

The Process of Sanctification: A Bourdieusian Approach to the Declension of Power in New England Puritan Clergy

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Introduction

This paper explains the declension of Puritan clerical power following the Great Migration up until when Massachusetts lost its charter in 1684. Historian Perry Miller argued that an overall declension in Puritan culture occurred during this period. However, that notion has been dispelled. There is a resurging field exploring declension in areas outside of Miller's scope of Puritan culture. I determine that colonial New England existed as a functional theocracy by using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital to explain clerical power through symbolic and religious misdirection and conversion. I explore civil and economic power struggles in colonial New England during the decades following the Great Migration to establish that Puritan culture did not largely decline. Instead, it was the Puritan clergy's power that waned during this period.

Most Puritan families kept a copy of the Geneva Bible in their home. Puritans read the Bible as families, congregations, and as a government. The Puritans' literacy rate was higher than their contemporaries because they taught children to read in hopes of biblical familiarity. Puritans had separated from the Catholic Church, in part, because their God-given right to read the Bible was restricted. In short, the Bible was vital to the Puritans of New England. The Puritans pointed to many scriptures to justify their intertwined religious government. Surely, Exodus 19 was one of those examples.

In this chapter of the Old Testament, Moses, Aaron, and the newly freed Israelites wander through the "wilderness" searching for the promised land, an image often borrowed and rhetorically invoked by the leader of the first wave of Puritan immigrants, John Winthrop.¹ In Exodus, Moses

1. Alan Heimert, "Puritanism, the Wilderness, and the Frontier," *The New England Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (1953), <https://doi.org/10.2307/362849>.

travels to the top of Mount Sinai where Jehovah reminds him of Israel's covenant that, if kept, will cause Israel to prosper.

Verse six recounts Jehovah telling Moses: "Ye shall be unto me also a kingdom of Priests, and an holy nation."² Moses is commanded that no one outside of whom Jehovah commands is allowed to climb the mount. In the penultimate verse of the chapter, Aaron is commanded to ascend Mount Sinai with Moses.³ Thus, Israel's civil government had the power of God through covenant, and the Puritans would too.⁴ The symbolism of this chapter invokes God's blessing for the New England Puritans' functional theocracy.⁵

The Puritans infused religion into every aspect of their lives. This worked during the Great Migration and for years after. However, it was impossible for Puritan orthodoxy to maintain its control for long in the face of a changing society, economic fluctuations, and governmental upheaval. By employing a Bourdieusian analysis toward New England economics and civil government, I conclude that, while Puritan culture did not decline

2. *The Bible and Holy Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testament* (Geneva: Rouland Hall, 1560), Ex. 19:6.

3. Aaron, Moses's brother, stood in place for Moses on several occasions during the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt. The priesthood is directed through Aaron's line. Ex. 40:12–15, Num. 16:40, 2 Chron. 26:18. The priesthood, while religious in many aspects, played a more significant role in the civil administration of the theocratic state than the Levites. 1 Kings. 8:4, Ezra 2:70, John 1:19.

4. Ex. 24:14, 18. This verse shows that Aaron was appointed a judge in Israel. While not completely divorced from religious duties, judges in Israel played a largely secular role. Ex. 23:2, 6.

5. I classify Massachusetts Bay as a functioning theocracy because it required religious adherence to be a freeman—a voting member. Perry Miller, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts 1630–1650* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965). While clergy members were banned from holding office, they did hold power in terms such as advisory and oversight. Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1995), 93. Most importantly, from a Bourdieusian perspective, New England Puritan clergy gained symbolic capital which "functions to mask the economic domination of the dominant class and socially illegitimate hierarchy by essentializing and naturalizing social position...noneconomic fields...legitimate class relations through misrecognition. Craig Calhoun and Moishe Postone, "Habit, Field, and Capital: The Question of Historical Specificity," in *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Edward LiPuma and Craig Calhoun (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 66. Bourdieu explains that symbolic capital works through the means of transubstantiative transfer of symbolic capital into other forms of capital such as economic, political, social, or most importantly, the meta-field of power. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," trans. Richard Nice, in *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*, by John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 242.

in the years following the Great Migration, New England's functional theocracy lost control of New England by the time England revoked the Massachusetts Bay charter in 1684.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this paper, I will be analyzing the power structure between ministers, magistrates, and common individuals through an approach based on the theories and studies of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu is particularly useful because his social theories are designed to “unveil domination and the least visible forms of domination, so often hidden by common sense.”⁶ Bourdieusian theory is perfect to address the power structure in New England culture because the contest for dominion was generally unseen. Bourdieu's theory will be used and explained throughout the paper, but a brief framework is necessary.⁷

Bourdieu views power through a Marxist lens, but instead of focusing purely on material capital, he gives voice to unseen capital.⁸ While economic and cultural capital are widely understood, I focus on symbolic capital because it sheds light on the inherent hegemonic structure of New England's functional theocracy. Symbolic power is based on “assumptions in the constitution and maintenance of power relations.”⁹ Symbolic capital requires legitimation through symbolic labor performed by those that it benefits, but the affected group must not recognize how the actor benefits.¹⁰ For example, a preacher only produces symbolic power in a society that agrees that religion is important for reasons besides material capital. Then he must misdirect the laity by obscuring his real intentions.¹¹ The preacher's interest must be seen as legitimate, e.g. doing God's will. This process legitimates the preacher, leading the laity to deference and obedience, thus the clergy becomes a ruling class. The magistrates need the ministers because they consecrate magisterial decisions through their symbolic power. Thus,

6. Monique De St Martin, “Une inflexible domination?” ed. Pierre Encrevé, in *Travailler avec Bourdieu*, ed. Rose-Marie Lagrave (Paris: Flammarion, 2007), 326.

7. It is important to note that while there are some definitions offered in this paper, Bourdieu's “thinking tools” are meant as guidelines that are “intended to be flexible and adaptable” for the study at hand. Terry Rey, *Bourdieu on religion: imposing faith and legitimacy* (Routledge, 2014), 43.

8. These terms will be used interchangeably throughout this paper.

9. David Swartz, *Symbolic power, politics, and intellectuals: the political sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 43.

10. Swartz, *Symbolic power*, 43.

11. Bourdieu contends that, generally, this process happens subconsciously.

the functional theocracy forms when the religious field is so powerful that all decisions must be consecrated by the clergy.

Historiography

Perry Miller, one of the foremost intellectual Americanists, resurrected Puritan studies which led to an outpouring of Puritan scholarship that continues. Throughout his career, Miller focused throughout his career on Puritan declension. He studied Puritan jeremiads, which were essentially diatribes directed at a congregation. The jeremiad granted extensive power to ministers. These sermons led Miller to conclude that a general "apostasy" occurred amongst the Puritans.¹² Margaret Sobczak, a critic of declension, sums up Miller's version of declension as "a waning of spiritual commitment to the survival of particular ideas and a particular social order."¹³ It is important to note that Miller's argument was mostly concerned with spiritual apostasy, rather than an overall cultural decline.

Miller's conclusion on declension was roundly criticized by numerous scholars including Edmund Morgan, one of Miller's doctoral advisees.¹⁴ Morgan acknowledged that Miller set the framework for future Puritan studies, but he criticized Miller for depicting the Puritans as a one-dimensional people.¹⁵

Although Miller's original declension argument has lost support, a new field of Puritan declension has emerged along secular lines. Mark Valeri's monograph, *Heavenly Merchandise*, argued that international trade, although initially controlled by functional theocracy, eventually altered

12. Perry Miller, "Errand Into The Wilderness," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1953): 8, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2936876>.

13. Margaret Sobczak, "Hoopes's Symposium on Perry Miller," *American Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (1982): 45, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2712789>.

14. Edmund S. Morgan, "An Address to the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, on the Occasion of Its Centennial," *The New England Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (1993): 357, <https://doi.org/10.2307/366001>.

However, not all of Morgan's statements of Miller's work were negative. It should be noted that Morgan referred to Miller's work as "the most imaginative and the most exhaustive piece of intellectual history that America has produced." In Edmund S. Morgan, "The Historians of Early New England," in *The reinterpretation of early American history; essays in honor of John Edwin Pomfrey*, by Ray Allen Billington and John E. Pomfret (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1969), 52.

15. Morgan, *Historians of Early New England*, 53. Also, see Michael McGiffert, "American Puritan Studies in the 1960s," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1970): 52, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1923838>.

Puritan morality.¹⁶ I seek to situate my exploration of power relations along theocratic lines. I seek, not to just note the changing circumstances in New England, but to define the periods that provided critical mass for significant alterations in New England politics and culture.

In this paper, I explore the notion of capital held by Puritan clergy held in seventeenth-century New England. Historians, Ira V. Brown and David E. Smith, proved that ministers gained extensive power through millennialism preaching.¹⁷ James West Davidson supplemented this conclusion by showing that Congregationalists firmly believed in ministerial prophecy. Furthermore, they believed that they could bring about Christ's Second Coming.¹⁸

During the seventeenth century, only ministers connected the Bible to the symbols that revealed New England's destiny. Sacvan Bercovitch, the preeminent scholar of Puritan typology, demonstrated that typological rights endowed ministers with a consecrated power over their congregation.¹⁹

Recently, scholars have focused on the dismantling process of Puritan hegemony in New England. Darren Staloff forcefully addresses the power struggle between competing groups in his work, *The Making of an American Thinking Class*.²⁰ He concluded that as power was removed from the government, common New Englanders justified political radicalism through the Bible, which led to the implementation of democracy.

This paper builds upon Davidson's, Bercovitch's, and many other historians' arguments that demonstrated the power imbalance in colonial New England. I begin with examples of early religious control of civil government that slowly eroded as the clergy lost its control over orthodox standards. As

16. Valeri, *Heavenly merchandize: how religion shaped commerce in Puritan America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010).

17. Ira V. Brown, "Watchers for the Second Coming: The Millenarian Tradition in America," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39, no. 3 (1952): 445, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1895004>; David E. Smith, "Millenarian Scholarship in America," *American Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1965): , <https://doi.org/10.2307/2710907>.

18. James West Davidson, *The logic of millennial thought: eighteenth century New England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977), 75.

19. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan origins of the American Self* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2011); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Puritan imagination* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Sacvan Bercovitch, *Typology and early American literature* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972).

20. Darren Staloff, *The making of an American thinking class: intellectuals and intelligentsia in Puritan Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

with my economic argument, I identify critical junctures in New England history where the functional theocracy began unraveling.

Civil Government

The civil and ecclesiastical fields were the most heavily intertwined fields in colonial New England. The magistrates, as Puritan churchman Thomas Cartwright stated, were intended to be “nursing fathers” and protectors of the church.²¹ This relationship was stable for several years. While the ministerial class maintained control, civil officers were comfortable with their allotted power. However, the two fields could not coexist indefinitely as long as they both sought to control the preeminent field of power.

The Massachusetts Bay Company was the initial investment of wealthy merchants seeking to replicate a profit-maximizing colony similar to Virginia. Religious thinkers, like John Winthrop and Richard Saltonstall, arrested control of the company, hoping to create a religious haven for Puritans where civil and religious power worked in concert as it did in ancient Israel. Winthrop, first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, in a letter to his wife, prophesied that they would avoid a great calamity that would soon befall the wicked that remained in England:

It is a great favour, that we may enioye so much comfort and peace in these so euill and declininge tymes and when the increase of our sinnes giues vs so great cause to looke for some heauye Scquorge and Judgment to be comminge vpon us: the Lorde hath admonished, threatened, corrected, and astonished vs, yet we growe worse and worse, so as his spirit will not allwayes striue with vs, he must needs giue waye to his furye at last: he hath smitten all the other Churches before our eyes, and hath made them to drinke of the bitter cuppe of tribulation, euen vnto death.²²

Winthrop’s utopian thinking was common among Puritans. They often invoked the typology of their fleeing into the wilderness of Massachusetts to that of Israel.²³ These comparisons motivated founding company mem-

21. Thomas Cartwright and B. Brook, *Memoir of the life and writings of Thomas Cartwright, including the principal ecclesiastical movements in the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (London: J. Snow, 1845), 185.

22. John Winthrop, “John Winthrop to Margaret Winthrop,” May 15, 1629, accessed February 11, 2018, <http://www.masshist.org/publications/winthrop/index.php/view/PWF02d052>.

23. Naoki Onishi, “Puritan Historians and Historiography,” in *The Oxford handbook of early American literature*, ed. Kevin J. Hayes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 95.

bers to recruit likeminded people for their venture. As a result, the future Massachusetts Bay government would be homogenous.

The New England Puritans' repeated use of the civil covenant shows that church and state were hardly distinct. Aboard the ship that brought the first wave of immigrants to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the *Arbella*, Winthrop delivered his renowned speech: "A Modell of Christian Charity," where he emphasized the Puritans' covenants with the Lord. He referred to the legal and religious meanings of covenant simultaneously. A portion of Winthrop's speech lays out the responsibility that each group member had for each other, known as the civil covenant, "Wee must...make others' conditions our oune; rejoyce together, mourne together, labour and suffer together, allwayes haueing before our eyes our commission and community in the worke, as members of the same body."²⁴ Despite the strong references to civil government, all covenants bound individuals to God, not just to each other. The powerful covenant arrangement shows that religion was the essence of New England's civil government.²⁵

Individual participation in the civil covenant acted as a precursor to the establishment of towns, the regulation of voting members, and just being a member of the community.²⁶ Philip Gorski, a sociologist of religion, summarizes the covenant experience: "the Puritans did not envision their polities as mere aggregations of individuals pursuing their private welfare, but as sacred corporations dedicated to higher principles."²⁷ It is upon the backdrop of the covenant that we can comprehend just how much power the clergy held in colonial New England government.

Unlike a traditional theocracy, secular and clerical leaders were distinct. The clergy could not hold public office. However, the religious covenant continually intersected the civil covenant. Every formal civil covenant called upon the name of God. This notion of a binding between God and a community of individuals can be found in the Salem Covenant of 1629, which

24. John Winthrop, "John Winthrop: A Modell of Christian Charity, 1630," *John Winthrop: A Modell of Christian Charity, 1630*, August 1996, accessed February 14, 2018, <https://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html>.

25. See generally, Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014). Also, David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

26. David A. Weir, "Early New England: A Covenanted Society," in *Emory University Studies in Law and Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 154.

27. Philip S. Gorski, *American covenant: a history of civil religion from the Puritans to the present* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2017), 44.

reads, "We Covenant with the Lord and one with another; and do bind our selves in the presence of God, to walk together in all his waies, according as he is pleased to reveale himselfe unto us in his Blessed word of truth."²⁸ Officials consulted ministers when creating and enforcing law. With a few notable exceptions, like John Cotton, ministers were paid from community taxes.²⁹ Clergy members, under instruction from the magistrates, delivered Election Day sermons. During these sermons, preachers often advocated for specific governmental changes and officials.³⁰ These instances of mixing between church and state show that, while there was some delineation, there is enough evidence to conclude that the clergy held a substantial amount of power in the field of civil governance during the Great Migration. In the upcoming decades, the magistracy challenged the clergy, causing disruption within the functional theocracy.

Despite the functional theocracy's rigid control, it would be challenged throughout its reign. Accounts of the banishments of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson have received excellent treatment from numerous sources. Williams's separation doctrine and Hutchinson's antinomianism both challenged the religious-secular alliance. However, the appearance of the Quakers in colonial New England reveals a darker side to the alliance than previously witnessed in New England. Quakers were more determined civil ingrates than earlier dissidents. They relentlessly pushed Puritan leaders to the position where they were forced to determine whether religious toleration was an option or not. However, for the theocracy, tolerance was unallowable. During the latter half of the seventeenth century, Massachusetts Bay diversified. They saw their religious and civil covenants as the opposing side to the same coin. Without the civil covenant, leaders reasoned, separate covenants that protected English orderliness and godliness would disintegrate.

28. Jeffrey Barz-Snell, "The Long History," *The First Church in Salem*, accessed February 11, 2018, <http://www.firstchurchinsalem.org/the-long-history/>.

29. John Cotton argues that payment should be given "not of constraint but freely, brought by the givers as an offering to the Lord & laid down." See John Cotton, *The true constitution of a particular visible church, proved by Scripture. Wherein is briefly demonstrated by questions and answers what officers, worship, and government Christ hath ordained in his church* (London: Printed for Samuel Satterthwaite, at the Signe of the Black Bull in Budge Rowe, 1642).

30. Michael Besso, "Thomas Hooker and His May 1638 Sermon," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 10, no. 1 (2012): 206–7, <https://doi.org/10.1353/eam.2012.0002>.

Quaker beliefs focused on an inner light that God gave liberally to all people. Quaker doctrine undermined the authority of ministers, the Bible, and the entire covenant system. In 1657, Quakers continued to disregard Puritan authority. The clergy could not stand by and watch Quakers dissuade their followers. Their covenants would not allow it, so they punished the heretical Quakers. Punishments were mild at first, but they quickly progressed to floggings, banishments, and, eventually, execution.³¹

Quakers were undeterred. They stoically bore their punishment. One specific account told of the execution of the Quaker—and former Puritan—Mary Dyer. Her last words were of forgiveness: “for those that do it in the simplicity of their hearts, I desire the Lord to forgive them.”³² Still more Quakers were killed during the crisis, but the brutal punishment did not have the intended effect. One of Dyer’s prosecutors spoke for the entire ruling class when he expressed the failing sentiment, “Mary Dyer did hang as a flag for others to take example by.”³³ Among many sympathetic outcries, a dismayed utterance came in response to Herodias Long’s whipping: “Surely if she had not the spirit of the Lord she could not do this thing.”³⁴

Eventually, England demanded answers. New England responded by appealing to British secular law despite its rare use in the New England colonies. England was eventually mollified, but significant damage to the functional theocracy was done. Quaker numbers expanded. Many of their neophytes defied compulsive church attendance laws. Patricia Bonomi concludes, “Thus the Quaker incidents denote a crisis and a turning point in New England’s attitude toward religious toleration.”³⁵

31. Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the cope of Heaven: religion, society, and politics in colonial America* (New York: ACLS History E-Book Project, 2005), 27–29.

32. William Sewel, *The history of the rise, increase and progress of the Christian people called Quakers* (Philadelphia, Penn.: Friends Book Store, 1856), 291.

33. Horatio Rogers, *Mary Dyer of Rhode Island, the Quaker martyr that was hanged in Boston* (Providence, R.I.: Preston & Rounds, 1896), 67.

34. Humphrey Norton et al., *New-Englands ensigne: it being the account of cruelty, the professors pride, and the articles of faith: signified in characters written in blood, wickedly begun, barbarously continued, and inhumanly finished... by the present power of darkness possess in the priests and rulers in New-England, with the Dutch also inhabiting the same land.... This being an account of the sufferings sustained by us in New-England... 1657, 1658. With a letter to Iohn Indicot, and Iohn Norton, governor, and chief priest of Boston, and another to the town of Boston. Also, the several late conditions of a friend upon Road-Iland* (London: Printed by T.L. for G. Calvert, 1659), February 1659.

35. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, 29.

The Quaker-Puritan conflict was the quintessential challenge to orthodoxy from the heretical. Bourdieu's theory on the struggle for power within the religious field is tailored for the study of the Puritan-Quaker conflict. The Puritans represented the orthodox hierarchy, while Quakers were the subversive heterodox. Bourdieu contends, "religion has social functions in so far as the laity expects justification of their existence as occupants of a particular position in the social structure."³⁶ Puritan ideology emphasized that colonists had been led into the "wilderness," just as Moses and the children of Israel. If these settlers lost faith, they might leave the church. While this is upsetting to a congregation, departure would be damning for a functioning theocracy because of the likelihood of civil rebellion.

Quakers came as humble zealots, but they challenged the elite ruling ministers and magistrates of New England. Bourdieu explains that dominant culture, or religion, replicates itself—the method of maintaining power. The Puritan elite had replicated power for thirty years based on laity misrecognition. The laity mistakenly believed that the ruling class was superior because they controlled access to most forms of capital. With the arrival of the Society of Friends' gospel, the monopoly on the field of power was broken up. If this doctrine was accepted by the laity, Puritan hegemony would fall.

Still, the Quakers did not ring the death knell to Puritanism. However, New England's religious field had changed because the power within the Puritan religious field was fundamentally altered. Future Puritans were raised more tolerant towards religion because Quakers challenged Puritan orthodoxy. As a modern observer of tolerance, Ta-Nehisi Coates argues, tolerance does not appear immediately, rather it is a "bet on the future."³⁷ Ordinary religious protestors and thinkers continued to bet on a more tolerant future.

However, the most significant blow to the Puritan functional theocracy was the period surrounding the removal of Massachusetts Bay's charter. During this period, New England Puritans definitively lost the power capital that enabled their control. Moving into the First Great Awakening, the church no longer directly governed as it had during the Great Migration.

36. Pierre Bourdieu, "Legitimation and Structured Interests in Weber's Sociology of Religion," in *Max Weber, rationality and modernity*, by Sam Whimster and Scott Lash (London: Routledge, 2009), 124.

37. Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Importance Of Being Politically Correct," *The Atlantic*, May 29, 2009, accessed February 14, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2009/05/the-importance-of-being-politically-correct/18471/>.

Puritan churches became much less hierarchical and authoritative than the Puritanism of seventeenth-century New England.

In an effort to maintain control of the religious field, ministers, over several years, preached a series of jeremiads—sermons focused on the degenerate nature of Puritan society because of the apostasy among the second and third generations. The clergy had lost its monopoly as the gatekeeper to material capital because of the Quaker menace, so they took an alternate approach to maintaining control. Social historian Robert Pope provided ample evidence that a religious decline during the latter half of the seventeenth century did not take place, as the “need” for jeremiads suggested. Rather, it was the clergy that unnecessarily instigated a hysterical fear of religious declension to persuade younger generations of the need for their correction.³⁸

John Norton, similar to other preachers, typified God as a physician when he claimed, “God proposeth to us Remedy or Calamity; we have our option...accept it...or look at sorrow.”³⁹ Thomas Walley analogized apostasy to illness, but he excused the ancient Hebrews for their sickness as they lost prophetic guidance.⁴⁰ Walley’s obvious implication was that Puritans retained their prophetic council, in the form of ministers, and therefore had no excuse for their declension. Walley continued to focus on the power of orthodox preaching by any other doctrine as “occult and hid.”⁴¹

According to the minister Samuel Torrey, the only healing balm available for the younger generations was to become submissive and humble.⁴² After the metaphor of sickness and apostasy ran its course, Puritan preachers turned to the familial narrative of a disappointed father. In an often

38. Robert G. Pope, *The half-way covenant: church membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969).

39. John Norton, *Three choice and profitable sermons* (Cambridge, Mass.: Usher, 1664), 7.

40. Thomas Walley, *Balm in Gilead to heal Sions wounds: or, A treatise wherein there is a clear discovery of the most prevailing sicknesses of New-England, both in the civill and ecclesiasticall state; as also sutable remedies for the cure of them: collected out of that spirituall directory, the Word of God.: Delivered in a sermon preached before the Generall Court of the colony of New-Plimouth on the first day of June 1669. Being the day of election there.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Printed by S. G. and M. J., 1670), 3.

41. Walley, *Balm in Gilead to heal Sions wounds*, 6.

42. Samuel Torrey and Increase Mather, *An exhortation unto reformation: amplified, by a discourse concerning the parts and progress of that work, according to the word of God, delivered in a sermon preached in the audience of the General Assembly of the Massachusetts colony, at Boston in New-England, May 27, 1674, being the day of election there* (Cambridge, Mass.: Printed by Marmaduke Johnson, 1977), 37, accessed February 18, 2018, <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00141.0001.001>.

replicated sermon, William Stoughton predicated God's bestowal of His inheritance on the pious behavior of His children. He castigated his congregation by pronouncing that "a Parent expects more from a Child than from any other because of the Relation."⁴³ One of the famed New England Mathers, Eleazar, delivered a cutting line in his sermon, *A Serious Exhortation to the Present and Succeeding Generation*, when he ridiculed the second generation by asserting that their parents "will be so far from helping you that they will rejoice and bless God for executing Justice upon you to all Eternity; neither your fathers nor the God of your fathers will own you."⁴⁴ Despite condemning sermon after condemning sermon, religious hegemony was coming to an end in New England. Governmentally tolerated religion was gaining more traction in the Old World, and soon it would be imposed on its colonists.

Quakers and religious leaders were not alone in upsetting the New England Way. In 1669, John Locke wrote portions of *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*. In Article 97, Locke argued, "there will unavoidably be of different opinions concerning matters of religion...and it will not be reasonable for us, on this account, to keep them out, that civil peace may be maintained amidst diversity of opinions, and our agreement and compact with all men may be duly and faithfully observed."⁴⁵ Locke's language mandated tolerance, but his argument was more nuanced. He contradicted the Puritans' sacramental belief that a civil covenant only worked when it accompanied a religious covenant. Rather, Locke claimed that the only way a civil covenant could function is by removing the religious requirement because religious views would always be unavoidably different.

Massachusetts Bay's functional theocracy was ultimately torn apart in 1684 with the annulment of the Massachusetts charter.⁴⁶ In October 1684,

43. William Stoughton, *New-Englands true interest ; not to lie: or, A treatise declaring from the word of truth the terms on which we stand, and the tenure by which we hold our hitherto-continued precious and pleasant things.: Shewing what the blessed God expecteth from his people, and what they may rationally look for from him.: Delivered in a sermon preached in Boston in New-England, April 29. 1668. Being the day of election there.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Printed by S. G. and M. J., 1670), 8.

44. Eleazar Mather, *A serious exhortation to the present and succeeding generation in New-England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Drucker: Green and M. Johnson, 1671), 31.

45. Francis Newton Thorpe, *The Federal and state constitutions, colonial charters, and other organic laws of the states, territories, and colonies now or heretofore forming the United States of America. Vol. II. Florida-Kansas* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1909), *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, Article 97.

46. A charter similar to the first was restored in 1691, but there were significant

Massachusetts Bay lost its authority for self-governance when Britain removed its charter. Instead of Massachusetts' *Sola Scriptura*, it was reincorporated into an administrative system to be governed by England known as the Dominion of New England. Edmund Andros was instated as the royal governor. He quickly enraged colonists by suppressing civil liberties, but the ultimate transgression came when he used Boston's sacred Old South Church for Anglican services.⁴⁷

Colonists resisted by appealing to the civic-minded notion of being taxed without representation. The decades of the functional theocracy's declension came to a head as a strong separation developed between clergy and civil officials over the method of opposing Britain and Governor Andros. Merchants and civil officials opposed Andros, but ministers remained aloof, preferring to urge covenant renewal.⁴⁸ The clergy sought to regain the symbolic power that they had slowly lost. Instead of outright resistance, ministers attempted to walk a middle ground by subtly misguiding the laity through outward concern for their spirituality. Harry Stout explains, "Sermons...show how carefully ministers avoided pulpit commentary on explosive political issues."⁴⁹ With William of Orange's ascension to the throne in England during the Glorious Revolution, New England hoped for a reestablished charter and return to old ways. They felt so empowered that the British colonists overthrew Andros.

However, William of Orange, who became William II of England, did not prove to be a saving grace for the clergy. The new King instituted stronger policies of religious tolerance. This, combined with the revocation of the charter in 1684, brought the clergy's power over civil affairs to an end.

Philosophers, such as John Locke, articulated William III's notion for religious tolerance. Locke reasons: "I esteem it above all things necessary to distinguish exactly the business of civil government from that of religion.... If this be not done, there can be no end put to the controversies that will

changes from the original. Religious qualifications to vote were exchanged for property requirements, the English monarch appointed senior governmental officials rather than being elected, and King William made efforts to ensure that New England would not return to religious rule. David S. Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America* (Scranton, Penn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1987).

47. William Henry Whitmore, *The Andros tracts* (Boston, Mass: Printed for the Society by T. R. Marvin & Son, 1868), 26, October 17, 2011, accessed February 19, 2018, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/37773/37773-h/37773-h.htm>.

48. Harry S. Stout, *The New England soul: preaching and religious culture in colonial New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 116.

49. Stout, *The New England soul*, 117.

be always arising between those that have, or at least pretend to have...a concernment for the interest of men's souls."⁵⁰

Locke highlights the Bourdieusian theory that individuals use their status to procure symbolic power. People are in danger when a civil government does not tolerate religion because, in Locke's words, "God has never given any such authority to one man over another, as to compel anyone to his religion. Nor can any such power be vested in the magistrate."⁵¹ He seemingly attacks the Puritan functional theocracy because the civil covenant only functions when it is divorced from religion.⁵²

The clergy's symbolic capital had been eroding for decades. They would never regain their capital that they held during the time of the Great Migration. It became completely impossible following the changing way of thinking as expressed by Locke because symbolic power is produced when lay perception is misguided and misinterpreted as selfless acts. He conceptualized what the New England laity had been experiencing for years. With the removal of the charter and the advent of religious tolerance and years of ministerial intolerance, the clergy lost its capital in colonial New England.

Economy

Historians often describe merchants as the preeminent citizens of eighteenth-century New England.⁵³ Things were not the same in the seventeenth century. Merchants were forced to bow to the clergy's doctrine. A specific example of clergy dominance can be shown through Robert Keayne. Keayne was a notable merchant during the Great Migration. He plied his trade with obeisance to the clergy's dogma. For a time, Keayne's story demonstrates how a strong Puritan religious field dominated New England, but then slowly declined until religion had little input on trade.

Robert Keayne "was a good citizen, a man who obeyed the laws, carried out his social obligations, never injured others."⁵⁴ The preceding sentence is the opening sentence of Edmund Morgan's masterpiece, *The Puritan Family*. This description, although not meant directly for Keayne, could not

50. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 218.

51. Locke, *Two Treatises*, 218.

52. Locke, *Two Treatises*, 219.

53. Bernard Bailyn, *The New England merchants in the seventeenth century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1955).

54. Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan family. Religion & domestic relations in seventeenth-century New England* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 1.

describe a colonist better. Morgan continues, "This man, this paragon of social virtue, the Puritans said, was on his way to hell, and their preachers continually reminded him of it."⁵⁵ This begs the question: Why remind people of this "civil man" going to hell?

By all accounts, Keayne was a strict adherent to Calvinism, as practiced in Puritan New England. He attended sermons in London and New England, taking fastidious notes.⁵⁶ Keayne also recorded instances where he accompanied John Cotton on church discipline hearings of Ann Hibbens and Richard Waits.⁵⁷ During the antinomian scare, Keayne distanced himself from wealthy Boston merchants that gravitated toward the heresy, despite many of them being his commercial partners.⁵⁸ Despite his zeal, Keayne was not purely devoted to Puritanism. Prior to his conversion, he was a guild member to the Merchant Taylors' Company.⁵⁹ As with many guilds, the Merchant Taylors remained fairly agnostic about religion.⁶⁰ Rather, the guild was directed by guiding principles. Indeed, Mark Valeri contends that Merchant Taylors was essentially a Christian church without the theology.⁶¹ While guilds engaged in many of the same projects as churches, guilds' motives were entirely wrong. Instead of invoking God as the source of their charity, merchant guilds were humanists.

Keayne saw no conflict between humanism and Puritanism. There were some minor incongruences, like usury, but the Merchant Taylors fought against unsavory business practices as well.⁶² Still, Keayne, the "civil

55. Morgan, *The Puritan family*, 1.

56. Robert Keayne, *Note-Book kept by Capt. Robert Keayne, an early settler of Boston*. (Cambridge, Mass.: J. Wilson & Son, 1889), 5.

57. Keayne, *Note-Book*, 4–7.

58. Emery Battis, *Saints and Sectaries: Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 268, 273–75.

59. Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize*, 18.

60. There were periods where the guild would throw allegiance to one religion or another based on increased economic opportunity. At one point, under Sir Thomas White, the Merchant Taylors built the College of St. John as an expression of Anglican piety, but even ties to the college were severed when later economic benefit arrived. See: "The College of St John the Baptist was founded in 1555 by Sir Thomas White, a wealthy London merchant tailor," St John's College, accessed February 3, 2018, <https://www.sjc.ox.ac.uk/discover/about-college/history/>.

61. Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize*, 17.

62. Charles M. Clode, *The early history of the Guild of Merchant Taylors of the fraternity of St. John the Baptist, London: with notices of the lives of some of its eminent members* (London: Harrison, 1888), 2:278.

man,” threatened the clergy legitimacy. They derived their power from the community’s uniform belief that ministers were the group that granted access to prosperity in Massachusetts. Bourdieu tells us that the religious specialist must convince the laity that the clergy hold the majority of prestige, honor, biblical knowledge, and educational credentials.⁶³ Keayne was threatening to disrupt religious power with the doctrine of humanism that undercut the core tenets. As Keayne served for reasons besides God’s command, he gained prestige and honor, not the church and its officials. While humanism did little to enhance Keayne’s biblical knowledge, it did enhance his standing in the community as having a highly sophisticated knowledge that could contend with the Puritans’ widely accepted notion that the Bible was the only reliable source of divine revelation.

The magistrates, the visible power of the functional theocracy, brought Keayne to trial for price gouging. Keayne lost the trial and was fined an unseemly £200.⁶⁴ Despite the church being an active participant in the civil trial, nonetheless it still censured Keayne, a punishment just below full excommunication. Even after the draconian sentences, Keayne devised nearly a third of his worldly wealth toward civic and religious projects to improve a community that had rejected him.⁶⁵ Robert Keayne certainly was a civil man, and if the seventeenth-century Puritans are correct, he, just like any other Puritan, could be in hell.

Eventually, colonial New England would transition from an agrarian economy to a mercantile economy. Interestingly, it took a major depression that lasted throughout the 1640s for the church to tolerate merchants. It was the New England merchants that dragged New England out of the bleak depression that nearly ruined its colonial mission.

Massachusetts Bay developed in the 1630s because of immigration during the Great Migration. Each new wave built homes, boosted the

63. David Swartz, “Bridging the Study of Culture and Religion: Pierre Bourdieu’s Political Economy of Symbolic Power,” *Sociology of Religion* 57, no. 1 (1996): 76, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3712005>. In regard to these conditions, it was imperative that the ministers maintained a working relationship with the magisterial class. To this end, the magistrates, at least early in New England history, often deferred to the elders’ decisions, and they almost always consulted them on important decisions, lest the magistrates lose clerical support via the election sermon, etc.

64. This would later be reduced to £80.

65. Robert Keayne and Bernard Bailyn, *The apologia of Robert Keayne; the last will and testament of me, Robert Keayne, all of it written with my own hands and began by me, mo: 6:1:1653, commonly called August; the self-portrait of a Puritan merchant* (Gloucester, Mass.: Harper & Row, 1970), <https://www.colonialssociety.org/node/654#rw101>.

agricultural market, and required imports. Beginning in 1640, migration to New England nearly ceased.⁶⁶ The circumstances that allowed New England's unusual economy to thrive concluded, and with it, a decade-long depression commenced.⁶⁷

Creditors refused to loan money because the General Court protected the debtor at the money lender's expense. Religious power continued to restrict financiers' and merchants' actions throughout the 1640s. Finally, when the colony was on the verge of ruin, the General Court reluctantly loosened its economic grip. The depression lifted once credit was established. As merchants began business, an immigrant-dependent economy was replaced by a robust Atlantic trade that would sustain Massachusetts for centuries.⁶⁸

Bourdieuian theory explains that the overlap of the religious and economic fields allowed merchants to challenge the clergy in this contest. Ministers had crossed into the sphere that traditionally belonged to financiers and merchants. In this way, the ecclesiastical field opened themselves up to be challenged not just in the economic field, but also in the religious field.

Bourdieu's notion of symbolic power is pertinent for this conflict. Clergy members gained symbolic power or legitimacy because they were able to misrepresent their interest in economics. Instead of appearing to be concerned with the task of everyday business, clergy members misrepresented their interests as spiritual, thus "legitimizing the social order" they had created.⁶⁹ Ministers lost their control of the economic field, because as Bourdieu states, the "monopoly of cultural legitimacy and the right to withhold and confer this consecration in the name of fundamentally opposed principles: the personal authority called for by the creator and the institutional authority favoured by the teacher."⁷⁰ The decade-long depression

66. England began a reformation process that rectified Puritans' past reasons for leaving England. The mother country removed the desire to seek fortune across the ocean by increasing religious tolerance.

67. Marion H. Gottfried, "The First Depression in Massachusetts," *The New England Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1936): 655–57, <https://doi.org/10.2307/360989>.

68. Gottfried, "The First Depression," 658–59. A specific industry that was crucial for New England discharging its depression was the advent of the shipbuilding industry. The industry did not just procure profit for owners and laborers, but it provided a valuable export and ready access to ships for New England merchants.

69. Swartz, *Bridging*, 77.

70. Pierre Bourdieu, "Intellectual field and creative project," in *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education: Conference Papers*, ed. M. F. D. Young (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1971), 178.

severely questioned the orthodox view that merchants were to be questioned and scrutinized for their business methods. Now, these despised merchants were the saviors of the colonies.⁷¹

The clergy retreated to form a dialectical doctrine known as providence. Interestingly, providence took on an economic approach to God's favor/disfavor similar to the invisible hand. Providence led one to believe that good or ill that befell people was an indicator of God's judgment on their activities. If you prospered, God was pleased, and if you did not, it was because God was unhappy with you. The clergy could no longer mandate appropriate business practices, as they had with Robert Keayne. Instead, God would be the judge.

Conclusion

Historians have argued over spiritual declension among New England Puritans for decades. Indeed, there was a decline, but not how Perry Miller described. The decline came in Puritan orthodoxy's power in New England's functional theocracy. In time, the Quaker issue, revocation of the Massachusetts Bay charter, and improved notions of religious tolerance led to significant change in the way clergy exercised their capital in colonial New England. They exhausted their symbolic capital during the fight to maintain their hegemonic status, and as a result they, lost most of their civil power. Indeed, an observer during America's Revolutionary period lamented that the clergy were "not as valuable an order of men now as they used to be."⁷²

Similarly, the Puritan clergy saw merchants encroaching upon their theocratic power. The magistrates had been the nursing fathers they were established to be for years, but merchants gave no indication of such support. During the Great Migration, and for years after, ministers prosecuted merchants on religious grounds. It worked until merchants dragged New

71. In London, a steady stream of articles, plays, and tracts started to portray the merchant as a hero and having an "Inquisitive Genius," rather than the villain. Thomas Sprat, the Bishop of Rochester, reflects the diminished power of the clergy, when he stated, But of the English Merchants I will affirm, that in all sorts of Politeness, and skill in the World, and humane affairs, they do not onely excel them, but are equal to any other sort of men amongst us." Thomas Sprat and Abraham Cowley, *History of the royal-society of London: for the improving of natural knowledge* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Oxford University Press, 2003), 88, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A61158.0001.001/1:7?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>

72. "Livingston Papers," Thomas Tillotson to Robert R. Livingston, January 7, 1779, in *Social Structure of Revolutionary America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015).

England out of a severe depression, thus, dispelling the notion that the clergy was the source for all truth. Eventually, merchants challenged ministers for control. Clerical retreat is evidenced by the concept of God's providence replacing direct ministerial control.

When the Puritan preachers delivered jeremiad after jeremiad, enumerating the ills that infested Puritan culture, they revealed symbols from the Old Testament. Preachers rarely examined the New Testament. Closer scrutiny of Christ's responses to the religious leaders of the Jews would have been enlightening. In Mark, Christ condemns the Jewish clergy that so closely mirrored Puritan ministers, "Esai [Isaiah] hath prophecied wel of you, hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lippes, but their heart is farre away from me. 7) But they worship me in vaine" (Mark 7:6-7).

The Puritan clergy was so engorged by their religious power that they were blind to their own shortcomings. They connected so many symbols and types for the laity that they did not "first cast out the beam out of [their] own eye" prior to removing "the mote of [their] brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5). Because of the ministers' impaired vision, the functional theocracy lost its control of colonial New England, but New England culture flourished without the weight of guilt and shame imposed by a religiously controlled government.