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1603–1689

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ENGLISH PURITANISM 1603–1689

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For Anne

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PREFACE

Ideally, an introductory study of this kind should be short, clear and interesting. It is not its task to bewilder readers with too many arcane terms or obscure references; those whose interest is aroused will have other opportunities to appreciate the complexities and subtleties of the subject. I have therefore aimed at clarity. If readers encounter a strange word or term, they will find help in the Glossary (p. 220) and by using the index. Wherever possible I have taken quotations and illustrations from accessible modern accounts rather than from their seventeenth-century originals; and whatever the source, I have modernized all quotations where necessary. In the interests of brevity I have given references, in the main, only for direct quotations. Unfortunately this policy obscures the great debt that this book owes to the many scholars of English puritanism upon whose work it draws so freely. Indeed some of my debts go deeper still and it is proper to record here my deep appreciation of the work of William Haller, Christopher Hill, Geoffrey Nuttall and Patrick Collinson, whose writings first brought puritans to life for me.

This book has grown out of my experience as a teacher as well as my research interests. I am therefore grateful to the students in Oxford and Swansea who have heard some of my earlier attempts to describe the puritans. The history department of the University of Wales Swansea has been – as its students and staff will agree – a friendly and stimulating place in which to work. The university's research support fund has generously subsidized some of the research for this book. The final version of the book has benefitted from the generous advice and criticism of Ian Green, John Morrill, Tom Webster, Blair Worden and the publisher's anonymous reader, for which I am extremely thankful: the remaining faults are all my own. I am also grateful to the staff of Macmillan for their patience, efficiency and courtesy in seeing the book through to publication. I

have received a great deal of practical help and personal assistance from my parents, Joanna Spurr and Eleanor, Edward and Ian Sisley, Ivor and Rene Colville, Edward Briffa, and my colleagues Stuart Clark and Hugh Dunthorne. I thank them all. Only Harry and Alice know what we all three owe to Anne, but this book is dedicated to her with love.

John Spurr