

Puritan heritage



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Puritan Heritage When the Puritans arrived to New England for creating a new society on the basis of Calvinism, they were regarded as educated, industrious, moralistic and perseverant. Despite of the fact that their influence on the social life in New England started to disappear at the period of wars of revolution, due to trade interrelations with the outside world, it is much spoken about cultural heritage that American nation feels in many spheres of society at present. I suppose that those scholars and educators who underestimate the meaning of the Puritan legacy for the nation in general, and culture and education in particular cannot objectively investigate the problems that are relevant at present. If I were an educator, I would pay much attention to examining the Puritans heritage for better understanding conflict values in the fields of education and sciences. Such features as industriousness, desire to get knowledge, as well as restraint and adherence to morality are regarded as the features inherent to the Puritan conscience. To my mind, many value conflicts that are observed in the field of modern education cannot be properly investigated without understanding historical heritage. I think that similarities that unite both parts of the nation are partly defined by the legacy of the Puritans, so it is necessary to observe this heritage in its historical perspective, because it influenced many aspects of nation's development. I suppose that using experience of the past is necessary to forge out effective strategies for future successful progress, so understanding the sources of the mentality is extremely important for many sciences, and I find this issue to be important for educational discourse at the moment. Some facts described below will prove that the Puritans influenced both the characters and minds of the nation in the process of its development.

The Puritans were aware that the level of economical and political prosperity depends upon educational level of population. Belief of the American citizens that every person should have a definite level of education, literacy and mathematical skills is a Puritan heritage. In the period when the Puritans settled down in New England in Europe advanced education was available only for the upper levels of society. The low classes weren't supposed to get education and literacy. (Hart)

When Winthrop and his allies came to Massachusetts they started with establishing new schools. The Puritans that had received education in Cambridge and Oxford prepared the teachers. In the middle of the 17th century there were more than 100 men with the highest education in New England. This was the highest concentration of educated people compared to any other place. The Puritans also supposed to be essential that every community have a spiritual leader, a learned pastor to direct religious education of the community members and to prevent them from errors. According to the School Act in Massachusetts " It being the chief project of that old deluder Satan to keep men from knowledge of the Scriptures,() so that at least, the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded with false glosses of saint seeming deceivers; and that learning may not be buried in the grave of our forefathers, in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors."(Hart) These were just the key facts that prove significance of the Puritan influence on various aspects of nation's life and mentality. I think, that studying this influence and understanding the sources is important for many sciences at present, especially education.

At present New England is still regarded as the place with high concentration of educated people, and it is obviously a legacy of the Puritans. They

intended to spread knowledge and education as widely as possible.

According to the Puritan doctrines, education was not to prepare the children of the highest levels of society to set them aside from the rest of the population, but to provide community with experienced and skilled lawyers, managers, doctors, ministers, teachers etc. Education was regarded as the tool of elevating all the people in community, rather as the privilege. Spread of school education and availability of the knowledge prevented aristocracy from establishing its power in New England, and this became the tendency of the nation in general. That is why the development of democracy in America was partly originated by the Puritans, and I share this opinion. (Hart)

References

Hart, Benjamin. Faith & Freedom. 1997. Available at <http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/cdf/ff/index.html>