular authority? This was the basic issue of Elizabethan Puritanism.

Upon the command of the Queen, Parker took up the unwelcome task of ecclesiastical disciplinarian. It is an interesting characteristic of Elizabeth's reign that while she was adamant in imposing her will she was notoriously unwilling to accept the responsibility for the resentment incurred. In this case she made it clear that her name might in no way be invoked to give force to Parker's regulations. Proceeding on his own authority Parker published, under the title of Advertisements, a body of articles described as "certain orders or rules thought meet and convenient though not prescribed as laws equivalent with the eternal Word of God, or as of necessity binding the conscience, but as temporal orders, mere ecclesiastical.[15]

Though "not prescribed as laws ... binding the conscience" they were nonetheless rigidly enforced. All licences for preaching bearing a date prior to April 1, 1565, were declared void and no new ones were to be granted to nonconformists. Parker cited certain of the leading clergy (among whom were Sampson and Humphrey) before him to tell them they must conform to the habits or lose their preferment. To which the two leaders of the Puritans replied, "that their consciences could not comply with these injunction, be the event what it might."[16] Whereupon they were

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[15]Brown, op. cit., p. 30.

[16]Neal, op. cit., I, 138.

both put under confinement.

The London clergy seemed to be the body with the greatest proportion of Puritan offenders so Parker turned next to them. On March 26, 1566, one-hundred-ten London clergymen were assembled before the ecclesiastical commissioners at Lambeth. A Mr. Robert Cole was exhibited before them in the prescribed ecclesiastical attire. The chancellor informed them that it was the Council's wish that they "keep the unity of apparel like to this man here ... keep the rubric of the Book of Common Prayers of England, and the Queen's Majesty her Injunctions, and the Book of Convocation." Then he put the decision, "Ye that will subscribe, volo, so write, you that will not subscribe, nolo. Be brief; make no words." The register of the churches was read. The ministers tried to defer, but a decision had to be made. Complaining that they were "killed in the soul of our souls," thirty-seven ministers refused to subscribe. Of this number Parker later wrote to Cecil, were the best of the London clergy. The penalty was suspension and sequestration with deprivation to follow in three months if they yet refused to conform.[17]

The Advertisements occasioned the beginning of the Puritan's literary warfare. The first of a long line was Robert Crowley's, A Briefe Discourse Against the Outward Apparell and Ministring Garments of the Popish Church, which was the manifesto of the deprived London clergy. In it they state the following four reasons for their refusal to subscribe: (1) the garments offend weak brethren and encourage stout papists; (2) the authority of the Crown does not extend so far as to enforce them; (3) they are

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[17] W. H. Frere, The English Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1911), p. 119.

unnecessary, and (4) popish.[18] A reply was soon printed by the Anglicans which enlisted into the fray in support of conformity the opinions of foreign divines, Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr. Statements of other foreign theologians soon appeared, freely though purposefully misused, until finally Bullinger and Gualter declared themselves more or less in favor of conformity because that will better edify the church than the continuation of the controversy.[19] Finally even the pro-Puritan Beza wearied of the dispute and counseled tolerance, and one by one the Puritans began to make their peace with the Establishment. By 1567 even an "original" Puritan like Whittingham yielded, "quoting Calvin to the effect that to forsake the ministry for such matters of ceremony would be to tithe mint and neglect greater things."[20] Some indication of Separatism remained, i.e. the Plumer's Hall congregation but such demonstrations were clearly no part of the main Puritan party.

The vestiarian controversy seemed to be dying out; but the fundamental problem involved was far from being solved. The basic issue of the controversy was not whether the Prayer Book should be altered here and there, nor whether allowance should be made for those who for conscience sake could not conform to its vestiarian requirements. The real issue

> was a question which presupposed the conviction that the religious life of a nation must have a uniform expression; it was the question whether the religious life of England should be expressed in the continuance of the historic Church of England, or in a system such as Calvin had established at Geneva.[21]

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[18] Ibid., p. 122.

[19] Ibid., pp. 122-3.

[20] Knappen, op. cit., p. 210.

[21] H. Hensley Henson, Puritanism in England (New York: Hodder and Stroughton, 1912), p. 29.

The progress and direction of the Puritan movement at this time is accurately summed up by Frere.

> Thus gradually nonconformity became a definitely presbyterian organisation, pledged to work within the Church for the abolition of episcopacy, for a new view of the ministry which was not that of the Book of Common Prayer, for a new system of discipline which was not that of the English Church, and for a new scheme of worship which should tolerate much that at present was not tolerated and forbid much that was at present enjoined. The movement was thus not one for liberty of opinion or practice, but merely for the substitution of a new coercive system in place of the old one.[22]

Consequently the next round developed into an attack on the episcopacy of the Established Church.

The Disciplinarian Controversy

It is not without significance that the next phase of English Puritanism take its origin in the universities. In its beginning stages Puritanism claimed many of the great scholars of its day. It did not originate as a religion of the rabble, or even of the middle class which later supported it. It began as a movement of the clergy and remained predominantly so until the later part of Elizabeth's reign when the presbyterian movement was underway. Even then it was entirely clergy directed. Nor was it merely the malcontents of the clergy as some of the Anglican historians are wont to style them.[23] Consistently the most learned theologians and the most persuasive preachers were sympathetic to the Puritan cause. Parker himself noted that the thirty-seven divines who refused to subscribe were the best of the clergy and preachers in all London. The

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[22]Frere, op. cit., p. 126.

[23]Ibid., p. 170.

early Puritans in the main were the clear-eyed men of vision while the Anglicans were the provincial reactionaries. This is evidenced by the fact that English Protestants with any foreign experience invariably attached themselves to the Puritan party.[24]

Of the universities Cambridge, particularly, was the cradle of the Puritan cause in the decade beginning with 1570. Hundreds of young men embarked from here resolutely convinced that further reformation of the church was necessary if the return of Romanism were to be forever precluded. Not the least influential factor in shaping these stalwarts was the addition of Thomas Cartwright to the Cambridge faculty toward the end of 1569. The first course he taught in the Lady Margaret Professorship became a landmark in the history of Puritanism.

In the spring of 1570 the new professor began a series of lectures on the first two chapters of Acts. In these he dealt with the question of ecclesiastical polity as, in his mind, it arose from the exegesis of the text. As an exegete he read Presbyterianism in the organization of the first Christian church and he was unable to separate the function of the interpreter from that of an advocate. He maintained that the model set up in the Apostolic Church was the model for all time. The error of episcopacy was obvious; consequently the hierarchy of the Church of England must be changed.

The force of his eloquence and the weight of his scholarship made Cartwright's lectures a sensation at the university. The authorities were urged to investigate and upon Cartwright's declaration that the content of his Six Articles was not mere academic scholarship with him but honest

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[24]Knappen, op. cit., p. 232.

conviction, he was deposed and left for Geneva. The gist of the Articles is worth quoting since it is the basis of the entire disciplinarian controversy.

> The names and offices of Archbishops and Bishops should be abolished. In their stead the offices of Bishops and Deacons, as described in the New Testament should be established. The Bishop should have a purely spiritual function and the deacon should care for the poor. The government of the Church should not be entrusted to Chancellors of Bishops or Officials of Archdeacons, etc., but to the minister and the Presbytery of the Church. Each minister should be attached to a definite congregation. No one should, like a candidate, seek the office of a minister and none should be created ministers by the authority of Bishops, but should be elected by a Church. All should promote this reformation according to their several vocations, i.e. the magistrate by his authority, the minister by preaching, and all by their prayers.[25]

Upon the platform of their new leader the Puritans were eager to build and in the Parliament of 1572 they submitted a bill to legalize Puritan nonconformity with respect to the Prayer Book. They were seeking help in Parliament because the 1563 incident convinced them they could expect no quarter from the bishop controlled Convocation. But the Queen had no thought of allowing the reform of the church to pass into the hands of a Puritan heavy Parliament. While the bill was in passage the Queen sent word that it must be surrendered to her and in the future no bill concerning religion was to be introduced into the House unless it was previously approved by Convocation.

This defeat at the hands of the Queen occasioned the first Puritan manifesto, which was published as an appeal to public opinion. It was a book in two parts, the first entitled "An Admonition to the Parliament" and the second "A View of Popish Abuses yet remaining in the English Church,

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[25] A. F. Scott Pearson, Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism 1535-1603 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1925), pp. 28-9.

for the which Godly Ministers have refused to subscribe." The aim of the first treatise is to point out the glaring contrast between the Apostolic Church and the Church of England and to advocate the abolition of episcopacy for presbyterianism. The second is mainly an attack on the Prayer Book, "culled and picked out of that popish dunghill, the Portuise and Mass book."[26] The success of the book was overwhelming.

The authors, Field and Wilcox, were promptly apprehended and imprisoned but the press could not be uncovered. Soon "A Second Admonition to the Parliament" appeared giving a detailed exposition of the Puritan ideal of church government. The author suggested a series of ecclesiastical assemblies or conferences, which are described as meetings of certain ministers and laymen to exercise themselves in "prophesyings or interpreting the Scriptures." Also "affairs of the church" and "demeanors of the ministers may be examined and rebuked." Further arrangements include a provincial synod as a check upon the conferences, a national synod and finally a general synod of all church. The Admonition concludes with an appeal to the Queen and the Council to see "these things put in practice and punish those that neglect them."[27]

When the popular ground swell caused by the Admonition did not soon abate it became necessary for the Establishment to defend itself in answer. In Thomas Whitgift, later Archbishop, that answer was forthcoming. Appearing in February 1573, Whitgift's Answer to the Admonition paragraph by paragraph examined the Puritan manifestoes. The two points which he

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[26]Ibid., p. 60.

[27]Brown, op. cit., pp. 61-2.

chiefly attacked were the plea for equality of ministers and the sufficiency and authority of Scripture as a directory of ecclesiastical polity.[28] Within a few months this book was answered by Cartwright's A Reply to the Answer. The battle was joined. Within a year Whitgift published his Defense of the Answer which drew from his opponent The Second Reply, which, fortunately, ended the exchange.

Some attention should be given to Cartwright's first Reply since it gives the chief arguments which the Puritans adopted. The Second Reply adds little but elaboration. To Whitgift's charge of Anabaptism Cartwright answers that the Puritans seek no separation from the true Church which they explicitly declare to be the Church of England; they seek merely its further reformation. And inasmuch as the State would benefit by the reform of the Church, the Puritans seek also the good of the State. When Whitgift classes the Puritans with the Papists in their opposition to the Church of England, Cartwright points out that the Papists mislike the Prayer Book because it veres from the Mass-book while the Puritans reject it because it is too close to the same. "The Puritans would not only unhorse the Pope but would also take away the stirrups so that he should never get into the saddle again."[29]

The chief contention of Cartwright is that the Church of England is wrong in its episcopal hierarchy which is a product of Rome and should be reformed according to the model of the Apostolic Church. This he interpreted to be none other than Presbyterianism. Whitgift holds that church

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[28]Frere, op. cit., p. 181.

[29]Pearson, op. cit., p. 89.

polity is a matter which Scripture leaves to the discretion of the Church and maintains that even what has been wrongly used by Rome may be rightly used by the "reformed" Church of England. Theoretically it is not the authority of Scripture that is in dispute, but rather which things has Scripture prescribed. Cartwright does not maintain that nothing is right unless it is expressly commanded in Scripture but he states that the Word of God does give the direction of all things pertaining to the Church. And certainly something as important as church polity God would not overlook. Cartwright's chief criticism of the episcopacy is its organizational rank. The only bishops he can allow are "presbyters" and they must all be of equal importance.[30]

The open attack was upon the episcopacy, specifically, the bishops. But in the case of the Church of England during Elizabeth's reign, the bishops were little more than the Queen's pawns. Along with the further reformation of the Church, indeed, as an essential part of that reformation the Puritans were striving for the right of the church to settle its own affairs. A secular authority, be that the supreme ruler of the land, was not to dictate the policies and preferences of the church. But to attack the royal supremacy was treason. Bishops, however, could be railed against supposedly without indicating disloyalty to the Crown. But the issue was soon to be clarified and for that reason it is significant to note that Cartwright's Reply presented the first clear statement regarding the limitations of the Crown in ecclesiastical affairs. Cartwright declared that the role of the Crown in church affairs was to execute, but

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[30] Ibid., pp. 89-95.

not to make, ecclesiastical law. That right was given to the clergy alone.[31]

As a final summary of the Puritan ideal of church polity there appeared in 1574 a book by Walter Travers entitled Disciplinae Ecclesiasticae, the most memorable book on the Puritan side of the controversy.[32] The purpose of the book was to discuss the proper calling, and function of bishops and deacons according to correct ecclesiastical discipline ("the policy of the Church of Christ ordered and appointed of God for the good administration and government of the same"[33]). Again diocesan episcopacy is rejected as unscriptural and the true bishop is the minister of one church - a criticism of the Anglican abuse of pluralities. Of bishops there are two kinds, doctors and pastors. The former are "bishops who are occupied in the simple teaching and expounding of the holy doctrine and true religion." The duty of the pastors is to speak the word of exhortation when necessary and to administer the sacraments. The deacons are of two kinds also: the treasurers, or almoners, whose office is to look after the poor; and the elders, or governors, who rule over the church along with the bishops in the consistory. In important matters, however, the entire congregation must be consulted. The author then passes on to the governing bodies which include groups of churches, constructing the same framework as presented in the Second Admonition (cf. above).[34]

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[31]Knappen, op. cit., p. 238.

[32]Brown, op. cit., p. 82.

[33]Pearson, op. cit., p. 143.

[34]Ibid., pp. 143-4.

While it must be admitted that the Puritan position of a divinely ordained and unalterable form of church government is not tenable, nevertheless their criticism of the episcopacy is in many respects thoroughly in keeping with the model of the Early Church. The secular greatness and social distinctions of the episcopacy, especially in its Elizabethan abuses, could hardly be said to be congruous with the spirit of New Testament Christianity. Also, the element of corporate action, of the responsibility of the laity in congregational affairs, both in the choice of officials and in the maintenance of discipline, must undoubtedly have existed in the New Testament Church recorded in Acts. Despite the fact that the Early Church must have had a quite different notion of what constituted "discipline", the evidence of congregational participation is incontestible. Another contribution which the Disciplinarian Controversy may be said to have made to the English philosophy of church polity is its clear statement of the limits of secular authority in ecclesiastical causes. Henry's assumption of the title "Supreme Head of the Church" had been questioned by no one before the Elizabethan Puritans.

The Disciplinarian Controversy marks the highpoint of Puritan ecclesiastical philosophy. To the end of Elizabeth's reign the position was never advanced beyond Cartwright's Reply and Traver's Disciplinae Ecclesiasticae and Stuart Puritanism sought altogether different goals. Up to this point, however, the movement had restricted itself to occasional acts of protest and voluminous statements of position. Excepting the scattered Separatist and Independent demonstrations, which the Puritan movement consistently refused to claim, the party had made no effort to put its doctrines into effect. Arising out of the Disciplinarian Controversy such

an attempt was made. This phase we shall consider under the title of the Presbyterian Movement.

The Presbyterian Movement

In 1575 Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, died. He was succeeded in office by Edmund Grindal, the mildly Puritan Bishop of London. Grindal was not aggressive in his Puritanism, but neither did he hold that nothing of good could come out of Geneva. And at least one development which had risen from Reformed sources he esteemed very highly. This was the Puritan practice of "prophesyings."

The term derives from I Corinthians 14, 31: "Ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted." The practice, as far as the English Church is concerned, originated with John a'Lasco's London congregation.[35] They were gatherings, attended by both clergy and laity, designed to promote a knowledge of the Scripture. At a time when English preachers needed nothing more than a program of instruction which would enable them to rise above the stage of merely reading government-issued homilies, such exercises as the prophesyings were well thought of.[36] Especially in the early '70's this movement prospered, when the more progressive bishops backed it with their approval.

But whatever else she may have been, in religion Elizabeth was not progressive. She wanted obedience rather than intelligence and spiritual maturity in her subjects.[37] Cost what it might, ignorance seemed a small

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[35] Supra 21.

[36] Perry, op. cit., p. 305.

[37] Knappen, op. cit., p. 253.

price to pay for docility. And the prophesyings, in that they were gatherings of Puritan clergy, gave the appearance of conspiracy against her throne. In 1576 she gave the orders to outlaw all such gatherings. However, it seems the new Archbishop was made of sterner stuff than his predecessor. Offering rather to resign his office, he refused for conscience sake to obey, whereupon the Queen sequestered him for the remainder of his life.

Elizabeth's political instinct was not betraying her in moving to suppress the prophesyings. For out of these quiet gatherings grew Elizabethan Puritanism's final attempt to reform and supplant the royal Established Church. The prophesyings had begun in Norwich as early as 1564, appeared in Northampton about 1571, and were strengthened in London in 1574 by Bishop Grindal himself. Even after the Queen's order for suppression certain of the Bishops, notably the Bishop of Chester, continued to encourage them, and not until Grindal died and was succeeded by the thoroughly Anglican John Whitgift was any concerted action taken against them.

The reason for their spread is undoubtedly found in the support they enjoyed from the laity. The secular authorities in the provinces were cooperating with the Puritan clergy to set up "little English Genevas", districts which were virtually autonomous for ecclesiastical purposes.[38] These congregations chose their own ministers and frequently handled much of the enforcement of civic discipline in church procedure. When we consider that at this time an estimated five-sixths of ecclesiastical bene-

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[38] Ibid., p. 259.

fices in England were controlled by the laity,[39] it is entirely plausible that many provinces should be able to disregard the preferences of the Crown. In many cases, Puritan control through sympathetic magistrates was strong enough to openly defy the authority of the Bishop which indirectly bespoke the authority of the Queen.[40] Even more numerous were instances in which the Bishops indirectly supported the movement, at least to the extent of not suppressing it.[41]

Toward the latter half of the decade beginning in 1580 the movement began to take on a more organized character. The emphasis shifted from the casual meeting for Scripture study to a formally organized congregation within a congregation. The individual group was called a "classis" and the concern became more that of discipline and organization than that of doctrine. Also the movement began to spread beyond the individual classis. The shire of Northhampton, for example, was arranged in three separate classes, held in the towns of Northhampton, Daventry and Kettering. All three were then organized into a provincial synod which in turn reported to an assembly which was held in Cambridge. The Cambridge assembly included the similar provincial synods of the following other shires: Warwick, Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex. The headquarters for all the assemblies was London.[42] It is evident that the movement was no haphazard affair. John Field, operating out of London, had carefully set about con-

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[39]Roland G. Usher, The Reconstruction of the English Church (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1910), p. 95.

[40]Knappen, op. cit., pp. 259-61.

[41]Ibid., pp. 262-3.

[42]Brown, op. cit., pp. 91-2.

structing a unified organization out of the disconnected prophesyings. By unceasing correspondence he kept the outlying groups in touch with the organization. Where no prophesyings existed Field commissioned a Puritan brother in the area to organize a new classis. Two or three times a year the classes sent delegates to the provincial synod and when Parliament met something corresponding to the Scotch General Assembly was held in London.[43]

Thus the Puritans were able to accomplish much in spite of the opposition of the Queen, as long as it was unknown to her. This course of action was their only alternative since nothing could be gained in Convocation or on the parliamentary front. And yet it is significant that even in this apparent sabotage of the episcopacy, the Puritans had no intention of separating themselves from the Established Church. Their purpose was rather to bring about from within such changes as would make its government conform more nearly to what they regarded as the Scriptural ideal. Their design was to set up a discipline within a discipline, Presbytery in Episcopacy,[44] and they considered themselves within the limits of the law in doing so for they felt they were not destroying, but strengthening the Established Church. They were serenely confident that when God's plan for the Church of England became manifest to those in authority, Presbyterianism would legally replace the Episcopacy.

But under Whitgift's primacy it was not meant to be. The weakness that had always defeated them before was upon them again. Weakened by in-

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[43]Knappen, op. cit., pp. 284-5.

[44]Brown, op. cit., p. 78.

ternal division they were not able to accomplish the task which lay ahead. In 1587 when Traver's proposed Discipline was circulated among the classes for adoption and subscription there was disagreement on two vital points: its harmony with Scripture, and whether it might be used without danger to the church.[45] The Discipline was presented at the General synods of Cambridge in 1587, at Coventry 1588, and again at Cambridge in 1589 but no agreement could be reached. Soon the organization began to fall apart. Field's death in 1588 hastened the disintegration process. Field's loss to the party was great; he had been the organiser, propagandist, and party secretary all in one.[46] Without his controlling hand the whole movement collapsed for lack of internal agreement.

The external political situation also contributed to the final defeat of Elizabethan Puritanism. With the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 the Catholic danger was completely resolved and there no longer remained any reason for indulging the Puritans as a counterbalance. Whitgift had published his Three Articles demanding subscription to the Book of Common Prayer already in the first year of his primacy but he still lacked the means of enforcement. But by 1584 he had begun to refurbish the Ecclesiastical Court of High Commission to supply that coercive power which the bishops lacked.[47] With the complete eradication of the Catholic threat in 1588 the Court was ready to go into action.

In connection with the action of this Court we must remember that the

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[45]Knappen, op. cit., p. 293.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Usher, op. cit., pp. 107-8.

nature of Henry's Reformation had caused the issues of Church and State to become commingled. He had made the administration of the Church a matter of political rather than ecclesiastical expediency and caused every religious question to be loaded with political implications. Alteration of the ecclesiastical system was the exclusive prerogative of the Crown. Disagreement with the status quo was seditious and any attempt to change it was treason.[48] Such was the view Elizabeth took of the Puritans. They were enemies of the Established Church and thus enemies of the Crown.

Indeed, Bancroft's sermon at Paul's Cross in 1589 (which Usher views as "the turning point in the history of Elizabethan nonconformity"[49]) had measured their attempt to change the government of the Church from Episcopacy to Presbyterianism as actual treason.[50] The preparation of this sermon consisted in two years of intercepting Puritan letters and investigating the records of various classes, synods and assemblies. A somewhat more complete compilation of the investigation was published by this worthy divine in 1593 under the two titles, A Survey of the Pretended Holy Discipline and Dangerous Positions. These books attempt to demonstrate that Puritanism equals anarchy.

By 1590 Bancroft was able to show his commissioner a convincing enough case against the Puritan Presbyterian movement and Whitgift began to round up the leaders to appear before the Court of High Commission.

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[48] Ibid., p. 40.

[49] Ibid., p. 50.

[50] Ibid., p. 42.

Here the defendants were administered the ex officio oath, which was a convenient way of forcing a man to incriminate himself without bother of accusers or witnesses. Cartwright and his cohorts refused to take the oath and eventually were taken before the Star Chamber. Although the trials were, on the whole, indecisive, the two year imprisonment and the scare of further legal action were sufficient to completely demoralize and disorganize the Puritan party. By 1593 the last of the prophesyings were broken up or disbanded.[51] The Parliament of that same year enacted a bill to imprison all non-conformists until they either consented to conform or after a specified time could be banished. Thus the entire matter of ecclesiastical conformity was thrown into the common law courts.[52] After a little experience of the treatment they received at the hands of the common law judges, Perry says "they perceived the wisdom of keeping quiet and concealed, and waiting the chances of a new reign."[53] Elizabethan Puritanism's last attempt had ended in failure, and the Church of England as established by Elizabeth was beginning to enjoy that respectability and free acceptance which comes only with age.

We have thus seen the origin of the movement of English Puritanism, which is based on the conviction that the Church must, in the spiritual and ecclesiastical realm, be an autonomous body, capable of settling its own causes as it sees them in the light of God's Word. We have seen it grow from a few over-zealous reformers to a powerful force,

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[51] Knappen, op. cit., pp. 296-9.

[52] Perry, op. cit., p. 336.

[53] Ibid., p. 337.

> which under Elizabeth was supported by the great majority of serious-minded Protestants, and even at the end of that queen's reign was regularly able to command a majority in the House of Commons, the nearest thing to a truly representative body which England then possessed. At the same time we have seen this great movement thwarted by the determination of the ruling sovereigns, who produced a great ecclesiastical rival to divide its support and so were able to drive the clergy into a sectarianism which sapped their strength, lowered their prestige, and virtually destroyed all hope of subjecting the laity to effective discipline.[54]

And in observing the movement in its origin and early development we have seen it at its best. For the Puritanism of the succeeding century was led unwillingly into the arena of political conflict to champion the cause of constitutional government and individual liberty. Without offering to judge whether it supported justice or injustice in that phase of its existence, we must recognize that the Puritanism of the sixteenth century was a movement led by a different class of men and for totally different reasons and with vastly different methods than was that of the seventeenth century. The basic and essential meaning of Puritanism is found in its origin and early development.

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[54] Knappen, op. cit., pp. 333-4.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLITICAL PROBLEM OF PURITANISM

Puritanism did not originate as a political movement nor did it wish to achieve any political significance. In its essential meaning it may be said to deal in an altogether different realm then that which regulates the outward behavior of men. The end which it sought was a purely religious one, but the means it chose to achieve this end were to a great extent political. It was for this reason that in the seventeenth century the movement was entirely swallowed up by its political aspect and surrendered its original religious goal for one consistent with its nature and methods. Therefore the political problem of Puritanism deserves some consideration.

As we have noted before, Henry's Reformation was essentially, if not exclusively, political in nature. It retained the Catholic religion in almost all points intact with the one great exception of the papal supremacy. Henry was not particularly interested in the doctrinal considerations of the Reformation but he did recognize that the religion of the English people in 1529 was wholly Catholic in habit and tradition and vaguely Catholic in sentiment. He therefore broke with the Catholic tradition only as far as a denial of papal supremacy demanded. His denial of papal supremacy and declaration of the royal supremacy were wholly political and nationalistic moves.

As a result two politically significant facts developed: first, in all of Tudor history religious issues were at the same time political issues; second, the English Church never came to an examination and definition of the nature and function of the church. The first fact arises

out of Henry's politically motivated assumption of the title of Head of the Church of England - to oppose the Church was to oppose the Crown. This was accepted as natural and normal by Henry's subjects primarily because the second fact was true. As long as the Reformation did not seek to examine what the church is and what are its functions, it was both handy and helpful to accept the king as the head of the Church.

Henry's supremacy of the Church was based upon the idea prevalent in sixteenth century England that the Church and the commonwealth are conterminous. The Church and the State were thought of as but two aspects of one thing, the commonwealth.[1] Therefore "to say the King is head of the realm but not head of the Church, either means something evidently absurd or means nothing at all."[2] This was a purely political consideration and as such needed no further explanation or elaboration. But when the matter is considered from its religious aspect the question arises, to what extent is the King the Head of the Church? Is the King the Head of the Church merely because he is the sovereign of those who belong to the Church, or is he also their spiritual head in that he is to determine their belief? This question Henry's Reformation avoided. It preached the doctrine of royal supremacy but was careful not to define it.

The Tudor sovereigns were creating a national State and a national government. To this end the establishment of national control of Church was a necessity. While under Henry VIII it was possible to see the royal supremacy as an istrument for the salvation of souls, under Elizabeth,

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[1]J. W. Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1928), p. 169.

[2]Ibid., p. 163.

because of the wider divergence of belief, it became more and more difficult to hold that view. The Supreme Governor of both Church and State, it appeared, was using her ecclesiastical power to further the purposes of the State at the expense of the church. Instead of seeking the establishment of "pure doctrine" and the salvation of souls the secular sovereign was seeking a compromise which would include the most people. "Recognition of the royal supremacy and attendance at the authorized and official church services becomes a test of loyalty."[3] "The State was very definitely shaping ecclesiastical policy, along lines believed to be most consonant with its secular ends."[4] And yet this was entirely in keeping with the theory of the Church being conterminous with the Commonwealth and the secular ruler being supreme in both.

It was on this point that Puritanism became politically involved. The assumption which was held by the Queen and the supporters of the Establishment was all that was needed to prove that the doctrines of the Puritans were seditious, in that they involved not only an attack on the Established Church but on the Crown which had established it. For the assumption that the Church and the Commonwealth are identical involved either the belief that the Queen by Parliament could pronounce infallibly in matters of faith and religion or the belief that one was in duty bound to accept her pronouncements and act on them, right or wrong.[5] The latter comes closer to what the Bishops of the Established Church appear

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[3] Ibid., p. 172.

[4] W. K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), p. 141.

[5] Allen, op. cit., p. 175.

to have thought. Whitgift, in defending the concept of a national Church regulated by the Crown, declared that even blasphemers and Papists must be counted members of the Church until they have been formally excommunicated. "Thus Papists at heart who are willing to conform have a ready and unassailable defence."[6]

Plainly enough Whitgift was not seeking a religious validation for the Church. He was primarily concerned about the maintenance of social order. Of course, the Archbishop would not admit that it is within the jurisdiction of the secular ruler to bind men against their consciences in those things which he names 'points of religion necessary to salvation.' In these things Scripture was the norm and source of belief. And, he adds, in the Church of England all of these are "as purely and perfectly taught as ever they were in any Church sithence the Apostles' time."[7] But in such things as are left "indifferent" by Scripture, it is the right and the duty of the Church to command. And, of course, the secular ruler, who is Supreme Governor of the Church, must decide which things are "indifferent". And in such things the Crown may command whatever it believes.

To the Puritans, however, such things as rites, vestments, and church polity were anything but "things indifferent", and even if they were, by definition they were not to be commanded. But this disagreement was merely symptomatic of the basic disagreement with regard to the definition of the nature and function of the church. Cartwright, who was the spokesman

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[6]Jordan, op. cit., p. 147.

[7]Allen, op. cit., p. 174.

for Elizabethan Puritanism, articulated the view that Church and State were separate societies and consistently maintained that the Puritan attempt to reform the Church of England in no wise reflected adversely upon the existing civil government. This view, which Pearson refers to as "the two-kingdom theory," deserves some consideration.

The Church and the State, according to Cartwright, are distinct and separate bodies, but not unrelated. They are likened to the twins of Hippocrates who prosper or languish together. And yet the Church enjoys a priority and superiority over the State. Otherwise God is made to give place to men. And yet the Church depends upon the State, for without the ruler to protect and uphold it, there could be no true church.[8]

The difficulty is immediately apparent. Where is the line of demarcation between ecclesiastical and civic spheres of jurisdiction? Which of the "twins" is the final authority? Here Cartwright is explicit in his claim for the Church. The Church's representatives would serve as interpreters of the law of God, which it is the duty of the State to enforce.[9] Therefore the secular ruler is the servant of God to establish and defend the Church; he is the Church's executioner. "As it is the privilege of ministers to interpret God's laws, it is that of the magistrate to see that they are put into practice."[10] When the Church becomes diseased and corrupt Cartwright says the godly magistrate must take the

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[8] A. F. Scott Pearson, Church & State (Cambridge: University Press, 1928), pp. 17-21.

[9] Ibid., p. 25.

[10] Ibid., p. 30.

initiative to enforce the divine decrees.[11] But even here Cartwright makes it clear that the Church is corrupt only when it is not Presbyterian, or Puritan, and the "godly magistrate" is godly only when he is a true servant of Presbyterianism.[12] "The final arbitrament of the magistrate is thus accepted if he enforces the principles of Puritanism and so the Puritan is the final judge after all."[13]

And yet the Pruitans could not see that they were attacking the royal supremacy of Elizabeth in ecclesiastical affairs. Without hesitancy they took the oath acknowledging Elizabeth as Supreme Governor of the Church.[14] To them the royal supremacy in the church did not mean the right to decide points of doctrine and belief, but simply the right to enforce the determinations of Scripture which they supposed to be manifest and beyond all doubts.

It is significant that the rights they were claiming for the Church were in actuality being claimed only for themselves, i.e. by "the Church" they meant the godly, when they supposed themselves to be. The basic disagreement between the Puritans and the Anglicans was this problem of what constitutes the Church. The Anglicans maintained it to be conterminous with the Commonwealth, while the Puritans referred to it as "the godly," which means Presbyterians. What the Puritans aspired to in their Discipline was "the establishment of government by the godly of the ungodly multitude which they habitually denounced."[15]

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[12] Ibid., p. 34.

[13] Ibid., p. 35.

[14] Ibid., p. 54.

[15] Allen, op. cit., p. 219.

The same men who denied that the magistrate had any right to dictate to them in matters of faith and worship wished to make of civil power a sword in the Church's hand. It may seem that they did not see the contradiction. Either they must grant the same right, i.e., freedom of faith and worship, must be granted to all men, or they were claiming infallibility for their own personal judgments. Actually what they believed was that although all men had the right to search the Scriptures, they were not allowed to come to different conclusions than those of Presbyterian Puritanism.[16]

The single false premise upon which Puritanism was based is this that Scripture bears but one interpretation and that must be Puritanism. Right or wrong this is still a completely "religious" concept. But when the second premise, namely that whatever is scriptural it must be adopted and supported by the State, then the goal, which is religious, is being sought with political means. It was for this reason that Elisabeth felt obliged to oppose it because she was seeking, not the establishment of so-called scriptural truth, but the creation of a strong, unified, nation-conscious England.

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[16] Ibid., p. 224.

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