

The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century

RELIGION, THE REFORMATION,
AND SOCIAL CHANGE

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LIBERTY FUND
INDIANAPOLIS

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1 | Religion, the Reformation, and Social Change

If we look at the 300 years of European history from 1500 to 1800, we can describe it, in general, as a period of progress. It begins with the Renaissance and ends with the Enlightenment; and these two processes are, in many ways, continuous: the latter follows logically upon the former. On the other hand, this progress is far from smooth. It is uneven in both time and space. There are periods of sharp regression, and if the general progress is resumed after that regression, it is not necessarily resumed in the same areas. In the sixteenth century, indeed, the advance seems at first sight general. That is a century of almost universal expansion in Europe. But early in the seventeenth century there is a deep crisis which affects, in one way or other, most of Europe; and thereafter, when the general advance is resumed, after 1660, it is with a remarkable difference: a difference which, in the succeeding years, is only widened. The years 1620–60, it seems, mark the great, distorting gap in the otherwise orderly advance. If we were to summarize the whole period, we could say that the first long period, the 120 years 1500–1620, was the age of the European Renaissance, an age in which the economic and intellectual leadership of Europe is, or seems to be, in the south, in Italy and Spain; the period 1620–60 we could describe as the period of revolution; and the second long period, the period 1660–1800, would be the age of the Enlightenment, an age in which the great achievements of the Renaissance are resumed and continued to new heights, but from a new basis. Spain and Italy have become backwaters, both economically and intellectually: in both fields the leadership has fallen to the northern nations, and, in particular, to

England, Holland and France. Just as the northern nations, in the first period, looked for ideas to the Mediterranean, so the Mediterranean nations, in the second period, looked north.

Now what is the cause of this great shift? Why was the first Enlightenment, the enlightenment of the Renaissance, which spread outwards from Italy, cut short in its original home and transferred, for its continuation, to other countries? Why was the economic advance which, in the sixteenth century, seemed so general, and in which all Europe had its share, carried to completion only in certain areas: areas which, at first, had not seemed best fitted for the purpose? This is a large question and obviously no general or easy answer can be satisfactory. In this paper I wish to consider one aspect of it: an aspect which is not, of course, easily separable, and which is admittedly controversial, but whose importance no one can deny: the religious aspect.

For religion is deeply involved in this shift. We may state the case summarily by saying that the Renaissance was a Catholic, the Enlightenment a Protestant phenomenon. Both economically and intellectually, in the seventeenth century, the Protestant countries (or some of them) captured the lead from the Catholic countries of Europe. Look at Europe in 1620: the date I have chosen for the end of the Renaissance period. With the advantage of after-knowledge we are apt to say that the shift had already taken place: that Holland and England had already usurped the place of Italy and Spain. But of course this was not so. At that time the configuration of power—to a superficial observer at least—must have seemed much the same as it had been in 1520. Spain and the Empire, Italy and the Papacy, these are still the centres of power, wealth, industry, intellectual life. Spain is still the great world power; south Germany is still the industrial heart of Europe; Italy is as rich and intellectually exciting as ever; the papacy is recovering its lost provinces one by one. Now look again in 1700, and how different it is. Politically, economically, intellectually Europe is upside down. Its dynamic centre has moved from Catholic Spain, Italy, Flanders and south Germany to Protestant England, Holland, Switzerland and the cities of the Baltic. There is no escaping this great change. It is general fact; and although we may find special reasons applicable to this or that part of it, its generality is too huge and striking to be exorcised by any mere sum of particular explanations. The Inquisition may have ruined Spain, the blockade of the Scheldt Flanders, the loss of the Levant market Venice, the change of sartorial fashion Lombardy, the difficulties of transport south Germany, the opening of Swedish iron-mines Liège.

All these events may be separately true, but together they fail to convince. A wholesale coincidence of special causes is never plausible as the explanation of a general rule.

How can we explain this extraordinary rise of certain Protestant societies and the decline of Catholic societies in the seventeenth century? It is not enough to say that new discoveries or changed circumstances favoured north Europe as against south (for Catholic Flanders and Liège and Cologne are in the north, and yet shared the Catholic decline), or the Atlantic countries as against the Mediterranean (for Lisbon is better placed on the Atlantic than Hamburg). And even if opportunities did change, the question remains, why was it always Protestant, not Catholic societies which seized these opportunities? Surely we must conclude that, in some way, Protestant societies were, or had become, more forward-looking than Catholic societies, both economically and intellectually. That this was so was a commonplace in the eighteenth century; and in the nineteenth it was elevated into a dogma by those *bourgeois* propagandists—the Germanophil friend of Madame de Staël, Charles de Villers, in 1802; the Protestant statesman François Guizot in 1828; the Belgian economist, who followed his own reasoning and became a Protestant, Émile de Laveleye in 1875—who sought to restore to their own Catholic countries the lead they had lost.¹ The success with which largely Protestant entrepreneurs industrialized France and, through France, Europe under Louis-Philippe, Napoleon III and the Third Republic is evidence that, in their own time at least, there was some truth in their theories. In the nineteenth century, if we may trust appearances, it was by becoming “Protestant”—that is, by accepting the rule of a “Protestant” *élite* and a “Protestant” ideology which convulsed the French Church, alarmed French Catholics and brought papal thunderbolts from Rome—that France caught up, industrially,

1. See Charles de Villers, *Essai sur l'esprit et l'influence de la réformation de Luther* (Paris, 1804); F. P.-G. Guizot, *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe* (Paris, 1828); Émile de Laveleye, “Le protestantisme et le catholicisme dans leurs rapports avec la liberté et la prospérité des peuples,” in *Revue de Belgique*, 1875, and “L'Avenir des peuples civilisés,” in *Revue de Belgique*, 1876. On de Villers, see Louis Wittmer, *Charles de Villers, 1765–1815* (Geneva and Paris, 1908). Both Guizot's and Laveleye's essays were widely translated and republished and had great influence: the former even provoked a Spanish reply from J. L. Balmes, *El protestantismo comparado con el catolicismo en sus relaciones con la civilización europea* (Barcelona, 1844)—a reply considered by the too partial Menéndez y Pelayo as “obra de inmenso aliento . . . es para mí el primer libro de este siglo”; the latter was introduced to the English public with a panegyric by Mr. Gladstone.

with those Protestant neighbours which, two centuries before, had outstripped it.² Such empirical evidence from the nineteenth century cannot be overlooked by us, even when we are looking at the seventeenth century.

But even if we admit the obvious fact that, in some way, Protestantism in the seventeenth century (and evidently in the nineteenth too) was the religion of progress, the question remains, in what way? The nineteenth-century French propagandists did not argue the reason: as men of action they had not much time for reasons; they merely stated the fact and pressed the consequence. It was left to the more academic German sociologists to explain the phenomenon. They explained it in several ways. Karl Marx saw Protestantism as the ideology of capitalism, the religious epiphenomenon of an economic phenomenon. Max Weber and Werner Sombart reversed the formula. Believing that the spirit preceded the letter, they postulated a creative spirit, "the spirit of capitalism." Both Weber and Sombart, like Marx, placed the rise of modern capitalism in the sixteenth century, and therefore both sought the origin of the new "spirit of capitalism" in the events of that century. Weber, followed by Ernst Troeltsch, found it in the Reformation: the spirit of capitalism, he said, emerged as a direct consequence of the new "Protestant ethic" as taught not by Luther but by Calvin. Sombart rejected Weber's thesis and indeed dealt it some heavy and telling blows. But when he came to make a positive suggestion he produced a far more vulnerable thesis. He suggested that the creators of modern capitalism were the Sephardic Jews who, in the sixteenth century, fled from Lisbon and Seville to Hamburg and Amsterdam; and he traced the "spirit of capitalism" to the Jewish ethic of the Talmud.³

2. Propaganda in favour of Protestantism, not as being true but as being necessary to economic vitality, can be found in the works of Edgar Quinet, Ernest Renan, C. de Laboulaye, L.-A. Prévost-Paradol. See E. G. Léonard, *Le Protestant français* (Paris, 1953), pp. 220 ff., and Stuart R. Schram, *Protestantism and Politics in France* (Alençon, 1954), pp. 59–61. The alarm it caused is shown by Ernest Renauld's *Le Péril protestant* (Paris, 1899), *La Conquête protestante* (Paris, 1900). The Modernist movement in the French Church was in part a new Protestant movement and was specifically condemned as such by Pius X in the bull *Pascendi Gregis*.

3. Sombart's views are first given in *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, 1 (1902), i, 440, and developed in his later writings: see especially *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig, 1911); Weber's in *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (1904–5), *Die protestantischen Sekten und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (1906), and *Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Munich, 1923); also in numerous controversial articles published in *Archiv*

Nobody, I think, would now defend Sombart's positive thesis, but much of Weber's thesis is still firm. It remains the orthodoxy of an influential school of sociologists in America. It has its defenders still in Europe. It is therefore worth while to summarize it very briefly, especially since it has often been misinterpreted. Weber did not argue that Calvin or any other Protestant teacher directly advocated capitalism or capitalist methods. He did not argue that Calvin's teaching on the subject of usury had any effect in the creation of capitalism. In fact, he explicitly repudiated such an idea. Nor did Weber deny that there had been capitalists in the Middle Ages. What he stated was that in the sixteenth century there arose a completely new form of capitalism. In the Middle Ages, as in Antiquity, men had built up great fortunes in commerce and finance; but this, said Weber, had not created even the beginnings of a capitalist system. Such men had been "Jewish adventurer-capitalists," "speculative pariah capitalists," who made money because they loved money and enjoyed making it. But the makers of modern capitalism, he said, were dedicated men who were not animated by love of money: indeed, if they made money, that was an accidental, almost an unwanted by-product of their activity. They were inspired by a moral discipline, an *immerweltliche Askese* or "worldly asceticism," which caused them to place their religion in the methodical pursuit of their "calling," and incidentally to pile up wealth which, since they eschewed all forms of luxury, extravagance and social ambition, they could only re-invest in that "calling." So, indirectly, their moral discipline created that new phenomenon, that "rational bureaucratic capitalism," that "rational organization of citizen labour," which was quite distinct from "Jewish adventurer-capitalism" and which made Europe unique in world history; and this moral discipline, according to Weber, was the Protestant, or rather the Calvinist, ethic. The Protestant ethic thus created the spirit which, when applied to economic affairs, created modern industrial capitalism. For we will not be far wrong in equating Weber's "Jewish adventurer-capitalism" with commercial capitalism and his "rational bureaucratic capitalism" with industrial capitalism.

Now, in spite of all that can be said against it, I believe that there is a solid, if elusive, core of truth in Weber's thesis. The Calvinist ethic did

für Sozialwissenschaft u. Sozialpolitik. Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (1911); *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt* (Munich, 1911), echoes Weber, of whom indeed he can hardly be considered independent (see Walther Köhler, *Ernst Troeltsch*, Tübingen, 1941, pp. 268, 358).

lead, in certain cases, to the formation of industrial capitalism. It is not enough to say that capitalism had a freer field in Protestant countries, because we have to explain why even in Catholic countries, like France or Austria, it was Protestants who thrived and built up industry. And it is indisputable that extreme forms of Protestantism were popular among industrial workers, whether the miners of Bohemia and Saxony or the cloth-workers of Yorkshire and Lancashire. On the other hand, there are certain serious difficulties about Weber's thesis. Any general theory has to take account of exceptions. Since Weber himself limited the Protestant ethic to Calvinism, he had no need to explain the economic stagnation of Lutheran Germany; but what about Scotland? According to Weber's theory, Scotland, with its coal deposits and its strict Calvinist system, should have progressed faster than England, whose Anglican system was regarded by Laveleye as, economically, little better than popery. And why was it Arminian Amsterdam which created the amazing prosperity of the United Provinces, while Calvinist Gelderland remained the reserve of booby squires — that class which, according to the earliest explicit exponent of the theory, Slingsby Bethel, was always the enemy of mercantile progress?⁴ Such notable exceptions suggest that even if Calvinism did create or fortify the capitalist spirit it did so in a very uncertain manner.

For these reasons I wish to consider the thesis anew — or rather, not the thesis but the historical facts to which Weber supposed it to apply. I think this is worth doing, because Weber himself merely described a theoretical connection: he never gave a single historical instance of the connection thus described; and Weber's most distinguished successor, R. H. Tawney, confined himself to English examples, thus denying himself the light which may come from a comparative method. In considering the facts, I will begin by a brief glance at Europe in the years of revolution between what I have called the period of the Renaissance and the period of the Enlightenment: i.e., in the years of the Thirty Years War.

Let us start with the Protestant powers. In the late 1620s and early 1630s the political champions of the Protestant cause were not Calvinists, they were Lutherans. They were the two kings of Scandinavia: the extravagant, catholicizing aesthete, Christian IV of Denmark and, after his defeat, the severe, mystical, crusading hero, Gustavus Adolphus of

4. [Slingsby Bethel] *The Present Interest of England Stated, by a Lover of his King and Country* (1671); cf. also his (also anonymous) *The Interest of Princes and States* (1680).

Sweden. In order to intervene in Europe, both these kings found themselves obliged to mobilize new industrial and financial resources, and this meant employing great capitalists. Who were the capitalists whom they found?

Christian IV turned first to a Calvinist firm in Amsterdam, the de Willem brothers. Jan de Willem, in Copenhagen, was one of the founders of the Danish East India Company. His brothers Paul and David sat in Amsterdam and through the international money market provided credit for the purchase of arms. When the de Willem brothers ceased to serve him, Christian IV turned to another Calvinist family, of Flemish origin, the Marcelis family, who had already made a commercial empire in the north. At first it was a cosmopolitan empire. They sought to corner Swedish copper, handled the King of Denmark's Norwegian copper and the Czar of Russia's corn and armour. But in the end they plumped for Denmark. By the 1640s the brothers Gabriel and Celio Marcelis were the King of Denmark's economic advisers, contractors, financiers, munition merchants, timber exporters. They advanced money on the Sound tolls and the copper tithes. They raised fleets. Around them, the native Lutheran aristocracy sank into mere landownership and the native Lutheran merchants became mere agents of Dutch Calvinist merchant houses. The Dutch Calvinists became, in fact, a new capitalist aristocracy in Lutheran Denmark.⁵

The King of Sweden did likewise. What the Marcelis family was for Denmark, the firm of de Geer and Trip was for Sweden. Louis de Geer, indeed, a Calvinist from Liège, settled in Amsterdam, was to become the seventeenth-century Fugger of the north. Driving out all his rivals (also Dutch Calvinists), he became "the indisputable master of Swedish economic life," "the Krupp of the seventeenth century." The whole copper and iron industries of Sweden were in his hands, and from them he supplied the armies and fleets not only of Sweden but also of Holland, France, Venice, Portugal, England, Scotland, Russia and the German princes. He also manufactured brass, steel, tin, wire, paper, cloth. He was a great shipper and shipbuilder: in 1645 he assembled,

5. For the Calvinists in Denmark, see Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam* (Baltimore, 1949), pp. 112-14; H. Kellenbenz, *Unternehmerkräfte im Hamburger Portugal- u. Spanienhandel* (Hamburg, 1954), and "Spanien, die nördlichen Niederlande u. der skandinavisch-baltische Raum," in *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- u. Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1954, pp. 305-6, 311, etc.; Axel Nielsen, *Dänische Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Jena, 1927), pp. 193-96.

chartered and equipped a naval squadron to serve Sweden against the fleet which his kinsman Gabriel Marcelis had similarly raised for Denmark. He organized and financed the Swedish African Company. In repayment of his loans to the Swedish Crown he received yet more concessions, consignments of copper, leases of Crown lands, customs dues, privileges, exemptions, titles of honour. He was the financier of Sweden's empire abroad, the founder of its extractive industry at home. To operate it, he brought to Sweden Calvinist workers from his native Liège: 300 Walloon families who never learned Swedish but whose influence was felt in Sweden for more than 300 years.

De Geer was not the only great Calvinist financier and industrialist in Sweden in those years. Willem Usselinx founded the Swedish West India Company. The brothers Abraham and Jacob Momma opened up iron- and copper-mines in Lapland and became the personal financiers of Queen Christina. The brothers Spiering controlled the Baltic corn market and farmed the Baltic tolls. It was a Dutch Calvinist from Livonia who founded the Bank of Sweden in 1658. Other Dutch Calvinists controlled the export of iron guns, the royal brass factory at Nacka, etc.⁶

If Lutheran Denmark and Sweden were modernized and financed by Calvinist entrepreneurs, what of the other supporter of European Protestantism, the Catholic monarch of France? Cardinal Richelieu, it is well known, like Henri IV before him, relied largely on Huguenot men of affairs. His bankers were French Calvinists, the Rambouilletts and the Tallemants. To pay the French and Swedish armies he employed Jan Hoeufft, a Calvinist from Brabant who had been naturalized a Frenchman in 1601 and had been employed by Henri IV to drain the lakes and marshes of France. Through his brother Mattheus in Amsterdam, Hoeufft was in touch with the Calvinist international, with de Geer, and with the Baltic.⁷ But in 1639 Richelieu found another Protestant financier, who was to dominate French finance for the next quarter of a century. This was Barthélemy d'Herwarth, who, in that year, brought over to the service of France the leaderless German army of his deceased employer, Bernard of Saxe-Weimar.

6. For Calvinists in Sweden, see Eli F. Heckscher, *Economic History of Sweden* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), pp. 101-19, and "L'Histoire de fer: le monopole suédois," in *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, 1932. There are biographies of de Geer in Dutch by F. Breedvelt van Ven (Amsterdam, 1935), and in Swedish by E. W. Dahlgren (Uppsala, 1923); cf. also G. Edmundson, "Louis de Geer," *English Historical Review*, 1891.

7. For Hoeufft, see Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam*, pp. 30 n., 105-6.

Barthélemy d'Herwarth is a famous figure in French economic history.⁸ By his financial ability he kept the army of Alsace loyal to France. He financed Mazarin's German policy. "Monsieur d'Herwarth," the Cardinal once declared in the presence of the young Louis XIV, "has saved France and preserved the crown to the King. His services should never be forgotten; the King will make them immortal by the marks of honour and recognition which he will bestow on him and his family." The King duly made him *Intendant des Finances*, and relied on him more than once in moments of crisis. The *dévots* were outraged to see this Huguenot so powerful at Court, but they could do nothing: Herwarth "had rendered such service to the State by means of his credit with the German army," it was explained, "that all other considerations must yield." As *Intendant des Finances*, Herwarth filled his office with his co-religionists. Under him, wrote Élie Bénoist, the contemporary historian of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, "Public Finance became the refuge of the Reformed, to whom other employment was refused." Upon which a modern French historian has commented, "Herwarth after Sully, there—as far as France is concerned—is the true origin of the famous Protestant Finance; not in the intimate connection and theological reasons invoked by Max Weber and his school."⁹

"As far as France is concerned"—possibly; but possibly not. Even if the French Huguenots sought to introduce each other into financial office, does that explain their competence for these offices? And anyway, the phenomenon does not appear in France only. We have seen it in Lutheran Denmark and Lutheran Sweden. Once again, we cannot properly invoke a special reason to explain what seems to be a general rule. In order to see how general it is, let us now continue our survey of Europe. Let us go over to the other side in the Thirty Years War: the side of Catholic Austria and Catholic Spain.

For the Habsburg powers also needed industrialists and financiers to mobilize their resources and pay their armies: those armies that had to fight on so vast a theatre, from the Baltic to the Alps, from the Carpathians to the Pyrenees. That they were successful for a time was due, it is well known, to the genius of one man, Albert von Wallenstein. Wallenstein, greatest of *condottieri*, discovered the secret of keeping an army in being, paying it by contributions levied from conquered provinces and cities, feeding, clothing and arming it from his own work-

8. For Herwarth, see G. Depping, "Un Banquier protestant en France au 17^e siècle, Barthélemy d'Herwarth," in *Revue historique*, vols. x and xi (1870).

9. E. G. Léonard, *Le Protestant français*, p. 52.

shops, factories and mines. But behind Wallenstein, we now know, stood another man whose presence, long hidden, has only recently been revealed: Hans de Witte, a Calvinist from Antwerp.

There is something incredible in the career of Hans de Witte, the solitary Calvinist who sat in Prague financing the army of the Catholic powers. He had come thither to serve the tolerant, eccentric Emperor Rudolf II, and had somehow stayed to finance his intolerant successors, who, however, tolerated him for his industrial and financial services. Already, by the beginning of the war, he controlled the silver and the tin of the empire. Thereafter his power never ceased to grow. It was he who advanced all the money to pay Wallenstein's armies, recouping himself with the taxes of loyal and the contributions and ransoms of conquered provinces. It was he who organized the supply of those armies with arms and armour, uniforms, gunpowder, saltpetre, lead, all drawn from Wallenstein's duchy of Friedland. Production, manufacture, transport down the Elbe—he managed it all. All the silver-mines, copper-mines, lead-mines on Wallenstein's estates were in his hands. The iron forges of Raspenau in Bohemia, the rival of the iron-mines of Arboga in Sweden, were under his control. He was the de Geer of the Catholic powers. Like de Geer he brought his co-religionists with him to work the mines, and secured guarantees that they would not be molested for their religion. It was a guarantee that only he could have secured: for as the Jesuits took control in Bohemia, the Calvinists had been remorselessly driven out. In the end only one remained: Hans de Witte, the greatest industrialist, greatest financier, richest subject of Bohemia, the banker of the Emperor and Empress, of the generalissimo, the nobility, the clergy, the Jesuits themselves. When the crash came—when Wallenstein fell and the banker's long-strained credit was finally ruined—it was still in Prague, still a Calvinist, that he met the end, drowning himself, bankrupt, in his garden well.¹⁰

So much for the Habsburgs of Vienna. What of the Habsburgs of Madrid? It is hardly to be expected that we should find a Calvinist entrepreneur at the ear of Philip IV; but we soon find that, to mobilize his resources, even the most Catholic king was obliged to look outside the faith. In fact, for the handling of his foreign trade and the provision of his fleets, he looked to the Lutheran merchants of Hamburg,

10. The character and history of Hans de Witte have been brought to light by Mr. Anton Ernstberger, *Hans de Witte Finanzmann Wallensteins* (*Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- u. Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Beiheft, 1954).

who, if they were heretics, were at least neutrals and nominal subjects of his cousin the Emperor. For a whole generation Lutheran Hamburg became the mercantile capital of the Spanish empire. There were centralized the sugar trade of Brazil, the spice trade of the East. Through it the King of Spain drew on the industry of Germany, the commerce of the Baltic. Through it his overseas colonies were supplied with manufactures in exchange for the precious metals which financed the war. Through it were equipped the successive armadas with which he hoped to keep his colonies and reconquer northern Europe.

But when we look more closely at Hamburg, what do we find? Numerically the Lutheran Germans are no doubt in a majority, but in quality they are eclipsed by Dutch Calvinists. It was in vain that Spain sought to avoid dependence on the hated rebels by using Hanseatic merchants: the Hanseatic merchants, on closer inspection, turn out to be Dutchmen, or Dutch agents. It was Netherlanders, not native Hamburgers, who founded the Bank of Hamburg in 1619, and formed three-quarters of its greatest depositors. In 1623, when the Spanish government pounced on the foreign ships in its harbours, no less than 160 "Hanseatic" ships were found to be really Dutch. In using the Lutheran Hanseatic cities, Spain was only concealing its real dependence on its open enemies, the Calvinist Dutch.¹¹

Meanwhile, on the Rhineland front, the Spanish armies had to be maintained. The King of Spain needed a capitalist who could mobilize the salt-mines of Franche-Comté as de Geer had mobilized the copper-mines of Sweden and de Witte the iron-mines of Bohemia. He found the man he needed. François Grenus, a Swiss Calvinist from Berne, a merchant-banker in Geneva, farmed the royal salt-mines and, by his loans, sustained the Spanish forces. The other clients of this Swiss de Witte were the other enemies of European Protestantism: the Emperor, and that Duchess of Savoy, the sister of Queen Henrietta Maria, who is chiefly remembered in history for slaughtering the saints of God, the Protestants of the valleys of Piedmont.¹²

Thus in Catholic as in Protestant countries, in the mid-seventeenth century, we find that the Calvinists are indeed the great entrepreneurs.

11. See Kellenbenz, "Spanien, die nördlichen Niederlande," pp. 308, 315; E. Baasch, "Hamburg u. Holland im 17ten u. 18ten Jahrhundert," in *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*; 1910, xvi, 55-56.

12. For Grenus, see Baron de Grenus, *Notices biographiques sur les Grenus* (Geneva, 1849).

They are an international force, the economic *élite* of Europe. They alone, it seems, can mobilize commerce and industry and, by so doing, command great sums of money, either to finance armies or to reinvest in other great economic undertakings. Faced with these facts, it is easy to assume a direct connection between their religion and their economic activity; and yet, before we jump to such a conclusion, we would do well to look more closely at the picture we have sketched. We must apply the historical tests with which Weber, the sociologist, dispensed. In particular, we must ask, what was the common denominator of the actual Calvinist entrepreneurs whom we know? Was it Calvinism of the type defined by Weber? If not, what was it?

Now, certainly the men whom we have named were not all orthodox Calvinists in religion. Louis de Geer was: he indeed showed a firm, enlightened Calvinist piety from the time when, in La Rochelle, he took his vow to serve God with whatever he might gain in a life of virtuous commerce. He patronized Calvinist scholars, gave generously to dispossessed Calvinist ministers, and in all his career as an industrialist seems never to have supplied any enemy of the Calvinist cause. But in this uncompromising Calvinist piety Louis de Geer is an exception. His opposite number, Hans de Witte, though he professed Calvinism to the end, was as bad a Calvinist as it was possible to be. Not only did he serve the Jesuits and the Catholic powers against European Protestantism: he had his son baptized in the Catholic Church with Wallenstein, the terror of European Protestants, as godfather. The Swiss Calvinist François Grenus was not much better. As for Herwarth, it is not even certain that he was a Calvinist at all. As a naturalized French subject, he counted as a "Huguenot"; but he was already middle-aged when he became a Frenchman. He was born a German, of a Lutheran family, and Mazarin found him in the service of a Lutheran prince. He was probably a Lutheran.¹³

Of course, Weber himself would not admit mere doctrinal orthodoxy as a criterion. His Calvinist was not a strict believer or even practiser of his religion, but a social type, whose character, though originally formed by Calvinist teaching, could easily become detached from it. What we should look for, to confirm his theory, is not merely religious faith, but the moral deposit of faith which can be left behind even when faith has departed. To Weber this moral deposit of Calvinism was "worldly asceticism": frugality of life, refusal to buy land

13. Georg Herwarth, Barthélemy's great-grandfather, had headed the Lutheran party at Augsburg in the time of the Smalcaldic War.

or titles, disdain for the "feudal" way of life. Unfortunately, when we look for this moral deposit in our seventeenth-century Calvinist entrepreneurs, we are once again disappointed. In real life, all the great entrepreneurs lived magnificently. Dutch Calvinist merchants might not buy great estates in Holland, where there was so little land to buy, but abroad they let themselves go. Even Louis de Geer bought lands in Sweden "surpassing in extent the dominions of many small German princes." He acquired a title of nobility and founded one of the greatest noble houses in Sweden. So did the other Dutch capitalists in Sweden—the Momma brothers, Peter Spiering, Martin Wewitzers, Conrad van Klaenck. Hans de Witte acquired hereditary nobility and vast estates in Bohemia: at the height of his success he owned three baronies, twelve manors (*Höfe*), fifteen landed estates and fifty-nine villages. Barthélemy d'Herwarth showed even less of that Puritan asceticism which characterized Weber's ideal type. As his town house, he bought for 180,000 livres the Hôtel d'Épernon, and then, finding this palace of a duke and peer of France inadequate for his splendid tastes, he scandalized Parisian society by demolishing it and rebuilding on a yet more lavish scale. As his suburban villa he bought the maison de Gondi at St.-Cloud, where Catherine de Médicis had held her festivals and Henri III had been murdered, and sold it back to the Crown for 250,000 livres. As his country house he bought the château of Bois-le-Vicomte, once the residence of Cardinal Richelieu, of Gaston d'Orléans and of La Grande Mademoiselle. In such surroundings the Protestant financier entertained royalty and indulged, with his friends, that passion for gambling which was notorious and censured even at the indulgent Court of Louis XIV. Such were the real men whose abstract type was characterized by Weber as "rational worldly asceticism."

If the great Calvinist entrepreneurs of the mid-seventeenth century were not united by Calvinist piety, or even by its supposed social expression, what did unite them? If we look attentively at them we soon find certain obvious facts. First, whether good or bad Calvinists, the majority of them were not natives of the country in which they worked. Neither Holland nor Scotland nor Geneva nor the Palatinate—the four obvious Calvinist societies—produced their own entrepreneurs. The compulsory Calvinist teaching with which the natives of those communities were indoctrinated had no such effect. Almost all the great entrepreneurs were immigrants. Secondly, the majority of these immigrants were Netherlanders: some of them, perhaps, were Calvinists only because they were Netherlanders.

De Geer, the Momma brothers, Spiering in Sweden, the Marcelis

family in Denmark, Hoeufft in France, de Witte in Bohemia, were all Netherlanders. The pseudo-Hanseates along the Baltic coast, the newly prospering merchants of the Rhineland cities, were largely Netherlanders. "We can fairly say," writes the greatest authority on the subject, "that the old system of the Hanseatic League had been interwoven with a new system, which brought all these cities into peculiar dependence on Dutch entrepreneurs."¹⁴ Moreover, when we look closer still, we discover that these Netherlanders came generally from a particular class within the Dutch Republic. Even there they were, or their fathers had been, immigrants. Either they were "Flemings"—that is, immigrants from the southern provinces now under Spanish rule—or they were Liégeois, from the Catholic prince-bishopric of Liège.

The extent to which the new prosperity of Amsterdam, after 1600, was built up by *émigrés* from Antwerp is well known. Amsterdam, in the sixteenth century, was a fishing and shipping port: in the world of international commerce and high finance it had little significance until the reconquest of Antwerp by Alexander Farnese in 1585. The earliest form of marine insurance there dates from 1592, and it had probably been introduced by the more sophisticated southerners—the famous Isaac le Maire of Tournai and Jacob de Velaer of Antwerp—who were among its signatories. There were no bankers in Amsterdam before 1600. The Bank of Amsterdam, founded in 1609, and the Bourse of Amsterdam, founded in 1611, owed their existence to the "Flemish" immigration and were based on southern, Catholic models. The Dutch West India Company was an almost entirely Flemish company. Peter Lintgens, one of the founders of the Dutch East India Company, had brought his shipping and insurance firm, with its international connections, from Antwerp. The most famous of the great entrepreneurs of Holland in those days—Isaac de Maire, Dirck van Os, Balthasar Moucheron, Baptist Oyens, Peter Lintgens, Willem Usselinx, Isaac Coymans, Johan van der Veken—were all Flemings. It was they, far more than native Hollanders, who initiated the sudden portent of Dutch prosperity.¹⁵

14. Kellenbenz, "Spanien, die nördlichen Niederlande," etc., p. 308.

15. For this dependence of Amsterdam (and the Dutch Diaspora generally) on the previous expertise of Antwerp, see H. Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, IV, 340; Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam*, pp. 15–16, 24; Kellenbenz, "Spanien, die nördlichen Niederlande," pp. 309–10, and *Unternehmenskräfte*, pp. 149, 342–43; A. E. Sayous, "Die grossen Händler u. Kapitalisten in Amsterdam," in *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, XLVI and XLVII (1937–38); W. J. van Hoboken, "The Dutch West India Company: the Political Back-

If it was Flemings who built up the new prosperity of Holland, equally it was Flemings who, from Holland, formed the *élite* of the Dutch Calvinist entrepreneurs in the rest of Europe. The business life of Hamburg, we have seen, was ruled by Dutchmen; but these Dutchmen, we soon find, were largely Flemings. If thirty-two of the forty-two largest depositors in the Bank of Hamburg were Dutchmen, at least nineteen of these thirty-two were Flemings. Of the thirty-six families who controlled the Peninsular trade, which was the basis of Hamburg's spectacular fortune in the early seventeenth century, nearly two-thirds came from Antwerp, and the rest from Liège or the industrial Walloon country. In Sweden de Geer, in Bohemia de Witte might count as Dutchmen, but by birth the former was a Liégeois, the latter a Fleming from Antwerp. The most prosperous of the Netherlanders who went to Frankfurt were the Flemings. By 1600 they had a two-thirds majority in its ruling oligarchy: it was they who, in the words of its historian, made the period 1585–1603 “Frankfurt's second golden age as a Belgian colony,” “the daughter town of Antwerp.”¹⁶ In Emden, trade was largely in the hands of Antwerpers.¹⁷ Wesel was known as “Little Antwerp.” All along the Rhine it was entrepreneurs from Antwerp and from Liège who, bringing their refugee workmen with them, established first the cloth, then the extractive industries and thus created, for the Catholic natives, a new prosperity.¹⁸ Even in Calvin's Switzerland it was not Swiss Calvinists who created the new industries: for a whole century after Calvin there is not a single great Swiss entrepreneur. François Grenus, who flourished in the 1640s, was the first—if indeed he was a Swiss native and not a Walloon immigrant.¹⁹ The in-

ground of its Rise and Decline,” in *Britain and the Netherlands*, ed. J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossmann (1960).

16. A. Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*, I (1910), 63–69, 305–6; II (1921), 1–45; G. Witzel, “Gewerbegeschichtliche Studien zur niederländischen Einwanderung in Deutschland im 16ten Jahrhundert,” in *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift*, 1910.

17. Bernhard Hagedorn, *Ostfrieslands Handel u. Schiffahrt im 16ten Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1910), I, 124–30.

18. W. Sarmenhaus, *Die Festsetzung der niederländischen Religions-Flüchtlingen im 16ten Jahrhundert in Wesel* (Wesel, 1913). Paul Koch, *Der Einfluss des Calvinismus und des Mennonitentums auf der neiderrheinischen Textilindustrie* (Krefeld, 1928).

19. Baron de Grenus (*Notices biographiques*) describes François Grenus as a native of Morges, in the Pays de Vaud; but H. Lüthy, *La Banque protestante en France*, I (Paris, 1959), 38, 42, refers to him as an immigrant from Armentières.

dustry of Switzerland was created almost entirely by immigrants, the most spectacular of them, perhaps, being the converted Jew, Marcus Perez, who offered to make Basel the new economic centre at the cost of his abandoned home-town of Antwerp.²⁰ In the Calvinist Palatinate it was the same.²¹ Even in Scotland, where the Calvinist clergy vigorously opposed any economic enterprise, it was Flemish immigrants who, in 1588, sought to establish that basis of modern industrial capitalism, the cloth industry.²²

It would be easy to multiply instances. The general pattern is clear. When Weber observed, as evidence for his thesis, that in Hamburg the oldest entrepreneurial family was a Calvinist, not a Lutheran family, or when Slingsby Bethel recorded that it was “the Reformed,” not the Lutherans, who were the active businessmen in the north German cities with which he was familiar, they are merely recording the fact of the Dutch, or rather Flemish, dispersion. And although the men thus dispersed were largely Calvinists, they were not necessarily Calvinists. Their local origins were more constant than their religion. Thus the richest of all the refugees who came to Frankfurt were the so-called Martinists, the Lutherans of Antwerp: a dozen of them, we are told, could buy up all the Calvinists put together. At any time from 1580 the richest man in Frankfurt was probably a Lutheran—but a Lutheran from Antwerp. In Hamburg, too, some of the immigrant Dutch merchants were Lutherans, like the de Meyers and the Matthiesens. In Cologne the two greatest immigrant entrepreneurs, Nicolas de Groot and Georg Kessler, were not Calvinists but Catholics; but they came from Antwerp. Even in Calvinist Holland one of the greatest of the

20. On the immigrants into Switzerland, see J. C. Mörköfer, *Geschichte der evangelischen Flüchtlinge in der Schweiz* (Leipzig, 1876), pp. 30–42; A. E. Sayous, “Calvinisme et capitalisme à Genève,” in *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, 1953; Walter Bodmer, *Der Einfluss der Refugianteneinwanderung von 1500–1700 auf die schweizerische Wirtschaft* (Zürich, 1946); and the histories of Basel by T. Geering (1886), R. Wackernagel (1907–16) and Paul Burckhardt (1942).

21. See Eberhard Gothein, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Schwarzwaldes* (Strasbourg, 1892), I, 674 ff.; Richard Frei, *Die Bedeutung der niederländischen Einwanderer für die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der Stadt Hanau* (Hanau, 1927); Paul Koch, *Der Einfluss des Calvinismus*.

22. For the opposition of the Church of Scotland to economic progress, see W. L. Mathieson, *Politics and Religion: A Study in Scottish History* (Glasgow, 1902), II, 202–3; H. G. Graham, *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (1906), pp. 159–62. For the introduction of “Fleming wobsters” by the burgh of Edinburgh, see *Burgh Records of Edinburgh 1573–89* (Edinburgh, 1882), p. 530.

Flemish immigrants, Johan van der Veken, the entrepreneur of Rotterdam, was a Catholic—but a Catholic from Antwerp. Similarly, the founders of the new extractive industries were not necessarily Calvinists, but they were generally Liégeois. De Geer's father was a Catholic when he emigrated from Liège. The Biscayan iron industry was organized by that prince of Liégeois industrialists, Jean Curtius. The greatest pioneer of the extractive industry of the Rhineland, Jean Mariotte, was a Catholic—but a Catholic from Liège. Clearly all these men are more united by their Flemish or Liégeois origins than by their religious views.²³

Once this fact is established, new lines of inquiry soon present themselves. Instead of looking primarily at the religion of the entrepreneurs, we may look at their local origins. And once we do that—once we cease to look only at the Calvinists among them—we soon find that they are not confined to Flanders. Analysing the entrepreneurial class of the new “capitalist” cities of the seventeenth century, we find that the whole class is predominantly formed of immigrants, and these immigrants, whatever their religion, come predominantly from four areas. First, there are the Flemings, by whose Calvinism Weber ultimately defended his thesis.²⁴ Secondly, there are the Jews from Lisbon and Seville, whom Sombart set up as rivals to Weber's Calvinists.²⁵ Thirdly, there are the south Germans, mainly from Augsburg.

23. For Frankfurt, see Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*; for Cologne, H. Thimme, “Der Handel Kölns am Ende des 16ten Jahrhundert und die internationale Zusammensetzung der Kölner Kaufmannschaft,” in *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst*, xxxi (1912); for van der Veken, E. Wiersum, “Johan van der Veken, koopman en banker te Rotterdam, 1583–1616,” in *Verslagen der Maatschappij der Nederl. Letterkunde*, 1912. For Curtius, see J. Lejeune, *La Formation du capitalisme moderne dans la Principauté de Liège au 16^e siècle* (Paris, 1939); for the Mariotte family, J. Yernaux, *La Métallurgie liégeoise et son expansion au 17^e siècle* (Liège, 1939).

24. Weber afterwards stated that when he had said “that Calvinism shows the juxtaposition of intensive piety and capitalism, wherever found,” he had meant “only Diaspora Calvinism” (*Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft u. Sozialpolitik*, xxv, 245 n. 5). But, in fact, apart from one sentence parenthetically quoted from Gothein, Weber, in his original work, never referred to Diaspora Calvinism and his arguments are drawn almost exclusively from English Puritan writers.

25. Or rather, we should say, the Peninsular *émigrés*, most of whom were Jews; for just as the Flemings who emigrated were not all Calvinists, so the *émigrés* from Lisbon and Seville were not all Jews. The Ximenes family, about whom Mr. Kellenbenz has written (*Unternehmungskräfte*, pp. 146, 185, 253), were not Marranos: they were staunch Catholics, who had no religious need to emigrate.

Fourthly, there are the Italians, mainly from Como, Locarno, Milan and Lucca. From place to place the proportions vary. In Hamburg and the Baltic, where they have been systematically studied by Mr. Kellenbenz, the Flemings preponderate, followed by the Jews. Geography and the old Spanish connection easily explain this. In France we find a greater number of south Germans, who came through the branch offices of the great Augsburg family firms of the sixteenth century. Such were Barthélemy d'Herwarth, who came through Lyons, and the Catholic Eberhard Jabach, famous for his magnificent picture gallery, who came through Cologne.²⁶ In Switzerland the Italians predominated: Turretini, Duni, Balbani, Arnolfini, Burlamacchi, Calandrini, Minutoli, Diodati, Appiani, Pellizari—these, not the local disciples of Calvin, were the first makers of modern Swiss prosperity; and they continued to make it, without much help from the bigoted natives, until they were replaced or reinforced by a new immigration: the immigration of the French Huguenots.

Antwerp, Liège, Lisbon, Augsburg, Milan, Lucca . . . we only have to recite these names to see what has happened. These are great names in European economic history. On the eve of the Reformation they were the heirs of medieval capitalism, the promising starters of modern capitalism. For large-scale capitalism, before the industrial revolution, depended on long-distance trade and two great industries, cloth and minerals. In the Middle Ages, thanks to the long-distance trade of Italy, the cloth industry had been built up in Italy and its northern depot, Flanders. From the financial accumulation thus created, the capitalists of both Italy and Flanders had been able to mobilize the still more costly, but ultimately still more profitable extractive industry of Europe. By 1500 all the techniques of industrial capitalism were concentrated in a few cities strung along the old Rhineland route from Flanders to Italy. At one end was Antwerp, heir to Bruges and Ghent, commanding the old Flemish cloth industry and financing the extractive industry of Liège; at the other end were the Italian cities, the commercial and financial cities of Venice and Genoa, the industrial cities of Milan and Florence. To these had recently been added two new centres: Augsburg, whose cloth industry raised the huge financial super-

26. For the south Germans in Lyon, see K. Ver Hees, "Die oberdeutsche Kaufleute in Lyon im letzten Viertel des 16ten Jahrhundert," in *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1934. There was also a colony in Marseilles: see A. E. Sayous, "Le Commerce de Melchior Manlich et Cie d'Augsbourg à Marseilles," in *Revue historique*, CLXXVI (1935), 389–411.

structure of the Fugger and other families and enabled them to rival even Antwerp, concentrating in their hands the extractive industry of central Europe; and Lisbon, the capital of a new world-wide commercial empire, with possibilities of long-distance trade undreamed of before. These were the centres of European capitalism in 1500. In some way or other, between 1550 and 1620, most of these centres were convulsed, and the secret techniques of capitalism were carried away to other cities, to be applied in new lands.

This is not, of course, the German view. Marx, Weber, Sombart all believed that a new form of capitalism was created in the sixteenth century. Medieval production, they believed, was "petty production" only. It was not till the Reformation, they believed, that large-scale industrial production was possible. Then Reformation, industrial capitalism and the economic rise of the Protestant powers synchronized. After that it was easy to see causal connections. But today few scholars believe in this sudden sixteenth-century break-through of industrial capitalism. We know too much about medieval Italian and Flemish capitalism.²⁷ The enterprises of Benedetto Zaccaria in Genoa, of Roger de Boinebroke in Ghent, of the great cloth-merchants and bankers in Florence, were as "rational" in their methods, as "bureaucratic" in their structure, as any modern capitalism;²⁸ and if the founders of

27. It is interesting to observe the narrowly German origin of Weber's theory. Its antecedents were German too. It was W. Endemann, in his great work *Studien in der romanisch-kanonistischen Wirtschafts- u. Rechtslehre* (Berlin, 1874-83), I, 371 ff., who wrote that it took the Protestant revolt to free European capitalism from the repressive grip of the Catholic Church, and it was L. Goldschmidt, in his *Universalgeschichte des Handelsrechts* (Stuttgart, 1891), p. 139, who gave currency to the misleading statement that, in the Middle Ages, *homo mercator vix aut numquam potest placere Deo*. Endemann's statement was criticized at the time by Sir W. Ashley, *Introduction to Economic History*, II (1893), 377 ff.; but it still runs its course, as is shown by the extreme statement of the case in Benjamin N. Nelson, *The Idea of Usury* (Princeton, 1949). The fatal dissemination of Goldschmidt's statement, once it had been taken up by Pirenne, is shown in J. Lestocquoy, *Les Villes de Flandre et d'Italie* (Paris, 1952), pp. 195-96. Weber's immediate starting-point—the only factual evidence set out in his work—was a statistical study of Catholic and Protestant education in Baden by Martin Offenbacher. These statistics have been questioned by Kurt Samuelsson, *Ekonomi och Religion* (Stockholm, 1957), pp. 146-57. The exclusively German application of Weber's theory is pleasantly remarked by A. Saponi, *Le Marchand italien du moyen âge* (Paris, 1944), pp. xxix-xxx.

28. For Zaccaria, see R. S. Lopez, *Genova marinara nel dugento: Benedetto Zaccaria, ammiraglio e mercante* (Messina, 1933); for Boinebroke, G. Espinas, "Jehan Boine Broke, bourgeois et drapier douaisien," in *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- u. Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1904.

these medieval enterprises were sometimes outrageous characters—“Jewish adventurer-capitalists” rather than “worldly ascetics”—why, so (we now find) were the Calvinist de Geers and de Wittes of the seventeenth century. The idea that large-scale industrial capitalism was ideologically impossible before the Reformation is exploded by the simple fact that it existed. Until the invention of the steam engine, its scope may have been limited, but within that scope it probably reached its highest peak in the age of the Fugger. After that there were convulsions which caused the great capitalists to migrate, with their skills and their workmen, to new centres. But there is no reason to suppose that these convulsions, whatever they were, created a new type of man or enabled a new type of capitalism to arise, impossible before. In fact the techniques of capitalism applied in Protestant countries were not new. The century from 1520 to 1620 is singularly barren of new processes. The techniques brought by the Flemings to Holland, Sweden, Denmark, by the Italians to Switzerland and Lyons, were the old techniques of medieval capitalism, as perfected on the eve of the Reformation, and applied to new areas. That is all.

And yet, is it quite all? In saying this we may have cleared the air; but we have not solved the problem. We have merely changed it. For Marx, Weber, Sombart, who regarded medieval Europe as non-capitalist, the problem was to discover why capitalism was created in the sixteenth century. For us, who believe that Catholic Europe, at least up to the Reformation, was perfectly able to create a capitalist economy, the question is, why, in the sixteenth century, did so many of the essential agents of such an economy—not only entrepreneurs, but also workers—leave the old centres, predominantly in Catholic lands, and migrate to new centres, predominantly in Protestant lands? And this is still largely a problem of religion. We may point to many non-religious reasons: the pressure of guild restrictions in the old centres; the ease with which entrepreneurs and workers (unlike landlords or peasants) can migrate; the new opportunities which were already presenting themselves in the north. But these reasons, which can explain individual cases, cannot explain the general movement. For, after all, the majority of these men, though they might leave easily, did not leave willingly. They were expelled. And they were expelled for religion. The Italians who fled over the Alps from Milan or Como were largely cloth-merchants and cloth-workers who feared persecution for their religious views. The Italians of Lucca who founded the silk industry of Switzerland were silk-merchants who felt the pressure of the Roman

Inquisition not on their looms, but on their “heretical” views.²⁹ The Flemings who left the southern Netherlands for the north were either workers from the rural cloth industry fleeing from Alba’s Tribunal of Blood or Antwerpens to whom Alexander Farnese gave the alternative of Catholicism or exile.³⁰ All these men, who had worked, or whose ancestors had worked, peacefully in Catholic Flanders and Italy in the past, now found themselves unable to reconcile themselves to Catholicism any longer: economic reasons might point the direction, but religion gave them the push. The question we have to ask is, what had happened to create this new gulf between sixteenth-century Catholicism and the sixteenth-century entrepreneurs and workers: a gulf quite unknown to the medieval Church and the medieval entrepreneurs and workers?

In face of this question, it is convenient to ask, what was the religious attitude of those actively engaged in economic life in 1500? Basically we can define it, for lack of a better word, as “Erasmianism.” I wish I could find a better word—one more obviously applicable to Italy as well as to northern Europe (for the characteristics were general)—but I cannot. Let me therefore make it clear that by Erasmianism I mean not specifically the doctrines of Erasmus, but those general views to which the early reformers, and Erasmus in particular, gave a clear form. These Erasmians were Christian and Catholic, but they rejected or ignored a great deal of the new external apparatus of official Catholicism: an apparatus which, since it absorbed energy, consumed time and immobilized property, without having any necessary connection with religion, was equally disliked by educated, by pious, and by active men. So, instead of “mechanical religion,” and of monasticism which had come to represent it, the Erasmians extolled “primitive Christianity,” private devotion, the study of the Bible; and they believed intensely in the sanctification of lay life. Against the exaggerated pretensions of the clergy,

29. For the emigration from Lucca, see A. Pascal, “Da Lucca a Ginevra,” in *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 1932–35.

30. Examination of the places of origin of the *émigrés* from Flanders to Frankfurt, Hamburg, etc., shows that the poor immigrants were largely workers from the Walloon clothing and mining towns, while the rich immigrants came predominantly from Antwerp. The massive migration of the cloth-workers of Hondschoote to Leiden is the subject of Mr. E. Coornaert’s study, *Un Centre industriel d’autrefois: la draperie-sayetterie d’Hondschoote* (Paris, 1930).

claiming that the clerical or monastic condition was, by itself, holier than the lay condition, the laity exalted the married state as being not a mere concession to base human nature, but a religious state no less holy than clerical celibacy; and they exalted the lay calling as being, if sanctified by inner faith in its daily exercise, no less holy than the clerical office. This belief in the positive religious value of a lay calling was seized upon by Weber as the essence of the "Protestant ethic," the necessary condition of industrial capitalism. In keeping with his view of a new, revolutionary idea in the sixteenth century, Weber ascribed it, in its verbal form, to Luther and, in its real significance, to Calvin. But in fact, although Weber was no doubt right to see in the idea of "the calling" an essential ingredient in the creation of capitalism, he was undoubtedly wrong in assuming that this idea was a purely Protestant idea. His philological reasoning is known to be wrong. And, in fact, the idea was a commonplace before Protestantism. It occurs constantly in the works of Erasmus, who regularly extols the real, inner piety of the active layman in his calling above the complacency of the indolent monks who assume a greater holiness because of the costume they wear or the "mechanical devotions" which they practise.

In all this there is, of course, nothing explicitly heretical. Pressed to extremes, Erasmianism could be subversive of the clerical establishment. Put into practice, it would have diminished the number of the clergy, reduced their influence over the laity, cut down their means of propaganda, blocked the sources of their wealth. But as it was provoked only by the indecent number of the clergy, their indecent power and wealth, so, in normal times, it was unlikely to be pushed to extremes. Nor was it exclusively a doctrine, or rather a mental attitude, of the mercantile classes. It was an attitude which appealed to the educated laity in general. Erasmus had friends and patrons among princes and their officers, even among the clergy, as well as among the mercantile classes. Nevertheless there was a sense in which it was peculiarly the attitude of the *bourgeoisie*. In a time of crisis, Erasmian princes (like Charles V) would remember their "reason of state": they might (like him) carry their private Erasmianism to the grave, but they would hesitate before attacking the vested interests of the Church, which were so involved with those of the throne—and indeed of the social order. Erasmian officers and lawyers, as a class, would follow their prince. Erasmian clergy, as a class, would go with the Church. Among the educated classes, the urban, mercantile classes—not the great tax-farmers or contractors, economically tied to the Crown or the Church, but the

really independent, self-confident entrepreneurs—were most free to follow their philosophy to its logical conclusion, if they were forced to do so.

In the decades of the Reformation they were forced to do so. In those years the abuses of the Church drove its critics into extremity and the Erasmians, wherever they were, found themselves obliged either to surrender at discretion or to admit themselves heretics. If they chose the latter course, they became Calvinists. For Calvin, far more than is generally admitted, was the heir of Erasmus: the heir in a more intolerant age, it is true, the heir who has to fight for his legacy, and whose character is changed by the struggle, but still, in essentials, the heir. If we follow his career, or read his works, we are constantly reminded of Erasmus. Calvin was nurtured on Erasmian teaching. He published his great work in the last city of Erasmus. Some of his writings are almost plagiarisms of Erasmus. Like Erasmus, unlike Luther, Calvin believed in a reformed visible Church: the hierarchy was not to be destroyed but purified, made more efficient, more dynamic. And everywhere the Erasmian *bourgeoisie*, if it did not renounce its Erasmian views altogether, turned to Calvinism as the only form in which it could defend them. The mercantile aristocracy of Venice, preserving inviolate their republican constitution, were able to keep their old character, neither Papist nor Protestant. But their colleagues in Milan, Como, Lucca were not. So the most independent of them slid gradually into Calvinism, or at least, as they slipped over the Alps into Switzerland, accepted (with whatever private reservations) the public leadership of the Calvinists, the only International which could give protection and coherence to a group of urban minorities whose own strength lay not in numbers but in their moral and intellectual quality.

So the change took place. It was not that Calvinism created a new type of man, who in turn created capitalism; it was rather that the old economic *élite* of Europe were driven into heresy because the attitude of mind which had been theirs for generations, and had been tolerated for generations, was suddenly, and in some places, declared heretical and intolerable. Had the Roman Church and the Spanish State not suddenly resolved to persecute the views of Erasmus and Vives, Ochino and Vermigli, Castellio and Sozzini, the mercantile aristocracies of Antwerp, Milan, Lucca, even Seville³¹ would no doubt have continued, like that

31. Seville, the only great mercantile city of Spain, was also the last centre of Spanish "Erasmianism." This was crushed in 1558–59, with the great purge of the Jeronym

of Venice, to preserve their orthodoxy, wearing it, as of old, with a slight difference. In fact, this was not so. The abuses of Rome drove the merchant aristocracies into a position which the terrified Court of Rome saw as positively heretical. Justification by faith, this Pauline orthodoxy which consecrated "interior religion," the religion of the layman without priests—was not this the same doctrine which Luther was using to proclaim a revolt throughout Europe, a revolt from Rome?

We can see why Rome panicked. But to leave the question thus, as if reaction to a temporary crisis created a major shift in European economy for three centuries, would be unpardonably superficial. For why, we must ask, did the lay princes forward this priestly panic? And why did the fugitive Calvinist entrepreneurs so easily, and so permanently, leave the economic centres of Europe? For after all, the era of panic was relatively brief. Catholic princes (as the case of de Witte shows) were prepared to make concessions to economically valuable heretics, and after a generation most of the Calvinist entrepreneurs had lost their doctrinal purity. If de Witte was prepared to serve Wallenstein and have his son baptized as a Catholic, if the merchants of Hamburg were prepared to work for the King of Spain, there is no reason to suppose that they would have absolutely refused to return to their old allegiance in a more tolerant age. Besides, they were not always comfortable in Calvinist countries. Calvinism might have begun as Erasmianism armed for battle; in its first generation it might have attracted the *élite* of Europe; but soon, as it widened its base, it changed its character and lowered its standards. By 1600 Calvinism was the religion not only of the educated laity, but also of ambitious noblemen and rural squireens; it was controlled, often, by fanatical clergy, little better than the monkish inquisitors against whom it had once been a protest. To escape from such company the original intellectual Calvinists turned aside to Arminianism in Holland, to undenominational lay Puritanism in England. Besides, on the Catholic side, a new order had arisen which sought to recapture the *élite* of the laity: the Jesuits whom, in their first generation, the old clerical orders, the Dominican and Franciscan last-ditchers against reform, had rightly seen as dangerous continuators of that hated message, attenuators of clerical apparatus, flatterers of lay piety—in fact, Erasmians.

To pose this question is to go far outside the field of mere doc-

mite monastery of S. Isidoro, and the flight of eighteen of its monks abroad, mostly to Geneva.

trine. It is to ask large, hitherto unanswered questions of sociology. It is to ask, not why the ideas of an Erasmus or an Ochino were alarming to the Court of Rome in the days of Luther's revolt, but what was the structure of the Counter-Reformation State, which crushed out that revolt. For always we come back to this: the Calvinist and for that matter the Jewish entrepreneurs of northern Europe were not a new native growth: they were an old growth transplanted. Weber, in seeing the "spirit of Capitalism" as something new, whose origins must be sought in the sixteenth century, inverted the problem. The novelty lay not in the entrepreneurs themselves, but in the circumstances which drove them to emigrate. And they were driven out not merely by priests, on doctrinal grounds, though these supplied the pretext and the agency of expulsion, but—since the religion of State is a formulation of social ideology—by societies which had hardened against them. In the sixteenth century Italy and Flanders, for centuries the home of commercial and industrial capitalism, so changed their social character that they would no longer tolerate those men who, in the past, had made them the economic heart of Europe. The expulsion of Calvinists from the area of Spanish dominion or patronage—for both Flanders and Italy had passed, by 1550, under Spanish control—is a social fact comparable with the expulsion from Spain, in the same period, of those other socially unassimilable elements, the Moors and the Jews.

In other words, we must look for the explanation of our problem not so much in Protestantism and the expelled entrepreneurs as in Catholicism and the expelling societies. We must ask what was the social change which came over Catholic societies in the sixteenth century. It was a change which occurred predominantly in countries of the Spanish clientele. For instance, it did not occur in France—at least until Louis XIV expelled the Huguenots, with consequences, both to the expelling society and to the rest of Europe, remarkably similar to those of the sixteenth-century expulsions. On the other hand, it was not confined to the Spanish empire, for we find a similar withdrawal, if not positive expulsion, from some other Catholic countries. For instance, there was a gradual exodus from the independent prince-bishopric of Liège.³² Nor was it exclusively dependent on religion. This is shown in Italy where the Catholic entrepreneurs who had contrived to keep within the bounds of orthodoxy nevertheless believed that the conditions of their prosperity were incompatible not with the doctrines, but

32. See J. Yernaux, *La Métallurgie liégeoise*, pp. 99–105.

with the social forms of the Counter-Reformation. The great instance, of course, is Venice. The Catholic merchant society of Venice fought with surprising solidarity against successive attempts to introduce the social forms of the Counter-Reformation. The resistance of the republic in the early seventeenth century, against the combined pressure of Pope and Spain, is a struggle not between two religions, but between two social forms. When the Republic finally weakened about 1630, the Counter-Reformation moved in and commercial life shrank. The same antithesis can be seen, on a smaller scale, in the republic of Lucca. Cosimo I of Tuscany was restrained from the conquest of Lucca because, having seen the flight of so many of the great silk-merchants under papal pressure, he had no wish to scare away the rest. It was not that they were heretical or that he would willingly have driven them into heresy. The Medici dukes of Tuscany were famous for their encouragement of merchants, whether they were natives, foreigners or even heretics. What Cosimo feared was that, if the republic of Lucca were incorporated in the princely state of Tuscany, the merchants would flee "*come fecero i Pisani*." Therefore, though he could easily have captured the city, he refrained, because, he said, he could never capture the men who made the wealth of the city.³³

"The republic" . . . "the princely state" . . . Already in defining the problem we have suggested the answer. In the remainder of this essay I can still only suggest it, because the subject obviously requires longer treatment than I have space for. But I will try to outline the process as I believe that it happened. If, in doing so, I only reveal the gaps in our knowledge, perhaps that will encourage someone to supply those gaps.

The capitalism of the Middle Ages was the achievement, essentially, of self-governing city-republics: the Flemish and Hanseatic towns in the north, the Italian towns in the Mediterranean, the Rhineland and south German towns between them. In these republics, the merchants who governed them were orthodox, even devout Catholics: the Pope, after all, was the patron of the Italian cities against the Emperor, and the Florentine capitalists, as afterwards the Fugger of Augsburg, were the economic agents of the Pope. But they were Catholics in their own way. Their piety, their charity, was positive, constructive, sometimes even lavish; but it did not create, directly or indirectly, obstacles to their own mercantile enterprise. They might feed monks with

33. See E. Callegari, *Storia politica d'Italia, preponderanze stranieri* (Milan, 1895), p. 253.

their superfluous profits, but they did not immobilize mercantile wealth in monasticism. They might put a proportion of their sons into the Church, but within reason: they saw to it that the main enterprise of the republic was not impeded by a stampede into the Church.³⁴ They might subscribe to the building of churches, and fine churches too, but not on an extravagant scale: there is a difference between the duomo of Florence and the stupendous cathedrals of the north. And this care of the Church was combined with a parallel care of the State. The State, after all, was their instrument: they did not wish it to develop too many organs of its own, or become their master. Nor did they wish either Church or State to become too costly: to impose, through taxation, direct or indirect, an insupportable burden on commerce and manufacture, the nourishment of the city. For the city-republics, or at least those of them that were centres of international commerce, were not solid societies: they were international merchant colonies, and were kept in being by the constant afflux of "foreign" merchants, drawn to them by favourable circumstances. As such they were extremely sensitive to cost. Even a slight rise in the burden of taxation, a slight fall in the margin of profit, could cause a flight of capital to other more convenient centres—from Siena to Florence, from Ulm to Augsburg. This was a fact which, in episcopal cities like Liège, bishops had to recognize. It was a fact which conditioned the religious outlook of the city aristocracies themselves. In the fifteenth century, when the Church, in its opposition to Conciliar reform, set out to increase its strength by the multiplication of regular clergy and their propagandist and fiscal devices, it was not for nothing that the movement which would culminate in Erasmianism, the positive formulation of opposition to all these processes, found its natural supporters in the educated *bourgeoisie* of the old free cities. They recognized, even at its beginning, the process which, for some of them, would bring prosperity to an end.

Of course there was always an alternative process. A mercantile class could find profit—at least short-term profit—in yielding to the times. In the fifteenth century the cities were being swallowed up by the princes, and the princes, to sustain their new power, were enlisting the support of the rural aristocracy and the Church, and creating

34. In general, the mercantile cities seem to have prevented the building up of large estates in mortmain by the Church. See, for instance, C. M. Cipolla, "Comment s'est perdue la propriété ecclésiastique dans l'Italie du Nord entre le XI^e et le XVI^e siècle?" in *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*, 1947, pp. 317–27.

around their thrones a new class of "officers," expensively paid out of indirect public taxes or impositions of trade. Some of the old mercantile families profited by this change. They became court financiers or monopolists, and because the free-trade area within which they operated was larger than before, they sometimes made spectacular fortunes. But except when whole cities obtained exceptional monopoly positions in the new empires—like Genoa in the Spanish empire—these individual gains of state capitalists were offset by losses among private capitalists, who, since they no longer controlled the State, were powerless to redress it. Naturally, they drew the consequences. If one great merchant saved himself by becoming court purveyor or financier to the prince, others brought up their sons to be not merchants but "officers" of the new Court, or of the expanding Church, thus contributing to the burden which was crushing their class; and they invested their capital more heavily in land. Those who did not, and felt the added burden of those who did, retreated into critical, Erasmian doctrines and looked for other mercantile opportunities in freer, less taxed lands.

For already, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, new difficulties were pressing at home, new opportunities were beckoning abroad. In some towns of Flanders, Switzerland and Germany the craft-guilds had strengthened their power and, to protect their own employment, were impeding technical change. Even without religious pressure, the entrepreneurs of those towns were beginning to seek new bases, and the unprivileged workers willingly followed them. We see this change, unconnected with religion, in England, where capital and labour moved from the old towns of the east coast to the "new towns" farther inland. And the great entrepreneurs were looking still farther afield. The Fugger, having built up their mining organization in the mature economy of the south, were already applying it in the hitherto unexploited mineral wealth of Scandinavia. Even without the Reformation, there were purely economic reasons for a shift.

Then, in the 1520s, came the great revolt: the revolt of Luther. It was not a revolt within the old, mature economy of Europe: it was a revolt of the "underdeveloped," "colonial" areas of northern and central Europe, long taxed, frustrated and exploited (as they felt) to sustain the high civilization of the Mediterranean and the Rhine. Like all great social revolts, it used ideas which had been developed in the more advanced societies against which it was directed. The Erasmian criticism of the mercantile republics was adopted by the revolutionaries of the north. But, of course, it was adopted with a great difference. Al-

though the Erasmians might sympathize with part of the Lutheran programme, they could not go the whole way: that would be a betrayal of their civilization. Poised between the new "bureaucratic" principalities with their hypertrophied organs, the object of their criticism, and the anarchic, revolutionary doctrines of Luther, which ran far ahead of their criticism, the Erasmians suffered a terrible crisis of conscience. But as they were a minority, as the city-republics were no longer an independent force in politics, they had ultimately to choose. Either they must surrender, be absorbed into the world they had criticized, at best be tolerated within it, or they must themselves go forward into revolution. Fortunately in the time of their crisis, they did not have to submit to the anarchic revolution of Luther. In their old homes, in the urban societies of the Netherlands, of the Rhine, of Switzerland, of north Italy, the Erasmian message was being transformed, strengthened, sharpened, made capable of independence and resistance. Between the Catholic princes of the Mediterranean and Burgundy, fighting for the preservation of an old supremacy, and the Lutheran princes of Germany, placing themselves at the head of national revolt, arose that slender dynamic force of the surviving free cities of Europe: the Calvinist International.

With this great struggle we are not here concerned. What concerns us is the structural change which the Catholic countries underwent in the course of it. For in the end the revolt was stayed. If most of northern Europe was lost, and ceased to be an economic colony of the Mediterranean, Catholicism survived in its old home. The dream of the reformers, of carrying revolution to Rome itself, was never realized, and Rome reconquered even the Erasmian Calvinist cities of north Italy and Flanders. But this victory was won at a heavy social cost. Just as the papacy had triumphed over the Conciliar Movement in Europe by multiplying its abuses, its costly apparatus of power and propaganda, and becoming, for the sake of spiritual supremacy, more and more of a secular monarchy, so, in the next century, it triumphed over the Reformation at home by a still further continuation of that process and by a still more intimate alliance with the secular, princely State. The Counter-Reformation, which animated that reconquest, may be seen as a great spiritual revival: a new movement of mysticism, evangelism, charity. But sociologically it represented an enormous strengthening in the "bureaucratic" structure of society. The reformers had challenged clerical wealth, clerical mortmain and the swollen regular orders which had sustained themselves and enriched the Church by "mechani-

cal devotions.” At first, in the 1530s, the Church had recognized the justice of the challenge. It had contemplated conciliation, appeasement. But then the mood had hardened. The Counter-Reformation papacy, abandoning all thoughts of conciliation, turned to aggression on every threatened front. Clerical wealth, it declared, must be not diminished but increased; there must be not fewer but more regular orders, more lavish propaganda, more magnificent buildings, more elaborate devotions. Moreover, since the Church, to defend itself, needed the power of the princes, the princely bureaucracy, in return, was sustained by the clerical bureaucracy. Popery, as wavering Protestant kings were often reminded, was the only real guarantee of monarchy. And indeed, in a sense, it was. Would Charles I so easily have lost his throne if his fragile Court had been buttressed by a rich bureaucratic Church, with numerous offices and tempting perquisites for laymen, and, instead of Puritan lecturers, an army of friars evangelizing and preaching obedience among the people?

Of course, in its early stage, the weight of this enlarged apparatus might be carried. The new mysticism, the spiritual effort of the early Counter-Reformation, could refloat the old hulk which the reformers had vainly sought to lighten. The early Jesuits contrived to breathe into it some of the old Erasmian spirit. They cultivated the laity, modernized the philosophy of the Church, sought to reassure merchants and other laymen of the usefulness of their calling.³⁵ But the enthusiasm evoked by a heroic effort cannot outlast the generation which has sustained the effort; and by the seventeenth century the spirit of the Counter-Reformation was weary: what remained was the weight and

35. The economic modernity of the Jesuits has been emphasized by H. M. Robertson, *The Rise of Economic Individualism* (Cambridge, 1935). Mr. Robertson tends to emphasize only the Jesuit teaching and practice in matters of business morality. This not only involved him in irrelevant religious controversy: it also unnecessarily narrowed his argument, which I am sure is correct. (Long before it was attacked as a slander by an Irish Jesuit, it had been put forward as a vindication by an English Jesuit. See *Usury Explain'd, or conscience quieted in the case of putting out money at interest*, by Philopenes [John Dormer *alias* Hudleston, S.J.] London, 1695–96.) In fact, the argument for Calvinism, as put forward by Weber, is that the central, positive message of Calvinism, the sanctity of secular work—not merely peripheral teaching on such subjects as usury or business ethics—led indirectly to capitalism. But this same central message can be found among the Jesuits too. I have not found a copy of the work, but the title of a book by a Spanish Jesuit—*Los bienes de honesto trabajo y daños de la ociosidad*, by Pedro de Guzmán (Jérez, 1614)—seems clear enough. The economic modernity of the early Jesuits is only part of their general modernity: their determination to recapture from heresy the *élite* of the laity.

cost of the new machinery. And if the old princely bureaucracy had tended to squeeze out the mercantile life of urban societies, how much more was that likely to happen when the princely bureaucracies had been doubled by the addition, the inextricable addition, of clerical bureaucracies, no less costly, no less contemptuous of economic life which was not subservient to their needs?

Nor was it merely a question of cost: of the taxes which the new State imposed on the private capitalist class. The new State entailed a new society and the new social forms gradually strengthened themselves by investing in themselves. For any society which does not apprehend revolution tends to invest in itself. A capitalist society invests in capitalism, a bureaucratic society in bureaucracy. The public ethos of society—the order in which it values the various professions—and the opportunities for placing its capital both tend in the same direction. In medieval Flanders or Italy the mercantile profession led to power in the city oligarchies and to public respect. If a merchant built up a great fortune, how was he likely to use it? Whatever spiritual and worldly insurance policy he might take out in the form of gifts to the Church or the poor and the purchase of land or annuities for his dependants, his charity would not be at the expense of a future commercial life. A great part of it would be in favour of urban commercial institutions. He would keep the bulk of his fortune in commerce, and if he would show his orthodoxy by putting some of his family into the Church, he would put those on whom its worldly fortune would depend into business. Thus the wealth and manpower of society would be directed into commerce and industry and the Church would be the consecration of a business community. But in seventeenth-century Flanders and Italy it would be different. Even if a man had made a great fortune in commerce or industry, when he came to invest it for the future of his family he would look to the society around him and draw the appropriate conclusions. That society, he would observe, was no longer a mercantile urban society: it was a courtly, bureaucratic society, and its values and its opportunities were quite different. For his spiritual salvation, and for his dependants, he would still take out an insurance policy. He would still give his tithe to the Church, buy land or *rentes* for his widow. But for those of his sons on whom the worldly hopes of the family rested he would use his capital accumulation to buy offices in the administration of Church or State. Under the pashalik of the prince, officers would never starve: merchants might. Thus the wealth and power of society would be directed into office and the Church would be the consecration not of a mercantile but of an official society.

Thus the Counter-Reformation State gradually created, even in the old mercantile cities which it conquered, a new kind of society: a society, moreover, which then strengthened itself by its own social momentum. In Venice, because it was not absorbed by or converted into a princely State, in Amsterdam, because it continued the republican society which had been suppressed in Antwerp, the old character was preserved. The merchant of Amsterdam invested his fortune and placed his sons in continuing business, partly because it was honourable, partly because it was profitable—unlike a prince, a self-governing city-state could be trusted not to adopt laws or a policy ruinous to business—partly because there were fewer alternatives. In Milan and Antwerp the reverse happened. There independent capitalism wilted. The only great profits in business were the profits of state capitalism. But as even state capitalism generally begins with private capitalism, the great state capitalists of the princely states are often found to have made their first fortunes abroad. And even the state capitalists, if they plant their families and invest their fortunes within the State, tend to invest their profits in office and land, not commerce. The Genoese plutocracy, tolerated as a self-governing urban enclave in order to be the state financiers of the Spanish empire, and investing their profits in offices, titles and land within that empire, are typical of this history. So is Hans de Witte, an immigrant into Bohemia who became the state capitalist of the Emperor and invested in office, titles and land in Bohemia. As for the native capitalists, absorbed by conquest into the Counter-Reformation States, they turned necessarily the same way. If we take any great Counter-Reformation city in 1630 and compare it with its own condition in 1530, the pattern of change is similar. Outwardly the difference may not be obvious. The number of rich men may not have perceptibly diminished. There may be as many fine town houses, as many carriages, as much—perhaps even more—evidence of private spending. There is still a prosperous, conspicuous *haute bourgeoisie*. But when we look behind this front we find that the source of wealth is different. The spending in 1530 had been predominantly by an *élite* of merchants and manufacturers. In 1630 it is predominantly by an *élite* of “officers.”³⁶

The Counter-Reformation State was generalized in Europe, above all, by the power of Spain. It is one of the great accidents, perhaps

36. This is shown, for Belgium, by Pirenne; for Como by B. Caizzi: *Il Comasco sotto il dominio spagnolo* (Como, 1955). Cf. E. Verga, *Storia della vita milanese* (1931), pp. 272–78.

misfortunes, of history that it was the Castilian monarchy, that archaic "feudal" society accidentally raised to world power by American silver, which stood out, in the sixteenth century, as the champion of the Catholic Church, and thus fastened something of its own character upon both Church and State wherever their combined patronage prevailed. The Roman Catholic religion, as medieval history had shown, was perfectly compatible with capitalist expansion. The growth of princely States in the advanced capitalist societies undoubtedly, in itself, marked an economic regression, whether those States were patronized by Spain or not. Rome, with its swollen clerical bureaucracy, would have been an unmercantile city at any time. But the Spanish patronage, by its own character and by the necessities of State, imposed the pattern in a yet more extreme form. Moreover, it was fatally successful. The wealth and military support of Spain enabled the princely States under its protection to work: to seem economically viable even if they were not; and this illusion lasted long enough for the new system to become permanent. In 1610 the patronage of Spain was the natural sustenance of every princely Court which felt itself no longer secure: even a Protestant Court, like that of James I, was its pensionary. Conversely, every mercantile society, even if it were Catholic, like Venice, regarded Spain as its enemy. By 1640 Spanish patronage could be of little help to anyone; but by then the societies of Counter-Reformation Europe had been fixed: fixed in economic decline.³⁷

A general tendency is sometimes illustrated by its exceptions. I have suggested a general pattern of change in Counter-Reformation States.

37. This general antithesis between two alternative systems—the "bureaucratic" system of the princes which may encourage state capitalism, but squeezes out free enterprise, and the mercantile system of the free cities, which is not incompatible with a more flexible type of monarchy—may be illustrated also in Chinese history. In China the bureaucratic society which had been strengthened by the earlier dynasties was loosened in the ninth century A.D. with the massive secularization of monastic property. Thereafter, under the Sung dynasty, came a great efflorescence of science and technology. "Wherever one follows up any specific piece of scientific or technological history in Chinese literature," says Dr. Joseph Needham, in his *Science and Civilization in China*, I (Cambridge, 1954), 134, "it is always at the Sung dynasty that one finds the major focal point." But with the Ming dynasty, the old bureaucratic structure was restored and the great Chinese inventions—including the three which, according to Francis Bacon, "have changed the whole face and state of things throughout the world," viz. printing, gunpowder and the compass—were followed up not in China but in Europe. The force of this parallel has been impressed upon me by the studies of the late Mr. Étienne Balasz.

First, there is the reanimation not only of Catholic dogma but also of the whole structure of the Church: a wave of mysticism reinvigorates the old, decadent machinery, which the reformers have attacked. New religious orders are founded. New forms of charity, new devotions, new methods of propaganda bring new resources to the Church and increase its possessions in mortmain. This reinvigoration of the Church is a reinvigoration also of the State which accepts it and which, by definition, is a princely State; for urban republics are opposed to such large subtractions from economic life. But when a generation has passed and this spirit has evaporated, the burden of this great increase is both felt and resented. The newly established society, feeling itself vulnerable and threatened, becomes intolerant and turns against the uncomfortable, unassimilated elements in its midst. The obstinate survivors of the old reforming party are expelled, and the State settles down to enjoy its security, which it celebrates by pullulation of offices in the happily united Church-State. Such is the general rule which I have posited. It can easily be illustrated in Italy, Spain, Flanders, Bavaria, Austria. The apparent exception is France. But once we look below the surface we soon find that this exception is more apparent than real. For obvious reasons, the Counter-Reformation came late to France; but when it came the consequences were the same. It is only the timing that is different.

As the great power opposed to Spain, France found itself opposed to the Counter-Reformation, which, in its first century, had been so openly associated with Spanish power. Consequently, in France, the social repression of the Counter-Reformation was long unfelt. Henri IV might outdo many other Catholic princes in gestures of papalism (for he had a past to bury), but the apparatus of the Counter-Reformation State was not adopted in his time. The France of Richelieu contained Huguenots and Jansenists; it received the fugitives of the Roman and Spanish Inquisitions; it published the works suppressed by the Roman censorship; and it benefited by the vast sales of Church lands carried out in the Wars of Religion. But this happy state did not last long. Even in the time of Richelieu, the pro-Spanish party of the *dévots*, defeated in politics, was gaining ground in society. It was then that the new Catholic mysticism flowed in from Spanish Flanders and led to the foundation of new religious orders; then that the structure of the French Church was at last reformed. In the early years of Louis XIV the two opposite tendencies were fully revealed. Colbert, the heir to Richelieu's economic policy, preached a mercantilist doctrine of con-

secrated work, containment of Church lands, reduction of venal offices in the State, diminution of monks and nuns. But the monarchy which Louis XIV set out to establish was not of that kind, and he preferred to base it on the Spanish model, consecrated by the Counter-Reformation Church. So, with the death of Colbert, offices were multiplied as never before, regular clergy were increased, and as the burden and the repression became apparent, the old remedy was applied. In 1685 the Huguenots were expelled. A new Dispersion, comparable with the dispersion of the Flemings and the north Italians, fertilized the economy of Protestant Europe. And just as the Habsburgs, in the Thirty Years War, had to seek their state capitalists among the private capitalists whom they had previously expelled from their dominions as heretics, so the Bourbons, in the eighteenth century, had to finance their wars by applying to the Swiss financiers who, in fact, were not Swiss at all but French Huguenots whom earlier Bourbon kings had expelled from France.³⁸

Such was the effect on society of the fatal union of Counter-Reformation Church and princely State. What of its effect on the Church? In the Middle Ages the Church, which had been the organ of a feudal, rural society, adapted itself to the growth of commercial and industrial capitalism. This had entailed some difficult adjustments, for neither the merchant employers nor the industrial workers—that is, primarily, the weavers and the miners—had been content with the doctrines elaborated for a society of landlords and peasants. The entrepreneurs had disliked external “works,” had rejected the ban on usury. But the Church met them half-way and all was well. The industrial workers, brought together by their conditions of work, listened to radical preachers urging mystical faith, community of life and “primitive Christianity.” The Church was alarmed and sometimes declared

38. See Lüthy, *La Banque protestante en France*, 1. In general it is interesting to note the criteria of urban success adopted by the social propagandist of the Counter-Reformation, Giovanni Botero. In his treatise on the Greatness of Cities, he assumes, as the cause of wealth, the residence of princes and noblemen, the presence of government offices and law courts and—very parenthetically—state-controlled industry; but the cities in which free capitalists assembled and formed merchant oligarchies receive short shrift. Taking Geneva and Frankenburg as types, he describes them as the asylums of rebels and heretics “unworthy to be commemorated by us as cities.” And yet these and such cities were the true heirs of the medieval communes, with their cosmopolitan merchant colonies, composed, in the first instance, of “foreign” refugees (*Cause della Grandezza delle Città*, 1588, II, i).

them heretics. It drove out of its communion the followers of Arnold of Brescia, the Poor Men of Lyons, the Waldenses, the Lollards, the Taborites. But others it met half-way. The Beghards in Bruges, the Umiliati in Milan, the Brethren of the Common Life in the north continued within the fold of an expanded orthodoxy.³⁹ Thus the medieval Church, by its relative elasticity, by its toleration and accommodation—however limited—of new tendencies, remained the universal Church not only geographically, as the Church of all western Europe, but socially, as the Church of all classes. But after the Reformation this changed. In its years of panic, the bloated, rigid Church of the inquisitors and the friars saw the Erasmianism of the entrepreneur as a form of German Lutheranism: *Erasmus posuit ova, Lutherus eduxit pullos*; and it saw the “primitive Christianity” of weavers and miners as a form of German Anabaptism. So it drove both out of the fold. In the 1550s the popes of the Counter-Reformation drove the Italian Erasmists over the Alps and closed down the Order of the Umiliati (much changed from their former poverty) in Rome. In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Catholic Church was not only, in politics, the Church of the princely system, and, in society, the Church of a “feudal,” official system: it was also exclusively tied to these systems. Its old elasticity had gone, intellectually and spiritually as well as politically. While the Protestant Churches (or some of them) contained within them a wide range of ideas and attitudes—liberal Calvinism for their merchants and entrepreneurs, Anabaptism and Mennonism for their industrial workers—the Catholic Church no longer had anything similar. Without heresy, without variety, it was the Church of one form of State and one form of society only. It was not without reason that the theorists of the Counter-Reformation States, like Botero, harped on the essential unity of Church and State. The Catholic Church was the Church of their State. Equally it was not for nothing that Paolo Sarpi, the theorist of the one genuine mercantile republic which sought to remain within the Catholic Church, constantly and trenchantly insisted on the separation of Church and State. The Catholic Church was no longer the Church of his State: if it was to survive in Venice without destroying Venetian society, it must be kept rigorously distinct. Nor was it for nothing that the most famous work of Paolo Sarpi, the greatest of Catholic historians, a Servite friar of unimpeachable doctrinal ortho-

39. For the Umiliati, see L. Zanoni, *Gli Umiliati* (Milan, 1911).

doxy, remained unpublished in any Catholic country until the eighteenth century.⁴⁰

Of course, this was not the end of the story. By the eighteenth century the economic and intellectual failure of the Counter-Reformation States was obvious, and the statesmen and thinkers of those States began to draw the consequences. Society, they agreed, must be loosened. Its "feudal" structure must be lightened. The Church must both itself share in this lightening and cease to consecrate the present heaviness. So the Spanish reformers of the eighteenth century preached a Catholic reform indistinguishable from the old Erasmianism which

40. The same general point which I have made about economic enterprise—that it was the Counter-Reformation State which extruded it from society, not Calvinist doctrine which created it, or Catholic doctrine which stifled it, in individuals—can be made also in respect of another phenomenon closely related to economic enterprise: scientific advance. Both Weber and his followers argued that Calvinist doctrine led, as Catholic or non-Calvinist doctrine did not, to the empirical study of Nature; and this theory has become an orthodoxy in America and elsewhere (cf. the influential works of Robert K. Merton, "Puritanism, Pietism and Science," in *Sociological Review*, xxviii, 1936, and "Science, Technology and Society, in seventeenth-century England," *Osiris*, iv (1938), and R. F. Jones, *Ancients and Moderns* (St. Louis, 1936); R. Hooykaas, "Science and Reformation," in *Cahiers d'histoire moderne*, III, 1956–57, pp. 109–39). But it seems to me that such conclusions can only be reached either by concentrating all study on Calvinist ideas and Dutch or Huguenot scientists, while ignoring the contemporary development of similar ideas in other Churches (e.g., among the Catholic Platonists and the Jesuits) and their no less successful application by Catholic, Lutheran and Anglican scientists like Galileo, Kepler and Harvey, or by "saving the phenomena" with the aid of elaborate explanations, comparable with Ptolemaic epicycles, such as the suggestion that Bacon was "really" a Puritan (Hooykaas), or may have derived his ideas from "his very Puritan mother" (Christopher Hill, "Protestantism and the Rise of Capitalism," in *Essays . . . in Honour of R. H. Tawney*, Cambridge, 1961, p. 31). If these relevant facts are fairly included in the study, it seems to me that the exclusive causal connection between Calvinism and science necessarily dissolves. What remains is the irreducible fact that whereas Pico and Ficino died in the aura of Catholic sanctity, and Copernicus' work was dedicated to and accepted by the Pope, the Jesuits found it necessary to limit their scientific studies, and Bruno, Campanella and Galileo were all condemned south of the Alps. In other words, ideas which were perfectly entertainable in Catholic societies before the Counter-Reformation, and by individual Catholics thereafter (Galileo protested that "no saint could have shown more reverence for the Church, or greater zeal"), were repudiated by Counter-Reformation society. For it was not the theology of the Pope, it was Counter-Reformation reason of State and the social pressure of the religious orders which forced the condemnation of Galileo, just as they had forced the condemnation of Erasmus, whom Pope Paul III would have made a cardinal (cf. my article, "Galiléo et l'Église romaine: un procès toujours plaidé," in *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*, 1960, pp. 1229–34).

had been so ferociously extinguished in the Spain of Charles V and Philip II. In France and Italy the new Jansenists preached a very similar message. Their recommendations were not entirely without effect. Statistics are hard to come by, but it seems that in both France and Spain the weight of the Church, measured in the number of regular clergy, having increased throughout the seventeenth century, diminished again in the eighteenth. But it did not diminish fast enough. So the reformers called for political action. The call was heard. First, reforming princes intervened. Throughout Catholic Europe the Jesuits were expelled. Febronianism was the new Erasmianism of State. Joseph II, like Henry VIII, defied the Pope and dissolved the monasteries. Then came the revolution and after it, the reaction: a reaction in which the hope of reform seemed, for a time, to be finally lost.

However, it was not lost. A generation later the attack was renewed. When it was renewed, its character had changed. South of the Alps, it was openly anti-clerical. But in France, the home of Calvin, which had once had a strong Protestant party, the battle was fought, once again, in familiar form. In the reign of Louis-Philippe, and even more in the reign of Napoleon III, the economy of France was revolutionized by Protestant entrepreneurs. But once again it was not because they were Calvinists, and therefore animated by the "capitalist spirit," that these men were able to achieve the *Wirtschaftswunder* of the Second Empire and the Third Republic. They were not the authentic French Protestants, the true believers who, since 1685, had preserved the Calvinist faith in the "Churches of the Desert" in Languedoc. If we examine closely the great Protestant entrepreneurs of nineteenth-century France we find that, once again, they are nearly all immigrants. They are either Calvinists from Switzerland—the descendants of those earlier refugees, Italians of the 1550s or Frenchmen of 1685—or Lutherans from Alsace: Alsace which, as an imperial fief, had been outside the reach of the Edict of Nantes, and so also of its Revocation. In either case the pattern is the same. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the underdeveloped countries which had revolted from Rome offered opportunities to the entrepreneurs of the old industrial centres, Flanders, Italy and south Germany; in the nineteenth century the underdeveloped Catholic countries offered opportunities to the heirs of those entrepreneurs to return. In the first period the hardening of the Counter-Reformation State had driven those men out; in the nineteenth the loosening of that State made it easy for them to return.

For in the nineteenth century the Counter-Reformation State at

last dissolved. The ideas of the Enlightenment, the necessity of progress, the painful contrast with Protestant societies all contributed to the process. But in the long run perhaps another force was equally powerful. In the seventeenth century the Roman Catholic Church had suffered a general spiritual and intellectual contraction. After the effort of the Counter-Reformation, there had followed a long period of narrow bigotry. The humanism of the early Jesuits had been a flash in the pan: by 1620 they had settled down to be the mere sophists of the Counter-Reformation State. Even in the eighteenth century the union of Church and State was not denied: the Febronian princes sought to reform both, not to disunite them. But in the nineteenth century an effort was at last made to detach the Catholic Church from the Catholic princely State. Naturally enough, the attempt was made in France, the Catholic monarchy which was the last to admit and the first to disavow the fatal union. Naturally enough, it was most strongly resisted in Rome, the Church-State *par excellence*, driven into new postures of rigidity by the last struggle for the Temporal Power. But in the end it prevailed. That the countries of the Counter-Reformation could, in the end, catch up, economically, with those of the Reformation without a new revolt from Rome was due in part to the new elasticity which Catholicism acquired in the nineteenth century: to its painful severance from the *ancien régime*. The European Common Market of today, that creation of the Christian Democrats of Italy, Germany and France, owes something to Hugues de Lamennais.