At the time of the Puritan attack, the traditional political ideas of hierarchy, organism, and patriarchy did not accurately describe English government or society. A long process of social and economic change—in which Puritanism itself played a part—slowly made the old ideas and symbols irrelevant. The civil wars of the period of "bastard feudalism," the development of Tudor absolutism, the destruction of the Catholic Church, the gradual but continuous progress of enclosure, the rapid economic growth of the later sixteenth century, the revolution of the seventeenth—these were so many stages in the transformation of traditional feudal society into a modern social order. In the course of this transformation, men faced dramatic new problems, symptoms of the collapse of old beliefs and the dissolution of old bonds. These can be summed up most sharply in the appearance of the "masterless man," alien from the feudal world, vagabond and criminal, hero of the new picaresque. In the eyes of their sober, prosperous and fearful fellows, these uprooted peasants, disbanded soldiers, and discharged retainers were the most hated villains of the age, carriers of the social diseases of violence and crime.1 Taken together, however, their desperation, the cruel difficulty of their lives, their riotous and occasionally rebellious activity, did not produce at any single moment a total crisis. Throughout the long period of social transformation there was a strong undercurrent of more routine activity, of accumulation and minor loss, of complacent and self-righteous prospering. The routine was maintained, to be sure, at some cost to the nerves; Tudor government was as watchful and tense as any of the Calvinist saints might have

The new problems required a continual vigilance; they burst into view in a long series of minor crises, resulting chiefly from agrarian dislocation, which prompted the sporadic legislative efforts of the early Tudors and led eventually to the great compilations of Elizabeth's reign. Increasingly, an order still defended as natural was buttressed by legislation and governmental force. These served, however, as a more or less stable framework within which the slow processes of social change continued to work their way.

In the literature of the age, there was an intense awareness of mutability, danger and—by the Jacobean and Caroline periods—decay. While the preambles to Tudor enactments stressed the ever-present threat of social disorder, writers and dramatists explored with a new forcefulness the vicissitudes of private life—for now that life was lived largely outside the stable country world of the old order. In such a mid-sixteenth-century collection as the *Mirror for Magistrates*, the wheel of fortune seemed to turn only for the few: those born to power and princely status on the one hand, bold usurpers on the other. Private men might still live quietly for all the dramatic struggles of princes and pretenders. But this was not so a half century later; the wheel turned for everyone, Ben Jonson thought:

> We see these changes daily: the fair lands<br>That were the clients, are the lawyer's now;<br>And those rich manors there of goodman Taylor's<br>Had once more wood upon them, than their<br>By which they were measured out for their<br>last purchase.<br>Nature hath these vicissitudes.<br>

Such descriptions probably tended to exaggerate the changes actually taking place, but they were themselves an important element in the whole long process of transformation.

The social problems most immediately relevant to the study of Puritanism were of four sorts. First, the problem of rural "de-population," vagabondage, and extensive (one modern historian writes "Asiatic") poverty. Perhaps caused as much by rapid population growth as by enclosures and sheep-farming, the dislocation of men from the old rural society set thousands of beggars wandering the roads. For more than a century these beggars quite literally formed a distinct social group, completely alienated from the work-a-day world on whose fringes they dwelt, raising children who would make the best of their misfortune and turn begging (to the horror of the godly ministers) into a profession and a way of life. Other men, driven from the land, poured into the cities and boroughs where they were newly subject to the calamities of depression and urban unemployment.

Secondly, then, the problem of rapid urbanization (if only in London) with its intensification of the dangers of plague and fire and its even more important effects upon medieval corporatism, upon the old, highly integrated and well-governed burgher community. London's population grew enormously, probably tripling, between the accession of Elizabeth and the death of James; at the latter date it certainly exceeded 300,000 souls. This dramatic burgeoning of the ancient city took place despite the great plagues of 1603 and 1644, when—in the two years together—more than 65,000 men and women died in the city. The entire population increase, and more, was the result of emigration from the countryside. It brought new men into London who could not be absorbed by the existing civic institutions. Many of them settled in the suburbs and outparishes of the old city and were free of the London magistrates and the powerful Livery Companies (but also less protected than London citizens in time of depression, famine, or plague). Crime flourished in the suburbs, flourished, judging from the literature, to a greater degree than Londoners had ever known before. The suburbs are "no other but dark dens for adulterers, thieves, murderers and every mischief worker," wrote Henry Chettle in 1591. And in the rapidly expanding city all the forms of urban exploitation, rack-renting, and profiteering

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5 *The Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. L. B. Campbell (Cambridge, Eng., 1908), p. 67: "In greatest charge cares greatest do enrange./The most possessed are ever most annoyed./In largest seas sores tempests lightly brew./The freakest colors soonest fade the hue..."
6 Ben Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass*, II, i.

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4 There is an especially fine summary of the existing material on urban poverty in the sixteenth century in Jordan, *Philanthropy*, pp. 65ff.
were already well known. Indeed, Thomas Hobbes thought urban life and its dangers a sufficient validation of his doctrine of the war of all against all. Yet Puritanism flourished also in the city and especially in the suburbs: in the records of the bishop's court recent immigrants turn up often as members of sectarian religious groups. Deprived of village solidarity, disoriented in the great crowds, many men must have found solace in Puritan faith and even in Puritan discipline. Other newcomers, however, wandered more vaguely through the crowded city, the permanent basis of a mob, the permanent concern of the traditional authorities, who sought sometimes to drive them out of the city, sometimes to prevent their coming in.

There was, thirdly, the problem of the religious vacuum left by the slow decay and then the abrupt collapse of the old church. At a fairly early point, both in London and the country, this vacuum began to be filled by Puritanism. Nevertheless, well into the seventeenth century and despite what one writer has called the "reconstruction" of Anglicanism there were many parishes without ministers and with churches in disrepair, many thousands of men deprived both of spiritual leadership and traditional religious activities. Throughout the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, there was apparently a slow eclipse of the once vigorous parish social life—the feastings, dances, and church feasts. The disappearance of the urban confraternities and the weakening of guild ties, the increased rate of social and geographic mobility, the creation of the urban crowd and the urban undergrowth due in part to the disappearance of the old faith, but also to the Tudor transformation of the parish into an administrative unit. Once again, for many men, Puritanism provided an alternative set of social and spiritual activities.

Finally, and in a way including all the rest, there was the basic problem of social organization, raised by the dissolution or disruption of the manorial and parochial systems, the end of rural "housekeeping," the disappearance of the urban confraternities and the weakening of guild ties, the increased rate of social and geographic mobility, the creation of the urban crowd and the urban undergrowth. Puritanism represented one of the most significant efforts to reorganize, bound together in social and spiritual activities.

The intensity and detail of the discussion and the fervor of the polemic seem pedantic and even foolish today; they suggest, however, the revolutionary character of the debate, in which the most important matters seemed at stake, no distinction was too fine to be made and every point required an equally total commitment.

From Thomas More's *Utopia* to the utopian and millenarian tracts of the revolutionary period, these problems were the major concern of social and religious thinkers. Statesmen, theologians and then "mechanic preachers" sought to solve them in one way or another and, of course, sought also to take advantage of them. Puritan literature represents one of the most significant efforts to do both: "God's people, as well as worldlings, have their times to fish in troubled waters." And the first effort of the saints was a radical and sustained polemic in defense of a new "discipline"—which suggests very quickly the nature of the troubled waters in which God's people hoped to fish. "Those who know Calvin only as a theologian," wrote Rousseau in *The Social Contract*, "much underestimate the extent of his genius." The same can be said of the Puritan preachers: they too were would-be legislators, and like both Calvin and Rousseau their legislative effort had as its goal the replacement of a decaying order and the regeneration of "wicked" men.

If their constructive plans, however, were a response to social and economic change, they did not make up, in modern terms, a theory of society and economy. Puritans confronted a disorder and confusion whose particular, material causes they hardly


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nothing is more common, or finally more tiresome, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than the moralizing treatise or sermon (or play) in which the sins of contemporary Englishmen are balefully itemized—and only rarely successfully satirized. It was not a complacent age, though it might well be objected that the descriptions of London vice are a little too vivid and enthusiastic to be taken seriously as morality; they had a commercial value as well. In sum, however, the literature was serious enough. In common with the less enforceable sections of sixteenth-century legislation, the moralistic literature was marked by a tendency to harken back to the stable and benevolent world of tradition. Against all the sins of their contemporaries, the new greed, the racking of the poor, the lust after titles, the pursuit of fashion, the writers, preachers, and lawmakers raised the image of an older England in which paternal lords and sturdy but deferential yeomen lived in harmony and alms flowed freely. The medieval England of conservative mythology had its origins in the sixteenth century; its appearance at that time already indicated a considerable failure of memory, which suggests in its turn a fairly long period of social change.

The myth of the good-days-gone-by is probably the most naive form of social criticism; for that very reason, it is subject to a wide range of interpretation and use. Even Puritan writers, for example, indulged their fancy with the new mythology, though in their hands traditional society took on an unlikely Spartan hue. Men in former times, thought Philip Stubbes, were "ten times better than we . . ." With their rough garments and simple fare, they were healthier and stronger than the degenerate subjects of Elizabeth. Conservative writers more often emphasized the benevolent and kindly features of the old hierarchical order: the true love of masters and servants, the generosity and liberality of the country gentry, and the loyalty of the yeoman. Among all

writers the theme of primitive simplicity and goodness was pervasive; it prevailed even in the aristocratic genre of the pastoral, though once the impact of French and Italianate styles had been felt, rural simplicity became something of a convention, itself paradoxically elaborate and artificial. In Puritan hands, once again, it came to describe a new kind of rigor and virtue. The earlier tradition may be summed up in the words of an anonymous writer of 1568; it used to be the custom of gentlemen, he solemnly declared,

\[\text{to feed many and be themselves fed of few, to seek London seldom and at their own houses often to be sought, to have their smoky kitchens replenished with victual, their stables with horses, their wardrobes rather with harness than silk garments, their halls with men, their chambers with plenty of fuel and few perfumes.}\]

Puritan ministers joined eagerly enough in the attack upon silk and perfume. They even joined in the traditional moralists' critique of private wealth and of men who "think they may do with their own what they list," but his ideas may safely be labeled puritanical. Virtue's Commonwealth was a dissertation upon the dangers of wealth, the typical product of a moralist responding unhappily to the sudden affluence of his society. Money and the greed for money, Crosse thought, set men in motion, drew them from their ancient homes and their fixed vocations. Too many men "leave the limits of their calling ... and either fall into a loitering life or attempt that wherein they have no skill ..." "We see how men of good place and reckoning will hide themselves in corners, live privately ... crowd into cities [and] boroughs ... roll up and down from one lodging to another ..." He evoked once again the image of a stable country society in which "men dwelt upon their own ... kept good houses and were no small stay to the places where they lived." Out of our conceptions of the past," wrote Thomas Hobbes, "we make a future." But Crosse's conception was not equal to the task. The virtue he demanded, like the moral reformation of the Puritan ministers, required more than the hospitality and "good houses" of the country he remembered. And in fact, Crosse's primary concern was not with the decay of the old order. It was with the harsh and contemporary fact of disorder: it was not nostalgia but anxiety that pervaded his work. He was as worried as any of the ministers when he confronted the exuberance, the despair, and the free-wheeling energy of the Renaissance city. Thus he joined in the Puritan attack upon the theater not so much be-

\[\text{17} \text{ Anon., The Institution of a Gentleman (London, 1568), sig. C.} \]
\[\text{19} \text{ Crosse, Virtue's Commonwealth (London, 1609), sig. N verso.} \]
\[\text{20} \text{ Ibid., sig. I and I verso.} \]
\[\text{21} \text{ Thomas Hobbes, Behemoth, in English Works, ed. W. Moleyns (London, 1839-1845), VI, 259.} \]
cause the plays were "scandalous" and immoral, but because their showing was an occasion for riot and their audiences were "for the most part the lowest persons in the land . . . an unclean generation . . ." They were the very same people who were incapable of attention "at a lecture and holy exercise." Similarly, Crosse followed the Puritan ministers in their denunciation of the great feudal and Renaissance houses. Parents who "put their children to be servingmen," he thought, did them a great disservice; among courtiers and pageboys they learned only vices, they did little work, carousal was their only recreation. Crosse held up instead the image of the Puritan family where the father sternly trained his sons in the habits of work. "Everyone ought to betake himself to some honest and seemly trade, and not suffer his senses to be mortified with idleness . . ." This was hardly an invocation of traditional country life.

Crosse's views were fairly typical; in one form or another they were repeated by other men, moderates, who were not ready to identify themselves with the Puritans. They found their echo, for example, in King James' Basilikon Doron, a book whose somewhat strenuous tone hardly suggests the future Cavalier—hardly suggests, indeed, James' own courtiers. The king's insistence upon example, in King James' London. The habitual indolence of monks, servants, and gentlemen "wholly given up to hunting and hawking" had only been touched the central theme of Puritan social criticism and emphasized once again the nature of Puritan uneasiness with afternoons spent at the theater, with days of lounging and "waiting" in the old order itself and so they turned their backs altogether on the traditionalist mythology. Idleness was the mark of the feudal houses and the Catholic Church as well as of the growing city of London. The habitual indolence of monks, servants, and gentlemen "wholly given up to hunting and hawking" had only been supplemented by the new "chaos" of beggars, vagabonds, and the unemployed or underemployed poor. These were all men who did not "betake themselves" to honest work; Crosse's phrase suggests the voluntaristic nature of the Puritan ideal and sets that ideal clearly apart from the more natural, essentially sentimental behavior urged by the traditional moralist.

The Puritan demand for continuous, organized, methodical activity—to banish idleness—was a reaction to the breakdown of country stability and (as in Crosse) to the sudden appearance of the mobile urban man. But it was not a reaction in traditional terms. It was in fact part of the complex process by which contemporary Englishmen adjusted to the changes taking place in their society. While the moralists dwelt with morbid fancy upon the inevitability of vicissitude and decay and recalled sadly the old virtues of moderation and degree, Puritan writing took another turn. The ministers suggested the literal possibility of "opting out" of the world of idleness and confusion. Their emancipation from nostalgia made possible a direct and personal confrontation with the visible signs of disorder: men without work in the cities; noisy, jostling crowds; vagabonds on country roads; great houses filled with idle, merry men. With the intense moral discomfort of the righteous and the high-minded, Puritans sought desperately to separate themselves from the chaotic sinfulness that they imagined to surround them. This indeed was the central purpose of their self-discipline and their search for "good company." But they wished also, with a fervor that clearly surpassed that of Crosse and King James, to create a society in which godly order would be the rule and sin not a possible activity. The Puritans sensed in themselves, saints that they assuredly were, men of substance that they often were, the strength and energy to control human wickedness even as they transcended the world of sin and distinguished themselves from its less fortunate members. They sought to create a new discipline through three different methods of social control. These need now to be considered in

24 For a summary of the work of the Jacobean moralists, see Knisht's, Drama and Society.
26 The idea of separation from the wicked pervades even the literature on marriage and friendship: see, for example, Baxter on the theme "Beware of the company of the ungodly" in Richard Baxter, The Saints' Everlasting Rest (New York, n.d.), pp. 108ff.
some detail: the first of them is revealed in the Puritan doctrine of vocation, the second in the congregational system, the third in the theory of magistracy.

III

After having recalled the warrior virtues of the medieval English, Thomas Scott turned abruptly to the more contemporary virtues of the Calvinist Dutch. He emphasized their industriousness: the word had only recently taken on an almost religious tone suggesting zealous and painstaking application. There are none or very few beggars,” wrote Scott. “For indeed every man works and depends upon himself . . . their diet is but homely, every day is not a feasting day . . . Yea their whole life seems nothing but a fast from superfluity.” The image of the industrious Dutch—their praises sung by many an exiled minister—gradually replaced that of the patriarchal lord and sturdy yeoman. Puritans discovered a utopia of men without leisure. The businesslike behavior of Dutch merchants and artisans (one writer included the “diligent” fisherman) not only insured the stability and order of their society, but also set them apart as a godly people.

The new view of work and the rhetorical violence of the accompanying critique of idleness formed the concrete basis of the Puritan repudiation of the old order. God honored men as he honored angels: in proportion to their “serviceableness”—that is, to their zealous application, their skill, and their effectiveness. And he organized men as he organized angels: through a division of labor, in a chain of command. All men must work, gentlemen and commoners alike. The sons of the gentry, untrained in a labor in a calling and not occasional good deeds. “He that hath no honest business about which ordinarily to be employed,” wrote the Puritan minister Samuel Hieron, is “the testimony of his religion.” He was discussing continuous labor in a calling and not occasional good deeds. “He that hath no honest business about which ordinarily to be employed,”

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[in] riding with a great troop . . .” The theme was often repeated in Puritan literature; it was a far cry from the happy memory of the anonymous writer of 1568: stables full of horses, halls full of men. Inevitably, Puritans found themselves caught up in a sharp attack upon the leisured classes and their traditional ideas of service, honor, and recreation. The industrious saints tended to set themselves apart from both the idle rich and the men whom the rich supported: servants, ex-soldiers, actors, beggars, and the multitude of urban poor who sought occasional employment—grouped together they made up Crosse’s “unclean generation.”

Puritans discovered in work the primary and elemental form of social discipline, the key to order, and the foundation of all further morality. William Whately stressed the importance of keeping busy if one was to avoid committing adultery: “for pains in a calling will consume a great part of that superfluous nourishment that yields matter to this sin. It will turn the blood and spirits another way . . .” But work was something more than this obvious and inadequate form of domestic discipline; it was also the self-affirming activity of the godly. The saints were distinguished from the disorderly mob of worldlings by their industry and diligence: their industry revealed their saintliness—to themselves as well as to their fellows. The old Catholic theory of good works was here transformed into a Protestant theory of good work: the difference lay not only in the question of the efficacy, but more significantly in the question of the nature of the required activity. Man’s work, wrote the Puritan minister Samuel Hieron, is “the testimony of his religion.” He was discussing continuous labor in a calling and not occasional good deeds. “He that hath

29 Crosse, Virtue’s Commonwealth, sig. S ν.
32 The classic discussion of this point is Max Weber’s The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York, 1958), esp. pp. 109ff. Weber emphasizes the role of work in the individual’s pursuit of salvation: the ability to work hard and achieve success, he argues, was seen as a sign of grace. But the stress of the preachers is most often on the social and moral effects of hard work and not on its spiritual significance. The new ethic is at least as much a response to the overriding problem of social order as it is to the individual’s anxiety with regard to his fate in the life to come.
33 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. industry, industriousness.
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he went on, "no settled course to which he may betake himself, cannot please God."44 "Business" like "industry" had taken on anew meaning in the course of the sixteenth century: to a word which originally meant merely occupation or trade, but which until the 1580's also carried the implication of mischief and im-pertinence, there had been superadded a sense of diligence and systematic activity.46 It was this new meaning that was intended by Hieron and many other Puritan preachers; they taught men to "make a conscience of their calling." Work—and magistracy, warfare, philanthropy, and religious exercise were but different aspects of this general theme—was to be systematic and sustained; any sort of sporadic or spontaneous activity had to be rigorously avoided. So William Scott's "complete citizen" worried over his occasional afternoon naps and worried most of all because they came at "unaccustomed times"—they were unplanned.

If a man should at every week's end consider with himself how he hath spent it, how many hours might he reckon up which he cannot tell how he bestowed, besides eating and drinking? How many needless items would he find given to sleep? Item, seven nights; item perhaps seven half-afternoons, besides half-hours and quarters at unaccustomed times . . .48

The two implications of Puritan labor—social discipline and self-affirmation—were brought together by the ministers in the theory of the calling. As presented by William Perkins in his Treatise of the Vocations, the theory suggested a new order among the saints replacing the forms of organic connection and hierarchy, Puritan calling closely paralleled the Huguenot idea of political office, but its social extension was far more wide. Whereas the Huguenots sought chiefly to reorganize and discipline a feudal nobility, the Puritan effort would have included nobility and commoners alike; it would have turned politics from an aristocratic duty into a kind of work and made work in general the religious duty of everyman. Given this wider range, however, the two ideas were strikingly similar; like the Huguenot doctrine of office and obligation, Puritan calling opened the way to responsible and impersonal commitments among men. Obligation in the work-a-day world formed the basis for a wide network of contractual arrangements.

In a Puritan society, the scheme of human relations would be effectively determined by the scheme of human employment. The saints would come together almost exclusively in the course of their work. "Honest business" would fill their lives and absorb all their enthusiasm.46 Such relations as they then established would be contractual, that is, entered into voluntarily by formally free men, whose calling was sufficiently certain and whose activity was sufficiently sustained for them to make long-term promises and agreements.47 This was the obvious social meaning of those "set-tled courses" which Hieron urged upon all who sought to please God: "settled courses" made men dependable. Perkins repeated the older idea that men of divers callings were bound together by love; but in fact love played little part in the Puritan theory of social organization. "It is necessary my citizen defend himself," wrote the draper Scott, "by this buckler: distrust, which is a great part of prudence . . ." Nor was it any act of charity for Perkins to exclude beggars from civil society: they "are as rotten legs and arms," he wrote, "that drop from the body." Great lords, then, might no longer recruit loyal followers from among the multitude of vagabonds and beggars; the ministers even urged that the army not be filled with such men, "tattered jailbirds and masterless vagrants." "It is no Christian policy to choose such sinful instru-ments for such a serious action."48 Civil society, contractual relations, trust and responsibility existed, Puritans thought, only among those who had already submitted to the discipline of a "particular office."

This submission was an act of the will, a voluntary act that belied the organic imagery Perkins occasionally employed. Men must choose their offices for themselves, he insisted, responding to

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46 All the Sermons of Samuel Hieron (London, 1614), pp. 245-247.
44 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. business.
46 All the Sermons of Samuel Hieron (London, 1614), pp. 245-247.
48 Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. business.
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an inner call that was also a divine command. They must examine themselves, study their affections and gifts: "he that is fit for sundry callings must make choice of the best." Similarly in the political world, where groups of men acting as "instruments of God" choose officers from among their fellows: they must examine their gifts, they must choose the best man. "Thus may a private man become a magistrate." All this implied not only a formal freedom, but a formal equality; all men might not have equal gifts, but all would be "examined." Puritans went on to suggest that there was a kind of spiritual equality among the callings. Before God all callings were equal, wrote Perkins, "though it be but to sweep the house or keep sheep..." The idea was hardly new, but Puritans gave it a new importance. Application and diligence in any vocation was a tribute to God and an effective guarantee of social order. Whatever the rank of the saints, then, they must be drawn into the discipline. "The great and reverend God," wrote Dod and Cleaver, "despiseth no honest trade... be it never so mean, but crowned it with his blessing, to draw all good minds to his holy ordinance." Men accepted the discipline and received in return, as it were, a godly sense of self-importance.

They then entered into agreements with their fellows. The value of such agreements was obviously enhanced by the formal equality and spiritual self-esteem of the saints. A contract, for the first time, was clearly seen as an agreement between equals, unmarked by deference or humility on either side, fully voluntary and unforced on both sides and a matter not of personal loyalty or fear, but of conscience. "Natural necessity destroy the very nature of a covenant," wrote one Puritan minister, for it must be "a voluntary obligation between persons about things wherein they enjoy a freedom of will and have a power to choose or refuse." Given this freedom, the crucial feature of the contract was the mutual recognition of honest intention: "the form doth require," wrote the casuist William Ames in his Cases of Conscience, "internal and essential, the upright dealing of the contractor to be true and sincere." Spiritual equality was the basis of this mutual recognition of good faith. Even the covenant between God and fallen men, thought John Preston, "implies a kind of equality between us." Some sensitivity to the human dignity implied in this notion of a contract underlay Puritan ideas of master-servant relations and even, as has been seen, of the marriage bond.

The ideas of self-examination and free contract required Puritan writers to come to grips not only with equality, but also with social mobility. Choice would have to be left free, in politics and in business, if men were to "choose the best." Perkins recognized that mistakes might be made, even by parents with regard to their children; the ear was not always attuned to the call. But so long as free choice was accompanied by painstaking introspection, he had little to fear from the disruption of the hierarchical world. There would still be no freedom for "masterless men." The saints were masters of themselves and claimed only the privileges that their "pains" had earned, and beggars and vagabonds were simply expelled from the vocational world, cut off like rotten limbs because, thought Perkins, they took no pains at all. Eventually, the painful diligence of the saints would require also a kind of peace with material success and affluence, but on this point the earlier Puritan writers were extremely hesitant. It was not intended that work should bring wealth; the ministers had little sense of the possibility of rapid increases in productivity. Instinctively, they tended toward a kind of economic restrictionism. Men should be content, Perkins wrote, "if they have as much as will provide them food and raiment, and thus much lawfully may they seek..." For the moment the emphasis was on the lawful seeking—"skill and labor in a good occupation"—and not on its possibly dangerous results.

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That the Puritan theory of the calling involved a radical social criticism has already been suggested. Its nature was made clear by Perkins when he listed four groups of men who possess "no particular calling to walk in," who live outside the vocational

40 Perkins, Works, i, 756-762.
world. The list included: 1) rogues, beggars and vagabonds; 2) monks and friars; 3) gentlemen who "spend their days in eating and drinking"; and 4) servants—"for only to wait... is not a sufficient calling." All these were dangerous men, thought Perkins, because they were not subject to control and discipline. Some were wanderers with no fixed dwelling: they slipped in and out of parish, city, and shire "so avoiding the authority of all." "It is no good token, but an ill sign," wrote the Puritan theologian, "for a man to be uncertain in his dwelling." Others had no honest business, no settled courses. "An idle man's brain," thought the ministers Dod and Cleaver, "becometh quickly the shop of the devil... Whereof rise mutinies and mutterings in cities against magistrates? You can give no greater cause thereof, than idleness." Here was the source of riot and rebellion, of theater crowds and crowded brothels and of everything else that the godly identified as the work (or the play) of the damned.

There was no salvation in idleness or in vagabondage. The lazy multitude was always inclined, Perkins thought, to popish opinions, always more ready to play than to work; its members would not find their way to heaven. A careless, hand-to-mouth existence almost certainly precluded the sustained effort that salvation required. Poverty might, of course, be the fate of the saints: "The state of God's church and children in this world, for the most part, is to be afflicted and poor in their outward condition." But this was a godly poverty, the poverty of the "industrious poor" that led neither to disorder nor discontent. The saints would find the world sufficient; they would ask but little and that would be granted: "Set thy heart to seek God's kingdom," wrote Perkins, "follow the Word and labor therein for regeneration and doubt not, but if thou be upright and diligent in thy lawful calling. thou shalt find sufficient for this life." The complacent piety of Perkins' statement seems hardly compatible with the discovery of his contemporaries that idleness and unemployment were often involuntary. It reflected, however, a significant Puritan judgment upon the capacities of willful, godly men. When the same judgment was made by the poor themselves, it may be regarded as the very perfect ideology of pious poverty.

At the same time, the growing awareness of human helplessness did produce—and especially among Puritans—a new kind of philanthropy directed more or less exclusively at these very same godly poor. Wealthy Puritans, tutored in part by the ministers, sought to provide not only direct relief, but also educational opportunity and apprenticeship training and sometimes capital or materials for men who were willing, in effect, to become saints. Administered privately, outside the traditional channels, most often by laymen acting as trustees of substantial funds, Puritan philanthropy was deliberately discriminating and purposive. It was directed less toward the relief of beggars than toward the transformation of a selected number of religious paupers into self-sufficient and presumably self-disciplined men. The ministers carefully and correctly distinguished such charity from that casual, indiscriminate, and spontaneous alms-giving that constituted what Perkins called a "very seminary of vagabonds." Puritan philanthropy was a school of a different, undoubtedly a more rigorous sort. Like much of the legislation of the Tudors, though perhaps more effectively, it aimed at creating a disciplined, methodical worker, a man who could be trusted by his employer—the employer might well be the same person as the Puritan philanthropist—and who need not be feared.

But there was another kind of poverty bred in the disorder of the times and Puritan ministers almost invariably described its victims with nothing but hatred and dread. This was the poverty that beset hundreds and thousands of countrymen who wandered into the city, never found work and learned to live haphazardly as best they could.

A man, as he goes along in the streets [wrote Richard Sibbes], shall hear a company of poor that are the greatest rebels in the world against God; that blaspheme and swear, that rail against magistrates

49 Ibid.
50 Works, III, 71.
55 Perkins, Works, II, 144-145; see also Hieron, All The Sermons, pp. 388-389.
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and governors. They are the most unbroken people in the world, the poorest and beggarliest, the refuse of mankind. As they are in condition, so they are in disposition.\textsuperscript{52}

The last sentence strikes the typically Calvinist note. The most hopeless forms of idleness and poverty could only be the products of fallen nature, of the "disposition" of corrupt men. The same judgment was rendered by Perkins: beggars, he wrote, were "an unfaithful and ungracious generation . . . [they] live liker brute beasts than men . . . .\textsuperscript{44} They were without a calling and were not members of a particular congregation or a settled family. They had not undertaken the systematic labor through which ordinary men might transform themselves into saints; they were, indeed, most unwilling to work. That essential voluntarism which underlay all Calvinist thought made any understanding of the utter helplessness of these uprooted people impossible. Work was a test for which men must volunteer; their failure to volunteer was evidence that they had not been called.

Puritanism was in a sense the religion of the sociologically competent, of those who had been called. In the seventeenth century anti-Puritan publicists were quick to say that it was the religion also of the economically prosperous—a judgment at least partially true. Philanthropy might seek bravely to widen the area of competence, but in a fundamental sense those men who were most hurt in the long period of social dislocation and disorder were least willing, or rather least able, to join in Puritan discipline, introspection, and self-affirmation. Puritans, in their turn, called only those men saints who could, in the words of a modern writer, "conduct themselves as energizing centers of ethical action.\textsuperscript{44} This sort of voluntaristic doctrine came down hardest on the poor, though few of the preachers forgot to include the idle or old-fashioned rich in their invective. But while the rich were convicted only of wickedness and pride—and found both still pleasurable—the poor were blamed for their very helplessness and misery and denied the balm of self-respect. Puritan ministers would have subjected them without hesitation to the violence of the

magistrate. And from an "ungracious generation" the saints would have separated themselves, both in their everyday work and in their religious exercises.

Religious exercise was the second aspect of Puritan social order; alongside the discipline of work stood the discipline of faith. Both were open to all men willing to submit and take pains. Man's work, wrote Perkins, was his "particular calling." God had also proclaimed a "general calling" which all Christians shared: they must labor for "the building of [his] church." In the church, as in the economy, all the saints were to be methodically active. "Though men . . . fondly imagine that this duty is proper to the ministers, yet the truth is, it belongs not only to them, but to everyone."\textsuperscript{55} The building of the church was carried on in hundreds of local congregations where the saints struggled for power, harassed the sinful and zealously strove for such a "reformation of manners" as might please their exacting God. As work had been made a matter of choice and self-acceptance, so religion was now made a matter of self-government (though not democratic government). And as work in one's chosen calling was harder, more regular and assiduous than work had ever been before, so Puritan self-government was more systematic and repressive than government had ever been before.

Local self-government by the godly: this was the creed of the sixteenth-century "disciplinarians," first proclaimed by Thomas Cartwright in the 1570's.\textsuperscript{66} Seventy-five years later it was still the creed of moderate Presbyterians and Independents like Richard Baxter and John Owen. And whether they accepted every detail of Cartwright's system or not, it is clear that Puritans of the revolutionary period still shared the high hopes that he had placed in godly self-government. John Milton summed up those hopes at the very beginning of the revolution: discipline, he wrote was the key to every "sociable perfection in this life, civil or sacred . . . ." It was "not only the removal of disorder, but . . . the

\textsuperscript{52} Sibbes, Works, VI, 258.
\textsuperscript{53} Perkins, Works, III, 71; see discussion in Hill, Puritanism and Revolution, p. 287.
\textsuperscript{44} Gertrude Huchna, Antinomianism in English History (London, 1957), pp. 66-67.
\textsuperscript{44} On "disciplinarian" Puritanism, see Marshall Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (Chicago, 1950); Donald J. McGinn, The Admonition Controversy (New Brunswick, N.J., 1963); A. F. Scott Peacock, Church and State: Political Aspects of Sixteenth-Century Puritanism (London, 1948).
very visible shape and image of virtue.” Cartwright had only been more specific in 1573 when he argued that congregational discipline would restrain stealing, adultery, and murder; even more, it would “correct” sins “which the magistrate doth not commonly punish” — he listed lying, uncomely jesting, cholerical speeches. John Penn included poverty in the list: “there lacketh that orderly seeing to the poor which is expedient by idleness and liberty great poverty is among us . . . which might very well be amended by Christ’s discipline.” After the inevitable and lengthy citations of Scripture, arguments of this sort were perhaps the major theme of Puritan polemic: the new structure of church government was advocated as a panacea for social disorder. Francis Walsingham described the disciplinarian position as it had been presented to him (or, perhaps, as his agents had heard it argued in the streets): “Because multitude of rogues and poverty was an eyesore and a dislike to every man, therefore they put it into the people’s head that if discipline were planted, there should be no vagabonds nor beggars . . .”

This was to put the Cartwrightian position in its starkest and most practical terms; the same point might be made differently: the purpose of the discipline was to teach and enforce Christian standards of behavior. Enforcement was to be local, by the saints themselves; mutual control was the method of the new discipline. Church government by ministers, elders, and deacons, wrote Field and Wilcox in the First Admonition, was “an order left by God unto his church, whereby men learn to frame their wills and doings according to the law of God, by instructing and admonishing one another, yea, and by correcting and punishing all willful persons and contemners of the same.”

Not only Christian behavior, but also a new kind of Christian fellowship was to follow from the discipline. In an age when many ministers drew income from parishes that they rarely visited, Cartwright stressed the “four-fold cord” of pastoral duties that bound the minister to his congregation: preaching, examination, admonition, and “dissolving of doubts.” Similarly, though the congregation was founded neither on neighborhood (for only local saints, as will be seen, were admitted to communion) nor, properly speaking, on love, the connection of its members was very close. They examined and admonished one another. The saints were thus bound together in a close system of collective watchfulness, which might occasionally turn into a kind of spiritual terrorism. In his Kidderminster parish, Baxter reported, the enforcement of the moral discipline was made possible “by the zeal and diligence of the godly people of the place, who thirsted after the salvation of their neighbors, and were in private my assistants.”

Congregational unity approached the intense collectivism of the sect; the disciplinarians transformed the local church into a voluntary association of the holy. Among the separatists an actual covenant was signed confirming the sectarian organization. Covenant and discipline alike were made possible by the long-term commitment of the saints to their “general calling.” The two may be said to parallel the contractual relations made possible by commitment to a “particular calling.” The sectarian covenant was a voluntary agreement undertaken among equals; the Puritan discipline a common regiment to which all the saints equally submitted. As the parity of ministers made possible an alliance founded on ideology alone, so the equality of lay saints was the basis of local and national Puritan endeavor. “How vile account soever you will make of them,” wrote Cartwright of the Puritans, “they are the people of God and therefore spiritual and forthwith those of whom St. Paul saith, ‘The spiritual man discerneth all things.’” Such a view provided the basis for a religious organization which was not a mysterious union but a willful association of saints, working together on the basis of their own word and of their recognition of each others’ right to make promises and capacity to keep them.

Both Cartwright and his chief disciple Walter Travers often re-

88 Quoted in Hill, Puritanism and Revolution, p. 284.
90 Whigifit, Works, I, 517.
91 Baxter, Reliquiae Baxterianae, p. 87.
93 Whigifit, Works, I, 378.
ferred to the new community as a "commonwealth," thus stressing its essentially political nature. Close association might help the godly, as ministerial conferences helped Richard Rogers, to maintain a pitch of fervor and self-confidence, but its main purpose was social control. Godliness was the civisae of the tiny parish commonwealth and the elected elders were its special agents, a kind of moral police. Travers compared them to the civil officers in Athens—"which had care to see the laws kept"—and to the censors of Rome.

For although after a sort it is all men's duty to bring him into his way which goeth astray, yet better and more diligent heed is taken that offenses arise not in the church, when every part of the church have their watchmen assigned to them to whose office especially it should belong to mark, oversee, and examine all men's manners.

The elders, then, were magistrates of a sort and it was surely the Puritan intention that some men should double in the two roles and serve both as church elders and justices of the peace. The congregation would have been the local unit of the "holy commonwealth" much as the parish was of the Elizabethan state.

But the congregation would not include all the residents of the parish—as the old church had done. That would make godliness a matter of geography, said the ministers, and turn the church into "an inn to receive whoever cometh." Instead, participation depended on behavior and behavior presumably upon will. Puritans therefore required a careful testing of all who desired entrance into the parish commonwealth, an inquiry, as it were, into he patriotism of future citizens. They claimed the right to exclude even neighbors and kinfolk from the communion in order to maintain a clear distinction between the godly—who lived in sious and sober order—and the sinners—who "rioted" in uncleanness. "There is something generally in the dispositions [of he religious sort]." Baxter argued, "which inclineth them to dissociate from open ungodly sinners, as men of another nature and

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society." In Baxter's own parish, some two-thirds of the people were excluded from communion; "all the parish kept off, except about six hundred communicants." The other twelve hundred declined to accept the moral discipline and were, in Baxter's eyes, no longer members of his reformed church. "The church severeth those," Cartwright had written, "which being of the parish, are none of the church." Those who remained were drawn into the strange, time-consuming activities of the Puritan congregation: diligently taking notes at sermons, attending endless meetings, associating intimately and continuously with men and women who were after all not relatives and, above all, submitting to the discipline and zealous watchfulness of the godly. Puritanism required not only a pitch of piety, but a pitch of activism and involvement. Baxter's description of his weekly round is instructive: he preached twice, on Sundays and Thursdays; Thursday evenings he met with those of his congregants who "were most desirous and had opportunity," to discuss the sermon; on Saturday nights he met with the "younger sort" to "prepare [them] for the following day"; once in every few weeks, he celebrated a "day of humiliation" with his congregants and whenever one of the women of Kidderminster gave birth he kept a "day of thanksgiving" with some of the neighbors—"instead of the old feastings and gossipings"; two evenings every week he and his assistant met with fourteen families "for private catechizing and conference"; the meeting of church elders for "parish discipline" was held every first Wednesday of the month; and finally, the ministers' meeting for "discipline and disputation" was held on the first Thursday. Puritanism, like Oscar Wilde's socialism, took too many evenings. Yet Baxter's sermons and meetings must have been attended; he kept them up for many years.

The ungodly twelve hundred presumably held off from all this; yet their severance was not an entire separation. The Puritans, unlike the sectaries, were not interested simply in saving themselves, but in bringing every Englishmen under the vigilant eye of minis-
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ers and elders. The parish for them was still a community, but once they had seized control, it was transformed into a community at war within itself. Led by their minister—"chief captain of the Lord's army and conductor of his host"—the godly did battle for the souls of the local worldlings. But if they were to battle for the souls, they would have to have access to the bodies: they would have to compel catechism, religious education, and attendance at sermons. Most Puritans unhesitatingly called upon the Christian magistrate, hopefully he was also a church elder, to provide the necessary coercive force.

They may be of and in the commonwealth [wrote Cartwright] which neither may nor can be of nor in the church; and therefore the church having nothing to do with such, the magistrate ought to see that they join to hear sermons . . . and cause them to be examined how they profit, and if they profit not, to punish them . . .

The magistrate, wrote Baxter some eighty years later, must force all men "to learn the word of God and to walk orderly and quietly . . . till they are brought to a voluntary, personal profession of Christianity." Joining the congregation would thus remain a voluntary act and Puritan Christianity an extremely strenuous form of self-government, but the men who refused to govern themselves would have to be governed nevertheless—until, in effect, they could be forced to be free.

VI

The saints would work voluntarily much as they would walk to heaven alone, but even the saints preferred company in their pilgrimage and might require encouragement in their diligent labor. Other men would need not only encouragement and company, but coercion and control, direction and domination, if they were to honor God in their everyday behavior. It was not with love but with material force that the Puritans sought to respond to the sin-

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fulness of an "ungracious generation." The men who governed themselves would also govern the others, nervously calling upon the magistrate, aggressively exploring the uses of sovereignty. Cartwright described "two kingdoms"—one was the congregation, a world of self-control; the other was the state, a world of external coercion. The men who refused the discipline of work, the men who "kept off" from the discipline of the congregation: these were subjected entirely to the secular power and controlled violence of the state.

During the years of change and dislocation, Calvinism was one of the ideologies that legitimized the aggrandizements of state power. Puritan ministers, extraordinarily sensitive to the dangers of disorder and wickedness, developed the moral authoritarianism of their theology into a theory of secular repression. From the beginning, Calvinists had been advocates of regulation and control; the Genevan system was constructed so as to maximize both—a task that involved the steady extension of secular authority at the expense of the lax and inefficient ecclesiastical courts. In Puritanism the same tendency was clear. The saints demanded that the state replace the corporate church in caring for the poor, in adjudicating wills and contracts, in regulating marriage and divorce, even in enforcing much of the moral law. "There is no crime," wrote William Stoughton in 1604 in a treatise dedicated to the lawyers of the London Inns, "respecting any commandment contained within either of the two tables of the holy law of God but that . . . hath been evermore and is now punishable by the king's regal and temporal jurisdiction." Stoughton went on to discuss adultery, perjury, heresy, and absence from church; he had already argued that "all and singular matters of espousals and marriages" should be determined by civil tribunals. Here was a jurisdiction virtually coextensive with conscience and an authority—the modern state—far more efficient than the old priest-confessor or the bishop's court. Much of the repressive activity of the revolutionary Rump and the Cromwellian major-generals was anticipated in the work of Puritans like Stoughton. Only repression, the fearful

69 Cartwright, in Whiglit, Works, I, 386.
70 Baxter, Holy Commonwealth (London, 1656), p. 274. The extent of congregational discipline and the limits of state coercion were, of course, crucial points of difference during the revolutionary period. These disagreements cannot be considered here. But it is important to stress the general Puritan commitment to moral discipline and reformation, a commitment shared even by men who disagreed on the precise roles of church and state. See William Lamont, Marginal Pryme: 1600-1669 (London, 1958), pp. 157-174.

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ministers believed, could lead to that significant increase in the intensity and security of social control which they so ardently desired. The "reformation of manners" was, or rather would have been, had it ever taken place on the scale which the ministers intended, the Puritan terror.

The need for secular regulation was one of the recurrent themes of Puritan literature. Philip Stubbes, for example, reiterated with what was for him extraordinary precision, Calvin's position on usury. Before God, he wrote, the taking of interest was simply unlawful; "but seeing how much [usury] rageth, lest it should rage further and overthrow the banks of all reason and godliness . . . they [i.e. the magistrates] have limited [it] within certain mers and banks . . . ." The purpose of such legal limitation, he continued, shifting his metaphor, was to enclose "within the forest, or park, of reasonable or conscionable gain, men who cared not how much they could extort . . . ." Long after the publication of Stubbes' Anatomy of Abuses, Puritan preachers continued to denounce the usurer and his trade, devoting to the attack all the rhetorical vigor which the sin required. In large part, however, this was mere self-indulgence for Puritan purposes were achieved by governmental regulation. Casuists like Ames and Baxter made more careful distinctions: the saints were not to charge interest on loans to the needy; they were not to press the borrower in time of misfortune. But what was most important was that the ministers left the state to fix the legal limits and set the legal rates.

William Perkins treated the idleness of beggars much as Stubbes had treated the greed of the usurer: he defended ardently the principles of secular regulation and punishment set forth in Elizabeth's poor laws. "And therefore the statute made the last Parliament [1597] for the restraining of beggars and rogues is an excellent statute, and in being substance the very law of God, is never to be repealed." The cruel punishments for vagrancy were, perhaps, less important to the Puritan ministers than the extensive and minute control to which the poor were subjected in the "houses of correction." Of course, the numerous instances in which men and women "strong and fit for labor, but having neither masters nor lawful vocations whereby to get their living" were ordered to be whipped and then "burnt through the gristle of the right ear" must have had their emphatic approval. Godly magistrates would not be lax in seeing such punishments carried out; the ministers called upon the J.P.'s vigorously to enforce the new law. They were especially concerned, however, with the close supervision of the workhouses. And here they did not differ from such an intelligent advocate of secular authority as Francis Bacon. "I commend most," Bacon wrote, "houses of relief and correction . . . where the impotent person is relieved and the sturdy beggar buckled to work, and the unable person also not maintained to be idle, which is ever joined with drunkenness and impurity, but is sorted with such work as he can manage and perform." Some of the ministers went further than this and suggested that beggars might even be saved—turned into industrious men. But whether they were saved or not, they would subject to control—like usurers in the closed "park of conscionable gain"—and no longer free to wander on the open road.

The limitation of usury and the repression of beggary were only two features of the secular controls that the Puritans sought. Their legislative demands would have involved far more regulation, even of activities which other of their contemporaries regarded as harmless enough: bear-baiting, dancing, swearing, Sunday sports, church-ales, and so forth. Puritan M.P.'s introduced one bill after another aiming at the governmental repression of vice, and even attempting to make the local justices responsible for the enforcement of church discipline. Among the papers of the young John Winthrop, who never entered Parliament, is a draft

12 Stubbes, Anatomy, pp. 125-126.
16 See the views of Nicholas Bowrde, quoted in Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, p. 415: also Perkins, Works, III, 559. In the seventeenth century, the minister William Gouge is said to have maintained a small workhouse out of his own pocket, employing the poor in the manufacture of cloth; in the Puritan tradition he wrote savagely of men who would not work; Schlatter, Social Ideas, p. 148.
17 Quoted in Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Old Poor Law, p. 85.