

## A PURITAN COUNTER-REFORMATION

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THE drawing of historical parallels is recognized by sober scholars as a precarious business; but it has a certain fascination which few of us can altogether resist. Indeed, like many adventures which have an element of danger in them, it is not necessarily unprofitable. It is easy—and tempting—to push historical analogies farther than the facts will justify; but if they are used with care they may help us to see events in better perspective and interpret the experience of an epoch or a particular region with the help of clues suggested by similar experiences more or less remote in time or place. However that may be, this is the kind of adventure in which, for better or worse, you are now invited to engage. As the title has probably indicated to most of you, the analogy here proposed takes us back, first, to the Europe of the sixteenth century, and then to the New England of some four generations ago—to the age of the Catholic Counter-reformation and to the period of the so-called evangelical revival in New England.

During the first half of the sixteenth century the church-state system of medieval Europe was vigorously, and over large areas successfully, challenged by the Protestant Revolution. Under the leadership of such former Catholic churchmen as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Cranmer, in close alliance with secular princes and magistrates, ancient endowments were diverted either to secular purposes or to religious uses more or less at variance with the ancient faith and practice. The Reformers themselves were sure that their work was essentially constructive rather than

destructive—the revival of the pure gospel and the reconstruction of Christian institutions in accordance with the practice of the primitive Apostolic Church. To their Catholic opponents, however, the victories of Protestantism in northern Europe were so many blows at “the faith once delivered to the Saints,” certified and safeguarded for centuries by a venerable hierarchy under the guidance of the Roman pontiff. For them it was a tragic catastrophe and a calamitous breach in the unity of western Christendom—the triumph, for a time at least, of heresy and schism. That, in brief, was the situation in northern Europe in the middle of the sixteenth century, when the generation which was challenged by Luther’s famous ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg was gradually passing off the stage.

Even to those who have not inherited the Catholic tradition the era ushered in by the Protestant Revolt has its tragic aspects. Genuine zeal for reform was too obviously tainted by association with sordid motives of various kinds, political and economic. Ecclesiastical controversy on both sides was ungenerous and bitter. The power of the state was used, in Catholic and Protestant countries alike, to suppress dissenting opinions, and the so-called Religious Wars stand out as one of the major scandals of Christian history.

Nevertheless, it is easy in a natural revulsion from the bitterness, the bigotry, and the cruelty of these ancient conflicts, to forget the constructive aspects of that stormy epoch. Even the most confirmed pacifist must concede that though “war is hell,” it may have certain compensatory by-products—the bringing into use of neglected resources, the stimulating of the inventive faculties, the development of new agencies for purposes of offense or defense which may later be applied to beneficent service in the arts of peace. To some extent, the same principle may be applied to one of the least amiable forms of conflict, the clashing of ecclesiastical institutions and theological dogmas which

may often appear almost, if not quite, without meaning for later generations. Even in conflicts of this kind the human spirit may be stimulated to fresh thinking and the development of new agencies for constructive service. Attacks upon ancient dogmas and traditional practices have their uses not only for those who form the attacking party, but in some degree also for those who seek to preserve the values of the old order.

There is perhaps no more striking illustration in modern times of the stimulating effect of ecclesiastical conflict upon intellectual activity and institutional growth than the developments in the Catholic church in the sixteenth century which are commonly referred to as the Catholic reaction, or perhaps preferably the Counter-reformation.

To begin with, the teaching of the Protestant theologians, though it left much of the old dogmatic structure intact, nevertheless departed sufficiently from the medieval tradition to call for restatement of the orthodox position. This seemed especially necessary since, within the Church itself, there were influential personages who sympathized in some degree with the more moderate reformers. In view of this situation, the orthodox forces felt the need of setting up a standard about which they could rally, of reaffirming and in some measure restating old positions. This requirement was supplied by a series of dogmatic decrees adopted by the Council of Trent during the years from 1546 to 1563. These official pronouncements begin with a solemn reaffirmation of the Nicene Creed, following, so the opening canon reads, the example of "the Fathers, who have been wont, in the most sacred councils, at the beginning of the Actions thereof, to oppose this shield against heresies; and with this alone, at times, have they drawn the unbelieving to the faith, overthrown heretics, and confirmed the faithful."<sup>1</sup> In the decrees which

<sup>1</sup>*Dogmatic Canons and Decrees* (N. Y. 1912) 4.

followed, suggested concessions to the opposition were generally rejected and on one point after another the old positions were reaffirmed in uncompromising terms. "Now," in the words of a distinguished German scholar, "the Catholic knew exactly what his religion and who his opponents were."<sup>1</sup>

For the defence of the faith thus authoritatively stated, effective organization was demanded, and the Council of Trent met this requirement by equally uncompromising assertion of centralized authority in the Roman papacy, which, so far as the institutional life of the Church was concerned, emerged from this period of conflict stronger than ever before in its history.

If on issues of dogma and the essentials of ecclesiastical authority there was no yielding to the revolutionary spirit of the time, there was in other respects frank recognition of new needs and new agencies. If the Church was to make head against its opponents, reforms long urged by loyal churchmen must be taken seriously in hand. Especially in the face of vigorous opposition was a more adequate discipline of the clergy called for and a clerical leadership better equipped to meet the special needs of the time.

In the vital work of clerical education various agencies were developed but none of them was more effective than the new monastic order founded by Ignatius Loyola. The Society of Jesus, though probably not in its original conception designed for the combating of Protestantism, proved in fact one of the most important instruments of the Catholic reaction. If it had the centralized organization of an army, that organization was, to a far greater extent than any army, built up of highly trained individuals. Admission to the order was conditioned by the most rigorous preparation, intellectual as well as spiritual. Though every individual was subject to orders from

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<sup>1</sup>"Der Katholik wusste nun genau, was seine Religion und wer seine Gegner waren."  
M. Philipson, *West Europa in Zeitalter Philipp II, Elizabeth und Heinrich IV*, 177-178.

his superiors, there was a flexibility in the administration of discipline which made it easier for the Jesuit than for members of most medieval orders to adapt his methods to new and unforeseen situations.

In particular, Loyala gave a new emphasis to the educational function of a religious order, "as a special ministry, a special means of obtaining the end of his society—the glory of God and the salvation of souls." Besides the central college at Rome, to which were attracted some of the best Catholic scholars of Europe and which by 1584 enrolled more than 2,000 students, numerous other colleges were established, first in southern Europe, and later in the South German States, Bohemia, Hungary and the Netherlands. Not only in their own seminaries, but also in some of the universities, the Jesuits became an important educational influence.<sup>1</sup>

It would be a mistake to think of the educational work of the Jesuits simply from the point of view of religious propaganda. Its significance for the history of the theory and technique of education is generally conceded. Francis Bacon complained of superstition in the Jesuit colleges but he recognized their skill in teaching.<sup>2</sup> They had the approval in this respect, of the philosopher, Descartes; and the English historian Oscar Browning, though a sharp critic of their educational ideals, admitted that the early Jesuit teachers "gave the best education of their time."<sup>3</sup>

No less conspicuous was the work of the Society of Jesus in the cause of missions. By the end of its first decade St. Francis Xavier had found his way to India, the Malay archipelago, and Japan. In the next generation Matteo Ricci inaugurated the Jesuit missions in China and another half-century found the order active in North and South America. Other

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<sup>1</sup>R. Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education*, 86-88, 106ff, 144.

<sup>2</sup>*Advancement of Learning*, Book I (in J. M. Robertson, *Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, 50).

<sup>3</sup>*Encyclopaedia Britannica* (9th ed.), VII, 674.

orders played their parts in this heroic age of missionary expansion; but the work of the Jesuits and the new spirit of the Counter-reformation were of prime importance. This new position of missions in the life of the Church was recognized in 1622 by the founding in Rome of the Congregation of the Propaganda, charged with the supervision of Catholic missions throughout the world.

As in the case of the Jesuit schools, we must recognize in the missions of the new order a service, rendered primarily with a religious motive, which has nevertheless something more than merely ecclesiastical significance. Through the Catholic missionaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, notably in the great series of *Jesuit Relations* from Asia and America, Europe derived much of its knowledge of remote peoples and civilizations. It was largely also through Father Ricci and his successors at Peking that China learned something not only of western religion but of western civilization and western science.

In his recent *History of Modern Culture*, a non-Catholic scholar has strikingly summed up the achievements of this great agency of the Counter-reformation:<sup>1</sup>

With extraordinary zeal, they addressed themselves to the three tasks of educating youth, of evangelizing the heathen, and of beating back heresy. Nothing is more remarkable than their versatility. They preached to naked savages on the Congo and on the Amazon, and they built churches and painted pictures for the most cultivated peoples of Europe. While some of them explored Asia and the Indies, others wrote libraries of apologetics, history, moral philosophy, and poetry, or labored to reconcile science and religion, for the age of Louis XIV.

The Jesuit order then, with the Counter-reformation of which it was a prime instrument, furnishes an admirable example of the way in which an ancient system of thought, and the institutions through which it is expressed, may renew its vitality in the midst of conflict and apparent defeat—may even from these

<sup>1</sup>Preserved Smith, *Hist. of Modern Culture*, I, 363.

trials derive fresh stimulus for new and larger undertakings. Let us turn now to a situation nearer to us, both in place and time, and consider how far the sixteenth century experience of western Christendom may be paralleled in the old Puritan commonwealths of New England one hundred years ago.

It would be necessary, of course, to go back still another century, to the pioneer settlements of Massachusetts and Connecticut, to find a time when Puritanism had anything like the freedom from competition enjoyed by the medieval Church in western Europe; but well into the eighteenth century the typical New England town was one in which a single religious cult could count upon the legal and moral support of the community as a whole. There were indeed dissenting groups; but outside of a few towns, they were almost, if not quite, negligible. Furthermore, dissent, so far as it existed, rarely involved any significant departure from what may be called the common elements of Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century this situation had radically changed, without, however, any spectacular alteration in ecclesiastical institutions. The essential change which came about in the latter half of the eighteenth century was the peaceful penetration of the old established churches, particularly in eastern Massachusetts, by new modes of thinking—rationalist, deistic, liberal, or what you will. In their total result they meant a breaking away, first, from distinctively Calvinist dogmas, like the doctrine of election, but also quite as clearly from certain tenets of historic Christianity—such as original sin and the Trinity of the Godhead—regarding which most of the Protestant Reformers were in substantial agreement with the Catholic doctors of the Council of Trent.

In eastern Massachusetts and especially in that part of it which now falls within the metropolitan area of Boston, ecclesiastical control had passed largely from the clergy and laity who still accepted the Calvinism

of the Puritan pioneers into the hands of those who regarded that teaching as both antiquated and abhorrent. Occupying this position of advantage, the liberals in this part of New England had no desire to inaugurate a revolution in ecclesiastical institutions. They preferred, at first, to minimize the differences between themselves and their conservative neighbors. The situation was, of course, complicated by constitutional and statutory provisions which established close relations between Church and State. So it came about that the ultimate seceders from many of the historic churches of the old Bay Colony were not the liberals but the conservatives, who considered themselves, as they doubtless were in fact, more nearly in harmony with the principles of the founders.

This is not the place for a detailed review of the Unitarian - Trinitarian controversy, but a few of the events which brought about a definite alignment between the liberal and conservative forces must be recalled briefly.<sup>1</sup> One was the election, in 1805, of a Unitarian, Henry Ware, to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity in Harvard College. That election was, of course, only one of a series of changes which, from the point of view of the conservatives, had gradually transformed Harvard from a seminary of "sound doctrine" into an enemy stronghold. Secondly, we have to consider a series of local controversies in which conservatives and liberals contended for the choice of ministers of their respective schools of thought. In many of these cases, the communicants composing the church were outvoted by the members of the town or parish, with the result that the church property, or what in European ecclesiastical history would have been called the temporalities, passed out of the control of the actual church members. Under the terms of the

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<sup>1</sup>These developments are conveniently summarized in Williston Walker, *History of the Congregational Churches in the U. S.*, 329-347; J. H. Allen, *The Unitarians (American Church History Series, X)* chaps. VII, VIII; J. W. Platner, W. W. Fenn *et al.*, *Religious History of New England, King's Chapel Lectures*, chap. I, (Platner), II (Fenn).



existing law, as interpreted by the Massachusetts Supreme Court in the Dedham case of 1820, it has been estimated that eighty-one churches with conservative majorities were obliged to turn over their properties to minority groups. Whatever may be said on the bare issue of legal interpretation, it is now generally acknowledged that the law as thus interpreted worked serious injustice, was not in harmony with previous practice, and aroused intense resentment.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, notwithstanding the hardship involved, the orthodox element in the churches determined that the time had come for a clean-cut alignment. In one parish after another the orthodox members, often though not always constituting a majority of the church, withdrew and resigned the temporalities to their opponents. The result was that what had originally been a division between conservative and liberal elements within the churches became a permanent cleavage between two denominations.

So far, then, there is a certain, though by no means complete, analogy between this nineteenth century situation in Massachusetts and that which followed the Protestant Revolt in northern Europe. In both instances we have church edifices and other properties, historically associated with an older faith, taken over by the representatives of a new religious outlook. Doubtless the feelings with which English and German Catholics regarded the Anglican or Protestant use of ancient cathedrals and abbeys was not unlike that with which many orthodox Congregationalists of the last century looked upon those Unitarian churches which took over the old Puritan endowments. The state of mind of the orthodox party in New England, particularly as affected by the changes in Boston and Cambridge, is perhaps best expressed in a well-known

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<sup>1</sup>H. N. Dexter, *Congregationalism as Seen in Its Literature*, 619. Cf. for a recent statement from the liberal point of view, W. W. Fenn in *Religious History of New England*, pp. 106-111. For the legal aspects of the case, see E. Buck, *Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Law*, chaps. IV, V and notes.

passage in a letter written many years afterwards by Harriet Beecher Stowe:

When Dr. Beecher came to Boston, Calvinism or orthodoxy was the despised and persecuted form of faith. It was the dethroned royal family wandering like a permitted mendicant in the city where once it had held court, and Unitarianism resigned in its stead.

All the literary men of Massachusetts were Unitarian. All the trustees and professors of Harvard College were Unitarians. All the élite of wealth and fashion crowded Unitarian churches. The judges on the bench were Unitarian, giving decisions by which the peculiar features of church organization, so carefully ordained by the Pilgrim fathers, had been nullified . . . Old foundations, established by the Pilgrim fathers for the perpetuation and teaching of their own views in theology, were seized upon and appropriated to the support of opposing views."<sup>1</sup>

With due allowance for partisanship in tone and emphasis, Mrs. Stowe's statement gives a fairly accurate picture of the situation as seen by earnest upholders of the old New England tradition. The period which the writer had in mind was that in which her father, Lyman Beecher, probably the most aggressive and effective leader of the orthodox party in Boston, began his pastoral service in one of the new churches lately founded to counteract the Unitarian heresy. It is fair to say that the temper in which he confronted his opponents was not unlike that in which the Jesuit leaders of the Catholic reaction set themselves to stem the tide of Protestantism in northern Europe.

The question which I propose now to discuss is whether in the subsequent history of New England Puritanism there was anything comparable, whether in methods or results, to the sixteenth century Counter-reformation in Europe. Is the record, essentially, that of a cause already lost, of an outworn system which had lost its vitality; or is there evidence of energy renewed through conflict, of constructive achievements

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<sup>1</sup>C. Beecher, ed., *Autobiography, Correspondence, etc. of Lyman Beecher*, II, 110.

of which the historian may reasonably be asked to take notice?

To this question there have been various answers. Leaving out of account the specifically ecclesiastical historians who have dealt with the subject as inheritors, in some measure at least, of the Puritan tradition in its modernized forms, the most popular interpretation of New England history at the present time is substantially this: By the middle of the nineteenth century Puritanism was a largely spent force, persisting, if at all, only in its baser aspects. Referring to the separation of Church and State in New England during the first third of the nineteenth century, one writer tells us that this "was the outward and visible sign of a change that had long been taking place. The old Puritan theology had been dying for many a day. Unfortunately, whereas the former faith had in many cases been an effective builder of genuine strength of character the sediment that was deposited when it drained off held chiefly the dregs of some of its worst qualities . . . . The Puritan had possessed some sterling traits. His descendant became mainly Puritanical. His belief in himself as the chosen of God lingered long after the relationship had probably become repugnant to the Deity; it certainly had to the New Englander's fellow-citizens in other sections." It is admitted that New England still had something to give which "was to serve as a leaven in the educational and community life of many a western settlement in the wild days ahead"; but it is suggested that while "the more mediocre minds" believed it "incumbent on them to be missionaries," it was the representatives of the liberal revolt who counted in the expanding American society of the new generation.<sup>1</sup> That, I take it, is a prevalent view among scholars and sophisticated persons generally who have given no serious attention to ecclesiastical history, or have no special pre-

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<sup>1</sup>J. T. Adams, *Epic of America*, 158ff.

possession in favor of Puritan New England. It may be well conceded also that much of what has been quoted as to the state of Puritanism in the middle years of the nineteenth century may, with some justice, be applied to developments in more recent times. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of reason to suppose that, for the two generations following that which experienced the Unitarian-Trinitarian controversy and its immediate aftermath, Puritanism was still very much alive, that its less amiable traits were not more marked than in earlier times, and that its influence on the country at large was not less strongly felt.

For the leaders of the Puritan Counter-reformation, as for their Catholic predecessors, a prime consideration was the formulation of a platform. They could, of course, appeal to no ecclesiastical body comparable in significance with the great Ecumenical Council of the sixteenth century and there was no such generally promulgated formulary as the famous Tridentine Decrees of the Catholic Church. There was, however a definite and measurably successful effort to consolidate opinion on the orthodox side, uniting various schools of Puritan opinion—"old Calvinists," "Edwardians," "Hopkinsians," to use the almost forgotten terminology of the day—on the common ground of what was called "consistent Calvinism." One of the active promoters of this effort, Leonard Woods, later one of the first professors in Andover Theological Seminary, wrote in 1805 to his friend Jedidiah Morse of Charlestown, one of the most aggressive defenders of the older order: "If we can only get all Calvinists together, we need not fear. Hopkinsians must come down and moderate men must come up till they meet."<sup>1</sup>

Massachusetts Congregationalism had no controlling organization, for its cardinal principle was the autonomy of the local congregation; but as the

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<sup>1</sup>Letter in L. Woods, *History of the Andover Theological Seminary*, 456.

Unitarian movement developed, a General Association was formed which offered a rallying point for those who held to the dogmatic positions of the Westminster divines. About forty years later, the expansion of Congregationalism outside of New England and the formation of several new state associations led to the meeting at Albany, in 1852, of "the first council or synod representative of American Congregationalism as a whole since the Cambridge synod of 1646-1648." This Albany meeting brought together representatives of the old New England polity from churches in seventeen states.<sup>1</sup>

If there was no central authority capable of imposing a single dogmatic statement upon widely distributed congregations, the New England Counter-reformation was extremely successful for a time in forming new instruments for the defence of the "faith once delivered to the saints." One important step in this direction was the establishment of publications, of which the most important, perhaps, was the *Panoplist*, first issued at Boston in 1805 by "an Association of Friends to Evangelical Truth"; there were subscription agencies in other New England states, in New York, Philadelphia, and even Alexandria, Virginia.<sup>2</sup> With a view to further concentration of forces this periodical took over in 1808 an older organ and became the *Panoplist and Missionary Magazine*. While providing general religious intelligence, its prime function was to uphold the standards of Puritan orthodoxy. Deploring the tendencies of the time which led men, if they professed the Christian religion at all, to accept it only "in a form adapted to their vitiated tastes," "combining the service of God and Mammon," the *Panoplist* declared its unflinching adherence to "the Doctrines of the Reformation," as recognized "in the great body of the New England churches." "These,"

<sup>1</sup>Walker, *Hist. of the Cong. Churches*, 332ff, 381ff; Dexter, *Congregationalism as Seen in its Literature*, 515, 516.

<sup>2</sup>*The Panoplist*, vol. I (Boston, 1806).

continued the editors, "constituted the religious faith of our venerable forefathers, and by the editors are embraced, as the truths of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Nothing manifestly inconsistent with these doctrines can ever be admitted to the *Panoplist*."<sup>1</sup> So far as these editors could do it single-handed, here was a new *Index Expurgatorius*, in the spirit, if not the form, of that well-known Roman institution.

It was an article in the *Panoplist*, reviewing an English account of New England Unitarianism, which perhaps did more than any other single publication to consolidate orthodox opinion and bring about a definite alignment between Trinitarian and Unitarian churches. The writer agreed with the more outspoken radical leaders that it was impossible for persons holding "doctrines so diametrically opposite" to be "fellow-worshippers in the same temple." The time had come when the liberals should at least "permit the orthodox to come out and be separate."<sup>2</sup>

One of the most striking correspondences between the Catholic and the Puritan Counter-reformations was a new interest in the training of the clergy. The establishment of diocesan seminaries was one of the significant outcomes of the Council of Trent and, as already noted, the Jesuit order made a unique contribution in this field—training up generations of clergy who could use the pulpit, the classroom, and the printing press with new efficiency to defend the ancient faith against its antagonists. The recognition of a similar need was one of the outstanding features of the nineteenth-century Puritan revival.

In New England and in the country at large there had been as yet no effective provision for the professional training of ministers. There were professors of divinity at Harvard and Yale; and in all the New England colleges the training of religious leaders had been accepted as a primary obligation. From time to

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<sup>1</sup>*The Panoplist*, vol. I, "Preface."

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* XI. 265.

time also an outstanding personality like Timothy Dwight was able to exert a powerful influence on the thinking of young men who became leaders of their generation in Church and State. Generally speaking, however, there was no systematic program of professional training as distinguished from the religious instruction offered to the student body as a whole. Such teaching as the colleges failed to supply was provided, much as in the case of prospective doctors and lawyers, by the private instruction of older members of the profession, some of whom gathered about them a substantial number of pupils. To meet the new situation, however, a more extended and more systematic curriculum was required, and an institutional life in which young men of common aims could be brought together, subjected to suitable intellectual as well as spiritual influences, and equipped for the common task before them. The election of a Unitarian to the divinity professorship in the oldest of the New England colleges served to bring this movement to a head. Much correspondence had to take place and a difficult process of adjustment between conflicting interests and points of view before a real theological seminary was at last set up at Andover in 1808; once established, however, it set a new standard in professional education.<sup>1</sup> Judged on the basis of skillful adaptation to the specific purposes for which it was intended, this instruction was, and probably continued to be for some years, superior to that which was then provided for students in other so-called learned professions.

To the founders of this new seminary, as to the directors of the Jesuit colleges three centuries before, the thorough indoctrination of young men in accordance with historic standards of faith seemed a vital matter. For the Jesuits, the standard was set by the decrees of church councils from the Council of Nicaea

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<sup>1</sup>The correspondence on this subject, 1805-1808, is in L. Woods, *Hist. of Andover Theological Seminary*, Appendix.

to that of Trent. The Andover group went back to a dogmatic formula of the seventeenth century—the “Shorter Catechism” of the Westminster Assembly, interpreted and elaborated in a longer doctrinal statement called the “Associates Creed,” which had to be subscribed to by professors on their inauguration and thereafter at five-year intervals. These standards they must defend “in opposition not only to atheists and infidels, but to Jews, Papists, Mahometans, Arians, Pelagians, Antinomians, Arminians, Socinians, Sabellians, Unitarians and Universalists, and to all heresies and errors, antient or modern, which may be opposed to the Gospel of Christ or hazardous to the souls of men.” Curiously enough, however, from a twentieth century point of view, this minute exposition of theological subtleties was supposed, while effectively excluding all the above-mentioned heresies, to be sufficiently comprehensive to furnish a kind of *via media* for at least three doctrinal schools, whose adherents might nevertheless be accepted as “consistent Calvinists.”<sup>1</sup>

It would perhaps be far fetched to compare the regimen to which the New England seminary student was subjected with the “spiritual exercises” of the Society of Jesus; and yet the two disciplines had something in common. Leonard Woods wrote of himself and his colleagues in the Seminary that “while we attached high importance to literary acquisitions, we gave a still higher place to *spiritual improvement*.” All public lectures were to “be preceded and followed by prayer” and the Sunday sermons were to be “devout, practical, doctrinal and pungent, rather than speculative and metaphysical.”<sup>2</sup> Of interest also in relation to the more emotional aspects of religion was the stress laid on “a true taste for genuine church music.” Students who had “tolerable voices” were to be “duly instructed in the theory and practice of

<sup>1</sup>These doctrinal statements are printed in L. Woods, *Hist. of Andover Theological Seminary*, 247ff, 257ff, 260.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 163, 260.



this celestial art."<sup>1</sup> It would be a mistake, however, as in the case of the better Jesuit institutions, to underrate the scholarly quality of the education provided by the Seminary. The students were expected to be, and to a considerable extent were, a carefully selected group, normally college graduates; after a period of probation, they were expected to pledge themselves so far as circumstances permitted to continue their course over a three-year period.<sup>2</sup> The faculty during the next half-century included some vigorous personalities, capable of much more than routine classroom work.

Perhaps the most significant of the early teachers in a scholarly sense was Moses Stuart. Beginning with a very moderate equipment, he became one of the notable promoters of Hebrew scholarship in this country and a pioneer in the study of contemporary German theology. Though Stuart and his colleague Woods, the Abbot Professor of Christian Theology, took an important part in the literary controversy with the Unitarian party, Stuart especially had a reputation for encouraging free discussion in his classes. Indeed complaints were made that the Seminary did not sufficiently protect its students against unsafe ideas from Germany or elsewhere; instead they were introduced to "lax and infidel writers." Stuart, however, maintained that it was "a very mistaken prudence" which made "an *Index Expurgatorius* to a Library for the use of theological students." Such a library should not consist "only of those books the sentiments of which are approved." One of the best known college presidents of the middle nineteenth century, President Wayland of Brown University, though not himself a member of the denomination to which the Andover faculty belonged, emphasized the substantial contribution made by the Seminary to the improvement of classical scholarship in New England, through

<sup>1</sup>L. Woods, *Hist. of Andover Theological Seminary*, 243.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 136-139, 242.

the maintenance of exacting standards in the Seminary and through graduates who were appointed to chairs in the colleges.<sup>1</sup>

The old seminary has experienced many vicissitudes in recent years, but for more than half a century it justified the expectations of its founders. Within the first four decades of its history it sent out more than fifteen hundred students and the geographical distribution of these graduates was even more striking. At the semi-centennial anniversary of the institution, in 1858, it was pointed out that of the alumni who had closed their careers up to that time, a large majority were born in New England, but considerably less than half had remained there. The majority had gone out to service in the West and in the foreign fields of Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Islands.<sup>2</sup> The Andover idea of professional instruction in theology was rapidly taken up elsewhere. Harvard developed its professorship of divinity into a divinity school. Yale, with its orthodox constituency in Connecticut and western Massachusetts, took the same course, and its new school of theology came to rival Andover as a prime agency of the Puritan revival, especially in New York and the western states. Meantime, other independent seminaries were set up in New England at Bangor and Hartford—the latter by a group for whom Yale was not sufficiently conservative. This is not the place for a detailed account of the seminary movement outside of New England; but it can at least be said that the development of systematized professional training for the ministry was one of the notable products of this Puritan Counter-reformation.

Again, as in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ecclesiastical conflicts produced results of some significance for the history of education generally. Except

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<sup>1</sup>Platner et al., *Religious History of New England*, 72; addresses of Wayland and Braman in *Memorial of the Semi-Centennial* (Andover, 1859); Greene, *New Englander in Japan*, 9. Cf. W. Walker, "Leonard Woods," in his *Ten New England Leaders*.

<sup>2</sup>*Memorial of the Semi-Centennial*, 8, 241.

at Harvard, orthodoxy continued to dominate New England higher education. Yale, under the leadership of Timothy Dwight, had established its position in this respect and clergymen of the conservative school continued to hold the presidency in the New England colleges generally. When Williams College had a vacancy in 1821, it chose to fill it, Edward D. Griffin, one of the most strenuous of Calvinistic orators, a former professor at Andover, and pastor of the most aggressively orthodox church in Boston.<sup>1</sup> The theology of his distinguished successor, Mark Hopkins, was of a less rigid type; but it was still an essentially Puritan philosophy of life which his powerful personality impressed upon succeeding generations of Williams students; for the last thirty years of his life Hopkins was president of the American Board. Dartmouth was presided over for a generation by an Andover graduate of 1815, the redoubtable Nathan Lord, whose final retirement in 1863 was due not to his conservative theology, but to his persistent advocacy, even during the Civil War, of moderate principles on the slavery issue. President Wayland of Brown, whose presidency coincided nearly with that of Lord, was the head of a preponderantly Baptist institution; but he had spent a year at Andover and in 1858, at the semicentennial anniversary of the seminary, he paid a notable tribute to Moses Stuart, his old teacher of Biblical exegesis. Besides clinching its hold on most of the older colleges, the Puritan reaction was a definite factor in the establishment of a new and aggressively orthodox institution at Amherst. From its foundation in 1821 until the Civil War, religious teaching of this kind prevailed, in the new colleges, revivals were a conspicuous feature of college life, and a large proportion of its graduates entered the orthodox ministry.<sup>2</sup> It can hardly be said that any of these New England

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<sup>1</sup>G. H. Genzmer in *Dictionary of American Biography*, VII, 619-620; Woods, *Andover Theological Seminary*, 147ff.

<sup>2</sup>W. S. Tyler, *Amherst College*, especially chaps. I-IV, XIII, XIV.

institutions contributed largely to educational theory; but the traditional conception of the college as an institution in which intellectual discipline should be combined with the inculcation of a definitely religious outlook on life was perhaps never more intelligently and more effectively carried out in this country than by the generation of college men who came under the influence of Mark Hopkins and his contemporaries.

This is not the place for recalling details of denominational history; but evidences of the continued vitality of the Puritan tradition through the middle decades of the nineteenth century are readily available for any historian who cares to look for them. A striking illustration may be found in the ecclesiastical experience of Boston. By 1810, all but two of the sixteen historic Puritan churches within the present municipal limits of Boston had become Unitarian, leaving only the Old South Church and the First Church of Charlestown, presided over by the indefatigable and pugnacious Jedidiah Morse. Already, however, the reaction was at work. In 1809, Park Street Church, on "Brimstone Corner," was formed, not only to become the chief center of orthodoxy in Boston, but also to be closely associated with the expansionist enterprises of this new "counter-reformation." The Park Street organization was followed in rapid succession by others of the same school. Between 1808 and 1861, a little more than half a century, the Puritan tradition had given sufficient evidence of vitality in this stronghold of liberalism to establish thirty-five new churches.<sup>1</sup> Statistics have a certain value; but they leave out another important part of the story, which has been fully recognized by distinguished writers of the liberal school.

A few years ago Professor Fenn of the Harvard Divinity School pointed out in a lecture at Kings Chapel two important facts about these ecclesiastical

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<sup>1</sup>See table in Winsor, *Memorial History of Boston*, III, 415-420.

divisions of a century ago.<sup>1</sup> In the first place, the direct tangible influence of the Unitarian movement was confined mainly to eastern Massachusetts and a small area to the northward, leaving Connecticut and the back-country of Massachusetts very little affected. Secondly, this situation in the country had an important influence on Boston itself. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the city population was being rapidly recruited from the rural areas, which contributed a vigorous stock of young men and women. Partly because of the environment from which they had come, partly because the constituency of the liberal churches combined with its new theology a prevailingly conservative outlook on political and social issues, the newcomers, so far as they had religious interests at all, tended to gravitate toward the newer churches which had developed in the Puritan revival. There they found preaching by vigorous personalities, an effective use of church music, and a less rigid social tradition. No one realized this aspect of the development more clearly than the radical spokesman, Theodore Parker, who criticised the liberal churches for failing to draw in the newcomers and serve their social needs. "Common policy," he wrote, "would suggest that course not less than a refined humanity. But they did no such thing. They were aristocratic and exclusive in their tastes, not democratic and inclusive. So they shoved off these young country fellows, and now rejoice in their very respectable but very little congregations . . . A church of old men goes to its grave, one of young men goes to its work."<sup>2</sup> Professor Fenn says much the same thing in different language: "The Unitarians were the cult of the arrived, but in orthodox churches filled with vigorous ambitious progressive youth from the countryside there was the worship of pilgrims."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Platner, Fenn et al., *Religious History of New England*, 112, 113.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by Fenn, *ibid.*, 112.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

Deprived of ancient endowments, and legally at a disadvantage under the decisions of the courts, the orthodox element lost interest in the old church-state relation and came to realize the superior vitality of institutions which relied upon voluntary effort. In this spirit Lyman Beecher, who had at first regarded disestablishment as a calamity, came to regard it as the best thing that could have happened in the interests of the churches themselves.<sup>1</sup>

There is no purpose here to discuss the relative merits of opposing theological systems, or even to disguise the fact that the so-called "New England theology" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has had its day and ceased to be. It is obvious also that in point of intellectual and literary distinction, there was little in the output of the Puritan revival at all comparable with that of the liberal movement. What I have wished to emphasize, so far as New England is concerned, is, first, that while the old tradition had during the first half of the nineteenth century largely lost its hold upon the social and intellectual élite—or in the language of the present day, in the comparatively sophisticated circles—of eastern Massachusetts, it retained much of its vitality elsewhere. It was indeed stirred for a time to new energy by opposition and continued to be an influential factor in the life of the countryside, in the towns which were constantly being recruited from the country, and in the colleges.

After all, however, as our present-day historians ought to realize more clearly than they do, the New England of the middle and later nineteenth century, the influence of its characteristic ideas during that period, is to be sought less in a small geographical area in the northeastern corner of these United States, than in the greater New England which came into

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<sup>1</sup>C. Beecher, *Autobiography, etc. of Lyman Beecher*, I, 344. Cf. J. C. Meyer, *Church and State in Massachusetts*, chap. VIII; A. B. Darling, *Political Changes in Massachusetts*, 38, 86, 87.

being west of the Hudson River. This New England dispersion is, of course, a familiar subject duly recognized by Professor Turner and his successors among the historians of the West; but there are two aspects of that dispersion which have received less attention, or been insufficiently emphasized.

There is, first, a significant relation, not merely a coincidence in time, between that migration and the Counter-reformation which we have been considering. Large-scale New England emigration into northern New York began at the turn of the century, when the revolt against Calvinism was becoming formidable; and the subsequent mass movement of the Yankees into the "Old Northwest" came when the division between liberal and orthodox elements had hardened into a definite cleavage between two denominations. The areas, however, from which most of the New England settlers came were those in which the older tradition had not only prevailed but had taken on fresh vigor. It is doubtless true that western Puritanism developed a greater emphasis on the practical aspects of religion as distinguished from speculative theology; but its adherents were much less involved than were the New England Trinitarians themselves in the later evolution of what came to be known as "liberal orthodoxy" as illustrated, for example, in the teaching of Horace Bushnell. In short, it was the spirit of the Puritan revival which found expression in most of the Congregational and Puritan churches of the Old Northwest. Their ministers were largely graduates of the orthodox New England colleges, trained in the seminaries at Andover and New Haven, or later to some extent in western institutions founded by New England graduates of the older seminaries.

A second fact of importance in this western phase of New England Puritanism is the continuing relationship, and interaction, between the parent communities and their offshoots in the West. Such an institution, for example, as Illinois College was not only founded

by Yale graduates, the so-called "Yale Band," but continued to rely for sympathetic interest and financial support upon eastern friends. Its first president was a son of Lyman Beecher and had himself been pastor of one of the new Boston churches before going to the West.<sup>1</sup> The progress of religion and education in the West was reported to the headquarters of New England societies and duly recorded in official publications for the perusal of past and prospective donors. Yale and Andover kept up their interest in western matters. In 1843 nine seminary students at Andover were stirred to emulation of what their predecessors had done and formed the Iowa Band whose activities did much to shape the educational, as well as religious development of that State. When the seminary celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1858, interest in this western sphere of influence was a striking feature of the occasion.<sup>2</sup> Again, as Williston Walker has pointed out, it was to a considerable extent the desire of the transplanted New Englanders to strengthen the corporate spirit of the Congregational churches which led in 1852 to the Albany Convention of that denomination, the first general meeting of its kind since the Cambridge synod of 1646. Clearly then, western Puritanism not only looked back to New England for its origins but continued in vital contact with it.<sup>3</sup>

In the West, as well as in the East, the significance of the Puritan revival for education, and notably for higher education, must be stressed. Yale and Dartmouth, Amherst and Williams, in the East, served their graduates as models for the new institutions which they founded in the West. Western Reserve and Oberlin in Ohio, Wabash College in Indiana, Illinois College in Illinois, Beloit in Wisconsin, Iowa

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<sup>1</sup>C. H. Rammelkamp, *Illinois College*, chaps. I-IV. Cf. Turner, *Frontier in American History*, 36, 354.

<sup>2</sup>Walker, *The Congregational Churches*, 374; *Memorial of the Semi-Centennial*, 33ff; 57ff.

<sup>3</sup>Dexter, *Congregationalism as Seen in Its Literature*, 515-516; Walker, 371, 384.



College at Grinnell, and Carleton College in Minnesota—all illustrate the extension to the West of the New England tradition in education. During the formative years, Andover Theological Seminary supplied college presidents to Marietta and Western Reserve in Ohio, to Illinois College at Jacksonville, to Wabash in Indiana. It was estimated, that, by 1858, Andover had trained an average of two professors for each of nineteen institutions of higher education in the West and Southwest.<sup>1</sup>

The present leadership of the state universities in the Mississippi Valley should not be allowed to obscure the large part taken by men of Puritan training in the general educational development of their respective states. Professor Caleb Mills of Wabash College, a Dartmouth and Andover graduate, led in the fight for a free school system in Indiana, and after it was established by the legislature became state superintendent.<sup>2</sup> John D. Pierce, a New Hampshire boy who, after graduation from Brown under Francis Wayland, became a Congregational minister and later a Presbyterian home missionary, is credited with a leading part in the inauguration of the Michigan educational system, becoming its first state superintendent.<sup>3</sup> Calvin E. Stowe, Andover Seminary graduate and professor, son-in-law of Lyman Beecher and his colleague at Lane Theological Seminary, went abroad as an agent of the Ohio legislature to study German education, and made a report which had a marked influence on the development of the common school system in that state. It is an interesting evidence of early concern with transatlantic scholarship, that in his student years at Andover and under

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<sup>1</sup>*Mem. of Semi-Cent.*, 60-62.

<sup>2</sup>L. K. Matthews, *Expansion of New England*, 204-205; *Andover Theol. Sem., Gen. Cat.*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 232; McLaughlin, *Higher Education in Michigan* (U. S. Bureau of Education, *Circular of Information* No. 4, 1891), 35-37, 99-100; Brown University, *Historical Catalogue*.

the influence of Moses Stuart, Stowe translated a German work on Hebrew history; this translation was published first in Andover and later in London.<sup>1</sup> In Illinois, the faculty of the Yankee home missionary college at Jacksonville became the centre of an enthusiastic and effective propaganda for the establishment of common schools. It was there and under the active leadership of members of the college faculty that the Illinois Teachers Association was formed. Five years after the state passed its first effective school law, Newton Bateman, a graduate of Illinois College and of Lane Theological Seminary in the period of Beecher's presidency, became State Superintendent of Public Instruction.<sup>2</sup> In short, there was a close and important relation between the Puritan revival of the early nineteenth century and the educational progress of the Middle West.

Finally, let us consider briefly what is perhaps the most striking parallel between the Catholic Counter-reformation and its Puritan analogue in the nineteenth century, namely, its association with missionary propaganda on a world-wide scale. It would, of course, be a mistake in dealing with the foreign missionary enterprises of Protestant Christianity during the past century and a half to overstress the special role of New England Puritanism. The early issues of the *Panoplist* magazine show clearly the interest which New Englanders were taking in the Moravian missions among West Indian negroes, American Indians, and Hottentots. Recurring items in the same magazine, under the head of "Religious Intelligence," show that the editors were keeping their readers informed about the work of the British missionary organizations which

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<sup>1</sup>Channing, *History of the United States*, V, 246-247; J. Jahn, *Hist. of the Hebrew Commonwealth* (tr. C. E. Stowe, Andover, 1828; 3d ed., London, 1840). Stowe's report to the Ohio legislature was reprinted by order of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives (1838).

<sup>2</sup>C. P. Kofoid, "Puritan Influences in the Formative Years of Illinois History" (in Ill. State Hist. Soc., *Transactions*, 1905), 332-338.

had come into existence at the close of the eighteenth century. It is quite certain, however, that the process by which a general interest in missions developed into effective action was closely associated with other aspects of the Puritan revival. It was from colleges under the influence of that revival that the earliest missionaries were recruited. The same group of men who were active in such publications as the *Panoplist*, who served as ministers or laymen in the new orthodox churches of Boston, who were associated with the beginnings of Andover Theological Seminary, and supported home missionary enterprises in the West, were also the promoters of the foreign missionary movement.<sup>1</sup>

The American Board came into existence in 1810 as a creation of the General Association of Massachusetts. The immediate occasion, however, of this formal action was an appeal for advice from young men, then students at Andover, who felt themselves called to missionary service but were at a loss as to the next step. After the students had been heard, the Association proceeded to constitute *The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, charged with the responsibility of "devising ways and means, and adopting and prosecuting measures, for promoting the spread of the gospel in heathen lands." The personnel of the Board as originally constituted included five ministers, with four laymen; and the association of all these men with movements already mentioned is of interest. Of the five clergymen, Timothy Dwight, who as president of Yale had made that institution one of the prime agencies for the maintenance of orthodox Puritanism, was also a member of the first Board of Visitors of Andover Theological Seminary. A second, Samuel Spring, was a prime mover in the

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<sup>1</sup>An interesting picture of this group, from the point of view of an orthodox partisan, may be found in S. M. Worcester, *Life and Labors of Rev. Samuel Worcester* (2 vols. Boston, 1852).

founding of that seminary; and a third, Samuel Worcester, a Dartmouth graduate, had lost his pastorate in a Massachusetts country town because of his uncompromising Calvinism. Of the three laymen, one was Governor Treadwell of Connecticut; a second was Jedidiah Huntington of Revolutionary fame; a third, William Bartlett, was one of the founders and chief benefactors of Andover Seminary. Shortly afterwards another layman, Jeremiah Evarts, who had come from Connecticut to edit the *Panoplist*, became treasurer of the Board, and subsequently, as secretary, was for a time probably its most influential officer.<sup>1</sup>

This is not the place for a history of missionary organization. What is significant for our purposes is the obvious fact that a system of thought so commonly represented as dead or dying managed to display for the lifetime of three generations a quite extraordinary energy. The new Board, chartered by the Massachusetts legislature in 1812, in the face of some opposition at the time to sending good American money abroad, was within thirty years from that date spending more than a quarter of a million dollars in its various operations. By 1841, there were eighty-six mission stations. In Asia they ranged from the Turkish Empire and Persia, through India and Ceylon, to Siam, and China. In the Pacific, the Hawaiian mission was securely established and fast becoming the dominant influence in the islands. A beginning had also been made in Africa on the West Coast and among the Zulus of South Africa. Under the auspices of the new board, earlier missions among the Indians of western Massachusetts and New York were extended to the tribes of the South and West, and finally to the Oregon country.<sup>2</sup>

In this, as in earlier parts of this paper, there is no

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<sup>1</sup>J. Tracy, *History of the American Board of Missions*, chaps. II, III and passim; Walker, *Congregational Churches*, 324.

<sup>2</sup>Tracy, *American Board*: W. E. Strong, *Story of the American Board*.

question of the merits or demerits of the Puritan type of Christianity as presented to geographically and culturally remote peoples, of the wisdom or unwisdom of these early efforts to carry the ideas of Protestant Christendom, whether to races with ancient and highly developed cultures, as in India and China, or to more primitive societies, as in Hawaii and Africa. What can be shown is that the impulse of foreign missions in this case, as in that of the Jesuits, carried to remote parts of the world some of the most vigorous material which came out of the New England colleges and seminaries. The missionary adventure often made heavy demands on those who engaged in it, especially in these early years—the mastery of difficult languages, the reduction of spoken languages to writing, delicate negotiations with suspicious peoples and governments, the inauguration of educational systems, and the communication in some degree of western medical science and the practical arts. All these things, quite aside from the primary purpose of conveying a message not easily understandable by men of alien traditions, called for more than ordinary force and intelligence. If, as even the friends of missions will concede, the representatives of Protestant Christendom have often proved unequal to such tasks, there have been others who, like their Catholic predecessors, have displayed remarkable versatility in dealing with highly complicated problems. Whatever their errors or failures, no proper history of modern international relations or of the interaction of eastern and western cultures can be adequately written without including in it some record of this New England activity overseas, under the stimulus of the Puritan revival.

The serious study of this aspect of New England history still suffers from something like the old-fashioned distinction between “sacred” and “profane” history. Much of what has hitherto been written on the subject has had too much the character

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