

But if there is more room for conflict in Parker's data than he wishes to admit, *The English Sabbath* nevertheless remains a successful and useful monograph, the place to begin in any future analysis of English sabbatarianism before the Civil War.

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Theodore Dwight Bozeman. *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1988. Pp. x, 413. \$34.95.

This most fascinating and impressive study of Puritanism in England and New England, especially in New England from 1630 to the later seventeenth-century, attempts to portray the Puritan holy experiment in the wilderness as closely as possible to what the Puritans themselves would have liked us to understand concerning their modes of action and convictions. Consequently, it will open new dimensions for further research into the heart of Puritanism in America. Students of Puritan New England will find this highly important study indispensable to their own work, though some scholars will no doubt be exasperated by the author's constant habit of refuting the views of other writers. Ultimately, *To Live Ancient Lives* is an impressive piece of scholarship, which may well turn out to be one of the most important studies of Puritanism in America to appear since Perry Miller published his two volumes of *The New England Mind*.

In order to understand the ultimate goal of Puritanism, Bozeman argues that we should first examine the conceptual models which dominated and directed Puritan thought and action. Beginning with the Puritan's mode of conviction, Bozeman encourages us to move away from the traditional interpretation of Puritanism as an agent of modernization and to view Puritans as people who based their lives upon the model of "biblicist primitivism" (p. 10). That is, the Puritans strove to reconstitute Christian life according to the ancient traditions of the "biblical world, a world construed as a revelatory of the first and best of all requisite examples" (p. 345). Their model was "the ancient and covenanted people of Israel" and "the primitive church in the golden age" (p. 15). And since they also believed that "the biblical world was depicted as a display of authoritative archetypes for redemptively significant human activities in the postbiblical era" (p. 17), they sought to realize both of these models in their call "to live ancient lives" (p. 345). This radical appeal to ancient times, according to Bozeman, is the main clue to so much of "the Puritan enterprise" (p. 10), especially in New England where conditions enabled Puritans to realize, almost without hindrance, their premises of religious reformation.

One of the greatest merits of Bozeman's study is indeed his treatment of the Puritan movement as an ideological movement, and his ability to show how ideological premises shaped ecclesiastical and social life. Thus, beginning with the wide range of opinions concerning religious reformation in England from 1560, Bozeman aptly describes Puritans as having "a common restitutionist platform" designed to reconstruct Christian experience upon "the first apostolic directions, patterns and examples" of the "Primitive Churches" (p. 345). Hence, the primitivist dimension in Puritanism meant "to exalt the virtue of the first, pure times and patterns" of ancient, primitive

Christianity (p. 79). Having failed to realize their goals in England prior to the Puritan Revolution, some Puritans left for New England during the 1630s where, in an open space devoid of corrupting human traditions and innovations, they strove to reform Christian life according to the ancient patterns of primitive Christianity. The fruitfulness of Bozeman's thesis now reveals itself. The purity of America enabled Puritans to reconstitute "the church as it stood forth in the sacred time with converted membership, local organization, firm discipline, and uncorrupted sacraments" (p. 135). Likewise, this purity enabled them to shape their "legislative and judicial responsibilities in reference to first times" (p. 190), and "to hew the nearer to the Hebrew example" as contained in the Bible (p. 192).

Bozeman succeeds in illuminating the primitivist dimension in Puritanism, and his reconsideration of the Puritan "errand into the wilderness" (p. 114) and the "American Jeremiad" (pp. 308-10) is persuasive. The issue of Puritan millennialism, however, poses a more serious problem for Bozeman's thesis because millennialism signifies the *future* dimension of time, the *future* of Christ's reign upon earth, and not the sacred *past* of golden, primitive times. Therefore, because Bozeman tends to emphasize the past in the Puritan sense of time, he underplays the role of millennialism in Puritanism. Bozeman claims that "millennialism was not an original feature of the Puritan movement" (p. 210) and that the role of "millennial hope" in the formation of Puritan New England was minimal (pp. 194, 228). "Genuinely millennial ideas in both Old and New England" flowered only during the "crisis" of the late 1630s and 1640s (p. 217). This claim, however, yields a curious result: that despite their restoration of the Bible at the center of religious experience, Puritans did not seriously accept the Book of Revelation or adhere to the marginal notes on Revelation in the 1560 Geneva Bible in which the millennium is explicitly described as an earthly phenomenon. Most importantly, contrary to Bozeman, godly men did not suddenly stumble across the coming millennium with the approach of the Civil War. The millenarian impulse sprang from roots reaching deep into the rise of Protestant historiography during the Reformation and the creation of coherent apocalyptic tradition in England in the middle of the sixteenth-century.

Bozeman's attempt to undermine the role of millennialism is based upon the unwarranted dichotomy he draws between Puritan efforts to recover sacred past traditions and the progressive dimension of time signifying millennialism. Properly understood, the millennial impulse is not opposed to the "primitive dimension" in Puritanism. Puritans did not simply aim at restoring God to the center of religion. Rather, they strove to reconstitute God's glory with God playing a direct role within history. Puritan millennialism and "primitivism" are indeed compatible with millennialism, denoting a sacred era in which past primitive traditions are finally realized with the transformation of human history from alienation to reconciliation with God.

Despite these problems, Bozeman offers a valuable reconsideration of a very familiar topic. By focusing upon the role of the sacred past in Puritanism, he provides fascinating insight into its nature. Clearly, Bozeman has opened new and crucial dimensions in Puritan historiography.