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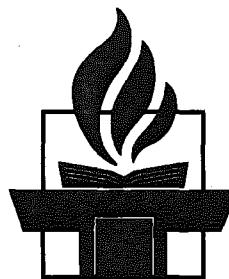
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The Perils of Puritanism

Thomas N. Smith

From the beginning the Puritans were an easy mark for the malicious sarcasm and satire of their opponents. Indeed, the term "Puritan" was itself, at first, a term of abuse thrown at these serious Christians because of their piety and zeal. "All who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The Puritans were no exception. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they were lampooned in print, in cartoon, in obscene verse, in pulpits, and in the polite after-dinner conversation of the gentry. Since then a whole collegium of Puritan bashers has come and gone, from Macaulay in the nineteenth century to Mencken and Hefner in our own.

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The root of this abuse is twofold. First, it is grounded in the human heart that is hostile toward God and godliness, and second, in the tendency of the godly to take positions that make themselves ridiculous, not just to the world, but to other serious Christians as well. The Puritans, no more than we ourselves, could not expect to escape both of these things completely. The fact is, the more a group of sincere Christians is persecuted for serious positions, the more seriously they tend to take themselves and, thereby, open themselves to taking their positions to ridiculous extremes. There is a very fine line between a godly conscientiousness and a carnal self-consciousness, between taking God seriously (a virtue) and taking ourselves seriously (a vice). Thus, I begin with a little spiritual exercise after the Puritan model.

The Puritans tended to take everything equally seriously, as do their contemporary devotees. And therein is a grave danger and temptation, what the Puritans themselves would have called one of "Satan's wiles" or "devices." This temptation is to blind ourselves to our own weaknesses out of fear, pride, or self-righteousness. To fall into such a temptation is to violate one of the cardinal rules of Puritan per-

sonal devotion: rigorous self-examination leading to self-renunciation and rededication of God as revealed in the Gospel. But, as the Apostle James reminds us: "Brethren, we all stumble in many ways."

The inability to examine and judge the Puritans (and ourselves as would-be Puritans) is all too apparent in the contemporary revival of interest in their times, their theology, and their practice. Judge for yourself. If you are prone to the temptation I have indicated, then it is likely that you have read the title to this article with something less than perfect objectivity and detachment. It is even possible that your seeing my title and reading my words have caused your pulse to increase. You may even feel it necessary to write to me or the editor to express your concern or outrage. There are several possible reasons for this. First, you may judge that what I write about the Puritans is uninformed, biased, poorly argued, badly written, etc. Or, you may be motivated by one or more of the three things which I mentioned earlier: fear, pride, or self-righteousness.

The fear results in having our dearly held views challenged; doubts are planted. The pride results from our fearing the possibility of having to change our views and resisting this. The self-righteousness results from our belief that what we believe and practice is God's truth, period.

It is just this kind of thing that we are always confronting when we are dealing with teachers or guides we respect. The tendency is to go beyond a legitimate respect and to harbor an idolatrous regard for them. What Barth said of Calvin in the early twenties needs to be said of every teacher and every tradition in the nineties:

... we do not have teaching by repeating Calvin's words as our own or making his views ours. That would not be to make his words historical, that is to give them life. Perhaps at times or to a large extent we do this. Why should we not

adopt some of Calvin's formulations as they stand and make them our own? We may, but that is not the aim in studying Calvin. Be they ever so devout and faithful, those who simply echo Calvin are not good Calvinists, *that is, they are not really taught by Calvin. Being taught by Calvin means entering into dialogue with him, with Calvin as the teacher and ourselves as the students, he speaking, we doing our best to follow him and then—this is the crux of the matter—making our own response to what he says.* If this does not really happen we might as well be listening to Chinese; the historical Calvin is not present. For that Calvin wants to teach and not just say something that we will repeat. The aim, then, is a dialogue that may end with the taught saying something very different from what Calvin said but that they learned from or, better, through him. Calvin's doctrine is the teacher, and therefore history is when it kindles in us our own independent knowledge which basically makes that doctrine superfluous no matter how much or how little of the teacher's words we can directly make our own. For if a teacher is able, and the students do their duty, then by the year's end they do not need the teacher. If they stay where they are, then that would be a terrible symptom that something is wrong. . . . We listen, we learn, and then we go our own way and in so doing we give evidence of respect, or doing the teacher justice (emphasis mine).¹

This, it seems to me, approximates the attitude Jesus is inculcating in His disciples in Matthew 23: 8-10. And it is this perspective that governs and informs what I have to say regarding the theology of the English Puritans.

And valid concern of the Puritan ethos must be based on an appreciation (I would say, "a *sympathetic* appreciation") of the historical and cultural circumstances they found themselves facing in English society and church in the seventeenth century.

The fact is, the church the Puritans found themselves in at the beginning of the seventeenth century was a “reformed” church in name only. The reformation begun under the circumstances of Henry the VIII’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon was a political move of the most flagrant sort. Henry himself remained as devoted a Roman Catholic as he was an antipapist until his dying day. The fact that the people sympathetic to the Continental Reformation sought to use the reforms instituted under Henry for the purpose of bringing the Gospel to England does not cancel the fact that these reforms played a relatively small part in actual reformation and revival within thousands of parish churches throughout the Realm. The advance of the truth under the short-lived reign of Edward VI was viciously opposed with the ascendancy of Mary Tudor in 1553. The coming of Elizabeth I certainly produced a climate of toleration toward a more evangelical position, thus making way for the Puritan influence within the Church of England, but the fact is that most of the people within that church were ignorant of the Gospel of Christ. The earliest Puritan pastors and their successors went to work to remedy this situation.

This perspective enables us to better understand the leading motifs of Puritan preaching and pastoral counseling. These men were after real Regeneration and conversion, resulting in real holiness and godliness among their congregations.

Hence the Puritan preoccupation with authentic conversion from sin, with “searching” applicatory preaching, with Regeneration and Sanctification, with precise moral and ethical practicality, in a word, with “the power of godliness.” Those of us living and laboring with the Christian churches of North America at the end of the twentieth century can well appreciate these concerns.

But it is just at this point that the Puritans (and we who appreciate them today) are in great danger. Such concerns,

especially when taken seriously and implemented with great zeal, expose us to a moral extremism which may threaten a clear, unambiguous preaching and application of the Gospel of pure grace. This inevitably happens when the subjective and practical concerns of a Gospel that insists, first and foremost, that what God has done for us through Jesus Christ and the gift of His Spirit we can never, in Justification or Sanctification, do for ourselves. It is my thesis in this paper that this is what too often happened in Puritanism as it played itself out in the lives of Christians and Christian churches.

Nor is this to suggest that such a tendency is always to be found in the Puritans, especially in such Puritan giants as John Owen or John Bunyan. The Gospel as a Gospel of grace, whether in its preaching as forgiveness or renewal, is clearly and beautifully evident in most Puritan works.

However, tensions existed then, as now, in a biblical presentation of the truth, and the Puritans, no more than we, were not always able to resist the temptation to relax the tensions that must always be maintained, and the result was a tendency towards moralism, legalism, and a conflict over the assurance of salvation that became a leading theme in the thousands of Puritan books, pamphlets, and sermons published during the seventeenth century.

My own belief is that the surest way to renewal is in the regular preaching of the Gospel as a gracious accomplishment of the Triune God, through the Election of the Father, the obedience of the Son, and the renewal of the Holy Spirit; that all ethical demand must be rooted and grounded in this reality as it comes into focus in the life and teaching, as well as the redemptive accomplishment, of Jesus, and that this is lived out, first, in the church, and then in society. That the Puritans shared this concern, I do not intend to deny. That they failed to carry it out completely in their perception and application of the Gospel, because of unresolved conflicts

within their own theological understanding, I hope to show.

The Puritans' View of Revelation

My first concern with the theology of the Puritans has to do with their view of revelation. This has been called a "flat" view of Scripture, and while realizing the pejorative flavor of the word, for lack of a better one, I will use it.

To say that the Puritans held a "flat" view of revelation is but to say that they exaggerated the unity of the two testaments. There is little room in their theology for a progressive revelation. This is not to say that they did not wrestle with this problem, nor that every Puritan preacher and divine stumbled to the same degree in understanding this matter (witness John Owen's magnificent "Introduction" to the epistle to the Hebrews). But, it is characteristic of the whole period to exaggerate the unity of the Bible, without giving due to the principle of diversity and development within it. This is seen in the Puritan determination to identify the Old Testament family as the prototype of the New Testament church, the tendency to view Old Testament society as the ideal for modern society, the inclination to read New Testament experience back into the lives of the patriarchs and kings and prophets, and in the almost universal practice of regarding the covenant at Sinai with its Ten Commandments as being the alpha and the omega of Christian ethics.

To the Puritans, the moral law (always "the Moral Law" in the Puritan literature) is always the Ten Commandments. This view of the decalog follows the lead of the scholastic theologians of the Middle Ages, Luther and Calvin, the Continental Reformed scholastic divines, and is enshrined in the *Westminster Standards*, that most enduring monument to the Puritan scholastic orthodoxy. (For a thorough-going treatment of this issue, the reader is referred to two works by the late Ernest Kevan, *The Moral Law* and *The Grace of*

Law. Kevan's treatment is, on the whole, sympathetic and noncritical, but is a fair and accurate presentation of the Puritan position on this issue.)

This insistence on the uniqueness of the covenant made at Sinai and inscribed on "two tables of stone" blinded the Puritans to the unparalleled uniqueness of the Coming of the Word in flesh and the implications of this for the ethics by which the New Community is governed.

In saying this, I do not mean to imply that the moral content of the Ten Commandments is not perpetual, nor that this moral content is no longer binding upon believers under the new covenant, nor that the New Testament itself does not link its specifically new covenantal imperatives to the Decalog (cf. Eph. 6:1-3 and Rom. 13:8-10). What I am concerned to stress at this point is the fact that the Puritans, in their failure to see the progressive development of the Bible, coming as it does to the climax in Jesus Christ, did not give adequate place to the supremacy and finality of the Lord Jesus as the prophet and law-giver of the New Israel. This can be seen in three areas.

The first of these is the Puritan stress on the necessity of a "law work" for true conversion. The Puritans maintained (on the tenuous basis of such texts as Romans 3:19; Galatians 3:23-24; and 1 John 3:4) that true conversion to God always resulted from a work of conviction wrought by the preaching of the Ten Commandments. They were suspicious of professions of faith which were not preceded by such a "law work" and stressed that the Christian lives produced by such "conversions" were not likely to measure up to the ethical precision produced by the more orthodox law preaching. For the Puritans it was *always* "the sharp needle of the Law and makes way for the scarlet thread of the Gospel" (Samuel Bolton), and "When God tunes the instrument He (always) begins with the bass" (John Bunyan).

The primary problem with this paradigm of “law preaching” and “law work,” of course, is the fact that there is no evidence of it in the apostolic preaching of the New Testament. It is not found in the preaching of Acts, and attempts to find it in the evangelistic method of Jesus are full of special pleading.² To ground the whole Christian life on this questionable foundation led to tremendous tensions in Puritan preaching and in the Christian lives of Puritan men and women.

Second, the Puritans emphasized the centrality of the Ten Commandments in regulating and scrutinizing the faith and life of Christians in a manner that almost excludes the ethical emphasis of the new covenant. The approach to ethical concerns which we see in such standard Puritan works on the Ten Commandments as that of Thomas Watson is strangely “not-at-home” in the New Testament Scriptures. To be sure, the overarching concerns are there—idolatry, malice, lust, etc. But, the concern to root all ethical obligation in the accomplishment of Christ and His subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit is seldom dominant and, in some cases, downright absent.³ The result, inevitably, is that Puritan preaching on ethical issues is moralistic in tone and legalistic in its tendency. All of this is the result of a flat view of biblical revelation and ethics, a view that does not give the uniqueness of the Coming of Jesus and the Spirit the centrality which it deserves and which it always has in the ethical emphases of the apostolic preaching.⁴

When this approach to ethics is then turned as a tool of scrutiny upon Christian profession the effects are sad and, at times, disastrous. A new preaching develops, a preaching too often preoccupied with the “marks” of a truly converted person. This kind of preaching was one of the inevitabilities of zealous men intent upon producing renewal among minimal Christians. The result for man was a sad one. One can only feel pity for many Puritan church members, particu-

ly for those of a morbid, introspective, and depressive personality type. The whole tendency of Puritan preaching on the nature of conversion, as well as the kind of ethical preaching we have just spoken of, especially when this preaching becomes a searching probe, is to keep such people in a constant state of emotional and spiritual turmoil, going about every day saying, “Do I love the Lord, or no? Am I His, or am I not?” And it is just here that we face what is perhaps the greatest irony about the Puritans and their era: The best works from the Puritan era, the works that remain, those that people will read and profit from, are invariably the Puritan treatises on comfort, assurance, encouragement. But, the need for such works is the result in great part of the kind of preaching that the authors of these works engaged in when dealing with the Law. The very fact that so much attention was given to the “problem” of assurance in the massive body of printed material coming from the Puritans would, I suggest, indicate the tensions here. The result is a terrible cycle. The believer is assured of acceptance through the faithful preaching of the Gospel, but his faith and life are scrutinized in such a way by the searching application of the Law that this assurance is always, at best, tenuous. This, I would argue, is what led Thomas Watson to say that the two hardest things for the preacher to do are to make the ungodly sad and the godly happy. Such Puritan preaching in the hands of a latter-day Puritan, Ralph Erskine, led one of his despairing hearers to say to his pastor, “Would to God that I possessed even the marks of one of your damned hypocrites!” Such a cycle produces aberrant behavior and mental conflict of the most serious kind. Some of us confess that we have preached in this manner or have sat under preaching of this kind as the result of the revival of interest in the Puritans. We have seen firsthand this vicious cycle. And, while the exaggerations of Nathaniel Hawthorne distort a holistic vision of Puritanism, they do

focus on a mental state of cognitive dissonance usually associated with such preaching and its effects.

Perhaps we can detect at this point another failure of Puritanism connected with their view of Scripture: The tendency to see the gifts of the Spirit which the New Testament makes distinctive to the new covenant as being “in some sense” active under the old covenant. The result is to denude the new covenant of its newness, and nowhere is this more evident than in the Puritan neglect of the doctrine of Adoption, especially as it relates to ethics, as even such a protagonist of Puritanism as J. I. Packer admits in *Knowing God*.⁵ The fact is the new covenant addresses its subjects in just these terms: “You are all sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus … in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts” (Gal. 3:26; 4:5-6). Furthermore, the whole ethical impact of the new covenant is predicated upon the fact of sonship (as Packer so ably demonstrates in *Knowing God*).⁶ The failure of Puritanism at this point must qualify any praise which we have for the massive body of literature coming from them, for it fails at just the point where the New Testament is so centrally and specifically focused. To be fair, we must say that the best Puritans, such as John Owen and Thomas Goodwin, balanced this inadequacy with an emphasis upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit working to give assurance to the believer through the Gospel.

The Puritans and the Gospel

The second major area of concern which we must emphasize in regard to Puritanism has to do with the tendency of the movement to subjectivize and individualize the Gospel. It is a common criticism leveled at contemporary evangelicalism in the English-speaking world that it is too subjective and individualized.⁷ Much of the blame for this

can be found in our Puritan heritage. The result of this is a self-conscious Pietism, a playing down of the church and its sacraments, and an “other worldly” perspective in life in the here-and-now. To be sure, it would be unfair to accuse the whole Puritan movement of the seventeenth century of fostering these things. As has been frequently shown, there were Puritans who maintained a healthy view of life in the church and in the world on personal and public levels.⁸ But it can also be shown from the diaries and journals of the same period that tremendous chasms of conflict existed in the minds of the Puritans themselves as the result of Platonic and Gnostic elements in their thinking.⁹

I would argue that much of the pathology evident in Puritan piety resulted from an exaggerated emphasis upon a subjective experience of the Gospel and an individualistic view of Christian living.

It is a consensus among historians of evangelical Christianity that one of the marks of the movement is a stress upon individual conversion. For evangelicals, anyone who is in the least in tune with the New Testament must see this. Thus, the Puritan emphasis upon conversion is biblical. What I am suggesting, however, is that the stress given this biblical emphasis in the Puritan sermons and treatises is out of proportion to the emphasis found on this subject in the New Testament itself.

The Puritan stress on individual conversion, conviction, assurance, etc., is out of proportion to the apostolic emphasis upon the mighty works of God coming to fulfillment in the history of Jesus Christ and His church. Part of the reason behind this is the failure of Puritanism to grasp the redemptive-historical element of the Bible (though there are amazing insights of this kind to be found in such Puritans as Thomas Goodwin). In failing to see the historical-redemptive nature of, say, Galatians 4:1-21 or Romans 8:1-5, the Puritans ran amok into a subjectivism that gave rise to their

peculiar doctrines of “law work” and assurance, not to speak of the conflicts inherent in their understanding of Sanctification and its relationship to Justification and Adoption. The practical result of this is a Christian experience dominated by doubt and fears and characterized by nervousness and a critical spirit. Far from the bold apostolic “*You are*” (see Gal. 3:26 et al.), the Puritan equivalent is, at best, “*You may be.*” And this is the result, in great part, from the Puritan stress upon the application of Redemption in the believer’s life and experience, rather than the apostolic insistence upon the accomplishment of Redemption in the Work of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The result of this emphasis on ethics is a preoccupation with a casuistical approach to conduct in the Puritan ethos. (Perhaps the standard work is Richard Baxter’s *A Christian Directory* [1990], recently reprinted by Soli Deo Gloria.) The Puritans were the original “how-to” Christians. They were preoccupied with ordering the whole of their lives to the glory of God. This cannot and will not be taken away from them. When asked by a sneering lord of the manor why he and his Puritan colleagues were so “precise,” John Rogers answered, “Oh, sir, it is because we serve a precise God.” But with the Puritan zeal to please God arose the conceit that godliness is always to be found in a precise, thorough-going attention to detail. This view is more akin to the Pharisees with their scrupulous attentiveness to hand washing, seed tithing, and Sabbath keeping, than to Jesus and His apparent nonchalance regarding such things. The whole tendency of this, as any experienced pastor will tell you, is to produce people who are preoccupied with moral minutiae while remaining insensitive or impervious to the larger issues of the Law: love, faithfulness, justice, and compassion. These are people whose tendency is ever to “strain out the gnat and swallow the camel.” The sad record of Puritanism in the New England Colonies would, I suggest,

underscore this if we look closely at the causes of Anne Hutchinson or the Salem “witches.”

The pull of such individualism and subjectivity in Christian experience and ethics is away from, rather than toward the church, as the body of Christ. Thus, there is little emphasis in the Puritans on the role of the church as a fellowship of real Christians met together for worship and mutual edification. One of the reasons for this, of course, is the fact that the Puritan preachers did not view their churches as fellowships of believers, but as fields where the wheat and tares grew together. To give credit, Goodwin, Owen, and the other Congregationalists tried to move in this direction, but without profound impact upon the Puritan movement as a whole. To be fair it must be said that the Puritans gave great stress to the importance of “the little church” within the home with daily worship (sometimes three or four times a day), and to meetings within private homes for fellowship and prayer. They also valued the sacrament, though here as elsewhere the insistence upon “proper communicants” tended to raise its own problems. It is interesting to note that more time was probably spent on the issue of the Lord’s Supper at the Westminster Assembly than on any one issue.¹¹

This is not the church of the New Testament. Unlike the Puritan church, the apostolic churches were ministering bodies, both to those within them and to those without. They were also churches engaged in massive evangelistic and missionary endeavors, which the Puritan churches, as a rule, were not.¹² I would argue that this is the natural result of an overemphasis upon the subjective and individualistic aspect of conversion and Christian experience, and the blame for this must be laid at the door of the leaders of the Puritan movement, the preachers, pastors, and divines themselves.

But there is perhaps another reason for this style of

church. The Puritans, especially the episcopalians and presbyterians, believed in a view of Christian ministry that did not give ample space for the exercise of the spiritual gifts of the various members of the body of Christ. To be sure, men such as Owen, Goodwin and Bunyan, as well as others of a more congregational bent, were more tolerant and even encouraging in this area. But, the strict clericalism that characterized the times, and many of the men of those times, advanced a view of the church far removed from that which is found in the New Testament.¹³

Much more could be said (and should be) about the weakness and blind spots of Puritanism. We could single out the following: (1) The interpretation of Scripture and making of theology under a strong Aristotelian philosophical perspective. (2) The urge to structure modern society on pre-modern models. (3) The credulity of such leading Puritans as Cotton Mather (cf. his *Magnalia Christi Americana*).

What, then? Shall we discard the Puritan Era and its huge body of literature altogether? The critique I have given is, after all, bleak to the point of paleness. The answer is "No." As stated earlier, the mark of true respect for any teacher, for any teaching tradition within the Christian church is the ability to hear, digest, learn, and then criticize the teaching in light of the final revelation which we have in the Scriptures. What is true of the Puritan Era and (even) its greatest teachers is true of every era of Christian history, of the fathers, the scholastics, the reformers, the teachers of the twentieth century, no less than of the Puritans.

The Puritans have much to teach us, and their style can be wonderfully entertaining and entertainingly edifying. I think of John Owen on *Spiritual Mindedness* and *The Glory of Christ*, of Thomas Flavel's *Evangelical Minister Drawn by Christ*, of Thomas Goodwin on *Christ the Mediator*, of Thomas Brooks' *Heaven on Earth*, of Robert Trail's *Throne of Grace*, and of various works by Manton, Sibbes, Watson, etc. These works

are as redolent as a cedar closet with the perfume of Christ and the Gospel. They breathe forth an atmosphere of holiness. They reflect like a mirror the brightness of the sun, the seriousness of that heart religion we find in both testaments. In a word, *they take God seriously* and this, in my opinion, is the whole duty of man (Eccl. 12:13).

Let us read them critically, but appreciatively. Let us use them in a contemporary and careful manner. Have we any models for such use? Thankfully, we do, and perhaps the most compelling of these is the nineteenth-century lover of the Puritans, Charles Haddon Spurgeon. In Spurgeon's hands the Puritans became a means of understanding and communicating the timeless message of the Gospel to his own time and place—Victorian England. Spurgeon loved the Puritans. Some of us have held in our own hands the very volumes ("wandering about in sheepskins and goatskins") he treasured and marked. But, Spurgeon was not an uncritical reader of the Puritans. He rejected their view of the church, their "law work" preparationism, their preoccupation with ethical minutiae, their tendency toward moralism and legalism, their overemphasis of the doctrine of Sanctification, and many other like things. He gloried in their Christ-centeredness, their experimental Calvinism with its exaltation of grace, their tender treatment of the depressed and the distressed, their seriousness over godliness in the home and in the workplace, as well as in the solemn assembly, and their unwavering focus on the glory to be revealed. They refreshed him in these areas, and from their gift Spurgeon refreshed others and continues to do so through the power of his printed sermons.

It is in such a way that we may read and profit from the Puritans despite all the perils inherent in the exercise. What is at issue here is the ultimate authority and lordship of Jesus Christ: "But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers" (Matt. 23:8). Because

Christ is the Teacher, par excellence, all teaching must be submitted to His ultimate, final standard of teaching. The Puritans themselves understood this formally.¹⁴ And it is doubtful that history will hold us of the twentieth century in any higher regard in respect to this issue than it does them.

On the other hand, Christ has given teachers to the church throughout her history (Eph. 4:8-12). To despise or to neglect them is rank arrogance and terrible expression of ingratitude to the Lord of the church.

What I am saying, in conclusion, is this: An interest in the past is always a mark of wisdom, whether it be found among the believing or the unbelieving. Wisdom did not begin with us. The Christian, particularly, is aware of the fact that he is a part of a long historical continuum (see Eph. 4:1-16). But there is always within us, testifying to our fallen and foolish condition, something else: A desire to live in the past, to find a place of comfort and peace in the past, or to relive the past, to reenact it. Such a desire is impious. It is an implicit denial of the sovereignty of God and an expression of the lusts of the heart. It is also stupid. It betrays enormous ignorance, both of the past and of ourselves. The British novelist L. P. Hartley was closer to the truth when he wrote: "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."

Endnotes

- 1 Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, English translation, 1995) 4-5.
- 2 Walter Chantry, *Today's Gospel, Authentic or Synthetic?* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971).
- 3 Various sermons in *Puritan Sermons, the Cripplegate Exercises*, Volumes 1-6, Richard O. Roberts, ed. (Wheaton: Richard O. Roberts Publishers, 1981).
- 4 See Titus 2:11-15 in its larger context of the entire epistle.
- 5 J.I. Packer, *Knowing God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), 202.

- 6 Ibid., 190-203.
- 7 Philip J. Lee, *Against the Protestant Gnostics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).
- 8 A recent effort is Leland Ryken's *Worldly Saints* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986).
- 9 Cf. Lee, op cit., 129ff., and Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1977).
- 10 D. W. Bebbington, "Evangelical Christianity and the Enlightenment," *Crux* (December 1989), Vol. 25, No.4.
- 11 Robert A. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985).
- 12 Bebbington, op cit., 32.
- 13 Op cit., Robert A. Paul.
- 14 *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 20, Section 2.

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