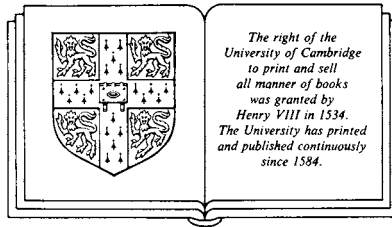


EXILE AND KINGDOM

*History and apocalypse in the Puritan
migration to America*

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INTRODUCTION

The initial premise of this book is that a serious study of the Puritan sense of time and view of history is warranted and in some respects long overdue. Throughout history religious movements have constructed new modes of historical thought and presented their own vision of history in order to explain and justify their rise and appearance upon the stage of history. In this context, the Puritan migration to America was, by its very nature as an ideological movement, no exception. The Puritans sought to construe a meaningful sacred, historical context within which to explain their removal to, and presence in, the wilderness of America within the course and progress of salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*) – the unfolding story of God’s plan of salvation and redemption – or within the annals of ecclesiastical history. Almost inevitably, then, as this study will attempt to show, serious analysis of the Puritan philosophy of history is indispensable in order to understand the meaning and significance which Puritans conferred on their action within the confines of the history of salvation, or within the unfolding drama of salvation and redemption, and how they understood their role in the context of the sacred history of the church upon earth.

The Puritan migration to New England was based essentially upon a well-defined Christian philosophy, or ideology, of history according to which Puritans explained their migration to and experience in the wilderness of America. I am referring here to *church history*, or *ecclesiastical history* – a unique mode of historical thought, or Christian philosophy of history, according to which the church is considered to be the main agent in history, and the process of history is perceived as evolving during time mainly in light of the sacred course and progress of the church, or God’s chosen people, in the world. Ecclesiastical history is sacred history, for it concerns the divine dispensation of God and his revelatory redemptive acts in history, or more precisely, the whole of Christ’s divine economy of salvation upon earth.¹

¹ Today indeed the most common, ordinary and regular usage of the term “ecclesiastical history,” or “church history,” refers to the history of churches as institutions. The reader will

Puritans of course did not invent ecclesiastical history as a unique mode of historical thought. The formation of this Christian philosophy of history can be traced back to the time of the Church Fathers. More specifically, the fourth century did see the development of a major new form of historiography, that of ecclesiastical history, and this new Christian conception of history prevailed as the tacit framework for Christian thought in the following centuries. It is important to recognize, then, that the Puritans were using this inherited mode of historical thought to define their own sense of time and view of history. Ultimately, it was through the prism of sacred, ecclesiastical history that the Puritans viewed with frightened eyes the gloomy course of the Reformation in England. They drew on the ideology of salvation history to explain the ultimate necessity of God's saints to depart from sinful England, to justify the meaning and significance of their migration to America, to construe the sacred, redemptive and revelatory meaning of the American wilderness, and last but not least, to interpret their life and experience in New England.

When Cotton Mather, the famous seventeenth-century historian of Puritan New England, argued, "But whether [Puritan] *New England* may *Live* any where else or no, it must *Live* in our *History*," he was referring to ecclesiastical history as a coherent and well-defined philosophy of history. And it was indeed within this mode of historical thought that he examined Puritan New England's singular role in sacred, providential history. "But of

immediately recognize, however, that in my usage of the term "ecclesiastical history" throughout this study I am referring more particularly to a coherent, well-defined Christian philosophy of salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*). The reason is that throughout the history of Christianity, this usage of ecclesiastical history as a unique mode of historical thought, or as a unique Christian ideology of salvation history, was common in the writings of Church historians. Therefore, in using the term "ecclesiastical history," or "church history," to denote a unique Christian philosophy and ideology of history, I follow, for example, such famous ecclesiastical historians as Eusebius Pamphili, "the father of Church History," John Foxe and Cotton Mather. For their use of the term "ecclesiastical history" as signifying a unique Christian mode of historical thought, see Eusebius Pamphili, *Ecclesiastical History* (323), translated by R. J. Deferrari, 2 vols. (Washington, 1981), vol. I, pp. 35–7; John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1570), the preface "To the Right Virtuous, Most Excellent and Noble Princess, Queen Elizabeth;" and Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana, or, the Ecclesiastical History of New England* (London, 1702), "A General Introduction."

Among the studies concerned with Christian views of history, see C. A. Patrides, *The Phoenix and the Ladder: The Rise and Decline of the Christian View of History* (Berkeley, 1964), and *The Grand Design of God: The Literary Form of the Christian View of History* (London, 1972); K. Lowith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago, 1957); H. Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (London, 1960), and *The Origins of History* (London, 1981); C. T. McIntire, *God, History, and the Historians* (New York, 1977), and C. T. McIntire and Ronald A. Wells (eds.), *History and Historical Understanding* (Grand Rapids, 1984); Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York, 1980); M. I. Finley, *The Use and Abuse of History* (New York, 1975); A. Richardson, *History Sacred and Profane* (London, 1964); S. Pollard, *The Idea of Progress* (Middlesex, 1968); E. L. Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia* (Gloucester, 1972), and *Redeemer Nation* (Chicago, 1968); F. C. Haber, *The Age of the World* (Baltimore, 1959).

all *History* it must be confessed," declares Mather in his monumental *Ecclesiastical History of New England*, "that the *Palm* is to be given unto *Church History*," because "the *Church* wherein the Service of God is performed, is much more Precious than the *World*, which was indeed created for the Sake and Use of the *Church*." Praising ecclesiastical history above all other modes of historical thought, Mather adds:

'Tis very certain, that the greatest Entertainments must needs occur in the History of the *People*, whom the *Son of God* hath *Redeemed* and *Purified* unto himself, as a *Peculiar People*, and whom the *Spirit of God*, by *Supernatural Operations* upon their Minds, does cause to live like *Strangers* in *this World*, conforming themselves unto the *Truths* and *Rules* of his Holy Word, in Expectation of a *Kingdom*, whereto they shall be in another and a better *World* advanced.²

Undoubtedly, in order to appreciate more fully the mind-set and motivations of the Puritans, and to illuminate more clearly the ideological context for their migration to, and experience in, America, it is necessary to analyze the idea of ecclesiastical history as a unique mode of historical thought.

"Any history written on Christian principles," wrote R. G. Collingwood, "will be of necessity universal, providential, apocalyptic, and periodized."³ Ecclesiastical history, by its very nature as the history of the Christian Church, is obviously the supreme example of this mode of historical thought. It is universal history inasmuch as the church claims universal validity for its teaching, appealing to the whole world and not merely to one nation, dealing with the origins of man and the universal promise of God, with Creation and the end of history. And although ecclesiastical history considers the church to be the central agency in the providential drama of human salvation and redemption, it has no particularistic center such as race, nation, or people. Ecclesiastical history is providential history because it espouses the belief that the whole universe is a theocratic universe ruled directly and immediately by God's divine providence; hence, history is God's domain, a space of time regulated and controlled by God's divine

² Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, "A General Introduction," in Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson (eds.), *The Puritans: A Source Book of Their Writings*, 2 vols. (New York, 1963), vol. I, pp. 167-8.

³ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1961), p. 49. Christian historiography, of course, is only one important example of man's attitude toward time and history. On the general issue of man's sense of time and vision of history, see Joseph Campbell (ed.), *Man and Time*, Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks (Princeton, 1983); J. T. Fraser (ed.), *The Voices of Time* (Amherst, 1981); Donald J. Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past* (Chicago, 1987); G. J. Whitrow, *Time in History: Views of Time from Prehistory to the Present Day* (Oxford, 1989); Anthony F. Aveni, *Empire of Time: Calendars, Clocks, and Cultures* (New York, 1989); Reginald L. Poole, *Studies in Chronology and History* (Oxford, 1934); Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford, 1967); John G. Gunnell, *Political Philosophy and Time* (Chicago, 1987); Stephen Toulmin and June Goodfield, *The Discovery of Time* (Chicago, 1982); Ricardo J. Quinones, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972).

providence, as a play preordained and directed by God's hand. It is a periodized history because it divides history into past, present, and future according to divine prophetic revelations. These epochs in God's all-embracing divine providence include the period before Christ, that after his First Coming, and the glorious period which is to unfold after the anticipated Second Coming. Finally, ecclesiastical history is apocalyptic history, dealing with prophetic, redemptive revelations based on the apocalyptic visions in the New Testament, especially the Book of Revelation, and founded upon the belief in providence and the anticipation of the fulfillment of divine prophecies and revelations. Because it progresses in a continuum from historical revelation to the future unveiling glory, from the promise made in Christ's First Coming to its realization in his Second Coming, each age came to perceive this apocalyptic and eschatological dimension of history differently.

Ecclesiastical history constituted an important mode of historical thought from the rise of Christianity to predominance in the western world during the fourth century until "the secularization of theological teleology of history" announced by the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.⁴ Founded upon a definite and coherent Christian conception of history, or more precisely, upon a historical economy of salvation, ecclesiastical history is a system of thought in which history is defined exclusively as the story of salvation and redemption, comprising a special dimension of space and time in which progress is made from promise to fulfillment, from prophecy to realization. In contrast to secular history which deals with peoples, societies, and institutions, during time, sacred history deals with the unfolding of God's divine plan of salvation, or with God's saving work and his mighty redemptive acts in history. Indeed, all history, secular and sacred, displays

⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology* (Edinburgh, 1957), p. 65. On the rise and development of ecclesiastical history, see: O. Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (London, 1967); M. A. Fitzsimmons et al. (eds.), *The Development of Historiography* (New York, 1967); H. E. Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing* (New York, 1962); J. W. Thompson, *The History of Historical Writing*, 2 vols. (New York, 1942); James T. Shorwell, *The History of History* (New York, 1939); D. Hay, *Annalists and Historians* (London, 1977); Ferdinand Christian Baur, *On the Writing of Church History*, translated and edited by Peter C. Hodgson (New York, 1968); Herbert Butterfield, "The Establishment of Christian Historiography," in *The Origins of History*, pp. 158-84; A. Momigliano, "Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D.," in *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford, 1977); John J. Dawson, *The Dynamics of World History* (New York, 1956); Reginald L. Poole, *Chronicles and Annals* (Oxford, 1926); Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth: A Study of the Christian Doctrine of Creation* (New York, 1959); Peter Guilday (ed.), *Church Historians* (New York, 1926); Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saints Augustine* (Charlottesville, 1986), *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven, 1984), and *The Excellent Empire: The Fall of Rome and the Triumph of the Church* (San Francisco, 1987); R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970).

the working of God's divine providence. Yet, it is only sacred, ecclesiastical history which tells what meaning and significance historical events have in the overall divine economy of salvation. The foundation of sacred, redemptive history is therefore the biblical narratives of God's saving work among his chosen people, the promise made in the Old Testament and the fulfilment in the New, as well as the prophetic revelations concerning Christ's Second Coming and the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God.

At the center of ecclesiastical or salvation history stands Christ. He is the focus of church history for some obvious reasons. First of all, it is through faith in Christ and by belonging to the church – which is his symbolic body on earth – that the believer can secure participation in salvation. Moreover, since Christ's First Coming is perceived as a historical revelation, all of history prior to His arrival becomes infused with meaning, and all subsequent history is seen to bear His mark until the anticipated Second Coming – an event signifying the end of time and history. With the First Coming, Christ entered time and history as the Son of God; his Second Coming is inseparable from occurrences within time or developments in the history of the church.

The church, as the spiritual body of Christ, inevitably assumes a central place in the sacred history of salvation, since until the Second Coming history is determined by the revelation of Christ as embodied in the church and its faith. Furthermore, because the process of history has a real significance and meaning in ecclesiastical history, history in fact became a divine epic stretching back in time to Creation and pointing forward to that magnificent event of the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God and of his son Christ. For throughout all the vicissitudes of time and history since the Fall, God's divine providence selected, elected, and predestined certain people to restore humanity and reconcile it with its Creator. Accordingly, in this divine epic of salvation and redemption, as, for example, St. Augustine argued, the expulsion from Eden marked the beginning of sacred, providential history whose essential feature consists in the apocalyptic struggle between the "city of God", or the church, and the "city of Satan."

Within the context of ecclesiastical history the church thus becomes the necessary, perhaps even the main, instrument of salvation without which there is no grace and without which Christ's Second Coming is unimaginable; and which is, consequently, essential to the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God. In this divine economy of salvation, that is, the historical process of human salvation and redemption in which man sins against God and God is willing to redeem him, the history of the church (hence the term 'ecclesiastical history,' or "church history") has a most

prominent place. By denying any possibility of salvation outside itself (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*), the church thus transformed itself into the primary means through which man, alienated from God, could become reconciled with him. Ecclesiastical history, then, is based on the notions of man's sin and God's saving grace; for without sin and redemption, history, as the space of time from the Fall to Christ's Second Coming, has no meaning.

Ecclesiastical history, then, is essentially the story of the attempts to bring the fallen world to reconciliation with God – with the church as the central agency in the drama of human salvation and redemption. It is a history that deals with the vicissitudes of the church during time, its struggles, persecutions, and triumphs. And indeed in Christian historiography this focus became the very theme of history itself. To be more precise, within ecclesiastical history, earthly events are significant only insofar as they relate to the sacred history of the church. However, in this Christian scenario of time and history, past and present events obtain their full meaning not only in relation to the history of the church, but mainly and more fundamentally in relation to the eschatological future and the decisive apocalyptic event of salvation and redemption which is to transpire at the end of time and history. The apocalyptic and eschatological revelation of God at the close of history, the culminating event in which God's glory is proclaimed along with the salvation of the elect, is the stated goal of ecclesiastical history. Thus, it is only in relation to this eschatological scenario that historical events acquire their significance.⁵

The relationship between sacred, prophetic revelation and the goal of history is the main concern of ecclesiastical history. For according to this mode of historical thought, there has been unfolding from the beginning of time the grand design of God's miraculous providence, a divine scheme, directing, conditioning, and controlling each and every event in history. History, therefore, is linear and teleological. The task of ecclesiastical history is to record and illuminate the sacred, providential, and redemptive course of events in the history of salvation. Thus, within this Christian ideology and philosophy of history, the past is perceived as replete with symbols and prophecies pointing to the glorious future, the millennium, the Kingdom of God, or the heavenly city of God – the New Jerusalem.

The Puritan conception of church history was based upon the premises of Protestant historiography, and more specifically upon the formation of a Protestant apocalyptic tradition in England during the sixteenth century.

⁵ On the relationship between history and apocalypse, see Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1979); Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic* (London, 1972); C. A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Ithaca, 1984); Thomas J. J. Altizer, *History as Apocalypse* (New York, 1985); Austin Farrer, *A Rebirth of Images: The Making of St. John's Apocalypse* (New York, 1986).

Chapter 1 explores how Protestant historians and theologians in Europe, beginning with Luther and Melancthon, justified the break between the Protestant and Catholic churches and fashioned a unique ideological context of sacred time and history in order to explain the special role of the Protestant Reformation within the larger framework of salvation history. In the ecclesiastical and theological controversies surrounding the forces of Reformation and Counter-Reformation, Protestants turned increasingly to history in order to find meaning for the Reformation in the course and progress of the church in the world. Protestant historiography based itself upon a historical interpretation of divine prophecies and regarded the Apocalypse as the guide to the entire course of the history of salvation and redemption. Consequently, the Reformation gave rise to a new mode of historical consciousness, or a distinctly Protestant historiography based upon apocalyptic interpretation of history. Within the apocalyptic scheme of history, then, the Protestant Reformation was situated at the end of time and history, as an eschatological event preceding that moment when the whole mystery of providential history was to be resolved.

The Protestant apocalyptic tradition exercised an enormous influence in England. Claiming that the English Reformation would reveal the full significance of England's singular role in sacred, providential history, it established an illustrious vision for England in the drama of salvation and redemption. Protestant historians, such as John Bale and John Foxe, gave prominence to English history within the confines of ecclesiastical history by presenting it as an ongoing apocalyptic struggle between Christ and Anti-christ. In this apocalyptic scenario, England played a unique part, almost to the point where English history and ecclesiastical history became inseparable. Thus, in the hands of the Protestant apocalyptic historians in England, English history had truly become a mirror of sacred, providential history. The English Reformation was in this sense the pinnacle of English history.

The Protestant vision of England's unique role in sacred, providential history, however, underwent a radical and revolutionary transformation in the early seventeenth century with the failure of the Puritan movement under Elizabeth and the early Stuart kings. By declaring that the Church of England had a unique and prominent role in providential history, Protestant apocalyptic tradition envisioned the ultimate sacralization of England as God's chosen nation in ecclesiastical history. However, the Puritan failure in England led instead to the gradual abandonment of this vision, and Puritans increasingly began to think of England rather as an obstacle, or locus of apostasy, impeding the struggle for the true reformation. Consequently, Puritan apocalyptic thought in fact brought about the ultimate de-sacralization of England's role in providential history, and thus turned the eyes of the godly to seek outside the boundaries of England the realization of their

eschatological vision and millennial expectations. This major transformation owed much to the writing of Thomas Brightman and William Perkins, to name only two of those who provided the justifications for a Puritan initiative to construe a new apocalyptic ideology of ecclesiastical history in which the Church of England, having failed to execute the true reformation, forfeited its glorious role in the all time drama of the history of salvation and redemption. Hence, the de-sacralization of England in providential history resulted in the Puritans' move to establish a new center of sacred time and sacred space in the wilderness of America.

Any discussion of the Puritan migration to New England should obviously take into account the meaning and significance assigned in providential history to religious migration. Within the confines of sacred, ecclesiastical history, religious migration holds a unique and prominent place. Controlled and directed by God's divine providence and conceived as an economy of salvation, the sacred history of the church manifests a long and continuous series of migrations of God's saints which mark the spread and advance of the church, and concomitantly the progress of the Gospel, upon earth. For if the ultimate mark of human existence on earth is based upon the drama of alienation from, and reconciliation with, God, then salvation history itself reveals a dialectical turn: a pilgrimage between Egypt and the Promised Land, or between Babylon and New Jerusalem. Between these two poles of the drama of human salvation, migration symbolizes the prophetic journey marking the end of alienation from and the total reconciliation with God.

Salvation history, therefore, consists in imminent flights of liberation from sin into grace, from the profane to the sacred. In this redemptive context, migration indeed constitutes the heart of ecclesiastical history. It acquires its prominence in sacred history precisely because it symbolizes the whole course of the history of salvation as alienation from and reconciliation with God. In this sense, religious migration is indeed a revelatory, prophetic, and redemptive event; a sacred journey directed by God's divine providence which unveils the meaning of a certain time and a certain space in the progress of the history of salvation. Thus, through the sacred dimension of time, or within the unfolding course of the drama of redemption, migration reveals new terrestrial places and consecrates them as sacred places in the drama of salvation. In this prophetic, redemptive context, indeed, the Puritan de-sacralization of England, led inevitably to the ultimate sacralization of New England in providential history.

The Puritan apocalyptic interpretation of history, then, ultimately constructed a new mode of sacred time and sacred space, or a new vision of the course and progress of church history, which in turn enabled them to assign sacred, revelatory and redemptive meaning rather to the wilderness in

America instead of to England. Yet, historically speaking, the Puritan eschatology and apocalypse of America was not the first instance of the European spiritual conquest of the New World in terms of the premises of ecclesiastical history. Nor was it the first example of the European justification of the colonization of America in terms of the carryover of the Gospel to the New World. Chapter 2, therefore, deals with the apocalypse and eschatology of America, or with the incorporation of the New World as a sacred space into the framework of church history during the Age of Reconnaissance and Discovery.

In ecclesiastical history there has always been a close and inseparable connection between sacred time and sacred space. Throughout history, now conceived as salvation history, God's divine providence led to the incorporation of certain places as sacred spaces within the providential course of the church in the world. Furthermore, the issue of the reconstruction and consecration of sacred time and sacred space in salvation history is inseparable from the singular, redemptive and revelatory role assigned in the history of the church to religious migration. Religious migration is a crucial feature of ecclesiastical history because it constantly connects, through God's providence, sacred time and sacred space. Over time, then, the progress of the Gospel in the world inevitably leads to the de-sacralization of previously revered places, nations and peoples, and to the sacralization of new ones. Hence the singular role which ecclesiastical history assigns to religious migration as a prophetic, revelatory and redemptive event, one which invests certain places with sacred meaning in the framework of the church's continued wandering upon earth. Ultimately, religious migration constituted an important part of the dissemination of the Gospel throughout the world; since the Fall, God's divine providence has invested sacred meaning not only upon certain times and certain people, but also upon certain places during the progress of the church in the world.

Two important types of religious migration emerged in sacred, providential history which Europeans had greatly used in order to consecrate sacred meaning on the New World in providential history, and obviously, no less in order to justify the conquest and settlement of America. On the one hand, there is the *Genesis* type, which is a peaceful religious migration based both upon God's promise to his chosen nation that he will appoint a place for them to dwell in upon earth, and on the idea of spreading the Gospel in the world. And, on the other hand, there is the *Exodus* type, which is a judgmental crisis and apocalyptic migration, marking the ultimate necessity of God's chosen people to depart from a sinful past and corrupt human traditions. With the discovery of the New World and the beginnings of European colonial activities there, the powerful sacred image of the *Genesis* type of religious migration had played a unique role in the justification and rationalization of

Catholic Spain and Portugal's conquest of America, and thus contributed greatly to the incorporation of America as a sacred space in providential history.

With the beginning of the English colonization of Virginia, the religious wars between the forces of Reformation and Counter-Reformation were transferred to the New World. Chapter 3 deals with the eschatology of the Protestant settlement of Virginia, and how English Protestants construed America as holding sacred meaning in providential history. Evidently, the apocalypse and eschatology of the Protestants' settlement of Virginia was based upon the premises of Protestant apocalyptic tradition in England, the transfer of the apocalyptic struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism into America and, above all, upon England's glorious role in providential history. Despite the obvious differences between Spanish, Portuguese, and English Protestants concerning religion, however, their justification for the settlement of America was commonly based upon the *Genesis* type of religious emigration taken from the annals of ecclesiastical history, namely, God's Promise to his chosen nation to go and spread the Gospel throughout the world.

The Puritan eschatology and apocalypse of the New World constituted a radical and revolutionary departure from previous European attempts to incorporate America as a sacred space within the confines of ecclesiastical history. Having failed to execute the true reformation in England, Puritans turned their gaze on the New World. Their experience in England, the experience of failure, was radically different from that of Catholics in Spain and Protestants in England who sought to transport to America the glorious religious cultures of their own countries. Puritans on the contrary sought to create in America that which had been denied them back home. Inevitably, as I demonstrate in chapter 4, the Puritan eschatology and apocalypse of America were not based upon the *Genesis* type of religious emigration, as was the case with Spain, Portugal, and Protestant England, but rather upon the *Exodus* type of religious migration, a judgmental, apocalyptic migration based upon the ultimate rejection of, and total separation from, what was seen as corrupted history and degenerating human traditions. With the Puritan migration, then, there appeared for the first time a unique reconstruction of America as a sacred space in providential history in which the total desacralization of the Old World led inevitably to the ultimate sacralization of the New World in the history of salvation. In the Puritan apocalyptic scenario, America became a sacred space in ecclesiastical history, a shelter, as it were, and a refuge for God's saints who felt obliged to flee into the wilderness of New England because of God's impending judgment on the old, sinful world.

Puritan eschatology and apocalypse of America determined not only the

creation of New England as a sacred center, both in terms of sacred time and sacred space, in the history of salvation, but ultimately served also as the basis for the creation of a sacred Puritan errand into the wilderness of America. Chapter 5 illuminates how the Puritans fully utilized the sacred, prophetic, redemptive and revelatory vision of the Errand of the Church of the Wilderness, or the Woman in the Wilderness of the Apocalypse. It also examines the eschatological and apocalyptic dimension of this errand, and describes how Puritans used this sacred prophetic vision in order to define the meaning of their holy experiment in the wilderness of America within the boundaries of sacred, ecclesiastical history.

The Puritans' eschatology and apocalypse of America, and the reconstruction of New England as the ultimate sacred center in providential history, had obviously tremendous social and political implications for Puritan life in New England. The last two chapters deal therefore with the crucial relationship between Puritan modes of conviction and modes of conduct, or between reflection and realization. Chapter 6 shows how the Puritans' failure in England to establish holy Christian fellowships according to their own vision of social and religious reformation, had led to the migration to New England, a place in which Puritans could realize their holy calling to lead a godly Christian life in both church and society in keeping with their special relationship with God. Likewise, chapter 7 explores how the Puritan theocratic impulse to establish every dimension of human life upon the sacred word of God, eventually led to the formation of a holy Christian commonwealth, or theocracy in New England, a unique political and social system in which both church and state were based upon a covenantal relationship with God.