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Forerunners of Puritanism

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Forerunners of Puritanism

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Abstract

Through the many years of human histories there have been many varied fortunes of many nations and races. Among them two cases are of special significance. One is Israel's founding of an independent nation after they were led out of slavery from Egypt by Moses, the man of faith, a thousand and one hundred years B. C. The other is that of Puritan England, seeking for freedom of faith, laid the foundation of the United States of America in New England. Although there was about three thousand years of disparity between these two histories, we cannot but notice one fundamental common fact between these two. That is, that both were of the same spirit, seeking for freedom of faith, and that faith became the foundation in establishing separate independent countries. Here, I wish to trace some forerunners of the Protestant Reformation, their Puritan backgrounds, their influence to later ages, and experiences in which they paid with their lives for the freedom of their faith.

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1. INTRODUCTION

At first glance, it seems that there is no relationship between the freedom of faith and the establishment of an independent nation; but yet there is a deep inevitable relationship between the two. That which gives real freedom to man is faith. From this faith, spiritual independence is born, and only those nations that hold such an independent spirit can build up true social and political independence and still retain them. Freedom of faith is different from the so-called free-

dom of religion where man is free to believe any religion or not to believe any. Freedom of faith is freedom given by faith. It is not we who choose a God whom we believe; but God who chooses and seizes us and lets us be His people. In this way, through obeying God, man can be released from all earthly and human restrictions, especially from the yoke of sins committed within himself, and hereby man is given true freedom and independence. Such is the freedom of faith shown through the Bible; it is the freedom sought by Israel in old times, and by Puritans in modern times. Only a nation who sought such freedom could really become a free and an independent nation; and only through such a nation could a really free and independent country be built. These histories solemnly teach each of us personally a great lesson on the importance of a nation's basic idea of God, faith, and humanity, especially under the existing state of the world.

2. ISRAEL'S EXTRICATION FROM EGYPT

Concerning Israel, although the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, they always, above all, sought freedom of faith. Moses, the representative of Israel, requested Pharaoh, the king of Egypt: "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."[1] The meaning is that Moses demanded freedom for the children of Israel to go into the wilderness and worship their God. The king of Egypt was very stubborn and would not easily comply with such a request. Egypt in those days was the center of a material civilization, a country symbolic of the world mind, and a great world power and influence. It could perhaps be compared to the similar position of the United States of America in the world today. Israel had been taken prisoner by Egypt; and Pharaoh, tyrant king, cruelly tried to prevent the bright future of Israel's freedom. Moses, however, made it his consistent aim to obtain a freedom of faith for Israel, and he would not concede a point; and yet it was neither by means of diplomacy nor violence, but only through simply leaving himself to the guidance of God in seeking for this freedom of faith. Thus, in this way, Moses extricated Israel from Egypt, aided by the providence of God; and in doing so, he came to lay the foundation of the Israelite nation. It is worthy of notice that in saving this slave nation, Moses first requested "the freedom of faith", before asking for improvement of livelihood or political freedom. Above all he sought "the kingdom of God and his righteousness"; and for that reason, Israel received first the salvation, from God, and then later also the freedom of livelihood and independence of government. "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."[2] This became a fact for Israel. The same thing is found to have happened in Puritan hisory.

3. WHAT IS A PURITAN?

Puritanism was a part of Protestantism under the influence of Luther and

Calvin. Especially it was a part of Calvinism, which was in action in England and the United States of America in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Puritans did not necessarily belong to one sect or group, but they all bore the same spirit, generally called "Puritanism". Consequently, men and women had in fact existed with a Puritan faith before the name was invented; and there will probably continue to be Puritans long after it has ceased to be a common epithet. In this sense, who the first Puritan was and who may prove to be the last are questions one need not try to answer.[3] In England, the leaders of the Reformation were Puritans; and in the United States of America its first founders were also Puritans. In modern England and the United States, the moral backbone and the spiritual influences of these nations had their origins in Puritanism. Tracing the descent of the Puritanism which chiefly exists in Calvinism, it became the religious policy of Queen Elizabeth. In 1558, she became queen, and accepted Protestantism; and, as ruler of the country, she secured a position for herself at the head of the Church of England, with the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity. At the same time, she unified the formal service in the national church system and requested all her nation to obey it. But although accepting Protestantism officially, it still retained many Catholic traditional and formal usages in the practical worship. It had a good deal of political affiliation, and was not always a pure reformative movement based only on Protestant doctrine. For that reason, those who wished to be thorough in the Protestant service could not be satisfied with that of the national church system, and wanted to reform it into a pure and genuine faith. They were, consequently, called Puritans because they sought pure faith and pure worship. In the beginning it was a contemptuous nickname given to Non-conformists and Presbyterians, but later it became a general term.[4]

"No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. It was as yet the one English book which was familiar to every Englishman; it was read at churches and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm."[5]

"The strength, of the Puritan cause lay in the middle and professional class, rather than among the small traders or the gentry; and it is in a Puritan of this class that we find the fullest and noblest expression of the new influence which was leavening the temper of the time. Milton is not only the highest, but the completest type of Puritanism. His life is absolutely contemporary with that of his cause."[6]

What Puritans sought first of all was freedom of pure worship based on the Bible, that is the word of God and faith based on each individual's conscience. Their central thoughts were: individual personal dignity and responsibility for the individual's spirit that is connected directly with God, righteousness by faith

and supremacy of conscience; and they pushed formal institutions away. The self-awakening of the freedom of man's will was the bottom of their thought and action. Man is requested to resolve to defend his spirit, obey the supreme order of God and fight against the devil. The Bible for them was the highest authority for their faith and salvation. Therefore they believed that the Bible should not be restricted by human institutions or ecclesiastical authority, but should be searched to find the truth contained therein through each person's conscience, since the Bible consisted of the words of God, and not of man. In accordance with this principle, a man should be permitted to study the Bible individually, willingly, and independently without ecclesiastical absolute authority; moreover, all individuals should not need a system of priestly ranks between God and man, because each one was believed to be under the immediate guidance and control of God, and capable of being directly saved by God.

"The Puritans were protestants *à outrance*, and the name is sometimes extended to embrace those Christian sects or schools which manifested the protestant spirit even before the Protestant Reformation. Puritanism in this generic sense, as 'strictness of living and simplicity of worship'—Christianity in its pristine purity, and opposed to fleshly and worldly compromise, as well as to ecclesiasticism, ritualism, the multiplication of sacramental mysteries, and the elaboration of dogma—is a recurrent phenomenon in Christian history."[7]

The "universal priesthood" was their faith. This faith, however, was not peculiar to Puritans; this was the same principle of faith already made clear through the New Testament, especially cleared up through the gospel principles as explained by Paul: "A man is justified by faith apart from works of law."[8] Thus, the principle of the faith was eternally established. The one who can save man is God, yes, it is only God. Therefore, salvation does not depend on any type of ceremony or institution which man has settled. Herewith, God's absolute sovereignty and grace were made clear with which man can be saved only by believing, obeying, and accepting the grace and gift of righteousness given by God through Christ. "And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ."[9]

This is a contrast of judgement, of Adam, and of the grace of Christ; and also a contrast of death and life. There is a great difference between death and life. Adam's fall brought death into the world; and Christ through his righteousness, made a new life possible. In a word, man enters morality through faith. "Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith."[10] The Puritans requested such faith; they never pressed novelty, but requested only the faith that was no more than the faith that had already been given through the Bible. They simply and purely requested freedom

of faith based on individual conscience and purity of worship; for this reason, they feared neither persecution nor suppression.

This fact made them to be Puritans and made the spirit of an English nation pure, and it became the foundation to establish the Puritan England, and also the fundamental life to establish the United States in New England. Of course this does not mean that the United States from that time on has always been ruled by this Puritan tradition in America.

4. FAITH OF THE PILGRIM FATHERS AND THEIR INFLUENCE

In autumn of 1620 the Pilgrim Fathers landed on the New Continent, across stormy seas, in order to get to the place where they could worship God with freedom of faith. The party consisted of one hundred and two members on the Mayflower, a sailing boat of a hundred and eighty tons. Seventy three of these being men of which thirty four were adults, twenty below the age of twenty, and nineteen employees; and twenty nine women, of which there were eighteen wives, eight young girls and three maids.[11]

In the spring of 1608, the members of the Scrooby Church, a group of Separatists crossed to Holland from the River Humber, near Grimsby, on a Dutch vessel engaged for the purpose of escaping cruel persecution. Upon receiving increased persecution, they were led by John Robinson until they finally reached Amsterdam in safety. They removed to Leyden in 1609, and made that place their homes.[12] From there they planed to migrate to the New Continent, hoping for realization of their goal.

"We are well weaned," wrote their minister, John Robinson, "from the delicate milk of the mother-country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange land. The people are industrious and frugal. We are knit together as a body in a most sacred covenant of the Lord, of the violation whereof we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves strictly tied to all care of each other's good and of the whole. It is not with us as with men whom small things can discourage." Returning from Holland to Southampton, they started in two small vessles for the new land: but one of these soon put back, and only its companion, the *Mayflower*, a bark of a hundred and eighty tons, with forty-one emigrants and their families on board, persisted in continuing its voyage.

The little company of the "Pilgrim Fathers," later generations loved to call them, landed on the barren coast of Massachusetts at a spot to which they gave the name of Plymouth, in memory of the last English port at which they touched. They had soon to face the long hard winter of the north, to bear sickness and famine; even when these years of toil and suffering had passed there was a time when "they knew not at night where to have a bit in the morning."[13]

"On December 21, 1920, when the Pilgrims began coming ashore at Plymouth, they had already committed an act as momentous as any that lay ahead of them.

Aboard ship they had signed the Mayflower Compact: 'We...solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God—covenant and combine ourselves...into a civil Body Politic.' They pledged full obedience to all decisions made for the general good. In effect, this simple document established democratic self-government, with church law as the sole code and constitution of an incorporated business community. Thus was created the first *Biblical Commonwealth* in New England."[14]

This thought and institution was accepted not only in the Plymouth Colony, but also later in the large Puritan settlement in Massachusetts; and also, in the Declaration of Independence drafted chiefly by Jefferson, who was much influenced by the political thought of John Locke (1632–1704), so that Jefferson had Puritan tradition in the bottom of his mind. And we can also see its fundamental thought in the constitution of the United States and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Therefore, the thought of the American revolution was originated in English American Puritanism in the 16th and 17th centuries with rationalism and enlightement of the 18th century joined together. It is broadly known that modern democracy is the child of the Reformation.

(1) "When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."[15]—These are important words which clear up the meaning of the declaration and the foundation of its thought.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;...deriving their just powers from the consent of the goverened..."[16]—This is central thought of the declaration, insisting rights and duties of mankind.

"We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America,...appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions,... solemnly publish and declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States...with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."[17] The Declaration of independence is a crystallization of actual experience in the history of the United States; and as far as its ideas are concerned, it is a Union of Puritanism and rationalism.

(2) "We, the people of the United States...promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."[18] (Preamble, the Constitution of the United States of America).—This shows the fundamental idea of the sovereignty of the people and would be based upon the idea of the puritan mind with individual freedom.

(3) "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal....that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that, government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."[19] (Lincoln's Gettysburg Address).

Calculating from November of 1863 when Lincoln addressed, four score and seven years ago was the year of the declaration of independence, 1886 and it expressed the Puritan spirit therein since the Pilgrim Fathers.

5. FORERUNNERS OF THE PURITAN

Apart from the name "Puritan", some men had puritan faith long before the Reformation, as I mentioned in the beginning of this article. Their numbers were not always many, but they were evidently the forerunners of the Puritans in the respect that they requested freedom of faith and purity of worship.

(1) Thirty Weavers in England.

It is reported that around 1165, thirty weavers in England were interrogated at an Oxford Religious Conference. These people were reported to be the first persecuted Christians for the freedom of faith who believed in the triune God, the Bible, and only a real church ; but they were banished out of the city after being sentenced as heretics because they did not have a regard for sacrament nor priesthood and later died from receiving strokes of the lash, and from exposure to the cold.[20]

(2) Richard Rolle (c. 1290–1349)

Rolle became a hermit at the age of 19 at Hampole, near Doncaste, and was famed for the rest of his holy life. He wrote the "Prick of Conscience" both in English and Latin and became a forerunner in clearing up corrupt priests.[21]

(3) William of Occam (1300?–1349 or 50)

Occam, an English schoolman, was known as the "Invincible Doctor" because he helped the Franciscan group who fought against Johannes XXIII. He also fought against the Pope's worldly and secular control in Italy and Bavaria.

Owing to this he was expelled, but he did not change his conviction to the very end. "He was one of the chief thinkers of his age and he gained, by his defence of nominalism against realism the name of Prince of Nominalists. He was also the author of the philosophical principle known as Occam's Razor. In logic he restored induction to its place as the handmaid of deduction."[22] "The three most profound and original of the schoolmen—Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and William of Occam were followed by a crowd of teachers hardly less illustrious in their day, such as Bungay, Burley, and Archbishop Peckham."[23]

Occam did dot shrink in his enthusiasm from attacking the foundations of the

Papal supremacy or from asserting the rights, of the civil power.

(4) John Wycliffe (c. 1320–1394)

The greatest forerunner of the Reformation in England, of course, was John Wycliffe. He became the harbinger of the Reformers not only in England but also the harbinger of Luther and Calvin on the Continent. John Huss (c. 1373–1415), a Bohemian reformer, showed the deep influence of Wycliffe, and became a big stimulus in the Reformation in Germany. This was about one century and a half preceding the generation of Luther. Wycliffe was indeed the morning star of the Reformation.

"Wycliffe was born at Hipswell, near Richmond in Yorkshire; he was educated at Balliol College, Oxford, of which about 1360, he became master...He became parish priest at Fillingham, Lincolnshire, in 1361, and later held the same position at Ludgershall, before being given the living of Lutterworth, Leicestershire, in 1373."[24] He was excellent in Mathematics, science and philosophy, and especially gave his life to the study of the Bible and theology. At Oxford he knew no rival in philosophical disputations; and as a lecturer he drew immense audiences of students.

However, his special character was one of seeking evangelical truth based on the Bible, rather than in philosophy or theology. He had an insight into many of its fundamental weak points through his use of scholasticism, and through scholastics he reached to gospel truths which the Bible itself had showed. He had confronted the medieval with the modern thought in his mind, and in the end, evangelical truth gained a victory in him. In Oxford they called him "Doctor Evangelicus", and in these words, his true character is vividly revealed. The churches at that time, of course, were all "Catholic" in system, in which they had a Pope as chief who controlled and restricted people not only in the religious world, but also in society, government, economy, civilization, thought, and in the lives of people in all Europe.

The amount of the "annates" i. e. the first fruits of a benefice and sacred tax that is commission for priests' induction etc. to the Vatican are said to be five times the amount of taxes charged by the English King.[25] The dissolute life of the Pope and leaders at the Vatican would have been above our immagination if we were to see them today. They were able to do this with the money which they had collected. As a result, simony i. e. the crime of buying or selling ecclesiastical preferment increased. Besides this, priests collected money from the general people under various pretexts. For instance: pardons, dispensations, and indulgences etc. Fees of registration of divorce, contract, one's dying wish, and baptism, etc. were also part of the church's income. Because of this corruption of the Pope and church, Wycliffe had to decidedly fight against them, comparing their corruptions to the truth of the Gospel according to the Bible. He claimed that foreign priests, as the Pope's agents, who wanted to collect money from English people should be banished from England in order to stop the flowing of English riches

into Rome. Thus, his assertion was approved by Parliament and also among influential persons. The Pope's greed and his unjustified imposition had violently aroused the English nation from antipathy; and Wycliff's insistence had appealed forcefully to the English nation's patriotic sentiment.

"The attack of Wycliffe began precisely at the moment when the Church of the middle ages had sunk to its lowest point of spiritual decay. The transfer of the Papacy to Avignon robbed it of much of the awe in which it had been held, for not only had the Popes sunk into creatures of the French King, but their greed and extortion produced almost universal revolt. The claime of first fruits and annates from all ecclesiastical preferments, the assumption of a right to dispose of all benefices in ecclesiastical patronage, the imposition of direct taxes on the clergy, the intrusion of foreign priests into English livings and English seas, produced a fierce hatred and contempt of Rome which never slept till the Reformation."[26]

Through his "De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae", "De Domino Divino", and "De Ecclesia", etc. Wycliffe made the fundamental distinction clear between the true church according to the Bible and that of people accustomed to call. He said that the real church is only one, its chief being Christ. He bravely fought for freedom of the gospel which Paul and Luther fought for with the "Righteousness through faith". "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jews first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, *But the righteous shall live by faith.*"[27] From this point of view, it is clear that Wycliffe was a Puritan before Puritans and the greatest forerunner of the Reformation.

"In 1378, Wycliffe started his momentous translation of the Bible into English; not only does the completed version rank as the first English prose classic, but its translator's labours confirmed him in his belief that the actual words of Scripture should form the criterion of all Christian doctrine."[28]

In 1382, the New Testament had been already completely translated by him, with which English people could, for the first time, read the Bible in their native tongue. It was an epoch-making event for them. The Old Testament had been completed in cooperation with Nicholas Hereford, his friend, in 1384. "An earlier translation of the whole Bible, in part of which he was aided by his scholar Hereford, was being revised and brought to the second form, which is better known as "Wycliffe's Bible," when death drew near."[29] This English Bible became the powerful arm which he recaptured from the church and its priests, and he gave it to the hands of the people. Through this English Bible he could prove truths concerning the gospel not only to the scholars and priests, but also to the whole nation. "With an amazing industry he issued tract after tract in the tongue of the people itself. The dry, syllogistic Latin, the abstruse and involved argument which the great doctor had addressed to his academic hearers, were

suddenly flung aside, and by a transition which marks the wonderful genius of the man the schoolman was transformed into the pamphleteer. If Chaucer is the father of our later English poetry, Wycliffe is the father of our later English prose."[30]

"With the formal denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation which Wycliffe issued in the spring of 1381 began that great movment of revolt which ended, more than a century after, in the establishment of religious freedom, by severing the mass of the Teutonic peoples from the general body of the Catholic Church. The act was the bolder that he stood utterly alone. The University, in which his influence had been hitherto all-powerful, at once condemned him."[31] "He died Dec. 31, 1384 and was buried at Lutterworth, but by order of the pope his remains were subsequently disinterred and burned."[32] Wycliffe was a man of great intellectual powers, supremely honest and quite fearless, and his doctrines endured because they were the outcome not of passionate prejudice, but of growing conviction on the living words of the Bible.

(5) Lollard

The word "Lollard", was said perhaps to have come from "lollen" or "lullen". It probably means much the same as "idle babbler," and was the nickname of contempt with which the orthodox Churchmen gave as an insult to their assailants.[33] Wycliffe had organized the Lollard movement, an order of poor preachers called "the Simple Priests", which was aimed to improve the evil ways of the Church. Their coarse sermons and long cassock-like dress were liable to be ridiculed by the clergy, but formed a priceless organization for the diffusion of their master's doctrines. This movement developed so rapidly that their opponents said: "Every second man you met, was a Lollard", they complained.

Since Wycliffe died, his work was succeeded to the Lollards, which he started; and these groups spread all over the country and were called "Bible men", because they tried to build their faith and lives on the Bible which is God's words.

They represented the Puritan characteristic revolution and opened the way of the Reformation. We see that the English Reformation was not merely influenced by Luther and Calvin, since the appearance of the Puritan movement had an older and deeper history. "On the whole, the nation, in any case more formally than profoundly pious, adhered to orthodoxy. Lollardy, the last decline of Wycliffe's scholastic attack 150 years earlier, played no part in the Reformation."[34]

They were Nonconformists, or Separatists, or Independents, and they believed the simple Gospel based on the Bible itself and sought the genuine faithful life which was born from their belief. Qualifications as preachers, for them, was only receiving the summons from God directly, following the dictates of their conscience, not from men, neither through man;[35] they did not need any system or hyperbolical ceremony which the Church established.

In this sense, the Lollard would have been the same type as the Mukyokai (Churchless) movement in Japan today, which was originated by Kanzo Uchimura

(1861–1930), a remarkable Christian reformer,[36] and the writer of *HOW I BECAME A CHRISTIAN*, which was translated into several European languages and gained more earnest readers and sympathizers overseas than in Japan, especially in Germany and Switzerland.

(6) Piers Plowman

"Piers the Plowman" is said to have been written perhaps by William Langland (c. 1332–c. 1400) about 1362. This poem is a dream fable, and in regards to the apologue would be equal with the "Divine Comedy" of Dante (1265–1321), and the "Pilgrim's Progress" of John Bunyan (1628–1688). It was one summer morning in May and the poet slumbered sleeply by the side of a brook, in the Malvern Hills, and dreamed:

In a somer sesoun whanne softe was the sonne
I shop me into a shroud as I a shep were;
In abite as an Ermyte, unholy of werkis,
Wente wyde in this world, wondris to here.
But on a May morwenyng on Malverne hilles
Me befel a ferly, of fairie me thoughte;
I was wery, forwandrit, and wente me to reste
Undir a brood bank be a bourne side,
And as I lay and lenide and lokide on the watris
I slomeride into a slepyng, it swiyede so merye.
Thanne gan I mete a merveillous swevence,
That I was in a wildernesse, wiste I nevere where;
Ac as I beheld into the Est, an heigh to the sonne,
I saigh a tour on a toft triyely imakid;
A dep dale benethe, a dungeoun therinne,
With depe dikes and derke and dredful of sight.
A fair feld ful of folk fand I there betwene
Of alle maner of men, the mene and the riche,
Worching and wandringe as the world askith.[37]

(A. Prologue. 1–19)

In the dream the poet saw, Corruption; Lady Holy Church appeared and talked teaching of love and truth. Lady Meed appeared and tried to get married to Falsehood; however, she was protested by Theology and was on trial before the King's court. In the court, there appeared Conscience, Reason and Love as witnesses... The Seven Deadly Sins converted their sins and went out to search for St. Truth together. Then Piers Plowman came and taught the way to the truth, preaching high regard of labor, sympathizing with poor farmers who were oppressed and he became a spokesman for them.[38]

It satirized that the true pilgrimage should not go to the big cathedral in Canterbury, but to the castle of Truth, and their guide should not be priest nor

clerk, but the Pious Ploughman who is labouring hardily with his hands in the field; and the pardon of sin should not depend on the indulgence or formal ceremonies. "He it is who bids the knight no more wrest gifts from his tenant nor misdo with the poor. Though he be thine underling here, well may hap in heaven that he be worthier set and with more bliss than thou....For in charnel at church churles be evil to know, or a knight from a knave there. The gospel of equality is backed by the gospel of labour. The aim of the Ploughman is to work, and to make the world work with him. He warns the labourer as he warns the knight. Hunger is God's instrument in bringing the idlest to toil, and Hunger waits to work her will on the idler and the waster. On the eve of the great struggle between wealth and labour Longland stands alone in his fairness to both, in his shrewd political and religious common sense. In the face of the popular hatred towards John of Gaunt, he paints the Duke in a famous apologue as the cat who, greedy as she might be, at any rate keeps the noble rats from utterly devouring the mice of the people. The poet is loyal to the Church, but his pilgrimage is not to Walsingham, but to Truth; he proclaims a righteous life to be better than a host of indulgences, and God sends His pardon to Piers when priests dispute it...."[39]

(7) **Geoffrey Chaucer** (**c. 1340–1400**)

Chaucer opposed the hierarchy of Catholic churches by a tacit consent. In his "Canterbury Tales", he sketched a good Puritan character in "a poor priest in a town". This priest was poor, but a learned man, and rich of holy thought and work. He taught of Christ's Gospel and the Twelve Apostles; moreover, he carried out his teachings in real life, and his mission was guiding people to Heaven through holy words and good examples.[40]

"A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre Persoun of a toun,
But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche.
Hise parisshens devoutly wolde the teche,
Benygen he was, and wonder diligent,
And in a adversitee ful pacient,..."[41]

(8) **John Huss** (**c. 1373–1415**)

Huss was born the son of a farmer in the south of Bohemia, finished theology at the University of Prague, and was made dean of the philosophical faculty in 1401 and rector in 1402. He was also the preacher of the Bethlehem Chapel, and in charge from 1400.

From the deep influence of Wycliffe, he steadily and continually insisted reform upon the doctrine and system of the Roman Church which was distorting the teachings of the Bible. He was known as a man of noble character and sincere

life, receiving the reverence and affection of the people. He was strongly tied with the Bohemians, who wished to have freedom from the Holy Roman Empire's control.

He was also an ardent patriot; his reformative movement was supported by King Wenceslaus, the university and general public. In 1410 he was forbidden to preach and in the following year ordered excommunication by a papal bull; but the general public took side with Huss.[42]

In 1412, when Joannes XXIII sold indulgences, aiming to collect the war funds to put down the king of Naples, Huss hotly spoke against it. Taking this opportunity, laymen believers banded together around him; and it expanded into a social movement. In that year he was excommunicated and banished from Prague. He, however, undauntedly continued his preaching and retired into the country to devote himself to writing.

In 1414, he received a friendly gesture from the emperor Sigismund, who offered him a safe-conduct if he would attend the "Council of Constance", called to restore unity in the Church. Relying on the emperor's good faith, Huss accepted, but no sooner had he arrived at Constance than he was arrested as a heretic.[43] At the Council he realized that the "safe-conduct" had only been the emperor's treachery. "He was condemned, and burned at the stake, July 6, 1415....His death arroused indignation throughout Bohemia which led directly to the Hussite Wars. A man of the greatest sincerity and courage, he is esteemed by all Protestants as the forerunner of Luther and one of the first to protest with honesty against the corruptions that abounded in the Church."[44]

(9) Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498)

Savonarola was born at Ferrarra, Italy and became a Dominican monk in 1474, against the will of his parents, who wished him to become a physician. By the time he was living in Florence in 1490, in the monastery of San Marco, his passionate hatred was not only to the world but also to the corrupted situation within the Church. In 1486, he became a very popular preacher since he possessed a magnetic personality and a power over words.

He soon became a leader of the city of Florence; which, at that time, was almost a new city, and his Puritan spirit was exemplified in the "Bonfire of the Vanities", to burn the fleshly things. However, in 1495, the Pope forbade him to preach in public; and after disobeying three papal injunctions to repair to Rome, he was excommunicated in 1497. Although he was again in the ascendant, in 1498, he was again forbidden to speak in public by the Arrabbiati, the Medici party. By Savonarola's continued attack against the Pope, the Pope finally gave the order that he must be silenced. After horrible torture, he was found a heretic and on May 23, 1498, he was hanged and then his body was burnt. Savonarola's interest lay on the Reformation within the Church more than on the problems of the doctrine.[45] "His sincerity and the fire of his personality are amply proved by the fact that he was able even for so short a time to hitch the wagon of so many

thousands to such a distant star."[46]

6. CONCLUSION

The simple faith of only faith, not keeping an eye on its result, is real pure faith. "A man is justified by faith apart from works of the law",[47] is deep, strong and solid faith. This faith, at first, gives peace to the believers. Through this faith, the forerunners of the Puritanism and the reformers of the Reformation attempted to overcome the world; when they found the following words in the Bible, how did they embolden in their reformative works? *Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἡ νικήσασα τὸν κοσμον, ἡ πίστις ἡμων.*[48]—(and this is the victory that hath overcome the warld *even* our faith.) Before the fighting, they have already overcome the world at even any sacrifice in their faith. "The righteous shall live by faith."[49] would have stricken them in the bottom of their spirit like an electric shock. The Reformation was not only a reform of Christianity itself, but also that of a new life to all human affairs—industry, commerce, arts, literature, morality and education etc., in the whole of Europe, the world at that time. It had rose with the study of the Bible itself by the forerunners and the reformers of the Reformation. So we might say that the Reformation came about by the Bible itself rather than by Wycliffe, Calvin or Luther, etc. A small copy of the Bible has the greatest strength to reform mankind and nations as well as each individual spirit.

To be a heroic Christian for humanity and righteousness, it is not always necessary to pass through any set of ceremonies or to sign any form of doctrines, but genuine and pure faith in God is one thing needful, and all other good things would follow as necessary consequences.[50]

Through the faith of Luther, a new Germany arose which produced Hegel, Kant and Goethe; through the faith of Wycliffe and Calvin, England produced Cromwell and the United States produced Washington and Lincoln. When a man concentrates all his attention on Jesus and his Cross, his thought will become unified and obtain freedom and strength, his spirit will come to life again and be able to stand alone in the universe. But, what are today's Christian Churches and so-called Christians?

7. NOTES

1) Exodus 5: 1.
2) Matthew 6: 33.
3) William Haller, "The Rise of Puritanism", (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 3.
4) Yasaka Takagi, "America", (Tokyo: Tokyo University Publishing Assn., 1962), p. 74.
5) J. R. Green, "A Short History of the English People", vol. 2, (London: Dent & Sons Ltd., 1960), p. 431.
6) Ibid., p. 435.
7) Ralph Barton Perry, "Puritanism and Democracy", (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1944), pp. 65–66.

8) Romans 3 : 28.
9) Ibid., 5 : 16–17.
10) Galatians 3 : 11.
11) Hyoei Ishiwara, "Puritan", (Tokyo : Yamamoto Shoten, 1963), p. 7.
12) William T. Davis, "Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation", (New York : Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1959), pp. 7–8.
13) J. R. Green, "A Short History of the English People", vol. 2, (London : Dent & Sons Ltd., 1960), p. 474.
14) Richard B. Morris and the Editors of Life, "The Life History of the United States", vol. 1, (New York : Time Inc., 1963), p. 86.
15) William T. Hutchinson, "The Constitution of Our United States", (Chicago : Rand McNally & Company, 1936), p. 53.
16) Ibid., p. 53.
17) Ibid., pp. 58–60.
18) Ibid., p. 7.
19) Ibid., p. 63.
20) Hyoei Ishiwara, "Puritan", (Tokyo : Yamamoto Shoten, 1963), p. 16.
21) J. A. Hammerton, "Concise Universal Biography", (London : The Amalgamated Press Ltd.), p. 1159.
22) Ibid., p. 1048.
23) J. R. Green, "A History of the English People", vol. 1, (London : Dent & Sons Ltd., 1960), pp. 141–142.
24) J. A. Hammerton, "Concise Universal Biography", (London : The Amalgamated Press Ltd.), p. 1427.
25) Tomoo Matsuda, "The Reformation", (Tokyo : Shibundo, 1961), p. 43.
26) J. R. Green, "A History of the English People", vol. 1, (London : Dent & Sons Ltd., 1960), p. 222.
27) Romans 1 : 16–17.
28) J. A. Hammerton, "Concise Universal Biography", (London : The Amalgamated Press Ltd.), p. 1427.
29) J. R. Green, "A Short History of the English People", vol. 1, (London : Dent & Sons Ltd., 1960), p. 229.
30) Ibid., p. 226.
31) Ibid., p. 226.
32) J. A. Hammerton, "Concise Universal Biography", (London : The Amalgamated Prees Ltd.), p. 1428.
33) J. R. Green, "A Short History of the English People", vol. 1, (London : Dent & Sons Ltd., 1960), p. 227.
34) G. R. Elton, "The New Cambridge Modern History", vol. 2, (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 227.
35) See Galatians 1 : 1.
36) See Churchless Christianity, Naoshi Koike : "Kanzo Uchimura : A Summary of His Life and Faith", (The Memoirs of the Muroran Institute of Technology, vol. 5, No. 1, July 1965), pp. 367–370.
37) Nevill Coghill, "Langland : Piers Plowman", (London : F. Mildner & Sons, 1964), pp. 14–15.
38) Yasuo Yamato, "A History of English Literature", (Tokyo : Nomura Shoten, 1948), pp. 25–27.
39) J. R. Green, "A Short History of the English People", vol. 1, (London : Dent & Sons Ltd.,

1960), p. 241.

40) Ibid., pp. 207–209.

41) Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales, line 477 and below.

42) J. A. Hammerton, "Concise Universal Biography", (London: The Amalgamated Press Ltd.), p. 794.

43) Ibid., p. 795.

44) Ibid., p. 795.

45) Ibid., p. 1189.

46) Ibid., p. 1189.

47) Romans 3: 28.

48) I John 5: 4.

49) Galatians 3: 11.

50) See I. Corinthians 2: 4–5 and I. John 2: 27.

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