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It is common to view the Puritan experience in America during the first decades of the Massachusetts Bay colony in terms of the Puritans' "Americanization" of their adjustment to the unique conditions of the New World and the beginning of their transformation "from Puritan to Yankee." Considerably less attention has been given to the relationship between their holy experiment in America and the Puritan movement in England, especially during the period of the Puritan Revolution. Particularly important in this regard is the orthodox Puritans' quest to preserve order and authority within the confines of the Christian commonwealth they were trying to establish in both old and New England during the 1640s. Since this search for order and authority was inextricably intertwined with the issues of religious liberty and toleration, this study seeks to explore some of the dimensions of the orthodox Puritans' struggle to maintain religious unity and conformity in both England and New England.

In 1642, in the midst of the political controversies between the Long Parliament and the Crown and on the eve of the English Civil War, Charles I noted that the Puritans' aim was to create "a new Utopia of religion and government into which they endeavor to transform this Kingdom." But if in 1642 Puritans appeared to be united, in 1649, on the very day on which the king was hanged, the royalist author of Eikon Basilike wrote of them:

That the builders of Babel should from division fall to confusion is no wonder; but for those that pretend to build Jerusalem to divide their tongues and hands is but ill omen and sounds too like the fury of those zealots whose intestine bit-

terness and divisions were the greatest occasion of the last fatal destruction of that city.  

This assessment of the ill effects of the profound divisions among the Puritans was not too far from what even a Puritan divine like Richard Baxter felt. Writing for “the true information of posterity,” Baxter lamented that:

God did so wonderfully bless the labor of his unanimous faithful ministers that had it not been for the faction of the Prelatists on one side that drew men off, and the factions of the giddy and turbulent sectaries on the other side . . . England had been like in a quarter of an age to have become a land of saints and pattern of holiness to all the world, and the unmatchable paradise of the earth. Never were such fair opportunities to sanctify a nation lost and trodden under-foot as have been in this land of late. Woe be to them that were the cause of it!  

Despite all their differences, the royalist and the Puritan divine both understood that something had gone wrong in England. By the late 1640s, Puritanism as a millennial movement aiming to create a new heaven and earth had failed to fulfill its own utopian aspirations.

The failure was grounded upon the fact that the Puritan dream of order, the New Jerusalem, had been turned upside down. “Utopian thought,” wrote George Kateb, “is dominated by a rage of order. A strong utopian impetus is to save the world from as much of its confusion and disorder as possible. Utopia is a dream of order, of quiet and calm. Its background is the nightmare of history.”  

Millennial expectations are grounded essentially upon utopian visions, and utopian thought is an indispensable element in the pursuit of the millennium—the flight from disorder and the establishment of the heavenly city upon earth. This close association between utopian thought, with its essential impulse for order, and millennial expectations is important to an understanding of Puritan activities in England and New England between 1640 and 1660. For during this time orthodox Puritans were engaged in a fierce battle against sects and heresies to preserve order and authority in the Christian commonwealth they sought to establish in both old and New England. This common struggle of orthodox Puritans on both sides of the ocean reveals, more than anything else, a need to reconsider Puritanism. Puritanism needs to be seen less as a revolutionary movement whose aim was to destroy existing established order and more as a conservative religious movement designed to secure its own utopian vision of order and authority by

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enforcing unity and conformity in religious affairs, and by rejecting any plea for liberty of conscience and religious toleration.

Events in England during the so-called Puritan Revolution could hardly be described in terms of order or authority. The great historian of the late nineteenth century, Samuel R. Gardiner, coined the term "the Puritan Revolution" and argued that "a Revolution" such as the Puritan revolution should be "an object of study . . . because it reveals more clearly than smaller changes the law of human progress." The historical development of a nation, according to Gardiner, stemmed from the struggle between "the conservatism of habit" and the goals of revolutionaries who "have bent themselves to sweep away the hindrances which bar the path of political progress." From Gardiner on, historians have associated the changes England underwent in these years with a struggle for "progress," "liberty," and "freedom." And because the main forces in England at that time were the Puritans, the terms "Puritanism and Liberty" have been so closely associated that the whole period has come to be seen as "the revolution of the saints." The radical impulse of the Puritans has seemed incompatible with the traditional social and political system, and the saints have finally emerged, in Michael Walzer's words, as "the first of those self-disciplined agents" of revolution in the modern world whose "primary task was the destruction of traditional order." The major fault with this interpretation is that Puritans in England hardly, if at all, thought of themselves in such terms. The Puritans rather, to use their own words, attacked "innovations" and tried to preserve the traditional order they thought Archbishop Laud and others had changed by their policies. Moreover, no one during the seventeenth century described the events in England during the 1640s and 1650s as the "Puritan revolution." Those who did use the term "revolution" implied something quite different from present usage.

According to Vernon F. Snow in his important article, "The Concept of Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England," the "scientific usage" or astronomical concept of revolution as "the periodic return of a moving object (or person) to the point of origins" had been the dominant concept during that time. In 1605, for example, the historian William Camden wrote, "All things runne round: and as the season of the year; so men's manners have their revolution." And while some contemporaries in England described the events between 1640 and 1660 as a revolution, no one called them "the Puritan revolution." Therefore, concluded Snow, in the late seventeenth century,

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the term *revolution* possessed diverse political connotations. To all who used the word it denoted change, generally sudden, and to most it signified completed circular movement. To all the concept of revolution was compatible with cyclical (in contrast to the linear) interpretation of political history . . . which still dominated most political thought. 7

Snow's distinction between two modes of historical interpretation, the cyclical and the linear, is important because it points directly to the fact that the Puritans carried on their revolution in the name of tradition and with the goal of preserving traditional society. Above all, this distinction shows that revolution in seventeenth-century England was associated with a return "to the point of origins" and is not congruent with the concept of "progress" that has dominated our modern, linear interpretation of history. The cyclical interpretation of time, it should be stressed, did not contradict millennial expectations, for in the millennium the whole circular movement of time and history was to cease and the whole mystery of time was to be solved.

Snow's finding that the prevailing interpretation of history in seventeenth-century England was cyclical points to two important conceptions or styles of historical consciousness. "It would be necessary to confront 'historical man' (modern man)," wrote Mircea Eliade in *Cosmos and History, the Myth of the Eternal Return*,

who consciously and voluntarily creates history, with the man of traditional civilizations, who . . . had a negative attitude toward history. Whether he abolishes it periodically, whether he devalues it by perpetually finding transhistorical models and archetypes for it, whether, finally, he gives it a metahistorical meaning (cyclical theory, eschatological signification, and so on), the man of the traditional civilizations accorded the historical event no value in itself; in other words; he did not regard it as a special category of his own mode of existence. 8

The essential difference between the cyclical conception and the linear notion of the "historical man" is that the former considers history as repetitive and regards its meaning as transcendental, while the latter conceives history and time in terms of progress or development, so that the meaning of history is imminent in time. In the former, the meaning of tradition is not as negative as it is in the modern view; tradition is rather the point of origins which time, in its circular movement, approaches.

As applied to the Puritan movement, the positive concept of tradition, the ends to which time and history lead, strongly suggests that the role of the revolutionary saints in England was less revolutionary and rather more traditional and that their actions were less "the politics of wreckers," 9 as Walzer has argued, than those of traditionalists who, in

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their words, wanted to abolish "innovations." The preservation of tradition and not the achievement of "progress" guided the Puritans and motivated their actions. Only in these terms can one explain the fact that the Puritans had no scheme of planned revolution and were emphatically not ideologists of revolution. The Puritan aim was to reform the Church of England, not to abolish it, to restrain the king's prerogative powers, not to execute him, and if at the end of the whole structure of the Church of England ceased to exist and the king was hanged, these results had nothing to do with a revolutionary plan. They were merely the outcome of inner struggles within the Puritan movement, consequences considered as evil by the majority of Puritans in England.

Puritan Massachusetts' relationship with England, especially during the 1640s, should be considered in the light of the above discussion. Led by millennial expectations, the Puritan emigrants who came to America during the 1630s had no other place but the wilderness in which to prepare for the Kingdom of God by establishing visible churches and a godly society. However, the majority of Puritans in England preferred to remain behind, and their millennial expectations were focused on reforming England and the Church of England. Thus, until the 1640s, millennial expectations led Puritans on both sides of the ocean to utilize very different social and ecclesiastical means. While the majority of English Puritans associated the pursuit of the millennium with reforming the whole Church of England, the Puritan emigrants who established the colony of Massachusetts thought it essential to establish visible congregations and were stymied in their efforts by the failure of godly magistrates in England to initiate reformation there. After events of the 1640s had radically changed the situation in England and Puritans had laid the foundation of the Christian commonwealth there, they found the main obstacle to their utopian visions of order and authority

lay in the spread of the sects and heresy. Thus, in spite of their ecclesiastical and theological differences, orthodox Puritans in England and New England were united during the 1640s in a fierce battle against the sectarians with their plea for religious toleration and liberty of conscience. What follows will show that in their determination to preserve order and authority, Puritans in England and New England stood upon common ground. Orthodoxy existed on both sides of the Atlantic, and not just in Massachusetts, as a peculiar feature of American Puritanism.

II

In an age in which religion was the affair of the whole community and at a time when people believed that only one form of religion could be true, insistence upon absolute unanimity in faith and practice and the assumption that some sovereign authority had to have coercive power to suppress heresy and defend the true faith were natural. Thus, in England and New England during the 1640s, Puritans looked to the godly magistrate to maintain uniformity within religious society and to sustain the Christian commonwealth against heresy and the multitude of evils arising out of sectarianism. This was the essence of Puritan orthodoxy. From its beginnings, Massachusetts had advocated the decisive role of the godly magistrate in religious matters, while in England, with the fall of Archbishop Laud in 1640, Puritans finally gained the opportunity to realize their premises of order and authority in church and state through the godly magistrates sitting in the Long Parliament. In the 1640s, then, on both sides of the ocean Puritans were engaged in establishing the foundation of a Christian commonwealth, and in this enterprise they found themselves united in their battle against heresy. They found themselves allied because the sectarians, in order to make room for themselves in England during the 1640s, stressed the necessity of separating church and state and refused to admit that godly magistrates should have power in religious matters over men's consciences. They thereby challenged the very essence of Puritan orthodoxy. In this context of the holy struggle against the sects and heresy, Puritans on both sides of the ocean attempted to overlook their internal differences and to constitute a united front whose main aim was to exclude sectarianism from the Christian commonwealth in old and New England. Before dealing with the Puritan struggle against religious toleration, however, it is first necessary to explore the Puritan "rage for order" in England during the early 1640s.

When Thomas Hobbes tried to explain in Behemoth the causes of the Civil War in England, he wrote that one of them was that people in England had been "so corrupted" by "ministers, as they call themselves, of Christ," who "in their sermons to the people" pretended "to have a right from God to govern every one his parish, and their assembly the
whole nation." Hobbes, no doubt, exaggerated the Puritan ministers' intentions. On the other hand, he captured the crucial importance of Puritan sermons during that time. For years the sermon served an essential role in the Puritan movement in England, and it was only natural that when the Long Parliament assembled in November 1640, it invited Puritan ministers to preach before both Houses of Parliament on many occasions. The "fast sermons to Parliament" became a regular event during the 1640s, and many Puritan ministers used their sermons to reveal the godly magistrates of Parliament their expectations concerning long-awaited reformation of the Church and Kingdom of England. At the same time, the "fast sermons to Parliament" also revealed the ways and means by which the ministers hoped to achieve the true reformation. These sermons are also important for understanding the contemporary issue of liberty and authority.

Parliament chose Cornelius Burges along with Stephen Marshall to preach the first sermons on November 17, 1640. Pleading with the members of the House of Commons to adopt "a formal, solemn, entire engaging and binding" and "indissoluble Covenant" with God, Burges, argued for the necessity of "setting up . . . a Faithful, Judicious, and Zealous Magistracy." For without a powerful magistracy, he argued, "the power of Godliness will soon degenerate into Formality, and Zeal into Lukewarmness." To maintain the covenant with God, argued Burges, the godly magistrate had to destroy "Popery, Arminianism, Socinianisme, Prophanenesse, Apostacy and Atheism." The meeting of Long Parliament, declared Burges, in articulating what would become a central theme in sermons preached before Parliament in subsequent years, opened a "door of hope" for the pursuit of the millennium. Thus, he reminded members of Parliament, "most of you are well seen in the history of the Church and can soon point your finger to the time wherein Babylon began to besiege Hierusalem and Antichrist began to pull his vizzard, in the Churches of Christ."

Stephen Marshall, "that Genevah-Bull," as the poet John Cleveland described him, also asked the godly magistrates in the Parliament to

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destroy the many heresies in the kingdom, for "little . . . is to be expected in Christendom, till the Beast his Kingdom be ruined." 14

A year later, in 1641, the godly magistrates in Parliament still had not turned to the reform of the church, and Marshall again admonished the Commons in his sermon A Peace-Offering to God for having neglected its duty to God: "as yet the Lord's Temple is not built, nor the Scepter of Christ thoroughly set up" in England. He appealed to members of Parliament: "Now that you have built your own house, and procure Civill Liberties, should you let Gods house lie waste, should you be (as many fear you are) less zealous in Gods cause, than in your own?" 15

In the same year Edmund Calamy told Parliament in his sermon, Englands Looking-Glass, that the great task before the godly magistrates "is about the ruin and repair of Kingdoms" and demanded that Parliament redress "the sins of England," which "are the enemies of England." For, according to him, only "Repentance and Reformation repairs and upholds Kingdoms and Nations." 16 In May 1641, William Bridge similarly declared before Parliament in his Babylons Downfall that "the sword is now drawing whose anger shall not be pacified till Babylon be down and Sion rais'd." He accordingly demanded that the godly magistrates punish those who stood with Babylon's cause "according to their deserving." 17

In 1641 Parliament had not yet addressed the issue of church reform except in its orders "for the Abolishing of Superstition, and Innovation, in the Regulating of Church Affairs" and for "establishing of Preaching Lecturers." 18 Thus, when Burges preached before Parliament again that year, he urged its members "to resume and pursue your first thoughts of setting up God and his Ordinances . . . by calling to your assistance a free Synod of Grave Ministers of this Nation." 19 A year later, in 1642, Marshall reiterated this idea in his sermon Reformation and Desolation. He argued that in order to further the reformation of the church, Parliament had to call "a grave Synod of Divines" to inform its members' "consciences what is to be done" concerning the church's reformation. 20 In his sermon of the same year, Gods Free Mercy to England, Calamy urged Parliament: "Do something to purge the land more and more of the innocent blood of the Martyrs" and to bring about "the reformation of Gods house." 21 And Thomas Goodwin argued in his sermon, Zerubbabels

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18 The Orders from the House of Commons for the Abolishing of Superstition and Innovation, in the Regulating of Church Affairs (London, 1641), in An Order Made by the House of Commons for the Establishing of Preaching Lecturers, Through the Kingdom of England and Wales (London, 1641).
Encouragement to *Finish the Temple* in 1642, that it was Parliament’s duty to “command unto the people what is good and right.” “Let no Church,” he admonished, aiming at the gloomy conditions of the Church of England, “think it selve perfect and *needing nothing* (as bragging *Laodicea* did).” Referring to the Book of Revelation, he called upon Parliament “to *measure that temple, alter, worshippers anew, and to cast out that outward court* that had defiled” the Church of England.22

These “Fast Sermons to Parliament” reveal that, in contrast to Massachusetts, where godly magistrates initiated and secured the reformation from the very beginnings of the Puritan migration and the establishment of the Christian commonwealth, the situation in England was much more complex. The main concern of Pym and other Parliamentary leaders in the early 1640s was with the constitutional struggle with the king and, later, with the Civil War, and they had little time to devote to the issue of church reformation. Thus, ministers in their sermons continued to urge the godly magistrates in Parliament to exercise their power on behalf of church reform. At the same time, the fast sermons showed clearly that, with the fall of Laud and the old ecclesiastical order in England, the affairs in the church had become unbearable to those who wanted, not to abolish the church, but to rid it of Popery, Arminianism, and heresy. Reformation and liberty went hand in hand with order and authority in the minds of the saints, whose conception of religious liberty was so limited as not to include within it the opinions and practices of other religious groups.

Puritan fears concerning the well-being of the Church of England are easy to understand in the context of the time. In 1641, a small tract appeared in London called *A Discovery of 29 Sects Here in London*. The author explained that all of these sects “except the first,” that is, the Protestants, were “most Devilish and Damnable.” The sects, the author argued, threatened the very existence of the Church of England, and he therefore warned against the opinions and practices of “Puritans,” “Papists,” “Brownists,” “Separatists,” “Calvinists,” and other less well-known sects such as “Bacchanalians” and “Pannonians.”23 The rise of sects in England terrified many. Thus, during the 1640s, many tracts decried the sinful practices and beliefs of the members of these sects, and the authors warned repeatedly against these heresies.24

The spectre of so many sects in the kingdom alarmed orthodox Puritans and provided the context for their sermons before Parliament in which they repeatedly admonished the civil magistrates to purge the land and reform the church. “God’s work lies yet undone,” complained Cornelius Burges to Parliament in 1641,

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23 *A Discovery of 29 Sects Here in London* (London, 1641); *A Nest of Serpents Discovered* (London, 1641).

24 See, for example, *A Description of the Sect Called the Famielie of Love, With Their Common Place of Residence* (London, 1641), and *The Brownists Conventicle: or an Assembly of Brownists, Separatists, and Non-Conformists* (London, 1641).
Matters of religion lie a bleeding: all Government and Discipline of the Church is laid in her grave, and all putridinous vermin of bold Schismatics and frantick Sectaries glory in her ashes, making her fall their own rising to mount out Pulpits, to offer strange fire, to expel the gravest, ablest, and most eminent Ministers in the Kingdom . . . out of the hearts of their people as a company of weak men, formalists, time-servers, no Ministers of Christ, but Limbs of Antichrist, having no calling except from the Devile; and to forshake our Assemblies as Babylonists and Antichristian, so as in short time they will not leave us the face of a Church.

At present, noted Burges sadly, "no curse is taken to suppress" the sectarians' "fury, and to reduce them to order." This task, he proclaimed to members of Parliament, would never be done "till You put your hand to the Cure." Consequently, Burges proposed that Parliament call "a free Synod of Grave Ministers" to assist it in "setting up God and his Ordinances" in England and thereby finally "put all men into a course of Order and uniformity in Gods way." But orthodox Puritans in England found that ecclesiastical order and uniformity were indeed hard to achieve because of the powerful presence of centrifugal millenarianism among the sects.

In May 1641, Parliament passed The Protestation in which its members "promis[ed], vow[ed] and prote[sted] to maintain and defend . . . the true reformed Protestant religion expressed in the doctrine of the Church of England." However, as Henry Burton argued in The Protestation Protested in 1641, Parliament's Protestation was worth nothing because popery could not be eliminated from the church, given the structure of the Church of England as a national church. Because the Church of England was a "National Church," declared Burton, it would be "very difficult, if not rather impossible, to constitute it so as is agreeable, in all points, to a true and visible Congregation of Christ." Once a hero and martyr of the Puritans, Burton, whose ears had been cut off because of his attacks on popery during the 1630s, now, in 1641, alarmed many Puritans by advocating Congregationalism, which a majority of Puritans in England identified with separation. His bold attack on the Protestation which was clearly related to the millennial expectations he set forth in his book The Sounding of the Two Last Trumpets in 1641 caused many

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28 Henry Burton, The Sounding of the Two Last Trumpets, the Sixth and Seventh . . . of the Revelation, as Containing a Prophecy of These Last Times (London, 1641).
Puritans to turn against him immediately. John Geere, a Puritan divine, answered Burton in his *Vindiciæ Voti*, or *A Vindication of the True Sense of the National Covenant* and in *Judahs Joy at the Oath*, both published in 1641.29 In these works, Geere sought to justify Parliament’s *Protestation* and the necessity of keeping the Church of England as a national church. In the same year an anonymous author published *A Survey of That Foolish, Seditious, Scandalous, Prophane Libell, The Protestation Protested* in angry response to Burton’s denunciation of the Church of England because of its inherent popery. He advised Burton to “go therefore with your conceit to New England [and] there convert the Americans from Popery.”30 The author obviously sensed correctly that Burton would find the Congregationalists in Massachusetts more congenial to his point of view. But the issue could not be resolved simply by dispatching Burton to America.

Burton’s argument for Congregationalism in *The Protestantation Protested* seemed to many English Puritans to open a Pandora’s box out of which all kinds of heresy would escape. At a time when almost every day brought with it “a [further] discovery” of sects, those fears are understandable. Hence, one can appreciate the Puritans’ total opposition to permitting the establishment of independent churches outside the Church of England. Thus, in 1641 Thomas Edwards published his *Reasons Against the Independent Government of Particular Congregations*, which he presented “in all humility to the honourable House of Commons.” What moved Edwards to write this tract was the immediate danger he saw “in some petitions drawn, to be presented to the Honourable House of Commons, for a Toleration of some Congregations, to enjoy Independent Government” outside the Church of England. On the same ground Edwards warned, “a Toleration may be demanded . . . for all rigid Brownists of the Kingdom, and for all the Anabaptists, Familists, and other Sectaries.” Why should these Independent churches, he asked, be given toleration when they would not, when in power, extend toleration to others?

These independent men where they have power (as in New England) will not give toleration for any other Ecclesiastical Government or Churches but in their own way; they would not suffer men of other opinions in doctrines and government to live within the bounds of their patent, though at the furthest bounds, but have banished them.

The Congregationalists in Massachusetts had indeed denounced toleration “for fear of disturbing the peace of their Church,” argued Edwards. Therefore he continued to refute the Independents’ plea for toleration in England on the basis of the very practice of Massachusetts Puritans,

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29 John Geere, *Judahs Joy at the Oath* (London, 1641), and *Vindiciæ Voti; or a Vindication of the True Sense of the Nationall Covenant* (London, 1641).
30 *A Survey of that Foolish, Seditious, Scandalous, Prophane Libell, the Protestantation Protested* (London, 1641).
who refused to permit "any other form of government but one, seeing there is but one way of Church government laid down in the Word, and that unchangeable, and therefore they cannot yeeld to it."31 Identifying Independents in England with those in Massachusetts, Edwards thus argued that by their own arguments toleration should not be extended to them in England.

Edwards' identification of Independents in England with Congregationalists in New England would of course have been rejected by both sides, as we will soon see. But Edwards pointed to a crucial problem involved with the issue of toleration: how could the Church of England tolerate other churches which did not tolerate it as a national church? If Congregationalists or Independents could not tolerate the Church of England, asked Edwards, why should the Church of England tolerate them? "I believe these present men," Edwards wrote of the Independents, who [are] here endeavoring a toleration for their Churches had they the power in their hands to settle a Government, we should have no Government tolerated, nor Church but the Independent way, and for this see The Protestation Protested, what he thinks of our Church and of whatever Government shall be established.32

III

The rejection of religious toleration of the sects during the 1640s was what essentially linked Puritans in old and New England. Although Puritans on both sides of the ocean had profound differences among themselves over the issue of church government, they stood on the same ground in their opposition to toleration, while Bay Puritans and English sectarians, despite their common impulse to erect visible churches, totally opposed each other on the issue of toleration. Massachusetts' controversies with English Puritans continued through the 1640s, but this struggle, in Lamont's words, was "over means, not over ends."33 Most English Puritans in the 1640s favored Presbyterianism—that is, a system of church government in which each particular church was governed by "a presbytery," or consistory of elders, which emanated from particular churches into classes and provincial and national synods.

Presbyterianism, therefore, aspired to create a hierarchical ecclesiastical order which would maintain religious uniformity and conformity.


The English Puritans and the Congregationalists of Massachusetts, along with the many Presbyterians who emigrated to the Puritan colony in America, struggled over this issue for many years, but they both shared a common understanding of the meaning of a Christian commonwealth and the role of the godly magistrate in ecclesiastical matters. Thus, when Puritans on each side of the ocean tried to lay down the foundations for a Christian commonwealth, they found themselves engaged in the same fight against toleration of the sects or heresy.

The word "toleration" now implies something positive, almost virtuous. However, in the seventeenth century the word had a "pejorative meaning," connoting "a lax complacency toward evil" (Dictionary of History of Ideas), "the action of sustaining or enduring; endurance (of evil, suffering, etc.) 1623" (The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on History Principles). Thus, if "to tolerate" in our time means accepting the right of something to exist, in the seventeenth century, it signified suffering the existence of something that was evil, something that should be condemned and eliminated. Therefore, as Herbert Butterfield has noted, toleration in the seventeenth century,

was not so much an ideal, a positive end, that people wanted to establish for its own sake; but, rather, a pis aller, a retreat to the next best thing, a last resort for those who often still hated one another but found it impossible to go on fighting any more. It was hardly even an "idea" for the most part—just a happening—the sort of thing that happens when no choice is left and there is no hope of further struggle being worth while.34

Butterfield's observation calls attention to the issue of toleration in its historical context. Historians of the English Civil War have given much attention to the issue of toleration, but most of them have treated it more in terms of its modern conception and less in the actual context of the times. Thus, many studies reveal a common argument concerning the development of toleration during the 1640s. They all hold that during that decade an irreconcilable struggle between Independents and Presbyterians took place in which the former, as the minority, leaned toward general toleration.35

The correlation between Independence and the rise of toleration that is so common in English Puritan studies has had much influence on the

historiography of early Massachusetts. According to this interpretation, the Independents who advocated toleration in England were the "Dissenting Brethren," the Congregationalist ministers who attended the Westminster Assembly of Divines. In this view, while Congregationalists in England leaned toward general toleration, those in Massachusetts opposed it. Consequently, as Perry Miller wrote, the "Independents," or English Congregationalists, "could . . . insure the cooperation of the sects" in the struggle for religious toleration in England "only by disowning New England." Thus, "colonial support" for the progressive movement toward toleration in England "was an embarrassment." To Miller, the battle over toleration in England was the reason why Massachusetts "turned aside from the main currents of English opinion." The "isolation of Massachusetts" had been completed when the colony, "by gathering her holy skirts closer about her heel," proceeded on "her unlovely way aloone."  

But it is not clear that English Independents, or, more precisely, the "Dissenting Brethren," advocated toleration or even that the struggle between Presbyterians and Independents was an irreconcilable struggle. Nor is it clear that Congregationalists in Massachusetts differed so greatly from their brethren in England. An accurate understanding of these issues is essential to determining whether Massachusetts really did become isolated from England and whether the "orthodoxy in Massachusetts" did indeed differ from the "main current" of thought in England during the 1640s.

To deal with the issue of the Independents in England, one needs to know the true meaning of the word in the early 1640s. "Till Mr. Ball wrote in favour of Liturgy, and against Canne, Allin, etc., and till Mr. Burton published his 'Protestation Protested,'" wrote Richard Baxter, "I never thought what Presbytery or Independency was, nor ever spoke with a man who seemed to know it." Baxter's words have not only been confirmed, but as J.H. Hexter showed in his important study, "The Problem of the Presbyterian Independents," it was very hard to distinguish between Presbyterians and Independents during the 1640s. For this reason, Hexter warned historians not to attempt to correlate either religion and politics, or Independent ministers in the Westminster Assembly of Divines and Independents in the Long Parliament. Moreover, the religious differences between the ministers who favored Presbyterianism and those who favored Independency do not seem to have been a matter of fundamental principle. For example, when Congregationalist ministers came back to England from Massachusetts some even embraced Presbyterianism. The problem becomes even more compli-

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36 Perry Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts (Gloucester, 1965), pp. 280–281.  
38 J.H. Hexter, "The Problem of the Presbyterian Independents," in Reappraisals in History (London: Longmans, 1961), pp. 163–184. On the controversy that followed George Yule's attempt to find a correlation between religion and politics, or between "the Parlia-
cated when one considers that contemporaries used the term “Indepen-
dent” in more than one way.

In the early 1640s, many contemporaries used the term freely to
describe those who adopted the principle of the free gathering of a Con-
gregation, or a church, and its independence in relation to any ecclesi-
astical order. For example, the Antinomian William Walwyn grouped
under the name “Independents” Anabaptists, Separatists, and other
sects. Walwyn used the term as an inclusive name for many sects and
included under it a wide range of sectarian who shared this particular
ecclesiastical principle.\(^{39}\) At the same time, however, the term “Inde-
pendents” was applied to a particular group, the Independent divines
in the Westminster Assembly as well as to the Congregationalists in Mas-
sachusetts. Yet the important fact about these latter two groups was that
both consistently attempted to dissociate themselves and their “Indepen-
dency” from the radical Independency of the various sects. Thus, the
Independent divines denounced “the most to be abhorred maxim” the
view that each “single and particulare society of men professing the name
of Christ” should “arrogate unto themselves an exemption from giving
account or being censurable by any other” churches.\(^{40}\) In other words,
it was far from the intention of the Independent divines to let every
church be wholly independent from any kind of authority which would
maintain unity and uniformity in ecclesiastical matters. Likewise, John
Cotton lamented that under the name of Independency many sects were
hidden: “The Antipedobaptists, Antinomians, Familists, yea, and the
Seeker too, do all of them style themselves Independents.” Thus like the
Independent divines in England, Cotton was not satisfied with the name
Independency as it applied to Massachusetts’ ecclesiastical way because
this name “neither truly describeth us, nor faithfully distinguisheth us
from many other.”\(^{41}\)

Why, one should ask, did Independent divines in England and Congre-
gationalists in Massachusetts resent being called Independents? Mas-
sachusetts Puritans, of course, totally rejected the idea of toleration and
thus their attempt to dissociate themselves from the term is understand-
able. However, the question of why the Independent divines attempted


to dissociate themselves from the very name and practice of Independency is somewhat more complicated, especially since historians have argued that it was this group which raised the issue of religious toleration in England. This problem can be solved only by examining the Independents’ activities in England in the early 1640s to see whether they indeed embraced and advocated toleration, and whether they differed as much as has been suggested from their brethren in Massachusetts on the issue of the magistrate’s power over religious matters. In order to avoid ambiguity in the following discussion, the term “Independents” will hereafter be used to describe only the Independent divines, or the group of Independent ministers who took part in the Westminster Assembly of Divines. All others who also advocated the principle of the independence of a particular church or Congregation will be described as Sectarians.

The Independent divines who attended the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1643 were ministers who had already advocated Congregationalism during the 1630s. However, in contrast to the ministers who went to New England in this decade, these clergymen had gone to Holland. Apparently the point that most sharply divided Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes, and William Bridge from their brethren in America was that their millennial expectations still centered on England. Contrary to Massachusetts Puritans, they thought that England still had a unique role to play in providential history. In any case, all of them came back to England following the meeting of the Long Parliament. The millennium was at hand, thought Thomas Goodwin. Preaching before his Congregation in Holland before returning to England he said: “It is the work of the day to cry down Babylon, that it may fall more and more; and it is the work of the day to give God no rest till he sets up Jerusalem as the praise of the whole world.” The New Jerusalem would be built, Goodwin believed, in England, and this goal could only be accomplished by the Congregational way. “And (my brethren) if the Kingdom of Christ had bin kept in Congregations, in that way that we and some other Churches are in, it had bin impossible that Antichrist should have got head.”42 However, in England, the godly magistrate still had not chosen the appropriate ecclesiastical way by which to reform the kingdom. Thus, when Goodwin and other independent ministers returned to England from the continent, they found themselves engaging in theological controversies with Presbyterians and Sectarians over how to construct the Kingdom of God on earth.

From the time they came back until the convening of the Westminster Assembly of Divines in 1643, the Independent divines’ activities in England revealed that they strongly preferred to associate themselves with the Presbyterians rather than with the sects. In 1641, Philip Nye and Edmund Calamy, the prominent Presbyterian of London, con-

cluded an agreement concerning the relationship between Independent and Presbyterian ministers in London. Both sides agreed that "(for advancing of the publike cause of happy Reformation) neither side should Breach, Print, or dispute, or otherwise act against the other's way; and this to continue 'til both sides, in full meeting, did declare the contrary."43

This agreement, welcomed by members of Parliament, made it clear that both Presbyterians and Independents "decided to abandon religious controversy for the duration of the war."44 Robert Baillie, who came from Scotland to aid the reformation in England, also suggested that in the face of the Civil War, orthodox Puritans needed to unite: "We have to get determined to our mutual satisfaction, if we were rid of Bishop, and till then, we have agreed to speak of nothing or anything wherein we differ."45

The unity between Presbyterians and Independents continued in the following years in spite of the theological differences between them. Puritan unity was aimed at reforming the kingdom by ridding it of Papists and sectarian heresy. This was nowhere clearer than with the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643, by which England and Scotland formed a treaty for "the extirpation of Popery . . . superstition, heresy, schism, prophaneness, and whatsoever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness."46 The Scots were Presbyterians, but this fact did not hinder Philip Nye, one of the Independent divines, from playing a crucial role in forming the treaty with Scotland and subsequently justifying it in England. The aim of the Solemn League and Covenant, explained Nye to Parliament, after the latter had affirmed the treaty in 1643, was "swearing fealty and allegiance unto Christ the King of Kings: and a giving up of all these Kingdomes, which are his inheritance, to be subdued more to his Throne, and ruled more by his Scepter." And "the effect" of this treaty, he proclaimed, was "that the kingdomes of the world become the kingdomes of the Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever. Rev. 11."47

Thus, in spite of their ecclesiological controversies, Independents and Presbyterians attempted to secure the help of the Scots for Parliament in the first Civil War. Moreover, Independent ministers in their "fast sermons to the Parliament" insisted, like Presbyterians, on Parliament's duty to reform the Church of England. Indeed, both Presbyterians and Independents favored the idea of a Westminster Assembly of Divines,

in which ministers would advise the godly magistrates in Parliament on
the ways and means to reform the national church. And both Independ-
ents and Presbyterians were united in their struggle against heresy and
the sects. On December 28, 1643, both groups jointly published a
pamphlet entitled Certaine Considerations to Dis-suade Men from Further
Gathering of Churches which was aimed at stopping the formation of inde-
pendent churches of the sectarians. The signatories of this declaration
included the “five dissenting brethren” or the Independent divines,
along with the leaders of the Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly.
The rationale behind this declaration stemmed from the fact that in
November of that year, the Assembly of Divines decided “to launch a
campaign against gathering Congregations” and informed the House of
Commons about “the liberty that many take in the city and other places
in gathering churches” before Parliament and the Assembly had
declared their opinions concerning ways and means to reform the Church
of England. What frightened the Divines in the Assembly was the rise
of sects in the kingdom. For example, the London ministers, as one con-
temporary observed, “make all the pulpit in London . . . ring against
Anabaptists, Brownists, etc., so loud that the divine echoes thereof
might easily be heard beyond the River Tweed.” The ministers turned
to the Assembly in November, complaining about “the increase of Ana-
baptists, Antinomians and sectaries, the boldness of some in the city,
and about it, in gathering separate congregation.”

And thus, in the following month, December 1643, Independents and
Presbyterians in their joint declaration, Certaine Considerations, argued
that “our miseries [are] increased by the several ways of Bretheren . . .
entering themselves into church-societies” and asked such brethren to
amend their ways “until they see whether the Right Rule will not be com-
manded to them in this orderly way” by the Assembly of Divines.

So far we have seen that the Independent divines associated them-
selves with the Presbyterians and not with the sects concerning the issue
of ecclesiastical order and authority. They were therefore much closer
to the Congregationalists in the Bay colony in their fight against heresy
than to the sectarians and their plea for toleration. This is not surprising, because Puritans stood on the same ground not only against popery but also against the sects. "Our enemies," declared The Parliament Scout, "formerly in the Bishops days would root out Religion, and Liberties, and introduce Popery, and Tyranny, they made the Common enemy the Puritan, the Puritan that always stood up in opposition to all innovations in Church and State." 53 Once we understand Puritans in these terms, not as revolutionaries but rather as conservatives who aimed to preserve tradition, the differences between the Independents and Presbyterians, especially in the Westminster Assembly of Divines, appear in their proper context.

After much delay, Parliament referred the issue of church reform to the Westminster Assembly in 1643. This body consisted of 125 ministers, most of them Presbyterians, thirty laymen, and some Scottish observers. Less than ten ministers in the assembly are known to have been Congregationalists or Independents. Yet, because fierce ecclesiological controversies, especially over the issue of church-government, broke out in the assembly between Presbyterians and Independents, it has become commonplace to view the relationship between these two groups as one of uncompromising struggle and to assume that the Presbyterians constituted a united front against the Independents. But, as Lord Saye and Sele noted, "the Presbyterians were not of one mind," and Robert Baillie, the observer from Scotland, could count only six English Presbyterians (among the total number of over one hundred Presbyterian divines in the assembly) who wholly supported the Scots' discipline. Moreover, there is much evidence that Independents often joined Presbyterians against the Scots' proposals, as in the case of ordination. On the other hand, Independents and Scots united against Presbyterians on the issue of ruling elders. 54

The relationship between Independents and Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly was a subject of controversy between the royalist newspaper, The Spie, and Parliament's newspaper, Mercurius Britannicus. The Spie, attempting to emphasize every difference among the divines, wrote that "there grew so kindly a debate in the Assembly between Master Nye and Master Henderson, that the Moderator could not possibly reduce them to any calmness." 55 The Mercurius Britannicus did not deny that there had been "a late heat in our Assembly, betwixt

53 The Parliament Scout: Communication His Intelligence to the Kingdome (June 20–27, 1644).
the Independents and Presbyterians," but these "holy Controversies," claimed the newspaper, were the result of the Puritans' attempt to "walk on so fast in the way of Reformation." Whatever the ecclesiological differences between Nye and Henderson, declared the newspaper, both stood on the same ground concerning "the Covenant," and concerning the "light from Scotland, and other reformed Churches" in relation to the issue of Reformation.\textsuperscript{56} Another newspaper, The Complete Intelligencer, presented a picture of the fundamental similarities between Independents and Presbyterians, notwithstanding their ecclesiological differences. "Though the Presbytery" and the Independents "are engaged upon very inconsistent Principles, and incompatible fundamentals, yet sure the Independents are as zealous against Idolatries and superstitions." The latter endeavored, continued the newspaper, "to assist with their godly zeal and labors, the defense of our Religion and State, against the Common Enemy."\textsuperscript{57}

The actual stand of the Independent divines toward the Presbyterians can be seen clearly in an important document they issued in early 1644. The first Independent manifesto, An Apologetical Narration, was a joint publication of the "five dissenting brethren," Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes, and William Bridge. Constituting a minority in the Assembly of Divines, the Independents appealed directly to Parliament, "to unite the Protestant partie in this Kingdom, that agree in fundamentale truths against Popery and other heresies, and to have that respect to tender consciences as might prevent oppressions and inconveniences." Historians have traditionally interpreted this sentence—the only such in all the Apology—as a plea for toleration. Yet, the actual circumstances in which the Apology was published suggests something very different. One of the clearest and most persistent claims which this tract makes is the need for unity among the "Protestant partie." Time and again, the authors warn against "the danger of rending and dividing the godly Protestant party in this Kingdom, that were desirous of Reformation." There was, they argued, "an absolute necessity of their nearest union and conjunction" against the "common adversary." Moreover, the Independents complained that they "had enjoyed a long continued settlement which had rooted in the hearts of men" with the Presbyterians during earlier years and that the "unhappy differences" among these two groups had not prevented the Independents from coming into "strict engagement" with the Presbyterians for "common ends."\textsuperscript{58}

Agreement between the Independents and Presbyterians (which had already worked well for over two years), and not toleration, was the prime consideration in the relationship between these two groups of


\textsuperscript{57} The Complete Intelligencer and Resolves (Nov. 14, 1643), pp. 44–46.

\textsuperscript{58} Thomas Goodwin et al., Apologetical Narration, pp. 26, 25, 26.
divines in 1643–44. What, then, had changed in late 1643 and early 1644? The Apologetical Narration was published by the Independents at the very moment when the Assembly of Divines began its campaign against the free gathering of churches by the sects in November 1643. This campaign in the Assembly and the city of London against the Sectarians created a peculiar situation for Independents who leaned toward the principle of voluntary gathering of churches under which so many sects flourished. "Those that are called pure Independents," urged Richard Vines, a Presbyterian, had to show themselves clearly so that "pernicious opinions may not shelter under their name and wing." Even more than Vines, the Independents wished to distinguish themselves from any association with the sects. The extent to which Independency was then associated with the sectarians can be seen in contemporary pamphlets. According to W.K. Jordan.

thirty-four orthodox titles which attacked the growth of sectarianism were examined in the McAlpin Collection (Union Theological Seminary, New York, NY) for the years 1641–43. Of these, twenty-nine do not dissociate between Congregationalism and the more radical and eccentric sects which appeared in this period. 60

The Apology of the Independents, then, should be seen as an attempt to clear Independency from any association with, not to mention responsibility for, the spread of the sects. Thus, the kind of Independency referred to in the expression "pure Independents" (Vines’ words) should be distinguished from the Independency claimed by the sectarians. Philip Nye made this point clear when he argued

that Independency of churches was asserted . . . in relation only to a superior Church-power properly spiritual, and as such claimed jure divino; and not in relation to that Ecclesiastical Power which is in or exercised from, the Civil Magistrate. 61

By viewing the Apologetical Narration in its historical context, then, we can explain why the word “toleration” never appeared in this tract: toleration was not the intention of the Independent divines. Rather, they hoped "to unite the Protestant partie in this Kingdom, that agree in Fundamental truths against Popery and other Heresies." If this is true, the differences between the Congregationalists in New England and the Independents (Congregationalists) in England that have been so much emphasized by historians of early Massachusetts did not, in fact, exist.

59 Tai Liu, Discord in Sion, p. 45.
This is evident not only in the activities of the Independents against heresy, activities in which, as we have seen above, they sided with the Presbyterians. It can also be seen in the justifications given by Independents, so similar to those of Massachusetts Puritans, for the coercive power of the civil magistrate. Nye, for example, maintained that though we affirm Church-Government is Independent, and immediately derived from Christ; yet we affirm also, that the Civil Magistrate is even therein (that is, in Ecclesiastical Matters) Supreme Governor civilly. And though nothing may be imposed on the Christian Churches against their Will, by any Spiritual Authority (for so only we intend) yet we affirm withall that the Civil Magistrate may impose on them spiritual Matters, by Civil Power, yea whether they like or dislike, if it be good in his eyes, that is if he judge it within his commission from God.63

This was exactly the stand of "orthodox" Puritans in the Bay colony. Moreover, in 1644 Thomas Goodwin and Philip Nye published John Cotton’s The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven in the hope that it would clarify their concept of Independency. "The substance of this" book wrote Goodwin and Nye in their preface to Cotton’s volume, agreed entirely with the ideas set forth in their Apology.64 The Independents fully endorsed a book in which Cotton declared that the Congregationalists "willingly acknowledge a power in the civil magistrate, to establish and reform religion, according to the word of God."65 It is clear, then, that both Independents and Congregationalists, from their shared premise that the church was a self-sufficient entity, invested in the magistrate the crucial role of keeping and maintaining religious unity, order, and authority. Therefore, though far removed from each other, Congregationalists in the Bay Colony and Independents in England came by way of the same premises of church-government to the same conclusions concerning the crucial role of the godly magistrate in ecclesiastical affairs.

The congruency between English Independents and New England Congregationalists concerning the decisive power of the civil magistrate in religious affairs has not gotten much attention from historians. That is why many have concluded that while the Puritans in Massachusetts opposed toleration, Independents in England, though holding exactly the same premises concerning church government, led the way to toleration there. But English Independents and New England Congregationalists sought to maintain religious society and Christian commonwealth by the same means—through the coercive power of the godly magistrate. That historians have overlooked this similarity concerning the magistrate’s power over religious matters is not surprising, because many contemporaries used the name “Independents” or “Independency” as an inclusive term for describing the various sects and paid little attention

63 Nye, The Lawfulness of the Oath of Supremacy . . . , p. 42.
65 Cotton, The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, p. 154.
to the "Independent Divines'" attempts to dissociate themselves and their "Independency" from the radical notion of independence of the sectarians. Thus, John Selden in his Table Talk, said that

both the Independent man and the presbiteran do equally exclude the Civill power . . . the Independent may as well plead they should not be subject to temporal things, not come before a Constable, or a Justice of Peace.66

And Ephraim Pagitt wrote in Heresiography, which appeared in two editions in 1645 and was frequently reprinted until 1662, that the Independents "take the power of gathering and erecting Churches both from the Magistrates and Ministers, placing it only in the hand of a few private Christians who are willing to make a Church Covenant." He even claimed that the Independents in England and the Independents in New England "take into their Churches without scruple Anabaptists, Antinomians" and other sects.67 Selden and Pagitt, undoubtedly, erred in their view of the Independent divines and the Congregationalists in New England, but their descriptions showed clearly why Nye and Cotton, for example, always attempted to dissociate themselves from the "Independency" of the sectarians.

It was, then, a primary aim of the Independent divines to distinguish their principles of church-government from those of the sects. "We found," wrote the authors of the Apology, "our opinions and ways . . . environed about with a cloud of mistakes and misapprehensions," and they claimed, in relation to the Presbyterians, that "in all points of doctrine . . . our judgements have still concurred with the greatest part of our brethren, neither we know wherin we have disserted."68 They were not alone in their belief that however great the ecclesiological differences between them and Presbyterians both should continue to seek union among themselves. The preface to the Apology, by Charles Herle, one of the Presbyterian divines at the Assembly, thus announced that this

Apologetical NarraTion of our Reverend and dear Brethren the learned authors of it, 'tis so full of peaceableness, modesty, and candour; and withall, at this time so seasonably needfull, as well toward the vindication of the Protestant party in generall, from the aspersion of Incommunicableness within itself, and incommatibilieness with Magistracy.69

So far at least, the Independents rather preferred to continue their union with the Presbyterians under the name of "the Protestant party." The Sectarians obviously were well aware of the Independents' intentions and this brings us to the issue of whether, at any time, the Independents sided with the sects against the Presbyterians. Historians

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67 Ephraim Pagitt, Heresiography, or, A Description of the Heretickes and Sectaries of these Later Times (London, 1646), p. 86.
68 Thomas Goodwin et al., Apologetical Narration, pp. 23–24, 4, 29.
69 Charles Herle's words appear in his "Preface" to the Apologetical Narration.
which have accepted the view that toleration was an issue between Independents and Presbyterians have tended to consider the Independents as siding with the sects on that issue against the Presbyterians. But the Sectarians themselves repeatedly refute this view in their writings. William Walwyn, the Antinomian, for example, upon reading the Apology of the Independents, concluded that:

Having heretofore met with an Apologetical Narration of Thomas Goodwin . . . I did with gladness of heart undertake the reading thereof, expecting therein to find such general reasons for justification of themselves, to the world, as would have justified all Separation. . . . But finding contrary to that expectation that their Apology therein for themselves and their Toleration was grounded rather upon a Remonstrance of the nearness between them and the Presbyterian, being one in Doctrine with them, and very little differing from them in Discipline, and how they had been tolerated by other Presbyter Churches, and indulged with greater privileges, than the Separatists, how they differed from the Separatists, and had cautiously avoided those rocks and shelves against which the Separatists had split themselves, confirming by these words, the people disesteem of Separatists, suggesting by that phrase of theirs, as if there were amongst the Separatists some dangerous bypaths or opinions, which they warily found, though no mention be made what they are, which is the worst sort of calumny.70

Walwyn's observation in 1644 in The Compassionate Samaritane on the true meaning of the Independents' Apology, indicates that the supposed link between the Independents and the sects on the issue of toleration still remained to be proved. In another book, The Power of Love, in which he attempted to clear the sect of the Family of Love, Walwyn attacked the Westminster Assembly of Divines, "our Divines [as they would have us call them,]" and proclaimed "I am not a preacher of the law, but of the gospel; nor you under the law, but under grace: the law was given by Moses, whose minister I am not: but grace and truth came by Jesus, whose minister I am."71 He then appealed to the Commons, asking whether the Divines, including the Independent divines, "obtained of you an Ordinance for suppression of all Anabaptists, Brownists, or Independent writing."72

What is most characteristic of the sectarian pamphlets of the time is their lack of distinction between the Independent and Presbyterian divines. From the sectarian perspective, all the divines in the Assembly appeared as oppressors of men's consciences concerning religious matters. John Goodwin, the separatist, for example, warned the Assembly of Divines against "the danger of fighting against God" by trying to persecute different opinion and based his argument for general toleration on the following principle: "For any man, or men, to attempt the suppression of any Doctrine, way or practise that is from God, is to fight

72 Walwyn, The Compassionate Samaritane, preface "To the Commons of England."
against God himself."\textsuperscript{73} Walwyn, too, argued that any attempt on the part of the Assembly to suppress God's people would fail: "I trust the present endeavours of our Divines in striving to raise themselves upon their Brethren's disgrace and ruin, will... prove vaine and fruitless."\textsuperscript{74} Similarly, the separatist Henry Robinson, in \textit{Liberty of Conscience} (1644), attacked the whole idea of a national church: "I know that much is said and done in many places in behalf of uniformity, a National Church, and Covenant... But wherefore such laboring in vaine... Do we think that God's salvation is also National?"\textsuperscript{75}

Frightened by the attempts of Presbyterian and Independent divines to constitute a new oppressive ecclesiastical order in England, sectarians like John Goodwin, William Walwyn, and Henry Robinson, raised and defended the banner of religious toleration. In doing so, they clearly recognized that the Independent divines stood with the Presbyterians in rejecting any idea of toleration that would allow the sects a place in the future Puritan commonwealth in England.

V

The central issue in the controversy over religious toleration was whether magistrates had power over men's consciences. In this context, the Independent divines' stand favoring, like the Congregationalists in Massachusetts, the decisive and coercive role of the godly magistrate stood in rigid contrast to the sectarians' plea for toleration. The latter attempted to refute the Presbyterians' and Independents' view of the godly magistrate's function in ecclesiastical matters and raised the principle of liberty of conscience, which in turn required toleration as the only means of assuring its fulfillment. Thus, Henry Robinson argued that if Civil powers, or others, have authority in matters of Religion, then their commands and Laws in that respect, must be absolute, as in other, and ought equally to be obeyed, which would engage the whole Kingdom still to the Discipline of the Common-Prayer-Book, and government of Episcopacy... a Liberty of Conscience must be permitted to us to enjoy our own opinion in matters of Religion, or else there is necessity of being liable and subject against Conscience.\textsuperscript{76}

The whole sectarian struggle in England on behalf of liberty of conscience was also directed against Massachusetts' stand concerning the

\textsuperscript{73} John Goodwin, \textit{Eomaxia, or the Grand Imprudence of Men Running the Hazard of Fighting Against God, in Suppressing any Way, Doctrine, or Practice} (London, 1644), p. 11.
\textsuperscript{74} Walwyn, \textit{The Compassionate Samaritane}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{76} Robinson, \textit{Liberty of Conscience}, p. 44.
magistrate's power over religious matters. Thus, Richard Overton, one of the members of the sect of Socinians (from Faustus Socinus, 1539–1604), upon reading Cotton's book The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, wrote in The Araignement of Mr. Persecution (1645) that

The judgement of the Divines of New England are against the Toleration of any Church Government and way but one, they will not suffer Brownism, Anabaptism, &c. Mr. Cotton the greatest Divine in New England . . . is against Toleration and holds that men may be punished for their Conscience.77

Massachusetts, as is well known, was against toleration. What is much less well known is that the Independent divines in England were also against toleration. Yet, Roger Williams, who was in England from the summer of 1643 to the summer of 1644 attempting to secure a patent for his settlement in New England and who took an active part during his stay in support of the cause of toleration, knew better. He had no trouble in recognizing that English Independents stood on the same ground as the Congregationalists in New England on the matter of toleration. Thus, he wrote in his The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution (1644), "Under the wing of the Civill Magistrate doe three great factions shelter themselves . . . the Prelacy . . . the Presbyter . . . [and] that (so called) Independent." The Independents, continued Williams, "cast down the Crown of the Lord Jesus at the feet of the Civill Magistrate" exactly as did the Puritans in Massachusetts. Moreover, the Independents’ aim in England, he declared, was to "persuade the Mother Old England to imitate her Daughter New England’s practice . . . to embrace themselves, both as the States and Peoples Bishops."

Williams recognized, then, the essential congruency between the Independents in England and the Congregationalists in Massachusetts in relation to religious toleration, and he denounced their view that God had commissioned magistrates to deal with religious matters. "Magistrates have received their power from the people," he argued, and their power was therefore "without respect to this or that religion." However, Williams found that England was not much different from the "orthodoxy in Massachusetts" when the Commons ordered his books Queries of Higher Consideration, Cotton's Letter Lately Printed, Examined and Answered, and The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution burned in August 1644.78

As evidence provided by both sides indicates, there was no alliance between the Independent divines and the sectarians on the issue of religious toleration, because the essence of the issue at that time concerned the magistrate's power over conscience. The Independents, along with the Presbyterians, affirmed that power in magistrates, while the sectorians denied it. In this context, Massachusetts Puritans, with their strong

defense of the magistrate’s power in religious matters, were much closer to the Independents and Presbyterians than to the sects. Thus the Bay Colony’s “orthodoxy” was remarkably similar to the stand of the majority of English Puritans.

If the Independent divines indeed favored toleration, this opinion should appear in their sermons and writings. However, they consistently opposed this idea. When Burroughes preached before the House of Lords in November 1645, he set down the official stand of the Independent divines by saying: “There is a great outcry against toleration of all religions, and we are willing to join against such toleration.”79 Another Independent divine, Joseph Caryl, drew similar battle lines in his sermon *The Arraignment of Unbelief as the Grand Cause of Our National Non-establishment* (1645). Directing his remarks against Overton’s *The Arraignment of Mr. Persecution*, Caryl declared that “we see this day . . . loose libertine Protestants mixt with Papist, against those who are close-covenanter, and close-walking Protestants.” Those “close-covenanter” and “close-walking Protestants” were of course the Independents and Presbyterians, who, according to Caryl, fought both the Papists and the sectarians. And he concluded his sermon with an appeal to Parliament to take action to secure the purity of church and religion:

As to bear all differences would make charity blinde, so not to bear some would make her more than lame. I know (Honourable Senators) your wisdom will easily find and discern the limit-stone, between liberty and libertinism, between the humours of men, and their conscience.80

In the mid-1640s, Presbyterians and Independents were engaged in securing an accommodation of “tender consciences” that would permit Independents to operate within the Presbyterian establishment that the Assembly of Divines recommended to Parliament. But even in that period, the Independents’ alleged alliance with the sects on the issue of toleration did not occur, and the Independents, as Burroughes and Caryl’s sermons revealed, continued their denunciation of toleration. *The Ancient Bounds* (1645), another Independent manifesto, clearly reflected the Independents’ continuing position toward toleration and liberty of conscience, for it repeated the Independents’ insistence on the magistrate’s power over religious matters:

We have committed to the magistrate the charge of the Second Table; viz., materially, that is, he is not to see God dishonoured by the manifest breach thereof, or any part thereof. But is that all? No, surely, He may enter the vault even of those abominations of the First Table, and ferret the devils and devil-worship out of [their] holes and dens.

This, of course, was also the official stand of Massachusetts Puritans. Moreover, idolatry, blasphemy, and profanation of the Lord’s day, the Independents continued to argue in the same vein as did Bay Puritans, “ought not to be suffered by the Christian magistrate.” Denying the doctrine of the Trinity, “where the Gospel has sounded, is not tolerable; or to deny the Resurrection, or a Judgement Day &c. I say, the Christian magistrate ought not to tolerate the teaching of such contradictions.”

Clearly, because of their principles of church-government, the Independents in England, like the Congregationalists in Massachusetts, saw no other way to maintain and sustain religious society and Christian commonwealth except through the exertions of Christian magistrates. For this reason, the alliance between the Independents and sectarians, who totally opposed any role for the godly magistrate in religious matters, never occurred.

How close the principles of the Independents in England were to those of Massachusetts Puritans can be seen with respect to the issue of liberty of conscience, which the sectarians raised against the magistrate’s coercive powers in religious affairs. As Thomas Shepard wrote from Massachusetts in 1645, “toleration of all upon pretence of conscience I thank God my soule abhors it. The godly in former times never fought for the liberty of consciences by pleading for liberty for all.”

The independents, likewise, were unwilling to accept any demand for religious liberty based on consciences:

All vicious and scandalous practices, contrary to the light of nature or manifest good of society . . . deriving themselves not from conscience, but a malignant will and unconscienced spirit. Nor yet may all principles that derive themselves from conscience have the benefit of this plea of liberty, so as to save their owners.

Given this stand concerning conscience, there is nowhere in the Independent divines’ sermons and writings any plea for toleration. Preaching before the House of Commons in 1645, Thomas Goodwin maintained:

If any man think I am pleading for liberty of all opinions, of what nature and how gross soever, I humbly desire them to remember that I only plead for Saints, and I answer plainly, the Saints they need it not.

Caryl, in England Plus Ultra (1646), even appears to encourage the two Houses of Parliament to persecute rather than to tolerate:

Whatsoever (I say) is an errour or heresy, let all the penalties which Christ hath charged upon it be executed to the utmost . . . If Christ would not have had errour

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83 The Ancient Bounds, p. 248.
to be opposed, why hath he left us means both for the opposition and suppression of error.  

The rigid insistence of the Independents on the magistrate's role concerning religious matters was nowhere more clearly expressed than in "The Whitehall Debates" of 1648-49. In those debates the Council of Officers of the Army discussed the question of "Whether the civil magistrate had a power given to him from God [in matters of religion]?” Among the clergy invited to take part in the debates on this issue were Philip Nye, the Independent, and John Goodwin, the Separatist. Goodwin answered the question without hesitation: “God hath not invested any power in a civil magistrate in matters of religion.” For Nye, on the other hand, as for the other Independent divines, the magistrate had an “edict from Heaven” to achieve the goals of a Christian commonwealth. On the basis of this edict, his power in religious matters was “lawfully exercised.”

"The Puritans of the left,” observed A.S.P. Woodhouse, “discovered that you cannot effectually guarantee the liberty of the saints without guaranteeing the liberty of all men." However, the Independent divines did not share this view. While sectarians proclaimed liberty of conscience as one of the natural rights of man and therefore excluded from the magistrate's power, the Independent divines, exactly like the Presbyterian divines and the Congregationalists in Massachusetts, insisted on such power for the magistrate and thereby separated themselves from the radical sects during the 1640s.

VI

This discussion of religious toleration and its enemies in old and New England provides us with a meaningful context to examine whether "orthodoxy in Massachusetts" was indeed isolated from the main currents of thought in England during the 1640s. The controversy about liberty of conscience and the magistrate's power over religious matters reveals, most importantly, that the Massachusetts Puritans' goal of constituting religious order and authority was in fact the very aim of the majority of orthodox Puritans in England. This is unsurprising, of course, because Puritanism on both sides of the ocean was a movement toward establishing an orderly Christian commonwealth in which religious unity would give countenance to the unity of the body politic. Therefore, Independents and Presbyterians in England, as well as Con-

85 Caryl, England Plus Ultra (London, 1646), pp. 24-25. For evidence that Independent divines continued to associate themselves with the Presbyterians, see their sermons of the late 1640s. See, for example, Caryl, Joy Out Joyed (London, 1646); Burroughes, A Sermon (London, 1646); William Bridge, The Saints Hiding-Place in the Time of Gods Anger (London, 1646); England Save with Notwithstanding (London, 1647); and Christ Coming (London, 1648).
gregionalists in America, whatever their differences about church-
government, shared one important thing vis-à-vis the sectarians—all of
them insisted over and over again upon the crucial role of the godly
magistrate in sustaining ecclesiastical order and maintaining a Christian
commonwealth.

There was, however, an essential difference between England and
Massachusetts that determined how far this vision of Puritan orthodoxy
could be realized. The Puritan impulse for order and authority could be
relatively easily fulfilled in America simply because in Massachusetts the
godly magistrate had assumed the role of defending the church and state
against heresy from the very beginnings of the colony. In the context of
the Puritan quest for order and unity, Massachusetts thus came to be the
model of the Puritans' aspirations for a community in which religious
unity and uniformity were intimately connected with political and social
unity, and vice versa. In England, on the other hand, it was much more
difficult to realize the Puritan utopia, not because English Puritans
embraced new views about the social and ecclesiastical order, but simply
because the whole political, social, and ecclesiastical context in England
was profoundly more complex—and conflictive—than was the case in
America. Consequently, in England, in contrast to Massachusetts, the
godly magistrates had to deal first with a civil war and a political settle-
ment. Above all, they had to take into account political and social con-
considerations that severely limited their ability to achieve those aims of Pur-
itan orthodoxy that the Bay Puritans had attained so successfully.

The reasons why English Puritans were unable to realize their orthodox
vision of order and authority are not hard to find. In the 1640s, argued
Richard Baxter, two people stood against "the old cause" of Puritanism
concerning the preservation of order and authority in England. Henry
Vane, wrote Baxter, "had increased sectaries in the House," and Oliver
Cromwell had recruited into the Parliamentary army as many "of the sec-
taries as he could get." For an orthodox Puritan like Baxter, as for other
orthodox Puritans on both sides of the ocean, the fight against popery
went hand in hand with the fight to extirpate heresy. "We took the true
happiness of King and People, Church and State," Baxter wrote, "to be
our end, and so we understood the Covenant," or the Solemn League
and Covenant, "engaging both against Papists and Schismatical." This
two-fold struggle was the essential policy of orthodox Puritans during
the 1640s, who always urged that the battle against popery be joined with
the suppression of heresy and the sects. But in the context of the First
Civil War, a godly magistrate like Cromwell found it hard, if not impos-
sible, to fight on two fronts, and he was unwilling to fight against the
sects while the whole Protestant case in England was in such a terrible
conflict with the king's army.

Therefore, Baxter blamed Cromwell for having "headed the greatest
party of the army with Anabaptists, Antinomians, Seekers or Separatists
at best; and all this he tied together by the point of liberty of conscience,
which was the common interest in which they did unite.”88 Baxter’s words clearly reflected the fears of orthodox Puritans regarding the rise of the sects. However, in the political context in England, as the anonymous author of The Second Part of Vox Populi (1642), asked, “why should the Parliament quarrel with more enemies till they had first prevailed over the most potent (the Papists) against whom they were sure to have these their coadjutors.” Hence, it was unavoidable that “there hath been Brownists, Anabaptists, and Separatists amongst” the Parliamentary party.89 The plea to give up suppression of the sects and to unite Parliament’s forces and the Protestant Party against the main enemy, popery, was always denied by orthodox Puritans.

The essential stand of orthodoxy was that only godly means should be used to achieve godly ends, and thus Independents and Presbyterians in England and Puritans in Massachusetts denied any association with the sects. They could not join with heresy to fight against popery, lest sinful means lead to corrupt consequences. Orthodox Puritans in England and New England, therefore, thought it was their duty to fight popery and heresy at the same time. Herein lay the profound differences between Vane and Cromwell on the one hand, and Baxter on the other. For Vane and Cromwell thought first and most of all to unite everyone against popery. This was the central issue of the First Civil War. Because of the terrible difficulties of the Parliamentary army during the early years of the war, both men knew that in order to gain victory over popery they had to recruit anyone who was willing to fight popery, which the sectarians with their millennial expectations and strong enthusiasm had been more than willing to do. But not only reasons of expediency guided Vane and Cromwell; both men had been strong millenarians who wanted to establish a united front of all Protestants, within and outside England, against popery or the Beast. Henry Vane, was already willing in 1637 to accommodate the Antinomians into the Puritan commonwealth in Massachusetts because “Christ commands us to do good unto all, but especially to them of the household of faith.”90 In his highly millennial views, Vane thought that all those who had been persecuted by popery were united in the same “household of faith.” The orthodox on both sides of the ocean flatly denied this view: both Winthrop in Massachusetts and Baxter in England attacked Vane out of the orthodox desire of achieving total unity and conformity in church and state alike. Henry

89 The Second Part of Vox Populi (London, 1642), p. 3 (unpaginated).
Vane, like Roger Williams, thus had the opportunity to fight against orthodoxy in old and New England.

Oliver Cromwell's views were much the same as those of Vane concerning the ultimate stakes in the battle of Protestants of all persuasions and the unity of all those of "the household of faith" against popery. Thus he admonished orthodox Puritans in England,

Those that were sound in the faith, how proper was it for them to labour for liberty, for a just liberty, that men should not be trampled upon their consciences! Had not they laboured, but lately, under the weight of persecutions? And was it fit for them to sit heavy upon others? Is it ingenuous to ask liberty and not to give it? What greater hypocrisy than for those who were oppressed by the Bishops to become the greatest oppressors themselves, so long as their yoke was removed.91

Cromwell, then, like Vane, had expanded the term godly people to include all those who were willing to fight popery or those who had suffered under it. Consequently, Colonel Cromwell recruited to his regiment of horse, as one contemporary wrote, those "who upon matter of conscience engaged in this quarrel" of the First Civil War against popery. Such actions, no doubt, raised the anger of orthodox Puritans in England who accused Cromwell of having "a company of Brownists, Anabaptists, Factious, inferiour persons, &c."92

In Massachusetts, by contrast, the full and profound implications of Puritanism as a conservative movement were revealed. Herein lies the crucial importance of the history of early Massachusetts for the Puritan movement in England. For in New England, where Puritans were absolutely free from political and social considerations that people had to reckon with in England, the consequences of Puritanism as a religious and social movement appeared most fully. This was not because orthodox Puritans in England, like the Independents and Presbyterians, did not strive to establish orthodoxy in England but simply because godly magistrates in England, like Cromwell and Vane, found it impossible, as the orthodox Puritans demanded, to fight on two fronts — against popery and heresy. Given the political context in England, Parliament and the Protestant party had first to win the war. Next to this main aim, the internal struggle within the Protestant party appeared to Cromwell and Vane to be secondary. Hence, out of reasons of expediency, godly magistrates in England sought to unite all Protestants against the common enemy of popery. For Cromwell, acceptance of the orthodox Puritan demand to fight against the sects in the name of the one true faith meant the possible defeat of the whole Protestant cause by the king.

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Thus, while orthodox Puritans argued that only the unity of the church would keep civil and public order, Cromwell and Vane argued, and made it the cornerstone of their policy, that civil and public order could be achieved only by upholding religious diversity. For to fight against heresy during the civil war would lead to the defeat of the whole Protestant party.

Yet if it was left mainly to Massachusetts to reveal the full and profound consequences of Puritan orthodoxy in church and state, this by no means implies that orthodoxy became a peculiar feature only to American Puritanism. Orthodoxy existed in England and was advocated by the majority of Puritans there. Given the political context, however, orthodox Puritans, in spite of all their efforts in Parliament and the Westminster Assembly of Divines, had been unable to achieve their goal of order and authority, or their aim of constituting a Christian commonwealth as the Bay Puritans had succeeded in doing. The radical views of Cromwell, Vane, and the sectarians, it should be stressed again, were not acceptable to the majority of Puritans. Orthodox Puritans still thought in terms of enforcing the one truth and establishing the one church. To abandon the concept of one truth and one church and to establish a pluralistic society, in which religious liberty would be given to almost all, was far from the intentions of the orthodox in old as well as in New England.

This is why the writings of orthodox Puritans in England so strongly resemble those of the Congregationalists in Massachusetts. On both sides of the ocean, orthodoxy hoped to exclude all except the one true way in relation to faith. In England, Adam Stewart plainly stated that toleration was not given to men to decide upon; it was up to God, who never permitted it: "God in the Old Testament granted no toleration of divers religions, or disciplines; and the New Testament requireth no less union among Christians, than the Old among the Jews." John Bastwick similarly argued that toleration was a sin against God: "It is a thing highly displeasing unto God, that his people should give toleration of any religion but that hee hath established." To orthodox Puritans in England, as well as to those in America, religious liberty of the kind advocated by the sects entailed the ruin of church and state and giving the devil the upper hand in this world. For toleration, as Thomas Edward wrote in *Gangraena* in 1646, had "all errors in it, and all evils, and it is against the whole stream and current of Scripture . . . it overthrows all relationship, both political, ecclesiastical, and economical."

On the other side of the ocean, in Massachusetts, orthodox Puritans clearly identified their cause with the struggle of orthodox Puritans in England against heresy, sectarians, and toleration. "The godly in former times," wrote Thomas Shepard,

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desired to kisse the flames and fill the prisons, and suffer to the utmost, as knowing that suffering for the truth, were more advantageous to the promoting of it than their own peace and safety with liberty for all errour.96

John Cotton, along with the orthodox in England, attacked in *The Bloudy Tenent Washed* (1647) Roger Williams’s advocacy of liberty of conscience and the exclusion of the magistrates from religious matters. “The great Questions of this present time,” wrote Cotton, were

How farre Liberty of Conscience ought to be given to those that truly feare God? And how farre restrained to turbulent and pestilent persons, that not only raze the foundation of Godlinesse, but disturb the Civil Peace where they live?97

We already know his answer to these questions, but if some of England’s orthodox Puritans remained confused regarding Cotton’s views of toleration, they only needed to consult his *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared* (1648). Writing an answer to Robert’s Baillie’s *A Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time* (1646), Cotton declared that as an orthodox Puritan he had much more in common with “Mr. Baylie’s [Baillie’s] zeal against [the] errors” of the “Anabaptists, Antinomians, Seekers,” and “Prelates, Papists, Armenians, Socinians, Erastians,” than with Williams’s plea for liberty of conscience.98

In 1648, Thomas Hooker’s *A Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline* also appeared in London. This work was a vindication of the Congregational way in Massachusetts. Relying exclusively on Thomas Brightman’s *Apocalypse Apocalypseos* 1611, in interpreting the history of the Church, Hooker argued that the time of the millennium was at hand, “when all the Kingdomes of the world are becoming the Lords and his Christ.” Yet, he continued, in millennial terms, “the spiritual Kingdome of Christ, is most opposed by a generation of Enthusiasts; and Familist,” who “under the pretence of free-grace, they destroy the grace of God in the power and operation of it, in the hearts and lives of men.”99 The quest for the millennium was essentially a quest for order and authority, and orthodox Puritans in Massachusetts, as well as in England, attacked sectarianism because it threatened to frustrate this quest.

The close association between “orthodoxy in Massachusetts” and orthodoxy in old England is nowhere revealed more clearly than in Nathaniel Ward’s *The Simple Cobler of Aggawam in America* (1647). “One would have to search long,” wrote Moses Coit Tyler of Ward’s book,

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among the rubbish of books thrown forth to the public during those hot and teeming days, to find one more authentically representing the stir, the earnestness, the intolerance, the hope, and the wrath of the times than does this book.100

Ward was a pastor of the church of Ipswich, Massachusetts, the Indian "Agawam" which appears in the book's title. Frightened by the new views of toleration coming out of England and New England, Ward began to write his book in the early 1640s, taking the manuscript to England when he returned there in 1646. The orthodox Puritan from the New World found his ideas much in favor in England; his book was printed in 1647, and a year later, apparently because of his views against toleration, he was invited to preach before the Commons. Ward's book was not peculiar to American orthodoxy, but was the product of an orthodox Puritan who opposed toleration in both Massachusetts and England. "The Truths of God are the pillars of the world," wrote Ward, "whereon States and Churches may stand in quiet if they will." And he, like many other writers from the Bay colony, clearly intended to show that Massachusetts has no "Colluviues of wild Opinionists" who "swarmed into a remote wilderness to find elbow-room" for their "phanatick Doctrines and practices." Therefore, he proclaimed boldly,

I dare take upon me, to be the Herauld of New England so farre, as to proclaime to the world, in the name of our Colony, that all Familists, Antinomians, Ana-baptists, and other Enthusiasts, shall have free liberty to keep away from us, and such as will come to be gone as fast as they can, the sooner the better.101

Although a minister himself, Ward was not interested in debate; on the contrary, he regarded his view as the whole and only truth. His discourse is therefore not a theological one aimed at proving errors, but a rigid plea to the godly magistrates to destroy any deviation in ecclesiastical matters. It is the work of the devil, he wrote, "who would ask nothing else, but liberty to enfranchise all other religion." For "to authorise an untruth, by Toleration of State, is to build a Sconce against the walls of Heaven, to batter God out of his Chair." Thus, warned Ward, "if the State of England shall . . . willingly Tolerate" heresy, "the Church of that Kingdom will sooner become the Devils Dancing-Schoole, than Gods-Temple."102

Ward's anti-toleration stand was common indeed in Massachusetts during that time. Thomas Dudley for example, wrote in verse: "Let men of God in courts and churches watch O'er such as do a toleration hatch." And it was common saying in the colony that "Antichrist was coming in that backdoor by a general liberty of conscience."103 Toleration, evi-

103 Thomas Dudley and Thomas Shepard are cited in History of American Literature, by M.C. Tyler, I, p. 108.
dently, in the minds of those orthodox Puritans in old and New England was a policy that would destroy order. "That State that will give Liberty of Conscience in matters of Religion," wrote Ward, "must give Liberty of Conscience and Conversation in their Morall Laws." Consequently, he declared:

There is talke of an universal Toleration, I would talk what I could against it, did I know what more apt and reasonable Sacrifice England could offer to God . . . than an universal Toleration of all hellish Errors, or how they shall make a universal Reformation, but by making Christs Academy the Devils University, where any man may commence Heretique per saltum; where he that is filius Diabolicus, or simpliciter pessimus, may have his grace to go to hell cum Publico Privilegio, and carry as many after him, as he can. 104

During the year of its publication, Ward’s *The Simple Cobler* went through four editions, and in June, 1648, he was invited to preach before the Commons. "Lament in a special manner," he admonished the Commons, "that your Townes and Churches, are so belepered with errours and strange opinions" which might bring "Gods wrath, and [put] the People spirits on fire." 105 For the Army, Ward’s sermon was "worse than Edwards his Gangraena," 106 because Ward’s aim was indeed to unite Independents and Presbyterians in England against heresy and toleration. This had been, nonetheless, the official stand in Massachusetts as given in “The Cambridge Platform” in 1648. "The congregational Churches, or their way," declared the Bay Puritans, when “duely administered, do no less effectually extirpate the Antichristian hierarchy, & all Blasphemies, Heresyes, and pernicious errours, than the other way of discipline doeth,” namely, Presbyterianism. 107

When confronted by the rise of sectarianism, orthodox Puritans in old and New England united against heresy and vehemently attacked the very notion of religious toleration and liberty of conscience. They stressed again and again the decisive role which godly magistrates should play in defending the church and sustaining the Christian commonwealth. Here, on the issue of the godly magistrate’s role, lay the essential difference between old and New England. In England, because of the political context, those in power could not, for reasons of expediency, act on orthodox Puritan demands to suppress heresy. Their main concern had first been to destroy popery. For this reason, they accommodated the sects within Parliament’s army. And this accommodation led Baxter to blame them for being the principal agents in abandoning the Puritan dream of New Jerusalem in England and for relinquishing

aspirations for unity and conformity to sectarian demands for diversity of sects. However, religious toleration was not won as an idea because only a few advocated it as a matter of principle. When people in England turned to it, they did so only because it was the lesser of two evils. Not an end in itself, it was rather a means to achieve unity among rival religious groups faced with a common enemy. In Massachusetts, on the other hand, the godly magistrate was totally free from such considerations and obligations, and the colony could continue its policies of antitoleration without hindrance. However, when Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector, enforced the policy of religious toleration in England, he created a historical paradox in the relationship between Massachusetts and England. Cromwell’s religious toleration became the basis of his policy toward the colony, and the great advocate of toleration in England, thus, unwittingly, upheld Massachusetts’ right to maintain religious uniformity within its realm. The one who enforced the policy of toleration in England on orthodox Puritans there, by the very policy of toleration, allowed the Puritans in America to persecute other opinions and beliefs.

VII

In sum, despite their ecclesiological differences, the Presbyterians and Independents in England, and the Congregationalists in New England, shared important and fundamental principles concerning the very nature of Christian society and the decisive role the godly magistrate was to play in religious matters. Throughout the 1640s, therefore, these Puritan groups constituted a common and formidable orthodox front against the Sectarians’ plea for religious liberty and toleration. They did so because orthodoxy, as the term suggests, signified principles of preserving religious unity and conformity within the confines of Christian commonwealth and civil and ecclesiastical harmony in maintaining the true church and the true faith within a godly Christian society. Originating in the Middle Ages, these principles permeated the social and political thought of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Consequently, the ideal of orthodox Puritans in England, Presbyterians as well as Independents, was to achieve religious “uniformity based upon the will of a godly people and maintained with the support of a godly civil state.”108 Likewise, Massachusetts Bay Puritans adhered strongly to this ideal of Puritan orthodoxy by establishing in America “the principles of [religious] uniformity and of civil ecclesiastical cooperation.”109

The premises of Puritan orthodoxy concerning the relationship between church and state should be seen above all in the context of the Protestant Reformation. More specifically, these premises go back to John Calvin who eliminated the distinction between the natural and supernat-

109 Perry Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, p. 72.
ural within a theocratic universe ruled directly and immediately by God’s divine providence. Hence, he revolutionized the theological and religious significance of the state in the drama of salvation. For according to Calvin, “Christ as the Head of His Church is also precisely the Lord of this world.” The state thus “exists for the good of those who in this perishable world belong to Christ and his eternal kingdom.”110 It exercises an important role in providential history, or in the history of salvation, by helping the church’s aims and goals in the world. Indeed, Calvin asserted that “the spiritual kingdom of Christ and civil government are things very different and remote from each other.”111 Yet he also emphasized their cooperation: “this civil government is designed, as long as we live in this world, to cherish and support the external worship of God, to preserve the pure doctrine of religion, [and] to defend the constitution of the church.”112 By seeking the spiritual welfare of its citizens, the political order was therefore not only responsible for promoting their religious life and the well-being of the church but also for protecting both from idolatry, blasphemy, and sacrilege. This was then, as we saw earlier, the very essence of Puritan orthodoxy in old and New England. That is, this was nothing less than the view that the state had a crucial role to play within sacred, providential history by protecting the true church, preserving the true faith, and extirpating heresy.

Ultimately, Puritan orthodoxy signified “the joining of Church and Commonwealth under the civil power” which entailed the magistrate’s supremacy over and responsibility for the church.113 It was because of these views that orthodox Puritans were never willing to relinquish their stand that the godly civil magistrate ought to have a decisive role in preserving religious order, authority, unity, and conformity within the Christian commonwealth that they had been trying to establish in both England and New England. This is clearly borne out in the official declarations of orthodox Puritans on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean: The Westminster Confession of Faith of 1646 professing Presbyterian faith set forth by the Westminster Assembly of Divines; The Cambridge Platform of 1648 written by Massachusetts Bay Congregationalists; and The Savoy Declaration of 1658 which was a statement of Congregational principles and policy drawn up by the Independents in England. These official documents of orthodox Puritans show clearly and unmistakably that orthodoxy indeed existed in both England and New England.

The Westminster Confession of Faith was written by the Assembly of Divines that met at Westminster Abbey during the Puritan Revolution. It was adopted by Presbyterians in England and Scotland and later became the dominant standard for Presbyterianism in the English-

111 John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, IV, 20, i.
112 Calvin, Institutes, IV, 20, ii.
113 Perry Miller, Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, p. 5.
speaking world. The Westminster Confession defined clearly the role Presbyterians assigned to the godly civil magistrate in religious affairs and the part he ought to play in Christian society in order to maintain order and authority:

The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and Sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.¹¹⁴

On the other side of the ocean, in Massachusetts, Congregationalists produced in 1648 The Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline which was a “publick confession of faith” in which, as with the Westminster Confession, the decisive role of the godly civil magistrate within Christian society was strongly asserted:

It is the duty of the Magistrate, to take care of matters of religion, & to improve his civil authority for the observing of the duties commanded in the first, as well as for observing of the duties commanded in the second table. They are called Gods. The end of the Magistrates office, is not only the quiet & peaceable life of the subject, in matters of righteousness & honesty, but also in matters of godliness, yea of all godliness.

Therefore, like Puritans in England, the Congregationalists in Massachusetts assigned the civil magistrate an important role in preserving unity and conformity in religious matters: “Idolatry, Blasphemy, Heresy, venting corrupt & pernicious opinions, that destroy the foundation, open contempt of the word preached, prophanation of the Lord’s day, disturbing the peaceable administration & exercise of the worship & holy things of God, & the like, are to be restrayned, & punished by civill authority.”¹¹⁵

The Savoy Declaration, 1658, or “A Declaration of the Faith and Order Owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England” as it was known in full, was drawn up by English Independents at a conference held at the chapel of the old Savoy Palace. In it, Independents pledged full adherence to the premises of Puritan orthodoxy as represented in The Westminster Confession and The Cambridge Platform. “God the supreme Lord and King of all the world,” the section of The Savoy Declaration on the Civil Magistrate begins, “hath ordained civil Magistrates to be under him, over the people for his own glory and the publique

good." Consequently, the crucial role which the godly Christian magistrate ought to play within a Christian commonwealth was derived from this divine appointment:

The Magistrate is bound to encourage, promote, protect the professor and profession of the Gospel, and to manage and order civil administration in a due subserviency to the interest of Christ in the world, and to that end to take care that men of corrupt mindes and conversations do not licentiously publish and divulge Blasphemy and Errors in their own nature, subverting the faith, and inevitably destroying the souls of them that receive them.\textsuperscript{116}

What is most evident in these official declarations of orthodox Puritans in old and New England is their overriding concern with preserving unity and conformity in religious matters within the confines of Christian commonwealth. For in an age in which religious affairs were so closely intermingled with the affairs of the whole society, it was only natural that the quest to maintain social and political order was deeply associated with the establishment of firm religious conformity. Accordingly, the official documents of orthodox Puritans reveal their unbroken commitment to order and authority within religious society through the power of the civil magistrate. Therefore, religious liberty and toleration were incompatible with reformation according to Scripture: "a toleration is against the nature of reformation, a reformation and a toleration are diametrically opposite; the commands of God given in his word for reformation, with the examples of reforming governors, civil and ecclesiastical, do not admit toleration."\textsuperscript{117}

Though orthodox Puritan arguments against religious toleration are not appealing by today's standards, they were, nevertheless, much more representative of the seventeenth century than the pleas of a minority of Sectarians who advocated religious liberty. Therefore, throughout the 1640s, orthodox Puritans were engaged in a fierce battle to maintain religious unity and social order against the Sectarians' plea to exclude the state from any interference in religious matters and, consequently, to secure toleration for all religious persuasions. In their struggle against the Sectarians, orthodox Puritans could count upon a decisive majority in Parliament and upon their overwhelming majority among the nine thousand parish ministers.

In the context of the struggle against the Sectarians' search for religious toleration, one easily discerns an important dimension regarding the essential conservative character of the Puritan movement. Examination of orthodox Puritan attitudes toward religious toleration clearly indicates that, as a religious movement, Puritanism was indeed conservative. Its ultimate goals were preserving order and authority and maintaining


\textsuperscript{117} Thomas Edwards, \textit{Antapologia: Or a Full Answer to the Apologetical Narration} (London, 1644), p. 285.
the traditional unity between spiritual and social life and between church
and state. "In order to understand Puritanism," wrote Perry Miller, "we
must go . . . to an age when the unity of religion and politics was so
axiomatic that very few men would even have grasped the idea that
church and state could be distinct. For the Puritan mind it was not pos-
sible to segregate a man's spiritual life from his communal life." This
cherished traditional unity undoubtedly underlay the essentially conser-
vative nature of Puritanism. For among orthodox Puritans, "practically
everybody agreed that there could be but one true religion and that the
church should be maintained by the state. The continuance of ordered
society was as yet inconceivable without the Christian church, and the
church was inconceivable except as a single comprehensive institution
uniform in faith and worship."

118 Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, eds., The Puritans: A Source of their Writings,