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In this book Professor Foster extends his valuable contribution to the understanding of New World Puritanism as not only a religious movement - driven with internal dissents and controversies – but as a significant cultural and political movement as well. Foster addresses his work not only to specialists in this field of ecclesiastical history but to the community of Americanists in general who work with a context heavily inflected by the European assumptions or ideologies that accompanied migrants to the colonies, often referred to as the Puritan "inheritance" (the ideals of the New England Way that were, as Foster emphasizes, articulated by Elizabethan radicals decades before the New England Migration).

The narrative moves, with impeccable scholarship, lively prose and an engaging attention to the individual people involved in these grand historical movements, through the period 1570 to 1700 in phases. Professor Foster begins with an account of the contribution made by Elizabethan radicals in the period 1570 to 1610. He then moves to the second stage in the development of English Puritanism, 1590-1630; the failure to find a political solution to religious and constitutional conflicts in the period immediately preceding the Great Migration; the move toward Sectarianism in England and America during 1630 and 1650; and he goes on to discuss the half-Way Covenant and declension controversies, 1650 to 1680. The book concludes with a consideration of the Great Awakening within the trans-Atlantic Puritan context.

Perhaps the most interesting point raised is the rather provocative suggestion that the Great Migration of the 1630s, rather than the Civil War, be seen as the culmination of religious tensions at work within the English Puritan movement in its conflict with the Church of England. This is the kind of thinking that becomes possible only from Foster's trans-Atlantic perspective. The Puritan society established in the New World is viewed as representing substantially the same agenda as that pursued from within the English movement back in England. What may be seen by some scholars, then, as the seeds of an evolving "Americaness" that matures with the Revolution, Foster is able to situate clearly within the highly complex phenomenon that was Puritanism. Consequently, he opens up a new way of interpreting Anglo American relations in the periods before, during and after the Great Migration. His challenge to conventional interpretations of American Puritanism in relation to its English roots is stimulating and exciting. It is to be hoped that other scholars will follow Professor Foster's lead and develop even further the kind of insight that this marvelous book has made possible.

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