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Introduction

History of dissent and the orthodox response, 1630–55

The founders of colonial Massachusetts spent their first decades in the New World working to erect a godly commonwealth in accordance with their understanding of God's plan for his people. They struggled to forge an orthodox consensus informed both by their concerns as Puritan reformers within the Church of England and by the needs arising from their attempt to organize righteous churches in the wilderness. As they labored to create institutions that would promote spiritual purity and social stability, the leaders of Massachusetts confronted challenges on two fronts. Accused of excessive timidity by those with a more radical vision and of extremism by those who believed a more modest reformation appropriate, the colony's leaders attempted to chart a middle course through these conflicting options.

In doing so, they staked out a position within the Anglo-Puritan community that they would attempt to defend in ensuing years. The earliest of these threats arose during the initial decade of settlement, as two reputedly godly residents led movements denouncing what they saw as the colony's failure to implement divine directives. In responding to the criticisms of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson, the colony's leaders declared their unwillingness to embrace the separatism and mysticism these radicals advocated. The second significant threat to the emerging New England way came from the presbyterian branch of the English Puritan party, whose reform program departed less decisively from the Anglican church. Far from finding Massachusetts orthodoxy too timid, Presbyterians thought the colonial establishment too radical. This challenge proved more difficult to overcome because presbyterianism – which by the 1640s had powerful advocates in England – shared much common ground with the orthodox establishment and its proponents were not as easily dismissed as Williams and Hutchinson had been. Although the leaders of the Bay colony would eventually make some compromises with their presbyterian brethren, they continued to maintain a position between them and the radical Puritan faction. Their efforts to create stable and godly communities succeeded remarkably well, in spite of such criticisms.

Only toward the end of the civil war and interregnum years would the archi-

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tects of the New England way confront the far more serious threat posed by the introduction of radical sectarianism. Since the late 1640s, England had witnessed an unprecedented rise in religious and political extremism. The ominous growth of radicalism in England had further encouraged colonial leaders to make peace with their presbyterian brethren. The Bay colony, long sheltered from these stormy developments, finally felt their full force with the arrival of Quaker witnesses in the colony in 1656. In the late 1650s, as the English gentry was beginning to suppress radical activity at home, indigenous radicalism would become a major problem in orthodox New England for the first time. The response of the Bay colony to first the Quakers and later the Baptists was shaped by its previous experiences in dealing with the criticisms of Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and the Presbyterians of old and New England. In some respects, the defenders of orthodoxy inadvertently paved the way for the creation of local sectarian movements.

The first sustained opposition to the nascent establishment coalesced around the promising young minister Roger Williams, who became teacher of Salem Church in 1634. Williams advocated that all the Bay colony churches declare their formal separation from the Church of England. In making this argument, he was promulgating a view that had guided the creation of a number of independent congregations in England as well as among English exiles on the European continent and in neighboring Plymouth Plantation.[1] Adopting a position usually associated with the separatist stance, Williams also objected to the idea that a magistrate should suppress dissent, coerce church attendance, or otherwise protect religion. The concern for church purity that underlay both of these views also led Williams to advocate the veiling of women at worship service, which he believed was a practice of the primitive churches. For his offensive ideas and his refusal to keep them to himself, the magistrates banished Williams in 1636. At that time, he traveled south to what would become the Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, where his belief in "soul liberty" would turn that settlement into "the Sinke into which all the Rest of the Colonyes empty their Hereticks."[2]

Anne Hutchinson, the leader of the second movement to disrupt the Bay colony in the 1630s, would be forced to follow Williams south two years later, after the government banished her for her objectionable views. A substantial matron, Hutchinson criticized the preaching of many of the colony's ministers, for she believed that they were encouraging a dangerous reliance on human activity in bringing about salvation.[3] She voiced these objections in private

[1] The best discussion of Williams's views on these issues remains Edmund S. Morgan, *Roger Williams: The Church and the State* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967).

[2] John Woodbridge, Jr., to Richard Baxter, in "Woodbridge–Baxter Correspondence," ed. Raymond Phineas Stearns, *NEQ* 10 (1937): 573.

[3] The literature on Hutchinson is voluminous. For a brief summary of her views, see E. Brooks

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meetings held in her Boston home, meetings attended by both men and women who came to hear her discuss the weekly sermons. The informal doctrinal discussions in which the Hutchinsonians so eagerly participated were a continuation of English Puritan practices, but their opponents believed that the doctrines upheld in the Bay colony's churches – unlike those of the Anglican church – did not deserve the critical comment of the laity.[4] Furthermore, Hutchinson's ministry raised questions about the proper role of lay people in the church, and the fact of her gender framed the issue in particularly controversial terms. Ousting Hutchinson necessitated a political struggle, for her male supporters included a number of powerful colonists. But the General Court was eventually able to banish her, along with some of her followers, in 1637. Boston Church excommunicated her the following spring, after which she left the colony.

In rejecting Williams and Hutchinson, colonial leaders were not dismissing the concerns for church purity and biblical primitivism, the desire for an intense spiritual experience, or the eagerness to have the laity take an active role in the religious affairs that had inspired the dissent of these rebels. Rather, their vision of orthodoxy was designed to steer a middle course between the radical positions these dissidents advocated and the more conservative views of the Anglican church.[5] The colony's "non-separatist" congregationalism, as Perry Miller called it, rejected the ceremony, hierarchy, and inclusiveness of the Church of England while continuing to hold out hope for the reformation of the national church. Although the experience with Hutchinson suggested that lay participation in public religious discourse should be carefully monitored, the ministry recognized the importance of lay involvement in the governing of individual

Holifield, *Era of Persuasion: American Thought and Culture 1521–1680* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), 116–18.

[4] A number of scholars have argued recently that Hutchinson was reacting to the changes Puritanism was experiencing in the New World; see Harry S. Stout, "Word and Order in Colonial New England," in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, ed. Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 20, 23–6, 31–3; Amy Schrager Lang, *Prophetic Woman: Anne Hutchinson and the Problem of Dissent in the Literature of New England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 37, 33. Andrew Delbanco goes farther, arguing that Hutchinsonians were upholding true Puritanism; *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), especially 203–4.

[5] William K. B. Stoever, *A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven: Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1978). The founders had to suppress allegiance to Anglicanism in the town of Weymouth, which had been settled in the 1620s, prior to the Puritan migration; see William Hyde, "The Early History of Weymouth," in *History of Weymouth, Massachusetts*, 4 vols. (Boston, 1923), 1:98–100. Some scholars have misread the evidence as involving a fight over Baptist views; compare David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America* (New York, 1850), 369, to Isaac Backus, *History of New England*, ed. David Weston, 2 vols. (Newton, Mass., 1871; reprint ed., New York: Arno, 1969), 1:93–4; the latter was originally published as *A History of New England With Particular Reference to the Denomination Called Baptists*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1777–96). Weston's addition to note 2, page 94, encourages this misreading.

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congregations. Furthermore, Bay colonists placed more emphasis on the autonomy of each congregation than did their brethren who supported the Scottish presbyterian system. The practices of limiting church membership to those who appeared to be among the elect and of limiting political participation to those men who were church members were intended to ensure the purity of the church as well as the godliness of the civil government.[6] Like Williams and Hutchinson, the architects of Massachusetts orthodoxy justified their system with reference to scriptural example. They hoped, in the aftermath of these incidents, that the godly impulses toward purity, piety, lay involvement, and biblicism could subsequently be contained within the church order erected in the colony. Regardless, they were resolved to thwart any attacks on that order in the future, just as they had in the cases of Williams and Hutchinson.

While the establishment did succeed in giving expression to the radical impulses inherent in the Puritan movement to the satisfaction of most colonists, the temptation to leave the orthodox fold to satisfy a desire for further church purity, lay activism, and strict biblicism remained. "Anabaptism" – which one minister declared "the Vexation and Clog of Reformation ever since the beginning of it" – was the most popular choice among colonists who felt this temptation during the years after Williams and Hutchinson had been dispatched.[7] Anabaptists, as Baptists were then derisively called, limited church membership to adult believers.[8] Typical sectarians, they viewed these pure churches as necessarily estranged from the sinful, larger society. As a result, they denied the state any power over matters of conscience, which gave rise to their support for freedom of religion. Seventeenth-century commentators criticized anyone who strove for greater church purity than they themselves considered necessary by linking them with the Anabaptist heresy: Tarred with that brush by Anglicans and Presbyterians, the founders of Massachusetts accused separatists in turn.[9]

The defenders of New England orthodoxy appreciated that the Baptist faith could snare the godly colonist, acknowledging that the scriptural basis for infant baptism was complicated. They were sympathetic to those who "scrupled" infant baptism and only urged them to keep their uncertainties private. However, the public advocacy of Baptist views – whether opposition to infant baptism or the more pronounced support for adult baptism – demanded the attention of

[6] In fact, the Bay colony's position on this issue was too extreme for some people – such as Thomas Hooker, founder of Connecticut – who were otherwise in agreement with the system.

[7] Jonathan Mitchell, *An Answer to the Apologetical Preface Published in the Name and Behalf of the Brethren that Dissented in the Late Synod* (Cambridge, 1664), 6. Anabaptism was somewhat akin to the separatism of Williams; he would become a Baptist briefly in 1639.

[8] Baptist beliefs are reviewed in Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory: Puritan Raidicalism in New England, 1620–1660* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 94–6.

[9] John Winthrop suggested that Roger Williams had been a closet Anabaptist in his separatist phase; see *Winthrop's Journal, "History of New England" 1630–1649*, ed. James Kendall Hosmer, 2 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1908), 1:297.

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the authorities, who were concerned to prevent other colonists from being infected.

Only a small number of cases of Anabaptism – twenty-six – have come to light for the period between 1639 and 1654.[10] Some of these dissidents were undoubtedly influenced by the burgeoning Baptist movement in England and Rhode Island.[11] At the same time, they continued and extended a tradition within the Bay colony itself of lay support for the more radical aspects of Puritanism. The first person known to have been publicly associated with believer's baptism in the colony was William Walcott; he was, appropriately, a Salem resident who soon traveled to Providence to join with Williams, his former minister, in the newly founded Baptist church there.[12] The most spectacular conversion became public in 1653, when Harvard president Henry Dunster began freely espousing Baptist views; like William Walcott, Dunster left the colony in search of spiritual fellowship and freedom to practice his newfound faith.[13] Because those publicly associated with antipedobaptism were few, un-

[10] Only one known case occurred in 1639 (rather than two, as has been generally believed, see note 12). In addition, the 1638 case involving Seth Sweetser did not, in fact, take place; see note 59. After the 1639 case, instances of Anabaptist sentiment appear in the records again in 1642, peaking in 1646 with a total of eight. Subsequently, cases dropped off rapidly, recurring only in 1649 (2), 1651 (3), and 1653 (2). The peak in 1646 may have resulted from a concerted effort to root out antipedobaptists in that year, which also witnessed the passage of a new heresy law and the meeting of the Cambridge Synod. The vast majority of cases (20) occurred in Essex County, especially Salem and Lynn (16 of the 17 for which the town of residence can be determined). Marblehead, Watertown, Charlestown, Cambridge, Boston, Reading, and Hingham had at least one each.

See EQC, vol. 1; Ernest W. Baughman, "Excommunications and Banishments from the First Church in Salem and the Town of Salem, 1629–1680," *EIHC* 113 (1977): 97–8; Gura, *Glimpse of Sion's Glory*, 110–11; William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630–1833: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 16–17; Joseph B. Felt, *The Ecclesiastical History of New England*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1862), 2:12, 46; Thomas Cobbet, "A Brief Answer to a Scandalous Pamphlet," appendix to *The Civil Magistrates Power in Matters of Religion* (London, 1653), 39; and Middlesex County Court Records, trans. David Pulsifer (1851), Judicial Archives at MA, 1:37, 45, 51 [hereafter cited as Pulsifer Transcript]. Also see "The Autobiographical Memoranda of John Brock, 1636–1659," ed. Clifford K. Shipton, *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, n.s., 53 (1943): 101, for the timing of the increase in the heresy.

[11] Baptist tracts were circulating in Massachusetts by at least the mid-1640s; see John Cotton, "To The Reader," in *The Grounds and Ends of the Baptisme of the Children of the Faithfull* (London, 1647), n.p.; *Winthrop's Journal*, ed. Hosmer, 2:257.

[12] Gura, *Glimpse of Sion's Glory*, 105–6; Sidney Perley, *The History of Salem, Massachusetts, 1626–1716*, 3 vols. (Salem: Essex Institute, 1924–8), 1:271–2. Gura has Walcott joined in this stance by William Wickenden; however, according to the work Gura cites for this information, Wickenden had already removed to Providence when he publicly embraced the position. See Samuel Gorton, *Simplicities Defence against Seven-Headed Policy* (1646), reprinted in Rhode Island Historical Society, *Collections* 2 (Providence, 1835), 109n.

[13] Jeremiah Chaplin, *Life of Henry Dunster: First President of Harvard College* (Boston, 1827). Typically, the authorities would attempt to dissuade the openly heterodox; failing that, they urged

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organized, and generally willing to cooperate with the measures taken to rid the colony of their views, their dissent did not pose a significant threat during the 1640s or 1650s. Only after the orthodox faith introduced modifications in its own practice of the ordinance of baptism would this scattered Anabaptist sentiment coalesce into a sectarian movement.[14]

During the 1640s, the major challenge to the standing order in Massachusetts – and one that shaped its response to the handful of Anabaptists in its midst – was mounted by the increasingly powerful presbyterian branch of the English Puritan movement. Beginning in the late 1630s, religious reformers who advocated reorganizing the Church of England along the lines of the Scottish national church criticized the congregational system in New England's largest colony. According to these critics, individual congregations should be subservient to a centralized presbytery that made decisions regarding church polity and doctrine. Furthermore, Presbyterians rejected the effort to create pure churches composed only of "visible saints," arguing instead that church membership should be available to any reputedly upright person. Adopting these practices would have moved the churches of Massachusetts back in the direction of Anglicanism, with its hierarchic structure and its inclusive parish system of membership. In both private correspondence and published treatises, English Presbyterians and New English Congregationalists debated their respective church orders vigorously for a decade.[15] The debate took on added urgency after civil war broke out in 1642, because these critics of New England orthodoxy temporarily gained ascendance in England. Emboldened by the success of their allies at home, colonists with presbyterian sympathies attempted to pressure the government into modifying the standing order, especially the church membership requirement for the franchise. Two Bay colony churches inclined toward presbyterianism, and ministers from the other churches struggled over how to maintain congregational autonomy while suppressing the unconventional practices of these churches.[16]

them to keep silent. For those who continued intransigent, an effort was made to persuade them to leave of their own volition. Dunster's particularly well documented case proceeded in this way. Banishment, provided for by a 1642 law, was not used until a Baptist church was actually gathered in the colony in the 1660s. Of the twenty-six cases previously discussed, only two colonists – William Witter of Lynn and Christopher Goodwin of Charlestown – are known to have made their objectionable beliefs public again. Presumably, the others were successfully dissuaded, silenced, or persuaded to leave.

[14] The distinction between dissidents and sectarians, developed by Jon Butler, is applicable here; the former – like the radicals of the pre-1656 era – are only critical of the prevailing system, while sectarians – who would organize after 1656 – erect a new one. See his "The Origins of American Denominational Order," American Philosophical Society, *Transactions* 68 (1978), 8.

[15] For a summary of the points at issue, see Perry Miller, *The New England Mind*, vol. 2: *From Colony to Province* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953; Boston: Beacon, 1961), 68–81. A good example is discussed by Larzer Ziff, Introduction, in *John Cotton on the Churches of New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 31–4.

[16] John J. Waters, "Hingham, Massachusetts, 1631–1661: An East Anglican Oligarchy in the New

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The presbyterian challenge was clearly pivotal during the 1640s. Although Philip Gura has argued that the radical Puritan threat continued to shape orthodoxy throughout this period, the radical influence was – for the time being – less than the conservative one.[17] Largely in response to the presbyterian critique, the Massachusetts establishment codified its ecclesiastical system in the Cambridge Platform, and leading ministers issued significant statements outlining congregational polity.[18] The vigorous church admission procedures instituted in the 1640s under the guidance of John Cotton were developed partially in response to the Presbyterians' comparatively inclusive policy.[19] The criticisms made by their more conservative brethren even encouraged orthodox efforts to root out and punish Baptists, for Presbyterians claimed that the New England way – with its restricted church membership and high level of lay involvement – fostered Anabaptism.[20] And the trend toward limiting the role of the laity, which had begun in the aftermath of the Hutchinson affair, continued during these years; restricting opportunities for lay members to speak during worship services served to weaken allegations of congregational radicalism.[21] With various radical tendencies within the Puritan movement decisively rejected during the 1630s, the major battle of the 1640s was fought on the other front, against the advocates of a comparatively hierarchic and inclusive church order. The skirmishes against Anabaptists were minor by comparison during these years.

If the criticisms of Presbyterians were distressing to Bay colony leaders, the failure of that party to retain control of England led to still more ominous developments, which raised the specter of radicalism and anarchy. In the late 1640s, events in England took a troubling turn, in the view of the godly ortho-

World," *Journal of Social History* 1 (1968): 351–70; Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York, 1893; Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1960), 138–9, 159–71.

[17] See Gura, *Glimpse of Sion's Glory*. Besides those who took heterodox positions on baptism and the few people who were influenced by the Gortonists, he cites very few cases of radical activity in Massachusetts from the late 1630s until the arrival of the Quakers in 1656.

[18] The text of the Cambridge Platform is provided in Walker, *Creeds and Platforms*, 194–237. John Cotton, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared* (London, 1648).

[19] Normal Petit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), 161.

[20] Robert Child et al., Remonstrance and Petition, in *The Hutchinson Papers*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1769; reprint ed., Albany: Publications of the Prince Society, 1865), 1:221; Robert Mascall to Captain James Oliver, 25 March 1669, in Backus, *History*, 1:311–13.

[21] David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 90–4, 110–11. James F. Cooper disagrees with Hall on the impact of the Hutchinsonian controversy but finds a decline in the lay role eventually; see "Anne Hutchinson and the 'Lay Rebellion' against the Clergy," *NEQ* 61 (1988), 392–7. Also see Barbara Ritter Dailey's account of the Bachiler party in "The Itinerant Preacher and the Social Network in Seventeenth-Century New England," in *The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife: Annual Proceedings 1984*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University Press, 1986), 45.

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dox on the other side of the Atlantic. By that time, the presbyterian effort to redesign the English national church had foundered. The rise of a plethora of radical movements, the execution of the king, and Oliver Cromwell's policy of toleration all contributed to the creation of an unprecedented situation in England, one that was alien to the colonists in orthodox New England. Having recently defended themselves against charges of fostering radicalism with their congregationalist church order, Bay colonists suddenly found themselves denounced for their conservative intolerance. According to one of their radical critics, repressive New England was becoming old at the same time as increasingly tolerant old England was becoming new.[22] The leaders of the Bay colony watched events in their homeland with fascination and alarm, safeguarded their policy of intolerance against all assailants, and shored up their defenses against dissent. Through it all, they thanked God that the civil and religious system that they had erected prevented their colony from sliding into the anarchy that had overtaken England.

In the decisively different context of Massachusetts, the impact of radicalism was comparatively limited. Some scholars, most recently Philip Gura and David Lovejoy, have argued that the "free aire of the New World" encouraged the expression of the full spectrum of radical views.[23] Although in tolerant Rhode Island colonists were free to embrace Anabaptism, Gortonism, and Quakerism, orthodox New England did not foster such extremism. Popular radicalism in the areas under orthodox control was generally limited to the occasional case of hostility to some aspect of the established faith, with opposition to infant baptism the most focused criticism made. Regions on the periphery of the colony were more likely to be "infected" with heterodox views, presumably as a result of extensive contact with radicals in the settlements that bordered on Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Haven.[24]

The unprecedented situation in the British Isles fostered an outpouring of subversive sentiments while circumstances in the orthodox New England colonies militated against such a development. The growth of extremism in England occurred with the downfall of the increasingly repressive Laudian Church of England and in the context of failed Puritan efforts to establish a reformed national church in its place.[25] The "internal dynamic" of the Puritan movement

[22] John Clarke, *Ill Newes from New-England* (London, 1652), title page.

[23] Gura, *Glimpse of Sion's Glory;* David S. Lovejoy, *Religious Enthusiasm in the New World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985).

[24] Stephen Foster makes this observation with regard to the Quakers; "English Puritanism and the Progress of English Institutions, 1630–1660," in *Saints and Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History,* ed. David D. Hall, John M. Murrin, and Thad W. Tate (New York: Norton, 1984), 32.

[25] William Haller made the point that once they had failed to reform the Church of England, the Elizabethan Puritans began inadvertently to lay the groundwork for more radical positions by criticizing the church hierarchy and advocating lay initiative in spiritual affairs; *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), esp. ch. 5.

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might propel people completely out of mainstream Puritanism into the Baptist faith and even – perhaps – beyond it, as scholars have argued, particularly with regard to civil war and interregnum England.[26] But the successful institutionalization of a Puritan polity could provide an adequate forum for the expression of potentially radical tendencies.[27] In Massachusetts, where Puritan reformers were in control from the outset, the largest identifiably disgruntled element in the population was concerned to protect traditional features of the New England way against innovations suggested by the ministry. For instance, the laity – comparatively uninterested in exploring the sectarians' more extreme version of the pure church – cared passionately about the purity of their congregational churches.[28]

Observing events in England with horror, the defenders of orthodoxy in the Bay colony moved to prevent the heresies rampant there from infecting their colony. Never complacent, they refused to rely solely on the orthodox inclinations of the populace in their campaign to protect the New England way. Their traditional strategies for dealing with dissent were fortified during these years with new legislation specifically outlawing Anabaptism (1644), the works of John Reeves and Lodowick Muggleton (1654), Quakerism (1656), and a host of less specific threats.[29] The authorities briefly and unsuccessfully tested a new approach when they sent troops beyond the borders of the Bay colony to arrest Samuel Gorton and some of his followers in 1643. After sentencing the group to hard labor in seven towns, the magistrates were distressed to find that the "Gortonists" had succeeded in leading a number of residents astray with their views. Although apparently few colonists were permanently lost to this heresy, the incident underscored the wisdom of removing heretics who could not be silenced.[30] By the mid-1650s, the standing order had developed successful

[26] James Fulton Maclear, "The Making of the Lay Tradition," *Journal of Religion* 33 (1953): 113–36, esp. 119, 129; Alan Simpson, *Puritanism in Old and New England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), ch. 1; Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964), ch. 1; David D. Hall, "Understanding the Puritans," in *The State of American History*, ed. Herbert J. Bass (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970), 331–2.

[27] The situation in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, where English residents were free to choose among nonseparating congregationalist, separatist, and Anabaptist options, was similar to Massachusetts in this respect; see Keith Sprunger, "English Puritans and Anabaptists," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 46 (1972), 113–28.

[28] Foster, "Progress of English Institutions," 9; also see Baird Tipson, "Samuel Stone's Discourse Against Requiring Church Relations," *WMQ*, 3d ser., 46 (1989): 790–4. Lay opposition to the halfway covenant – discussed later – was also based on this concern.

[29] *RMB*, 2:85; 3:356; 4, pt. 1:277–8; also 3:98–102, 259–60.

[30] Robert Emmet Wall, *Massachusetts Bay: The Crucial Decade, 1640–1650* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), ch. 4. Only Eleanor Truslar of Salem is known to have been punished for holding Gortonist views (*EQC* 1:68). John Endecott was possibly referring to her when he suggested that an example be made of a vocal Gorton supporter in Salem; see Endecott to John Winthrop, 22 April 1644, in *Winthrop Papers*, vol. 4: *1638–1644* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1944), 456.

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mechanisms of suppression and was primed to respond vigorously to the Quaker witnesses who would arrive shortly.

Establishment concern to protect the colony from radical influences may have fueled a trend toward conservatism in orthodox church polity. During the civil war and interregnum years, the churches curtailed opportunities for lay preaching, the power of the ministry increased, and synods that met to establish a common position on points of doctrine and practice became a frequent occurrence. In addition, ministers and lay elders meeting in these synods seriously broached the possibility of expanding church membership to include the grandchildren of the elect – an innovation that tended toward the more inclusive practices of Presbyterians and Anglicans.[31]

Arguably, these changes could be explained as the result of the institutionalization of the Puritan faith in the process of becoming an established church, as some scholars – most notably H. Richard Niebuhr – have suggested.[32] The changing attitude toward lay discussions of doctrinal matters offers one case in point. In England, where Puritans attempted to practice their faith in the context of an established church indifferent if not hostile to their cause, private meetings (which were not always conducted under ministerial oversight) were of paramount importance. Lay people became accustomed to discussing theological matters and, somewhat inadvertently, learned to be critical of those in official positions in the church hierarchy. Anne Hutchinson may have assumed that such discourse would become all the more possible in a Puritan-run colony, and she exercised the critical faculties that had previously been turned against the Laudian clergy in her attacks on the colony's ministers. But, in the context of a Puritan religious establishment, such practices subverted – rather than supported – godliness. In New England, the ministers who had encouraged English conventicles either opposed unsupervised lay discussion or worked to shift lay gatherings from a focus on doctrinal to devotional matters.[33] The changing nature of Puritanism in the early years of the Bay colony can be explained largely with reference to the process of a reform movement becoming an establishment.[34]

[31] See the works cited in note 21 as well as Hall, *Faithful Shepherd*, generally. For the discussions of baptism during this period, see Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), ch. 1.

[32] See especially H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1937), ch. 5. Pope has dealt with the halfway covenant in this way; see *Half-Way Covenant*, 261–2.

[33] See Thomas Cobbet, *A Just Vindication of the Covenant and Church-Estate of Children of Church-Members* (London, 1648), A2v–A3; also see *Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven . . . 1653, to the union* (Hartford, Conn., 1858), 244, 245.

[34] Stephen Foster puts this process in a transatlantic perspective in "The Godly in Transit: English Popular Protestantism and the Creation of a Puritan Establishment in America," in *Seventeenth-Century New England*, ed. David D. Hall and David Grayson Allen (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1984), esp. 211–15, 237.

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