

more to the status of handmaiden. It was primarily in this spirit that he plundered the writings of Newton and Locke. Once we admit this, we may see in Edwards an apologist of rare ability and great eloquence. It is primarily in this light that he should be considered today.

Indiana University

Newton P. Stallknecht

Errand into the Wilderness. By Perry Miller. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1956. Pp. x, 244. Index. \$4.75.)

"Religion like many other things is booming in America; it is a blue chip," writes D. W. Brogan, English observer of the American character, in a recent (February, 1957) issue of *Harper's Magazine*. This may help to account for the rash of new books and reprints on American Puritanism making appearance on the counters these days.

More likely it is the realization, as the author of this collection of essays insists, that the mind of man is the basic factor in human history and since the beginnings of American thought lie in the seventeenth century they are, necessarily, theological.

Together these "pieces", as Miller calls them, are broadly intended to spotlight aspects of the movement of European culture into the vacant wilderness of America; narrowly, to inquire further, as Miller has been doing in a brilliant series of books, into the "errand" that brought the first colonists to America and the meaning of the body of Protestant doctrine we call Puritanism, the first articulate body of expression from which we may begin to derive an understanding of the American mind.

The ideas of the Puritans, isolated and explained so capably by Perry Miller here and elsewhere cannot, of course, be summarized in a review. The rich intellectual feast spread before us in this slim volume, repetitious and intricate though it is, is added testimony that Miller is one of our best analyzers of thought as it was in a thoughtful age. It must suffice to indicate something of the subjects dealt with under the suggestive titles that make up this collection.

The first pieces cling closely to problems connected with the nature of Puritanism—why the Puritans went, or were sent, on their errand, and whether the lamentations of the

later Puritan writers indicating the failure of their mission are not really reassuring, carrying a suggestion of the expansion of the errand to include the irresistible and exciting works thrust upon them by the American environment.

In defending himself against the "curiously sullen reaction" of critics who insist that Connecticut under Thomas Hooker's leadership was more democratic than Massachusetts, Miller shows that Congregationalism was a complex affair, and Hooker no exception to Puritan orthodoxy.

Next, in dealing with the "marrow" of Puritan divinity, he seeks to explain what he has developed at greater length in his *The New England Mind*, the precise nature of the American "idiom" of Calvinism as outlined by Puritans anxious to make their faith easy to be "understood, known, and committed to memory," followed by an analysis of the thorny question of Puritan political doctrines.

Another essay argues that the larger assumptions of the promoters and settlers of Virginia involve religious motivation not dissimilar to that of Massachusetts, a much needed antidote to the customary interpretation of Virginia materialism.

An essay devoted to "Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening" takes on special significance, inasmuch as Edwards' works are now being published. Miller sees in the Great Awakening not the old clash of social groups or an economic protest, but indication of a growing awareness that the objectives of America's errand were to be "determined by the wilderness." It was Jonathan Edwards, on the frontier, rather than the Boston divines, who saw this challenge of the academic by the practical.

The author goes on to discuss Edwards as a practitioner of a "Rhetoric of Sensation" derived from Locke, the use of "naked" ideas, in which, among the Puritans, Edwards was an innovator, and with which, as weapons, Edwards whipped up his revival.

Admitting that in strictly historical regard there is no organic evolution of ideas from Edwards to Emerson, the author, moving beyond Puritanism, suggests, nevertheless, that a tentative exploration shows certain basic continuities—the persistent effort of both men to confront divinity face to face in Nature, and the excitement of Puritan thought which, Miller thinks, helped provoke the Emersonian rebellion against "corpse-cold" Unitarianism.

Less closely related to the theme of the volume, though the author takes pains to make some relations, the last two "pieces" deal with the "American theme" of Nature versus civilization, and the persistent American question, can an errand be run indefinitely?—in other words, the problem, associated with earlier civilizations' eschatology, of the "End of the World." These swirls in the current of American ideas are important contributions to the present broad concern with American civilization, a more general look than the earlier essays at some persistent ideas about the nature of America.

Though no book for those who are not philosophically inclined and ready to struggle rigorously with the blocks of ideas Miller piles one on the other, the volume has much for the student of ideas, much that is hard, but the reader is amply repaid for his effort by the matchless flashes of clarity that are characteristic of the author. We need more, nevertheless, of the kind of insight that Perry Miller provides if we are to achieve correct perspective on the basic elements that went into the formation of the later United States.

Butler University

G. M. Waller

American Catholicism. By John Tracy Ellis. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956. Pp. xiii, 208. Notes, index. \$3.00.)

This volume is the published form of a series of lectures delivered at the University of Chicago in January, 1955, on the Charles R. Walgreen Foundation for the Study of American Institutions. It is the second in a projected series called "The Chicago History of American Civilization" under the editorship of Daniel J. Boorstin. These studies of American civilization are planned so as to make available both a "chronological" and a "topical" account of American life. The hope is that, in this way, the study and the writing of history may be delivered from the narrative and statistical tedium too often and too long associated with history. The reader is thus to discover "one of the neglected pleasures of history, both as experienced and as written."

Monsignor Ellis is professor of church history at the Catholic University of America, managing editor of the *Catholic Historical Review*, and secretary of the American