





PART I

THE COLONIAL AGE

The colonists of the New World came from many different European countries, but the thirteen original American colonies were peopled mainly by Englishmen and were therefore influenced much more by the culture of England than by that of any other European country. The beliefs of the colonists who first came from England to America in the early 1600s—in many cases, beliefs that motivated their coming in the first place—were shaped by the thought of the European Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation.

Throughout the Middle Ages, from the fifth century through the fifteenth century, the Catholic church had dominated European learning and culture. At its worst, Catholic doctrine seemed to focus almost exclusively on the next world, using fear of purgatory (a place of painful purification where, according to Catholic teaching, the soul might suffer for centuries before it was ready to enter heaven) and the threat of hell to command obedience and motivate financial giving to the church. Such teaching seemed, to many Renaissance thinkers, to rob individuals of their freedom to live life well in this world. This teaching had a powerful effect on European culture, because throughout the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, the Catholic church had been the sponsor of almost all higher education. In spite of the intellectual achievements of great medieval Catholic scholastics such as Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) and John Duns Scotus (1265–1308), by the time of the early Renaissance in the late fourteenth century, Catholic thought seemed to many to have degenerated into narrow, rigid thinking that discouraged intellectual excellence in the study of art, literature, philosophy, the natural world, and even the Bible and Christian theology.

The Renaissance, which bloomed in the fifteenth century and arrived fully in England in the sixteenth, was, as the term's root words indicate, a “rebirth” of learning. The classical texts that were being read with new vigor at the beginning of this period emphasized living wise, honorable, fulfilled lives in this world. Further, Protestants understood the Bible to teach that preparing to live forever with Christ in heaven would also make their lives and relationships here on earth more

joyful and fruitful. Protestant theology was therefore part of the movement to apply the wisdom of human learning and spirituality to every part of life in this world, including every endeavor and relationship.

The great voyages of exploration that led to the discovery and colonization of the Americas came partly as a result of this new attitude toward life and learning. The discovery of the Americas by Italian explorer Christopher Columbus in 1492, the discovery of the continent of North America by John Cabot—an Italian navigator under commission of the English—in 1497, and the voyage around the world led by Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan from 1519 to 1522 were certainly driven in part by economic motives. European governments and merchants were seeking to find the shortest route to the silks, spices, and other wonders of Asia. In part, however, these voyages were also driven by a desire to know the truth about the physical universe we live in. They were motivated by the same intellectual curiosity that drove Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus’s 1543 discovery that the sun is the center of our solar system and Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei’s improvement of the telescope and use of it to confirm Copernicus’s findings early in the seventeenth century.

Renaissance scholars often called themselves “humanists,” partly because of this renewed emphasis on the study of human life in the present world, but their scholarship was often conducted to support Christian faith, not oppose it. In the heroic characters of classical literature, such as Virgil’s Aeneas, they found models of Christian virtue. In the precision and depth of classical philosophy, they found methods for clarifying and defending biblical truth. And in the eloquent power and beauty of classical literature and rhetoric (persuasive speaking and writing), they found prototypes for Christian literature and rhetoric. If man is created in the image of God, the humanists asked, why should his thinking and writing not be both beautiful in its creativity and unflinching in its pursuit of truth? In support of this endeavor, the humanists championed a deeper study of Latin, including all of its stylistic changes through the centuries; Greek, the original language of the New Testament; and sometimes even Hebrew. The humanists argued that scholars should not have to rely on a commentary to tell them what an ancient text said. They should be able to read the original text in the original language. This movement supported the careful, accurate study of the Bible as well as classical texts. Some intellectual currents of the



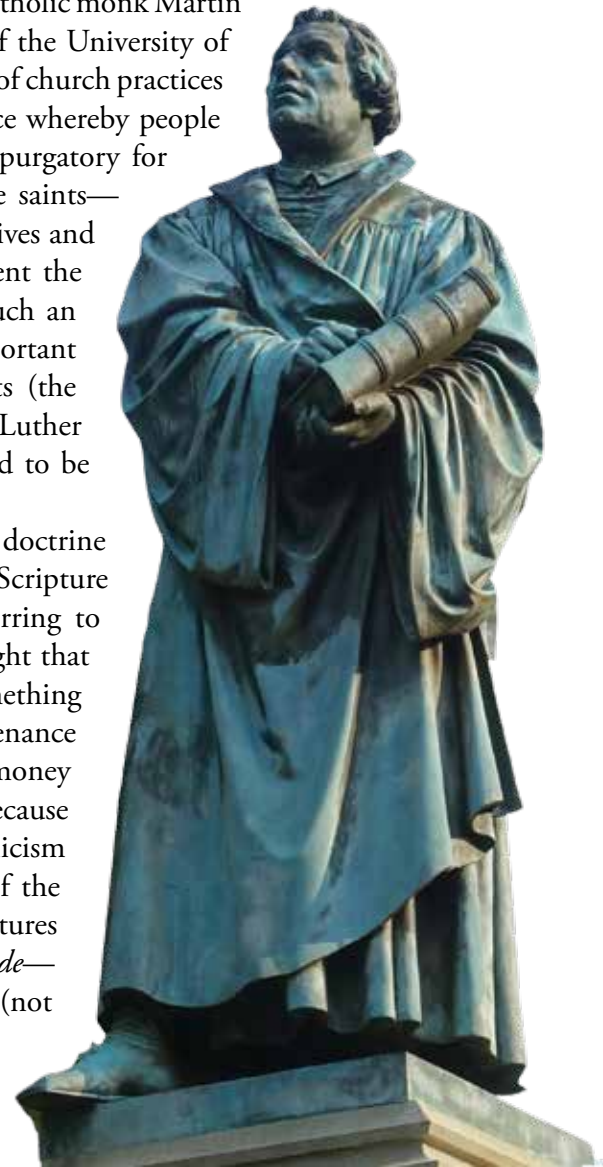
Landing of Columbus by John Vanderlyn.

Renaissance did involve a movement away from Christian faith toward classical paganism and a disregard of the supernatural in favor of the natural, but much of Renaissance thought supported Christian faith, or had the potential to do so.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the Christian renewal that took place in the Protestant Reformation was encouraged by the same changes in worldview that produced the Renaissance. The Reformation began in 1517 when German Catholic monk Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses onto the church door of the University of Wittenberg. In these theses, Luther protested against a number of church practices and teachings. One was the selling of indulgences, the practice whereby people gave money to the church in exchange for reduced time in purgatory for themselves or loved ones. Another was the veneration of the saints—Christians who were thought to have led exceptionally godly lives and were therefore able after death to answer prayers and represent the believer to God—and adoration of Jesus’ mother Mary to such an extent that these human figures sometimes became more important than Christ Himself. Yet another was the celibacy of priests (the requirement that they could not marry). A key problem for Luther regarding all of these practices was that none of them seemed to be supported by the Bible.

The keystone of Luther’s differences with Catholic doctrine came to be his assertion that it seriously misrepresented what Scripture said about the most important issue of all—salvation. Referring to such verses as Romans 1:17 and Ephesians 2:8–9, Luther taught that salvation is a gift of God’s grace received by faith, not something that can be earned by works such as confession to a priest, penance (inflicting punishment on oneself for one’s sins), or giving money to the church—practices required by the Catholic church. Because Luther believed that this crucial doctrine had been lost in Catholicism through the church’s inadequate attention to the teachings of the Bible, one of his main emphases was the translation of the Scriptures into people’s native tongues. In fact, the Latin phrases *Sola fide*—“faith alone” (not works)—and *sola scriptura*—“scripture alone” (not the traditional teachings of the church)—became important slogans of the Reformation. For centuries, the Bible had been available only in Latin, so no one but specially trained priests and church scholars had been able read it. Luther set about translating the Scriptures from their original languages



Martin Luther by Ernst Rietschel.

into German, while William Tyndale translated the entire New Testament and parts of the Old Testament into English before his arrest and execution for heresy. To read translations made into their own languages, however, people needed to be literate, so Luther joined the Renaissance humanists in calling for widespread improvements in education.

In many ways, the Reformation was fed by essentially the same concerns that drove the best of Renaissance thought. Like the Christian humanists, Martin Luther wanted Christian faith to transform all of life in this world, not to consist only of artificial practices aimed at ensuring one's place in the next world. He wanted believers to live lives of intellectual and emotional freedom and security, not to be coerced by fear of purgatory and damnation into rigid church-prescribed practices. And finally, just as the humanists wanted scholars to learn to read the original texts of important works rather than having to rely on translations and commentaries, Luther and other reformers wanted people to read and interpret the text of Scripture for themselves rather than having to depend solely on a priest to tell them what it said.

England joined the Reformation in 1534 when King Henry VIII declared himself, not the pope, the official head of the Church of England, or Anglican church. Henry had left the Catholic church for the distinctly unimpressive reason of wanting to divorce his wife, a move which the pope had refused to allow. But many reformers on the European continent and in England worked to encourage a more profound adoption of Protestant theology. During the brief reign of Henry's sickly son Edward VI, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer wrote *The Forty-Two Articles*—which became the basis for Anglican theology—and the *Book of Common Prayer*—which became the basis for its liturgy, or formal worship practices.



Death of Cranmer, from an 1887 edition of Foxe's Book of Martyrs

PERSECUTION OF THE PURITANS AND SEPARATISTS

After Edward's death in 1553, his sister Mary Tudor ascended to the throne and tried to force England back into Catholicism. Before her death just five years later, "Bloody Mary" had sentenced about three hundred Protestants to be burned at the stake and driven many others into exile. Some of the English Puritans and Separatists who



Assertion of Liberty of Conscience by the Independents of the Westminster Assembly of Divines by John Rogers Herbert.

eventually established the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies—two of the first and most important English colonies in America—were descendants of those who were executed or forced to flee England during Mary’s reign.

The Act of Uniformity and the Act of Supremacy, adopted a year after Elizabeth I’s accession in 1558, scarcely improved matters. Though the acts were central to an attempt by Queen Elizabeth to settle and unify the Church of England, their requirements were strict and the punishments for disobedience harsh. According to the Act of Uniformity, the English people were required to attend Anglican services

every Sunday and holy day, and those who did not were fined. Heavier fines and imprisonment were the prescribed punishments for those who conducted non-Anglican services.

The Puritans and Separatists were committed to living and worshiping in ways consistent with the teachings of the Bible, and they were concerned that the Anglican Church was still beset by serious errors in belief and worship. These believers tended to endorse the view of Scripture, salvation, worship, and church government espoused by the French theologian John Calvin (1509–1564), who had helped to reform the church in Geneva, Switzerland, and whose theology had formed the basis of Presbyterianism.

The Puritans believed that the Anglican Church could be preserved by being “purified” of its corruptions and brought to look in worship and government more like the Presbyterian church. This sort of government called for higher synods and assemblies made up of elected elders from individual congregations rather than ranks of appointed bishops and archbishops, as found in the Anglican and Catholic churches.

The Separatists are often thought of as a branch of the Puritan movement, yet they went further than the Puritans in their disagreement with the Church of England. They believed that this church was too corrupt to be purified and that the only answer was total separation from it. Many of them believed that each individual congregation of believers should govern itself without any higher levels of church government at all. Some of the more prominent and determined Separatists were even executed during Elizabeth’s reign.

When persecution and social rejection of the Separatists continued and even intensified after James I ascended to the throne in 1603, the Separatists began making plans to leave England. A group under the leadership of William Brewster and Pastor John Robinson sailed to Amsterdam,

Holland, in 1608, moving after a short time to the Dutch city of Leiden. Holland was a country of religious toleration, so living in Holland brought some measure of religious freedom. As the years passed, however, life in Holland became more and more unsatisfactory for a number of reasons that are detailed in William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

The Separatists began considering the possibility of settling in America in the English colony of Virginia, which at this time extended as far north as what is now the state of New York. Their many significant concerns about the difficulties and dangers of such a move are also detailed by Bradford in our readings. Despite these concerns, however, settlement in America ultimately seemed the best course. Settling in an established colony seemed safer than establishing a completely new colony, so the group sent two of their number to England to obtain a land patent to settle in the Virginia territory near the Hudson River. Eventually, however, the Separatists obtained English permission and investor support to allow them to settle in a territory known as New England, just north of the Virginia territory.

THE SETTLEMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS

In July 1620, the sailing ship *Speedwell* left Holland with the Leiden Separatist colonists. They met in Southampton, England, with a ship called the *Mayflower*, which contained a number of additional colonists hired by the English investors helping finance this new colonization. When the *Speedwell* developed leaks, the travelers were consolidated on the *Mayflower*, which sailed from England in mid-September with 102 passengers, roughly half of whom were Leiden colonists. The voyagers on the *Mayflower* were first called "Pilgrims"—a word for Christians who travel to



Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor by William Halsall.



Landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock by Joseph Andrews.

holy sites as an expression of their faith in God—by William Bradford, a colonist from the Leiden congregation. *Of Plymouth Plantation* is his account of the voyage and settlement. One passenger and one crewman died during the voyage, and a ship's beam cracked during a severe storm. To everyone's relief the beam was reparable, but the damage was initially thought a serious threat to the company's survival. Two babies were also born on ship during the voyage. After sighting land at what is now Cape Cod around mid-November, the colonists finally landed in Provincetown Harbor in Cape Cod Bay.

The colonists had not yet received their land grant from the Plymouth Council for New England, an English investment company that did not receive its charter until the Pilgrims were already on their way to the New World. Before landing, therefore, the colonists wrote out an agreement for self-government that has since become known as "The Mayflower Compact." Based on the form of Separatist church government, this document, signed by forty-one of the colonists, was the first measure establishing an essentially democratic government in America. In giving individual colonists a voice in the colonial government, this document was very much in keeping with the spirit of the Protestant Reformation and Renaissance humanism. In late December, after scouting out the coast, the colonists finally landed at Plymouth. The first party of settlers came ashore on December 21, with the rest of their shipmates following on December 26.

The first winter at Plymouth was terribly difficult. Almost half the colonists and half the ship's crew died of sickness, hunger, and cold. Those who survived to the autumn harvest had cause for great thanksgiving and celebration, now commemorated by America's Thanksgiving Day holiday. By this fall of 1620, the colonists had been able to raise food with seed corn abandoned by

Native Americans, with instruction from friendly natives such as Squanto. Squanto was a member of the Patuxet tribe who was living with the local Wampanoag tribe. The forgiving Squanto had learned English when he had been carried to Europe as a slave by earlier English explorers. He taught the Plymouth colonists how to fish and trap beaver. Approximately fifty-three pilgrims shared the thanksgiving feast with around ninety Native Americans.

Despite this hopeful beginning, the Plymouth colony did not grow rapidly in succeeding years. It remained for a second migration of Puritans, perhaps encouraged by the establishment of the Plymouth colony, to begin the full settlement of the region. A crucial part of this second migration was the group of seven hundred colonists who arrived in eleven ships in 1630 to form the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Meanwhile, back in England, oppression of the Puritans and Separatists deepened, and the Anglican Church moved toward a more formal liturgy reminiscent of the Catholic Mass. King Charles I, who had ascended to the English throne in 1625 and had a Catholic wife, was even more anti-Puritan than his predecessors. His conflicts with a Puritan-dominated Parliament caused him in 1629 to disband the Parliament for almost ten years. (Eventually, in 1642, civil war would break out in England between the Parliamentary forces and those aristocrats and their followers who were loyal to the king.)

In 1628, a new colonization project was proposed by a number of well-to-do Puritan businessmen, mostly as a profit-making enterprise in the beginning. The company they formed, called the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay, was able to procure a land grant for the area between the Charles and Merrimack Rivers. King Charles I did not oppose this move because he apparently saw it as a mere business venture, not the Puritan migration that it would become. Further, since the company charter did not specify where the stockholders could meet, they were able to draw up the Cambridge Agreement, which established the location of the company's government in New England, not in England. This measure would later allow the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to establish Puritan churches and a government consistent with Puritan doctrine in New England, without interference from the English king or Anglican archbishop.



Massachusetts Bay Colony seal.

John Winthrop, who was elected governor of the colony in 1629, arrived on the *Arbella*, one of eleven ships involved in the colonization. His sermon "A Model of Christian Charity," which you will read, was written during the voyage. Under Winthrop's strong leadership, the colony grew rapidly with the town of Boston at its hub, adding some 20,000 new colonists, mostly Puritans, over the next decade as part of what has been called the "Great Migration." Decades later, in 1689, the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies were united. Hereafter, the closely related Puritans and Separatists will be referred to simply as "Puritans."

THE PURITAN WORLDVIEW

The New England Puritans believed strongly in a sovereign God, one who rules over every aspect of the world and works powerfully to bring people He has predestined—chosen from “before the foundation of the world,” according to Ephesians 1:4—to belief in Him. The Puritans’ Calvinistic theology is often briefly summarized using the acronym TULIP.

The T in TULIP stands for “Total depravity,” the concept that every part of a person is affected by sin, that no part is left untouched, so a person does not have the ability to choose God without being led to do so by the Holy Spirit. The U stands for “Unconditional election,” the idea that God has chosen some people for salvation, and that His choice was based on His goodness alone, not on any merit in the chosen individual. The L stands for “Limited atonement,” the view that because something as powerful as Christ’s sacrifice on the cross cannot possibly fail to be effective, Christ died only for the elect. His blood was shed only for those who would come to be believers, not for unbelievers. Or to put it another way, Christ’s death was sufficient for all but effectual only for those who believe. The I stands for “Irresistible grace,” the idea that a chosen individual will choose to believe. He or she cannot resist the overwhelming love, grace, and mercy of God that has been revealed to him or her through the calling of the Holy Spirit. And finally, the P stands for “Perseverance of the saints,” the belief that it is impossible for a believer to lose his salvation. The work of salvation is God’s, not the believer’s. God never fails, therefore God never fails to save, therefore a true believer will never stop believing.

In the mysterious and unfathomable interaction between divine will and human free will, the Calvinist belief system stresses God’s will and deemphasizes the role of human free will in salvation and sanctification. It is easy to see how these beliefs arose, however, from reformers’ seeking out scriptures to combat particular Catholic errors. The Catholic church, at its worst, had used the ideas that good works lead to salvation and sin to damnation to manipulate believers. The Calvinistic belief that salvation is an unconditional gift that cannot be earned and cannot be lost freed the believer from the burden of those Catholic teachings. According to Calvin, the believer is God’s child forever by God’s own irresistible, irrevocable (unchangeable) choice, so believers had no reason to fear that any sin or failure to please priest or church could ever rob them of their salvation. They could no longer



John Calvin.

be coerced by others' religious threats. The great strength of Calvinism is this emphasis on the complete security of the believer, who is saved and preserved wholly by God's grace and not by his own works. This scriptural doctrine, which lies at the heart of the gospel message, gave Puritan colonists a confidence that enabled them to stand up against the English church and government authorities and to take huge physical risks in coming to the New World.

The Puritans also strongly believed in the importance of each believer's studying the Bible and listening attentively to its teaching. Pastors' thoughtful, carefully prepared sermons were a crucial avenue of this teaching, and Puritan clergy were expected to be deep thinkers and clear communicators. This emphasis naturally gave a high place to the human intellect and mandated education. It was no accident that in 1636 the Puritans founded Harvard College, the oldest and still among the most prestigious of America's colleges and universities. One sees these tendencies in the intellectual depth and coherence of Winthrop's sermon "A Model of Christian Charity," which you will read in this chapter, and the two Jonathan Edwards sermons that you will be reading in the next chapter. The profound, thorough, and well-organized interpretation and application of God's Word in the best Puritan sermons reached a level that is rare in modern sermons—perhaps in sermons from any era.

These sermons, however, were not merely intellectual or even theological endeavors. They were a cornerstone of practical, daily living for their hearers. The believer was expected to practice what he learned in church, living out his faith consistently in community with the other believers in his congregation. The Massachusetts Puritans saw themselves as a kind of new Israel, as chosen people in covenant with God just as surely as the Israelites had been in the Old Testament. As such, they wanted all of life—government, business, work, play, rest, family life, worship, and interaction with the natural world—to be brought under God's rule and to express His



The Puritan by Augustus Saint Gaudens.
Photo: pohick2 (CC-BY-SA 2.5).

beauty and truth. They wanted their colony to be in some sense a theocracy, a society governed in every aspect by God. Winthrop calls such a society a “city on a hill” in “A Model of Christian Charity,” a shining example for all the world to see.

This mindset could have its drawbacks and abuses, of course. Sometimes the individual in a Puritan congregation, rather than being sure of his eternal security before God, might suffer from the despairing feeling that he was not one of God’s elect and was completely helpless to do anything about his spiritual condition. On the other hand, the emphasis on holiness in

every aspect of life could lead to a prideful or condemning comparison of oneself with one’s neighbor if it became separated from a powerful sense of God’s love and grace. And abuses did occur, leading to very serious errors of Christian faith and practice, such as the persecution of Quakers in 1656 and the Salem Witch Trials (1692–1693).

Puritans have often been unfairly portrayed, however, in the modern American media and secular academia. They were strict in some ways, but their strictness was often part of an honest attempt to live out their faith consistently rather than hypocritically limiting it to one compartment of life. They rejected some holidays that they considered pagan, such as Christmas, but enthusiastically celebrated others. The Puritans avoided an excessive focus on clothing and finery but at times dressed in bright colors, not the drab tones we frequently associate with them. Consistent with their emphasis on family as a crucial building block of the church and God’s kingdom, they generally held a positive and healthy view of human sexuality and deeply loved their children.

In their emphasis on the importance of the development and full use of human reason in the service of Christian faith, on widespread education, and on making every aspect of life



Puritan Going to Church.

in this world a rich expression of what they believed about the next, the Puritans embodied many of the most humane and intellectual elements of Renaissance and Reformation thought. Their great faith, courage, independence, and valuing of the individual not only provide an enduring model of many important aspects of Christianity, but they also helped lay the foundation for American democracy. In reading Bradford’s journal *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Rowlandson’s account

of trusting God while being held captive by Native Americans, Winthrop's and Edwards' sermons, and Anne Bradstreet's and Edward Taylor's poetry in these next two chapters, you will see some of the rich truth and beauty of the Puritans' thought, belief, and practice.

Before turning to these texts, however, you will read first from a Native American narrative. The Native Americans were living in America first, and without the gracious help of certain natives, many more in the Plymouth Colony would have died of starvation. Certainly the treatment of the Native Americans by the Europeans who came to America was in many, many ways cruel and disgraceful. The Cherokees are one native people who suffered greatly, for example, from the broken promises of the United States government.

Perhaps the Englishmen brought something the natives needed, however. The Cherokee story of the creation of the world reported in the brief myth that follows shows this people's sense of the orderly design of the universe. It does not recognize a single great Creator as its cause, however, One in whose image they are made. The Christian account of creation tells of the Person who created the world, says much more about how and why He created it, and includes the remarkably good news that He loved us enough to give His very life to save us. The Englishmen who came to America had to focus a good deal on the issue of physical survival, and the Native Americans, threatened by the colonists' advance, were at times dangerous neighbors. It is a great loss that the Christians who colonized America did not do more to act like Christians toward the Native Americans, treating them as potential brothers and sisters while respecting the beauties of their culture and values. Had they done so, the fuller Christian story of creation and redemption might have been a much greater blessing to a larger number of Native Americans.



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CHAPTER 1

FAITH AND COURAGE

Early American Worldviews



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Illustration of a Cherokee War Chief.

CHEROKEE PEOPLE

The Cherokees were a Native American people group that migrated to the Great Smoky Mountains of what is today eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina in about AD 1200. Scholars believe they were originally an Iroquois-speaking tribe that migrated from somewhere around the Great Lakes during a time of famine, war, or overcrowding to settle in warmer, more fertile climates. There they cultivated corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers and hunted deer, elk, and turkeys.

In the early 1500s, the Cherokee people first encountered Europeans in the form of Spanish Conquistadors under the notorious explorer Hernando de Soto, who spent his time in North America claiming territory for Spain and (fruitlessly) looking for gold for himself. While some particularly violent skirmishes were fought with the native peoples, the Spaniards' greatest weapon was disease, which decimated several communities in what is now the southeastern United States. The Spanish Conquistadors were, at least initially, uninterested in anything that didn't sparkle like gold, and so the Cherokee and Mississippian cultures were of minimal interest to them. They established a few troop garrisons, which were promptly exterminated by native ambushes, and fled to the more profitable-seeming Mexican gold and silver mines, never to be heard from again.

The Cherokees' first interactions with English settlers were, with a few exceptions, mostly friendly. They allied with English settlers against the French-allied Shawnee and Tuscarora peoples, defeating their raiding parties and driving them northward in 1715. In the 1740s, the Cherokee people began to expand southward into Georgia, driving out the local Creek Indians in the Battle of Taliwa (1755.) By this time the Cherokees had acquired firearms through trade with the English and had become a force to be reckoned with. Trading agreements with the English colonies of South Carolina and Virginia cemented the political power of the Cherokee tribal cultures in the region.

In the 1770s, provoked by an influx of English settlers onto croplands and hunting grounds, Cherokees attacked and burned many European settlements west of the Smoky Mountains. The resulting wars were long and destructive, lasting well into the 1790s. Many settlers were murdered, and many Cherokees sold into slavery as retaliation. The Cherokee peoples at this time were by no means unified, and many sued for peace. A small faction of younger warriors, however, led by the war chief Dragging Canoe, retreated and built the village Chickamauga in northern Georgia, from which they conducted raids on English settlements. This war ended in 1794 when Colonial militias burned Chickamauga and defeated Dragging Canoe's army, but not before dozens of Cherokee villages had been burned and thousands of warriors had lost their lives or been sold into slavery. Finished with warfare, the Cherokee people unified and formed the Cherokee Nation in the late 1790s.

The Cherokee Nation was centered in Tennessee and Georgia. Adopting Colonial culture and technologies, some of the Cherokee people built large plantations and even owned African slaves. The Cherokee scholar and linguist Sequoyah developed the first written Cherokee language, creating a literate tribal culture. As a unified nation, the Cherokees thought they could negotiate more credibly with the new United States government. Under the leadership of Chief John Ross, the Cherokee people campaigned against the exploitation and invasion of their territory by American settlers who were clearing forests for cropland and digging out mountainsides for gold and copper.

In the landmark Supreme Court decision *Worcester v. Georgia* in 1832, the Cherokees won, at least theoretically, the right to keep their land and culture against state and federal interference. The federal government, however, led by the current president Andrew Jackson, flagrantly ignored the Supreme Court's decision and arranged for the Cherokee people to be forcibly removed from their homes and moved to the Oklahoma Territory, hundreds of miles away. Thousands of Cherokees were forced to abandon their crops and possessions and travel westward on a long, arduous trek that came to be known as the Trail of Tears. Many died of disease and exposure along the way, while the survivors were forced to settle in a foreign land under the watchful eye of the federal government. It was a horrible injustice against both the Cherokee peoples themselves and the American rule of law that had guaranteed them protection in our nation's highest court.

Cherokee culture, however, with its rich emphasis on story and mythology, lived on despite hardship. The following creation story gives us a picture of how the Cherokee people saw the world as highly relational and symbolic. For example, the animals all speak and play a role in the earth's formation. There is vitality about a narrative of this kind that seeks to explain the world in images found everywhere in nature. The Cherokee culture is emblematic of many Native American peoples and their fight for autonomy and cultural survival. Their mythology, with its strong emphasis on story and images from the natural world, provides us a picture of what the earliest Americans valued and worshiped and how they lived their lives.

As you read this myth, think of ways that its account of the creation of the world is similar to that of the biblical account in the book of Genesis. Also, consider how you would articulate the Christian version of creation and redemption to people who believed in such a creation account as this.



Myths of the Cherokee: How the World Was Made¹

1. This text was recorded by nineteenth-century anthropologist James Mooney, who published it, along with other Cherokee myths and legends, in *The Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*.

The earth is a great island floating in a sea of water, and suspended at each of the four cardinal points by a cord hanging down from the sky vault, which is of solid rock. When the world grows old and worn out, the people will die and the cords will break and let the earth sink down into the ocean, and all will be water again. The Indians are afraid of this.

When all was water, the animals were above in Gälûñ'läti, beyond the arch; but it was very much crowded, and they were wanting more room. They wondered what was below the water, and at last Dâyuni'si, "Beaver's Grandchild," the little Water-beetle, offered to go and see if it could learn. It darted in every direction over the surface

of the water, but could find no firm place to rest. Then it dived to the bottom and came up with some soft mud, which began to grow and spread on every side until it became the island which we call the earth. It was afterward fastened to the sky with four cords, but no one remembers who did this.

At first the earth was flat and very soft and wet. The animals were anxious to get down, and sent out different birds to see if it was yet dry, but they found no place to alight and came back again to Gälûñ'läti. At last it seemed to be time, and they sent out the Buzzard and told him to go and make ready for them. This was the Great Buzzard, the father of all the

buzzards we see now. He flew all over the earth, low down near the ground, and it was still soft. When he reached the Cherokee country, he was very tired, and his wings began to flap and strike the ground, and wherever they struck the earth there was a valley, and where they turned up again there was a mountain. When the animals above saw this, they were afraid that the whole world would be mountains, so they called him back, but the Cherokee country remains full of mountains to this day.

When the earth was dry and the animals came down, it was still dark, so they got the sun and set it in a track to go every day across the island from east to west, just overhead. It was too hot this way, and Tsiska'gili', the Red Crawfish, had his shell scorched a bright red, so that his meat was spoiled; and the Cherokee do not eat it. The conjurers put the sun another hand-breadth higher in the air, but it was still too hot. They raised it another time, and another, until it was seven handbreadths high and just under the sky arch. Then it was right, and they left it so. This is why the conjurers call the highest place Gûlkwâ'gine Di'gâlûñ'lätiyûñ', "the seventh height," because it is seven hand-breadths above the earth. Every day the sun goes along under this arch, and returns at night on the upper side to the starting place.

There is another world under this, and it is like ours in everything—animals, plants, and

people—save that the seasons are different. The streams that come down from the mountains are the trails by which we reach this underworld, and the springs at their heads are the doorways by which we enter it, but to do this one must fast and go to water and have one of the underground people for a guide. We know that the seasons in the underworld are different from ours, because the water in the springs is always warmer in winter and cooler in summer than the outer air.

When the animals and plants were first made—we do not know by whom—they were told to watch and keep awake for seven nights, just as young men now fast and keep awake when they pray to their medicine.² They tried to do this, and nearly all were awake through the first night, but the next night several dropped off to sleep, and the third night others were asleep, and then others, until, on the seventh night, of all the animals only the owl, the panther, and one or two more were still awake. To these were given the power to see and to go about in the dark, and to make prey of the birds and animals which must sleep at night. Of the trees only the cedar, the pine, the spruce, the holly, and the laurel were awake to the end, and to them it was given to be always green and to be greatest for medicine, but to the others it was said: "Because you have not endured to the end you shall lose your hair every winter."

Men came after the



Illustration of a Cherokee War Chief.

2. This is probably a reference to young Cherokee braves' initiation into manhood, an initiation that involves going without food, staying awake for long periods, and praying to supernatural powers, or "medicine."

animals and plants. At first there were only a brother and sister until he struck her with a fish and told her to multiply, and so it was. In seven days a child was born to her, and thereafter every seven days another, and they

increased very fast until there was danger that the world could not keep them. Then it was made that a woman should have only one child in a year, and it has been so ever since.

Questions on the Cherokees' "How the World Was Made"

1. The myth starts with an image of security and an image of insecurity. What strong thing holds the world up? What sad end will come to the world?
2. What strange creature helped create the earth? How did it do this?
3. Who fastened the earth to the sky? Why is this a significant part of the story?
4. What creature made the earth suitable for the animals to inhabit? How? What did they fear he was making too much of? How is this story of creation consistent with what we know of where the Cherokees originally lived?
5. How is the creation story in the first three paragraphs similar to the story of Genesis chapter 1 and chapters 6–9? In what crucial way is it different from Genesis 9?
6. How did “the conjurers” (medicine men, or shamans) adjust the sun—how high in the sky was right and why? What does this part of the story tell us about the Cherokees’ view of the world?
7. What is the Cherokees’ understanding of what is beneath the earth? What is their explanation for the fact that air from caves tends to stay within a narrow temperature range—less cold than outside winter air and less warm than outside summer air?
8. What phrase occurs in paragraph 6 similar to one in the second paragraph? What key question is it suggesting?
9. What test seemingly proved that some animals and plants were superior to others? What sorts of natural phenomena were the Cherokees trying to explain with this story?
10. How is the last part of the creation story similar to the Genesis account? Also, note at least two ways that it is different.
11. Read Acts 17:22–31 in your Bible. From Paul’s example of witnessing to the pagan Athenian Greeks, how might you witness to people who believe as the Cherokees did? Answer in one to two paragraphs, a total of 150–250 words.

WILLIAM BRADFORD

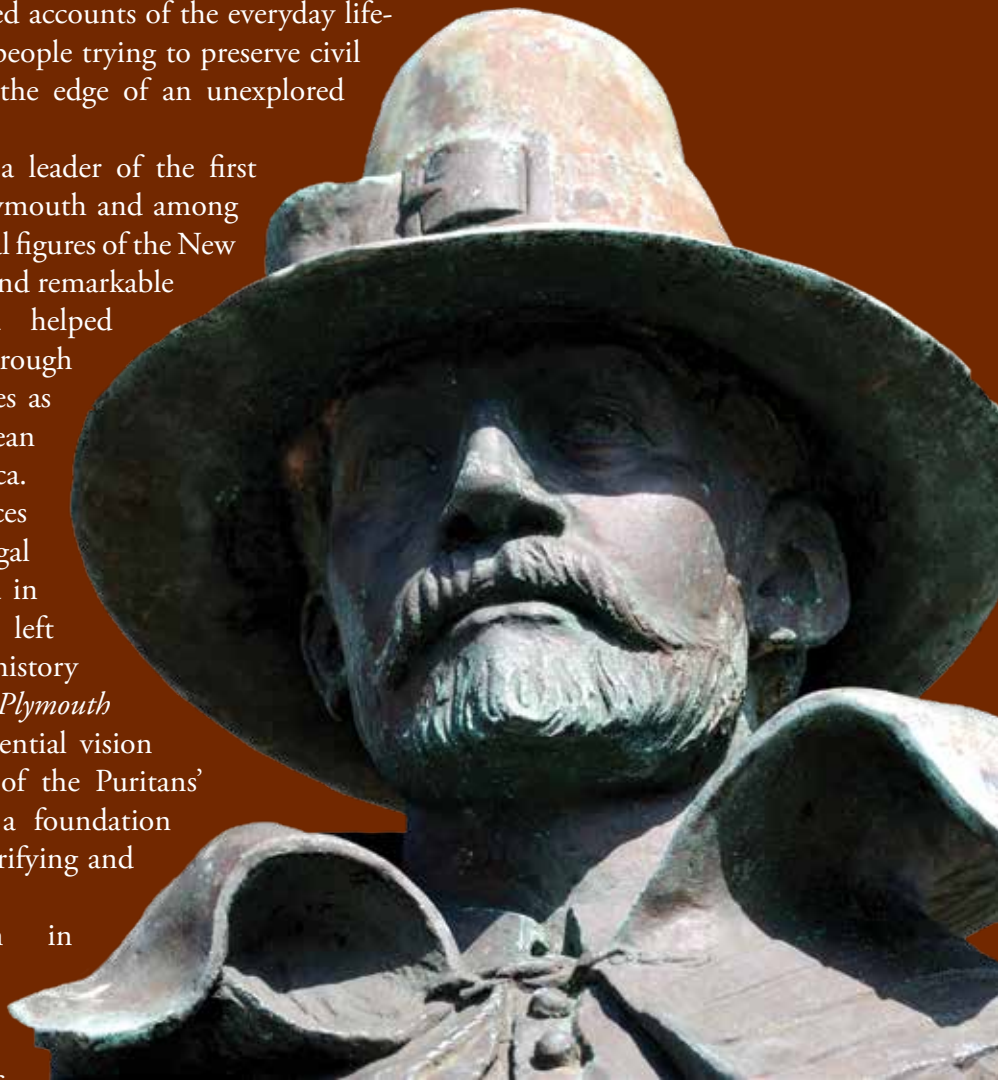
(1590-1657)

Some of the first Englishmen to write firsthand accounts of American life were the Puritans. Dissatisfied with the Anglican Church and driven from their homeland by harsh persecutions, these settlers inhabited the rocky bays and thick forests of the New England coast. They became wilderness men, forced to scrape a living for themselves and their communities out of the cold, barren soil of Massachusetts. They had to be hard as flint to survive long winters and poor harvests while raising their families and maintaining their communities in a state of order and relative calm.

Though well acquainted with suffering, the Puritans were also highly educated. Enthusiastic students of theology and rhetoric, the Puritans established some of the first great centers of learning in the Americas. Their pens produced many theological and political treatises, as well as lucid, detailed accounts of the everyday life-and-death struggles faced by a people trying to preserve civil order and social harmony on the edge of an unexplored wilderness.

William Bradford was a leader of the first Puritan-Separatist colony in Plymouth and among the first great writers and political figures of the New World. A man of perseverance and remarkable leadership abilities, Bradford helped keep the settlers together through extremely difficult circumstances as they built one of the first European settlements in North America. He was one of the key voices in the drafting of the first legal constitution of the New World in the Mayflower Compact and left behind a tremendously detailed history of the colony in his journal *Of Plymouth Plantation*. Weaving his providential vision of theology with his account of the Puritans' journey, Bradford established a foundation for Christian culture in this terrifying and often hostile environment.

Bradford was born in Yorkshire, England, to humble middle-class farmers. Young William's life was very hard; he was orphaned at the age of



William Bradford. Photo: Christopher "Rice" (CC-BY-2.0).

seven and sent to live with two of his uncles. Bradford was weak and sickly as a child, so he took to studying Scripture and whatever theological or philosophical literature was available to him instead of working as a farmhand. At the age of twelve, he first encountered the Separatists, a Reformed Protestant sect that sought to cleanse the Anglican Church from what they saw as doctrinal impurities and moral corruptions. It was here that he found a community to join and a cause to fight for. Discipled by the great Puritan elder William Brewster, Bradford found the father he had never known and quickly grew into a committed member of the Separatist Congregation. In 1607, however, a series of persecutions were leveled at the Separatists, prompting the congregation to move to the more open-minded city of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Even there, however, they encountered opposition and harassment.

In 1620, around fifty Pilgrims and fifty secular English settlers sailed on the *Mayflower* for the purpose of establishing a colony in the New World. They landed at Plymouth during the harsh New England winter. Low on supplies, the settlers hunkered down, but large numbers of them died of disease and starvation. Bradford's wife, Dorothy, drowned. It was a time of immense hardship and personal tragedy for all. The first governor of Plymouth died along with half of the settlers that first winter of 1621. Bradford had never held a serious leadership role in the community, but as one of the last men standing, he was forced to act as governor of the shattered remnants of the Plymouth Colony.

That spring, with the help of the native Wampanoag people, the strong leadership of Bradford, and God's faithfulness, the Plymouth Colony regained its footing. As governor, Bradford organized the colony's finances, helped settle disputes, wrote policy, and divided farmland—he essentially performed just about every task associated with legal practice, as the colony lay an ocean away from British law courts. Bradford soon remarried and had three children.

In 1630, Bradford began to write a history of the colony, stretching back to that first year of hardship in. A detailed and honest historian, Bradford gave credit to God for the survival and flourishing of the Puritan colony against all odds. *Of Plymouth Plantation* was the result. The work gave the new settlers something that is foundational for a culture's development: a shared history to refer to.

By the time Bradford died in 1657, Plymouth was one of many English colonies in the New World. On his grave was inscribed the Latin phrase *Qua patres difficillime adepti sunt nolite turpiter relinquere*, meaning "What our forefathers secured with so much hardship do not easily relinquish." William Bradford's work as leader of the colony through birth pangs and difficult times secured Plymouth Colony's continued growth and prosperity and secured for Bradford himself a place as one of the forefathers of American society and letters.



The First Thanksgiving by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris.

from **Of Plymouth Plantation**

And first of the occasion and inducements¹ thereunto; the which that I may truly unfold,² I must begin at the very root and rise of the same. The which I shall endeavor to manifest in a plain style, with singular regard unto the simple truth in all things, at least as near as my slender judgment can attain the same.

CHAPTER I

It is well known unto the godly and judicious, however since the first breaking out of the light of the gospel in our Honorable Nation of England, (which was the first of nations whom the Lord adorned therewith, after that gross darkness of popery³ which had covered and overspread the Christian world,) what wars and oppositions ever since, Satan hath raised, maintained, and continued against the Saints, from time to time, in one sort or other. Sometimes by bloody death and cruel torments; other whiles imprisonments, banishments, and other hard

1. Causes, things that led to it.

2. Which I will tell about truthfully.

3. Catholicism. A reference to having popes.

PART I: THE COLONIAL AGE

4. Here Bradford is probably referring to the tortures and executions conducted under Queen Mary Tudor, "Bloody Mary," who ruled from 1553 to 1558.

5. By "ancient" and "primitive" here Bradford means those characterizing the early church, before medieval Catholic corruptions in belief and practice occurred.

6. *Subvert* means "undermine, overturn." *Celerity* means "speed."

7. Heresies are serious perversions or distortions of biblical Christianity. *Dissensions* means "arguments, disputes." By "professors" Bradford means those who profess Christian faith, the believers. *Woeful* means "causing sadness and mourning." *Schisms* means "sharp divisions between people, especially within a religious group or church."

8. Likely to come upon.

9. Division, separation.

10. Bradford is talking here about rituals and beliefs adopted by the Anglican Church (Church of England) that to himself and other Separatists and Puritans smack of Catholic errors and impurities.

11. In the omitted paragraphs, Bradford talks of the accession of King James I (1603). He is comparing these persecutions not to the torments and executions under Bloody Mary, but to the persecutions under Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603).

12. Feeling compelled to, wanting to.

13. These were low-lying lands in an area that now includes Holland or the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, and areas in France and Germany. The root *nether* in Netherlands literally means "located below, lower."

14. Various people, some.

usages;⁴ as being loath his kingdom should go down, the truth prevail, and the churches of God revert to their ancient purity, and recover their primitive order, liberty, and beauty.⁵ But when he could not prevail by these means, against the main truths of the gospel, but that they began to take rooting in many places, being watered with the blood of the martyrs, and blessed from heaven with a gracious increase; he then began to take him to his ancient stratagems, used of old against the first Christians. That when by the bloody and barbarous persecutions of the Heathen Emperors, he could not stop and subvert the course of the gospel, but that it speedily overspread with a wonderful celerity⁶ the then best known parts of the world, he then began to sow errors, heresies, and wonderful dissensions amongst the professors⁷ themselves, (working upon their pride and ambition, with other corrupted passions incident⁸ to all mortal men, yea to the saints themselves in some measure,) by which woeful effects followed; as not only bitter contentions, and heartburning schisms,⁹ with other horrible confusions, but Satan took occasion and advantage thereby to foist in a number of vile ceremonies, with many unprofitable canons and decrees,¹⁰ which have since been as snares to many poor and peaceable souls even to this day. . . .

But after these things

they could not long continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted and persecuted on every side, so as their former afflictions were but as fleabites in comparison of these which now came upon them.¹¹ For some were taken and clapped up in prison, others had their houses beset and watched night and day, and hardly escaped their hands; and the most were fain¹² to fly and leave their houses and habitations, and the means of their livelihood. Yet these and many other sharper things which afterward befell them, were no other then they looked for, and therefore were the better prepared to bear them by the assistance of God's grace and spirit. Yet seeing themselves thus molested, and that there was no hope of their continuance there, by a joint consent they resolved to go into the Low-Countries,¹³ where they heard was freedom of Religion for all men; as also how sundry¹⁴ from London, and other parts of the land, had been exiled and persecuted for the same cause, and were gone thither, and lived at Amsterdam, and in other places of the land. So after they had continued together about a year, and kept their meetings every Sabbath in one place or other, exercising the worship of God amongst themselves, notwithstanding all the diligence and malice of their adversaries, they seeing they could no longer continue in that condition, they resolved to get over into Holland as they could; which was in the

year 1607 and 1608 . . .

CHAPTER 4

Showing the reasons and causes of their removal.

After they had lived in this city¹⁵ about some eleven or twelve years, (which is the more observable being the whole time of that famous truce between that state and the Spaniards,) and sundry of them were taken away by death, and many others began to be well stricken in years, the grave mistress Experience having taught them many things, those prudent governors with sundry of the sagest¹⁶ members began both deeply to apprehend their present dangers, and wisely to foresee the future, and think of timely remedy. In the agitation of their thoughts, and much discourse of things hear about, at length they began to incline to this conclusion, of removal to some other place. Not out of any newfangledness,¹⁷ or other such like giddy humor, by which men are oftentimes transported to their great hurt and danger, but for sundry weighty and solid reasons; some of the chief of which I will here briefly touch. And first, they saw and found by experience the hardness of the place and country to be such, as few in comparison would come to them, and fewer that would bide¹⁸ it out, and continue with them. For many that came to them, and many more that desired to be with them, could not

endure that great labor and hard fare, with other inconveniences which they underwent and were contented with.¹⁹ But though they loved their persons, approved their cause, and honored their sufferings, yet they left them as it were weeping, as Orpah²⁰ did her mother-in-law Naomi, or as those Romans did Cato in Utica, who desired to be excused and born with, though they could not all be Catos.²¹ For many, though they desired to enjoy the ordinances of God in their purity and the liberty of the gospel with them, yet, alas, they admitted of bondage, with danger of conscience, rather than to endure these hardships; yea, some preferred and chose the persons in England, rather than this liberty in Holland, with these afflictions. But it was thought that if a better and easier place of living could be had, it would draw many, and take away these discouragements. Yea, their pastor would often say, that many of those who both wrote and preached now against them, if they were in a place where they might have liberty and live comfortably, they would then practice as they did.

Secondly, they saw that though the people generally bore all these difficulties very cheerfully, and with a resolute courage, being in the best and strength of their years, yet old age began to steal on many of them, (and their great and continual labors, with other crosses²² and sorrows, hastened

- 15. Leiden, Holland.
- 16. Wisest. A sage is a wise man.
- 17. Following new fashions and trends too easily or flippantly.
- 18. Wait.
- 19. Bradford seems to be referring to the difficulty of supporting one's family in Holland—the hard work and low wages (and bad food).
- 20. In the biblical book of Ruth, the sister-in-law of Ruth. Orpah remained with her own pagan people in Moab rather than accompany Naomi back to Israel, as Ruth did.
- 21. Cato the Younger was a Roman statesman famous for his integrity and stubbornness. When Julius Caesar defeated his forces, rather than be taken captive, he killed himself, which made him an excellent example of the stoic philosophy that the Romans followed.



William Bradford. Photo: Christopher "Rice" (CC-BY-2.0).

22. Difficulties, sacrificial burdens born, like that of the cross of Christ.

23. Quickly, within good time.

24. Loose morals, sinful behavior.

25. "Tending to" means leading to. "Dissoluteness" is a lack of restraint or morality.



it before the time,) so as it was not only probably thought, but apparently seen, that within a few years more they would be in danger to scatter, by necessities pressing them, or sink under their burdens, or both. And therefore according to the divine proverb, that a wise man sees the plague when it comes, and hides himself, Proverbs 22:3, so they like skillful and beaten soldiers were fearful either to be entrapped or surrounded by their enemies, so as they should neither be able to fight nor fly; and therefore thought it better to dislodge betimes²³ to some place of better advantage and less danger, if any such could be found. Thirdly; as necessity was a taskmaster over them, so they were forced to be such, not only to their servants, but in a sort, to their dearest children; the which as it did not a little wound the tender hearts of many a loving father and mother, so it produced likewise sundry sad and sorrowful effects. For many of their children, that were of best dispositions and gracious inclinations, having learned to bear the yoke in their youth, and willing to bear part of their parents burden, were, often times, so oppressed with their heavy labors, that though their minds were free and willing, yet their bodies bowed under the weight of the same, and became decrepit in their early youth; the vigor of nature being consumed in the very bud as it were. But that which was more lamentable, and of all sorrows most heavy to

be borne, was that many of their children, by these occasions, and the great licentiousness²⁴ of youth in that country, and the manifold temptations of the place, were drawn away by evil examples into extravagant and dangerous courses, getting the reins off their necks, and departing from their parents. Some became soldiers, others took upon them far voyages by sea, and other some worse courses, tending to dissoluteness²⁵ and the danger of their souls, to the great grief of their parents and dishonor of God. So that they saw their posterity would be in danger to degenerate and be corrupted

5 Lastly, (and which was not least), a great hope and inward zeal they had of laying some good foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto, for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world; yea, though they should be but even as stepping-stones unto others for the performing of so great a work.

These, and some other like reasons, moved them to undertake this resolution of their removal; the which they afterward prosecuted with so great difficulties, as by the sequel will appear.

The place they had thoughts on was some of those vast and unpeopled countries of America, which are fruitful and fit for habitation, being devoid of all civil inhabitants, where there are only savage and brutish men,

which range up and down, little otherwise than the wild beasts of the same. This proposition being made public and coming to the scanning of all, it raised many variable opinions amongst men, and caused many fears and doubts amongst themselves. Some, from their reasons and hopes conceived, labored to stir up and encourage the rest to undertake and prosecute the same; others, again, out of their fears, objected against it, and sought to divert from it, alleging many things, and those neither unreasonable nor improbable; as that it was a great design, and subject to many unconceivable perils and dangers; as, besides the casualties of the seas (which none can be freed from) the length of the voyage was such, as the weak bodies of women and other persons worn out with age and travel (as many of them were) could never be able to endure. And yet if they should, the miseries of the land which they should be exposed unto, would be too hard to be borne; and likely, some or all of them together, to consume and utterly to ruin them. For there they should be liable to famine, and nakedness, and then want, in a manner, of all things. The change of air, diet, and drinking of water, would infect their bodies with sore sicknesses, and grievous diseases. And also those which should escape or overcome these difficulties, should yet be in continual danger of the savage people, who are cruel, barbarous,

and most treacherous, being most furious in their rage, and merciless where they overcome; not being content only to kill, and take away life, but delight to torment men in the most bloody manner that may be; flaying some alive with the shells of fishes, cutting of the members and joints of others by piecemeal, and broiling on the coals, eat the collops²⁶ of their flesh in their sight whilst they live; with other cruelties horrible to be related. And surely it could not be thought but the very hearing of these things could not but move the very bowels of men to grieve within them, and make the weak to quake and tremble. It was further objected, that it would require greater sums of money to furnish such a voyage, and to fit them with necessaries, then their consumed estates would amount too; and yet they must as well look to be seconded with supplies, as presently to be transported. Also many precedents of ill success, and lamentable miseries befallen others in the like designs, were easy to be found, and not forgotten to be alleged; besides their own experience, in their former troubles and hardships in their removal into Holland, and how hard a thing it was for them to live in that strange place, though it was a neighbor country, and a civil and rich commonwealth.

It was answered, that all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and must be both

26.Slices (of meat).



27. Attempted.

28. The injuries coming from Spanish attacks on Holland might be harder to defend against or remedy than Indian attacks.

29. Many, a number of.

30. *Lusty* means "strong, hearty." *Haughty* means "proud, arrogant."

31. Curses, vulgarities.

enterprised²⁷ and overcome with answerable courage. It was granted the dangers were great, but not desperate; the difficulties were many, but not invincible. For though there were many of them likely, yet they were not certain; it might be sundry of the things feared might never befall; others by provident care and the use of good means, might in a great measure be prevented; and all of them, through the help of God, by fortitude and patience, might either be borne, or overcome. True it was, that such attempts were not to be made and undertaken without good ground and reason; not rashly or lightly as many have done for curiosity or hope of gain, etc. But their condition was not ordinary; their ends were good and honorable; their calling lawful, and urgent; and therefore they might expect the blessing of God in their proceeding. Yea, though they should lose their lives in this action, yet might they have comfort in the same, and their endeavors would be honorable. They lived here but as men in exile, and in a poor condition; and as great miseries might possibly befall them in this place, for the twelve years of truce were now out, and there was nothing but beating of drums, and preparing for war, the events whereof are always uncertain. The Spaniard might prove as cruel as the savages of America,²⁸ and the famine and pestilence as sore here as there, and their liberties less to look out for remedy. After

many other particular things answered and alleged on both sides, it was fully concluded by the major part, to put this design in execution, and to prosecute it by the best means they could.

CHAPTER 9

Of their voyage, and how they passed the sea, and of their safe arrival at Cape Cod.

SEPTEMBER 6. These troubles being blown over, and now all being compacted together in one ship, they put to sea again with a prosperous wind, which continued diverse²⁹ days together, which was some encouragement unto them; yet according to the usual manner many were afflicted with seasickness. And I may not omit here a special work of God's providence. There was a proud and very profane young man, one of the sea-men, of a lusty, able body, which made him the more haughty;³⁰ he would always be condemning the poor people in their sickness, and cursing them daily with grievous execrations,³¹ and did not let to tell them, that he hoped to help to cast half of them overboard before they came to their journey's end, and to make merry with what they had; and if he were by any gently reproved, he would curse and swear most bitterly. But it pleased God before they came half seas over,³² to smite this young man with a grievous disease, of which he died in a desperate manner,



and so was himself the first that was thrown overboard. Thus his curses lit on his own head; and it was an astonishment to all his fellows, for they noted it to be the just hand of God upon him.

10 After they had enjoyed fair winds and weather for a season, they were encountered many times with cross winds, and met with many fierce storms, with which the ship was soundly shaken, and her upper works made very leaky; and one of the main beams in the mid-ships was bowed and cracked, which put them in some fear that the ship could not be able to perform the voyage. So some of the chief of the company, perceiving the mariners to fare³³ the sufficiency of the ship, as appeared by their mutterings, they entered into serious consultation with the master and other officers of the ship, to consider in time of the danger; and rather to return than to cast themselves into a desperate and inevitable peril. And truly there was great distraction and difference of opinion amongst the mariners themselves; fain would they do what could be done for their wages' sake, (being now half the seas over,) and on the other hand they were loath³⁴ to hazard their lives too desperately. But in examining of all opinions, the master and others affirmed they knew the ship to be strong and firm under water; and for the buckling of the main beam, there was a great iron screw the passengers brought out of Holland, which would raise the

beam into his place; the which being done, the carpenter and master affirmed that with a post put under it, set firm in the lower deck, and otherwise bound, he would make it sufficient. And as for the decks and upper works they would caulk them as well as they could and though with the working of the ship they would not long keep staunch, yet there would otherwise be no great danger, if they did not overpress her with sails. So they committed themselves to the will of God, and resolved to proceed. In sundry of these storms the winds were so fierce, and the seas so high, as they could not bear a knot of sail, but were forced to hull,³⁵ for diverse days together. And in one of them, as they thus lay at hull, in a mighty storm, a lusty young man (called John Howland) coming upon some occasion above the gratings, was, with a seal of the ship thrown into [the] sea; but it pleased God that he caught hold of the top-sail halyards,³⁶ which hung over board, and ran out at length; yet he held his hold (though he was sundry fathoms under water) till he was hauled up by the same rope to the brim of the water, and then with a boat hook and other means got into the ship again, and his life saved; and though he was something ill with it, yet he lived many years after, and became a profitable member both in church and commonwealth. In all this voyage there died but one of the passengers, which was William Batten, a youth, servant

32. Halfway over the sea.

33. Mariners were men employed on a ship. Fare is here used to mean "speaking against."

34. Unwilling, reluctant.

35. To *hull* is a nautical term for removing the sails completely and letting the waves and wind drive the ship.

36. A rope used to raise the sail.



37. A famous stoic philosopher. The stoics emphasized control over one's emotions.

38. This reference is to the Apostle Paul's shipwreck on the island of Malta, recorded in Acts 28.

to Samuel Fuller, when they drew near the coast. But to omit other things, (that I may be brief,) after long beating at sea they fell with that land which is called Cape Cod; the which being made and certainly known to be it, they were not a little joyful. . . .

Being thus arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. And no marvel if they were thus joyful, seeing wise Seneca³⁷ was so affected with sailing a few miles on the coast of his own Italy; as he affirmed, that he had rather remain twenty years on his way by land, than pass by sea to any place in a short time; so tedious and dreadful was the same unto him. But here I cannot but stay and make a pause, and stand half amazed at this poor people's present condition; and so I think will the reader too, when he well consider the same. Being thus passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation (as may be remembered by that which went before), they had now no friends to welcome them, nor inns to entertain or refresh their weather-beaten bodies, no houses or much less towns to repair to, to seek for succor. It is recorded in scriptures, a mercy to the apostle and his shipwrecked

company, that the barbarians showed them no small kindness in refreshing them,³⁸ but these savage barbarians, when they met with them (as after will appear) were readier to fill their sides full of arrows than otherwise. And for the season it was winter, and they that know the winters of that country know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search an unknown coast. Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men? . . .

What could now sustain them but the spirit of God and his grace? May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: Our fathers were Englishmen which come over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord, and he heard their voice, and looked on their adversity, etc. Let them therefore praise the Lord, because he is good, and his mercies endure forever. Yea, let them which have been redeemed of the Lord, show how he hath delivered them from the hand of the oppressor. When they wandered in the desert wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in, both hungry, and thirsty, their soul was overwhelmed in them. Let them confess before the Lord his loving kindness, and his wonderful works before the sons of men.



CHAPTER 10

*Showing how they sought
out a place of habitation,
and what befell them
thereabout.*

. . . The month of November being spent in these affairs, and much foul weather falling in, the 6th of December: they sent out their shallop³⁹ again with ten of their principal men, and some sea men, upon further discovery, intending to circulate that deep bay of Cape Cod. The weather was very cold, and it froze so hard as the spray of the sea lighting on their coats,⁴⁰ they were as if they had been glazed; yet that night betimes they got down into the bottom of the bay, and as they drew near the shore they saw some ten or twelve Indians very busy about something. They landed about a league or two from them, and had much ado to put ashore anywhere, it lay so full of flats. Being landed, it grew late, and they made themselves a barricade with logs and boughs as well as they could in the time, and set out their sentinel and betook them to rest, and saw the smoke of the fire the savages made that night. When morning was come they divided their company, some to coast along the shore in the boat, and the rest marched through the woods to see the land, if any fit place might be for their dwelling. They came also to the place where they saw the Indians the night before, and found they had been cutting up a great fish like a grampus, being

some two inches thick of fat like a hog, some pieces whereof they had left by the way; and the shallop found two more of these fishes dead on the sands, a thing usual after storms in that place, by reason of the great flats of sand that lie off. So they ranged up and down all that day, but found no people, nor any place they liked. When the supplies grew low, they hasted out of the woods to meet with their shallop, to whom they made signs to come to them into a creek hard by,⁴¹ the which they did at high-water; of which they were very glad, for they had not seen each other all that day, since the morning. So they made them a barricade (as usually they did every night) with logs, stakes, and thick pine boughs, the height of a man, leaving it open to leeward,⁴² partly to shelter them from the cold and wind (making their fire in the middle, and lying round about it), and partly to defend them from any sudden assaults of the savages, if they should surround them. So being very weary, they betook them to rest. But about midnight, they heard a hideous and great cry, and their sentinel called, "Arm, arm";⁴³ so they bestirred them and stood to their arms, and shot of a couple of muskets, and then the noise ceased. They concluded it was a company of wolves, or such like wild beasts; for one of the sea men told them he had often heard such a noise in New-found land.

So they rested till about five of the clock in the morning;

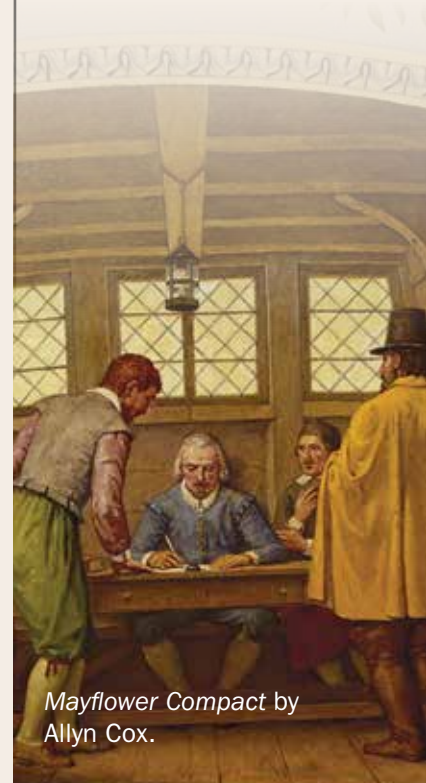
39. A flat-bottomed boat for use in shallow waters and close to the shore.

40. It froze the mist from the water that gathered on their clothing.

41. Nearby, right beside.

42. The side facing away from the wind.

43. A call for the men to take up their weapons.



Mayflower Compact by
Allyn Cox.

for the tide, and their purpose to go from thence, made them be stirring betimes. So after praise they prepared for breakfast, and it being day dawning, it was thought best to be carrying things down to the boat. But some said it was not best to carry the arms down, others said they would be the readier, for they had laid them up in their coats from the dew. But some three or four would not carry theirs till they went themselves, yet as it fell out, the water being not high enough, they laid them down on the bank side, and came up to breakfast. But presently, all on the sudden, they heard a great and strange cry, which they knew to be the same voices they heard in the night, though they varied their notes, and one of their company being abroad came running in, and cried, "Men, Indians, Indians"; and withal, their arrows came flying amongst them. Their men ran with all speed to recover their arms, as by the good providence of God they did. In the mean time, of those that were there ready, two muskets were discharged at them, and two more stood ready in the entrance of their rendezvous, but were commanded not to shoot till they could take full aim at them; and the other two charged again with all speed, for there were only four had arms there, and defended the barricade which was first assaulted. The cry of the Indians was dreadful, especially when they saw their men run out of the rendezvous towards the scallop,

to recover their arms, the Indians wheeling about upon them. But some running out with coats of mail on, and cutlasses in their hands, they soon got their arms, and let fly among them, and quickly stopped their violence. Yet there was a lusty man, and no less valiant, stood behind a tree within half a musket shot, and let his arrows fly at them. He was seen shoot three arrows, which were all avoided. He stood three shots of a musket, till one taking full aim at him, and made the bank or splinters of the tree fly about his ears, after which he gave an extraordinary shriek, and away they went all of them. They left some to keep the shallop, and followed them about a quarter of a mile, and shouted once or twice, and shot off two or three pieces, and so returned. This they did, that they might conceive that they were not afraid of them or any way discouraged. Thus it pleased God to vanquish their enemies, and give them deliverance; and by his special providence so to dispose that not any one of them were either hurt, or hit, though their arrows came close by them, and on every side them, and sundry of their coats, which hung up in the barricade, were shot throw and throw. Afterwards they gave God solemn thanks and praise for their deliverance, and gathered up a bundle of their arrows, and sent them into England afterward by the master of the ship, and called that place the first encounter. . . .



THE SECOND BOOK.

15 *The rest of this History (if God give me life, and opportunity) I shall, for brevity's sake, handle by way of annals,⁴⁴ noting only the heads of principal things, and passage as they fell in order of time, and may seem to be profitable to know, or to make use of. And this may be as the Second Book.*

The remainder of Anno:⁴⁵ 1620.

I SHALL a little return back and begin with a combination I made by them before they came ashore, being the first foundation of their government in this place; occasioned partly by the discontented and mutinous speeches that some of the strangers amongst them had let fall from them in the ship that when they came ashore they would use their own liberty; for none had power to command them, the patent⁴⁶ they had being for Virginia, and not for New-England, which belonged to another Government, with which the Virginia Company had nothing to do. And partly that such an act by them done (this their condition considered) might be as firm as any patent, and in some respects more sure.

The form was as follows.

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are under-written, the loyal subjects of our dread⁴⁷ sovereign Lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great

Britain, France, and Ireland king, defender of the faith, etc., having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God, and of one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic,⁴⁸ for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our sovereign lord, King James, of England, France, and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini 1620.

After this they chose, or rather confirmed, Mr. John Carver (a man godly and well approved amongst them) their Governor for that year. And after they had provided a place for their goods, or common store, (which were long in unloading for want of boats, foulness of winter weather, and sickness of

44. Records of key happenings through each year.

45. *Anno Domini*, "In the year of our Lord," was a means of measuring the years that had passed since the birth of Christ.

46. Land grant.

47. *Dread* here means reverence, rather than fear.

48. One people being unified.



49. Behaviors, attitudes shown through actions, body language, and facial expressions.

50. Past tense of *cleave*, meaning “stuck together, stayed committed to each other.”

51. Unprovided for.

52. Prepared.



divers,) and begun some small cottages for their habitation, as time would admit, they met and consulted of laws and orders, both for their civil and military Government, as the necessity of their condition did require, still adding thereunto as urgent occasion in several times, and as cases did require.

In these hard and difficult **20** beginnings they found some discontents and murmurings arise amongst some, and mutinous speeches and carriages⁴⁹ in other; but they were soon quelled and overcome by the wisdom, patience, and just and equal carriage of things by the Governor and better part, which clave⁵⁰ faithfully together in the main. But that which was most sad and lamentable was, that in two or three months' time half of their company died, especially in January and February, being the depth of winter, and wanting houses and other comforts; being infected with the scurvy and other diseases, which this long voyage and their inaccommodate⁵¹ condition had brought upon them; so as there died some times two or three of a day, in the foresaid time; that of one hundred and odd persons, scarce fifty remained. And of these in the time of most distress, there was but six or seven sound persons, who, to their great commendations be it spoken, spared no pains, night nor day, but with abundance of toil and hazard of their own health, fetched them wood, made

them fires, dressed⁵² them meat, made their beds, washed their loathsome cloths, clothed and unclothed them; in a word, did all the homely and necessary offices for them which dainty and queasy stomachs cannot endure to hear named; and all this willingly and cheerfully, without any grudging in the least, showing herein their true love unto their friends and brethren. A rare example and worthy to be remembered. Two of these seven were Mr. William Brewster, the reverend Elder, and Myles Standish, the Captain and military commander, unto whom myself, and many others, were much beholden in our low and sick condition. And yet the Lord so upheld these persons, as in this general calamity they were not at all infected either with sickness, or lameness. And what I have said of these, I may say of many others who died in this general visitation, and others yet living, that whilst they had health, yea, or any strength continuing, they were not wanting to any that had need of them. And I doubt not but their recompense is with the Lord.

But I may not here pass by another remarkable passage not to be forgotten. As this calamity fell among the passengers that were to be left here to plant, and were hasted ashore and made to drink water, that the seamen might have the more beer, and one in his sickness desiring but a small can of beer, it was answered, that if he were their own father he should have none;

the disease began to fall amongst them also, so as almost half of their company died before they went away, and many of their officers and lustiest men, as the boatswain, gunner, quarter-masters, the cook, and others. At which the master was something stricken and sent to the sick a shore and told the Governor he should send for beer for them that had need of it, though he drunk water homeward bound. But now amongst his company there was far another kind of carriage in this misery then amongst the passengers; for they that before had been boon companions⁵³ in drinking and jollity in the time of their health and welfare, began now to desert one another in this calamity, saying they would not hazard their lives for them, they should be infected by coming to help them in their cabins, and so, after they came to die by it, would do little or nothing for them, but if they died let them die. But such of the passengers as were yet aboard showed them what merriness they could, which made some of their hearts relent, as the boatswain (and some others), who was a proud young man, and would often curse and scoff at the passengers; but when he grew weak, they had compassion on him and helped him; then he confessed he did not deserve it at their hands, he had abused them in word and deed. O! said he, you, I now see, show your love like Christians indeed one to another, but we let one another lie and die like dogs.

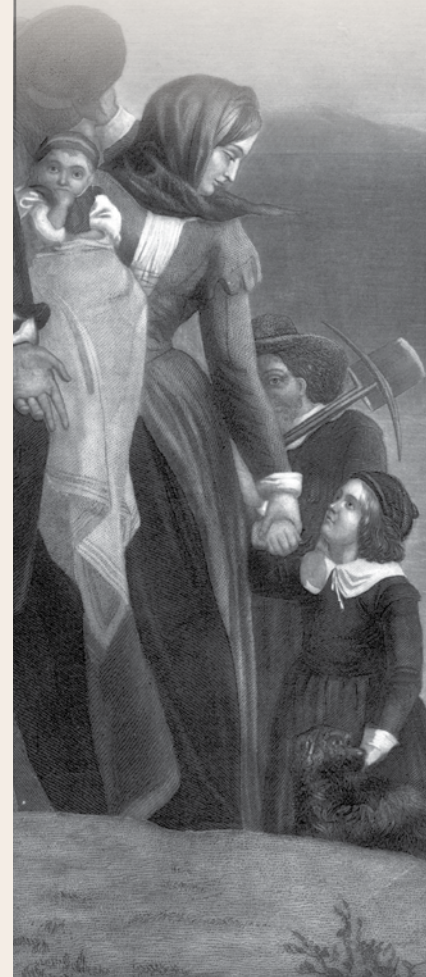
Another lay cursing his wife, saying if it had not been for her he had never come this unlucky voyage, and anon⁵⁴ cursing his fellows, saying he had done this and that, for some of them, he had spent so much, and so much, amongst them, and they were now weary of him, and did not help him, having need. Another gave his companion all he had, if he died, to help him in his weakness; he went and got a little spice and made him a mess of meat once or twice, and because he died not so soon as he expected, he went amongst his fellows, and swore the rogue would cozen⁵⁵ him, he would see him choked before he made him any more meat; and yet the poor fellow died before morning.

All this while the Indians came skulking about them, and would sometimes show themselves aloof of, but when any approached near them, they would run away. And once they stole away their tools where they had been at work, and were gone to dinner. But about the 16th of March a certain Indian came boldly amongst them, and spoke to them in broken English, which they could not well understand, but marveled at it. At length they understood by discourse with him, that he was not of these parts, but belonged to the eastern parts, where some English-ships came to fish, with whom he was acquainted, and could name sundry of them by their names, amongst whom he had got his language. He became profitable

53. Jolly and lighthearted friends.

54. In the same way.

55. Cheat, deceive.



to them in acquainting them with many things concerning the state of the country in the east-parts where he lived, which was afterwards profitable unto them; as also of the people here, of their names, number, and strength; of their situation and distance from this place, and who was chief amongst them. His name was Samoset; he told them also of another Indian whose name was Squanto, a native of this place, who had been in England and could speak better English than himself. Being, after some time of entertainment and gifts, dismissed, a while after he came again and five more with him, and they brought again all the tools that were stolen away before, and made way for the coming of their great Sachem, called Massasoit; who, about four or five days after, came with the chief of his friends and other attendance, with the aforesaid Squanto. With whom, after friendly entertainment, and some gifts given him, they made a peace with him (which hath now continued this twenty-four years) in these terms.

1. *That neither he nor any of his, should injure or do hurt to any of their people.*
2. *That if any of his did any hurt to any of theirs, he should send the offender, that they might punish him.*
- 25 *3. That if anything were taken away from any of theirs, he should cause it to be restored; and they should do the like to his.*

4. *If any did unjustly war against him, they would aid him; if any did war against them, he should aid them.*
5. *He should send to his neighbors confederates, to certify them of this, that they might not wrong them, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.*
6. *That when their men came to them, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them.*

After these things he returned to his place called Sowams, some forty miles from this place, but Squanto continued with them, and was their interpreter, and was a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation. He directed them how to set their corn, where to take fish, and to procure other commodities, and was also their pilot to bring them to unknown places for their profit, and never left them till he died. He was a native of this place, and scarce any left alive beside himself. He was carried away with diverse others by one Hunt, a master of a ship, who thought to sell them for slaves in Spain; but he got away for England, and was entertained by a merchant in London, and employed to Newfoundland and other parts, and lastly brought hither into these parts by one Mr. Dermer, a gentle-man employed by Sr. Ferdinando Gorges and others, for discovery, and other designs



in these parts. . . .

30 But to return. The spring approaching, it pleased God the mortality began to cease amongst them, and the sick and lame recovered apace, which put as it were new life into them; though they had borne their sad affliction with much patience and contentedness, as I think any people could do. But it was the Lord which upheld them, and had beforehand prepared them; many having long borne the yoke, yea from their youth. Many other smaller matters I omit, sundry of them having been already published in a journal made by one of the company; and some other passages of journeys and relations already published, to which I refer those that are willing to know them more particularly. And being now come to the 25th of March I shall begin the year 1621. Anno. 1621

... Afterwards they (as many as were able) began to plant their corn, in which service Squanto stood them in great stead, showing them both the manner how to set it, and after how to dress and tend it. Also he told them except they got fish and set with it (in these old grounds) it would come to nothing, and he showed them that in the middle of April they should have store enough [of fish] come up the brook, by which they began to build, and taught them how to take it [catch the fish], and where to get other provisions necessary for them; all which they found

true by trial and experience. Some English seed they sew, as wheat and peas, but it came not to good, either by the badness of the seed, or lateness of the season, or both, or some other defect.

In this month of April whilst they were busy about their seed, their Governor (Mr. John Carver) came out of the field very sick, it being a hot day; he complained greatly of his head, and lay down, and within a few hours his senses failed, so as he never spoke more till he died, which was within a few days after. Whose death was much lamented,⁵⁶ and caused great heaviness amongst them, as there was cause. He was buried in the best manner they could, with some volleys of shot by all that bore arms; and his wife, being a weak woman, died within 5 or 6 weeks after him.

Shortly after William Bradford was chosen governor in his stead, and being not yet recovered of his illness, in which he had been near the point of death, Isaak Allerton was chosen to be an assistant unto him, who, by renewed election every year, continued sundry years together. . . .

About the later end of this month, one John Billington lost himself in the woods, and wandered up and down some 5 days, living on berries and what he could find. At length he lit on an Indian plantation, 20 miles south of this place, called Manamet, they conveyed him further off, to Nawsett, among those people that had before set upon the

56. Grieved, sorrowed over.



PART I: THE COLONIAL AGE

57. Venison is deer meat. Meal is roughly ground grain of some sort. A peck is roughly eight quarts.

58. Pretended, fabricated.

English when they were coasting, whilst the ship lay at the Cape, as is before noted. But the Governor caused him to be inquired for among the Indians, and at length Massasoit sent word where he was, and the Governor sent a shallop for him, and had him delivered. Those people also came and made their peace; and they gave full satisfaction to those whose corn they had found and taken when they were at Cape Cod. . . .

35 They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength, and had all things in good plenty; for as some were thus employed in affairs abroad,

others were exercised in fishing, about cod, and bass, and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer there was no want. And now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides water fowl, there was great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides they had about a peck of meal⁵⁷ a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to that proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty here to their friends in England, which were not feigned,⁵⁸ but true reports.

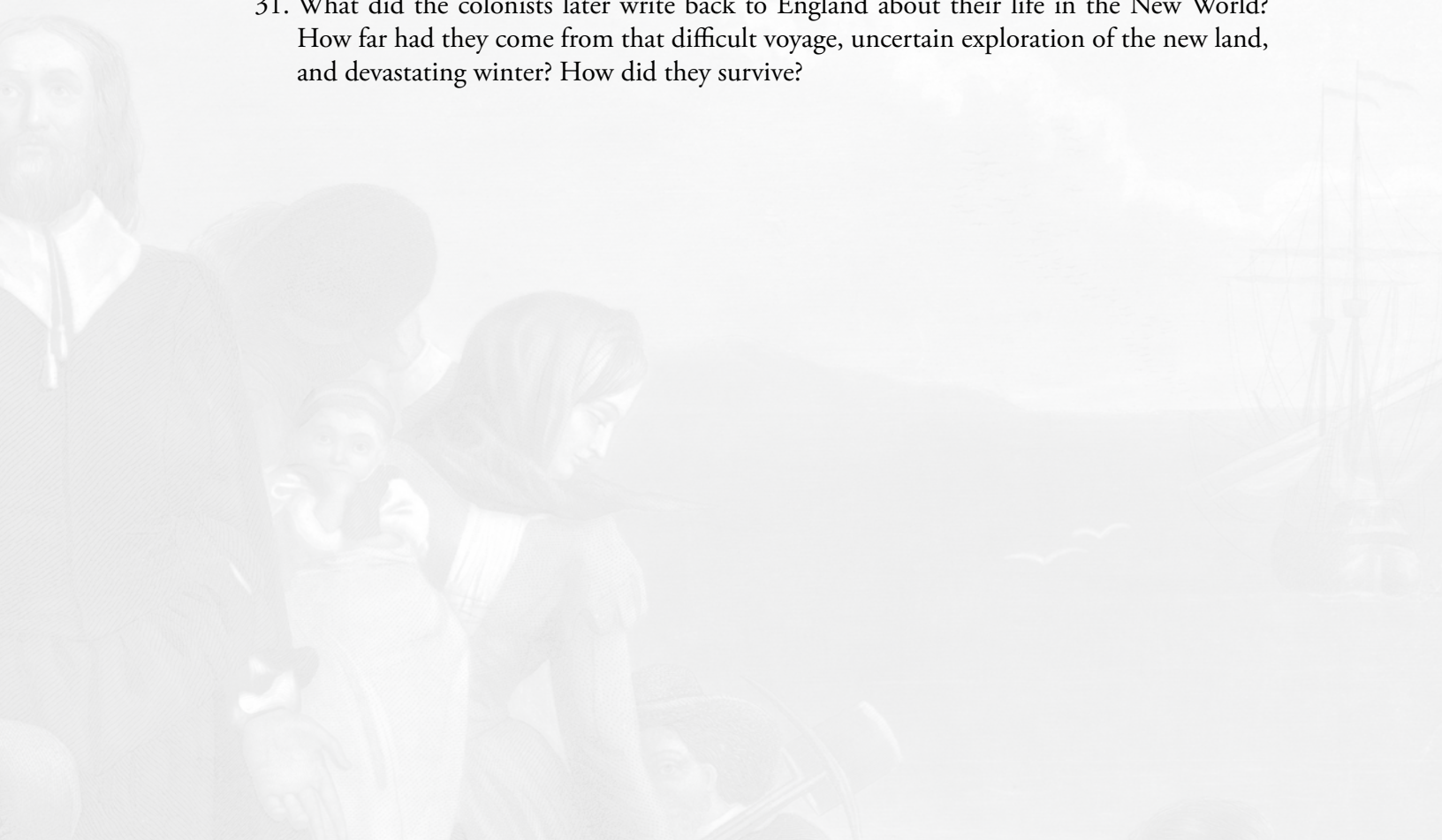


Questions on William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*

1. In two to four sentences, summarize what Bradford says in his second sentence about the ways and the reasons Satan had opposed the Protestant Reformation in England.
2. When these Satanic strategies didn't work, what other "ancient stratagems, used of old against the first Christians" did Satan adopt, according to Bradford?
3. Paragraph 2: Summarize in a couple of sentences why the English Separatists in Bradford's congregation ultimately felt the need to move to Holland.
4. Paragraph 3: In chapter four, what reason does Bradford give for the Separatists' growing sense that they needed to leave Holland and possibly journey to America?
5. What do Bradford's allusions to Cato of Utica and Orpah show us about his own education? (See "Allusion" in the Glossary of Literary Terms.) In what way were the people who wouldn't join the Separatists in Holland like Orpah or the friends of Cato?
6. Paragraph 4: In your own words, write several sentences to summarize the second and third reasons Bradford gives for the need to leave Holland.
7. Paragraph 5: What was Bradford's final reason for leaving Holland for a place like America?
8. Paragraph 7: In a brief paragraph, summarize the arguments against migration that the Separatists considered. In a second paragraph, write about how you would have felt had you faced such difficulties and how you view these Pilgrims who were willing to go ahead and face these hardships. (Note: The Separatists' views of the Native Americans reflect prejudice, but the Separatists believed these things to be true, so their fears were very real to them.)
9. Paragraph 8: In this paragraph Bradford responds to all these concerns about going to the New World. (Keep in mind that Bradford may be expressing the positive arguments in words more powerful than those actually used by the Separatists in their discussions. The arguments as he states them, however, are quite admirable and probably do express at least the mindset of many of the Separatists interested in going.) In several sentences, summarize these arguments and comment on what makes them admirable.
10. Paragraph 9: What special work of God's justice and providence during the voyage does Bradford mention?
11. Paragraph 10: Explain the danger to the Pilgrims generally and the special danger to one unfortunate individual that occurred during the sea voyage. Would these have frightened you? Evaluate this sentence from the paragraph: "So they committed themselves to the will of God, and resolved to proceed."
12. Paragraph 11: Bradford says that the Pilgrims thanked God for their safe arrival in New England but then lists all the disadvantages facing them. What are these?

13. Consider the style of paragraph 12. What book of the Bible does it remind you of?
14. Paragraph 12: Bradford says that “the children of these fathers” ought to pray the prayer contained in this paragraph. Any inhabitants of present-day America are, in a real sense, children of the Pilgrims and have profited by their sacrifice and can benefit from their example. How can this prayer apply to your life? Answer in one to three sentences.
15. Paragraph 13: When describing the reunion of the men in the boat exploring the Cape Cod Bay and the men who were exploring on land, Bradford says “they were very glad, for they had not seen each other all that day, since the morning.” Why would this reunion after just some daylight hours apart be such a big deal to these explorers?
16. Paragraph 13: At the end of the paragraph, Bradford writes that the group was awakened suddenly in the middle of the night by “a hideous and great cry.” What do you think that must have felt like?
17. Paragraph 14: Bradford takes time talking about what the men did with their guns. Some took them down to set beside the boat to be ready for their departure. He says that three or four men kept their guns with them. Others had carefully wrapped their guns in their coats overnight to keep the powder dry. Why do you suppose Bradford spends so much time on these details?
18. Paragraph 14: Why, according to Bradford, did the explorers pursue the Indians for a quarter of a mile? What was particularly amazing about the way the episode turned out, and how did the Pilgrims respond?
19. Paragraph 16: Why, according to Bradford, was it considered necessary to make the agreement that has become known as the Mayflower Compact?
20. Paragraphs 17–18: What makes the Mayflower Compact an early American form of democracy?
21. Write down all the phrases from the Compact that recognize God in some way.
22. Paragraphs 19–20: What early potential problems with disunity or rebellion arose, and how were these overcome?
23. Paragraph 20: Roughly how many of the colonists died this first winter? How many were well during the worst times, and how did they care for the rest of the colonists? Who are the two caretakers that Bradford names? How did God bless these caretakers?
24. Paragraph 21: The *Mayflower* sailors were not connected with the Separatist believers. How, according to Bradford, did they respond differently than the believers did to the illnesses of the colonists and, later, those of their own group? How were the Pilgrims still on the ship able to be a witness to them?
25. Paragraphs 22 and following: In several sentences, summarize the great blessing that occurred in the relationship between the colonists and the Indians. Also, summarize the contents of their peace treaty.

26. How had Squanto learned English? How did he aid the colonists? For how long? Bradford describes him as “a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation.” Do you think Bradford was right? Why or why not?
27. Paragraph 31: Describing the planting of corn, Bradford writes that Squanto “told them except they got fish and set with it (in these old grounds) it would come to nothing.” What does he mean? What would fish have to do with planting corn? How well did the seeds grow when planted in the colony?
28. Paragraphs 32–33: What do we learn about the life the colonists were leading from the account of the deaths of Governor John Carver and his wife? Who was elected in Carver’s place and how long did he remain governor?
29. Paragraph 34: What happened to John Billington? What does his experience tell us about life in the new colony? What good ultimately came out of his adventure?
30. Paragraph 35: Describe the kinds of food the colonists were able to store up in that first good harvest of 1621, the harvest commemorated by our present Thanksgiving Day celebration. What one food item mentioned has become a traditional part of the Thanksgiving Day meal?
31. What did the colonists later write back to England about their life in the New World? How far had they come from that difficult voyage, uncertain exploration of the new land, and devastating winter? How did they survive?





Historically inaccurate portrait of Mary Rowlandson from the second edition of her book.

MARY ROWLANDSON (1617-1711)

By the late seventeenth century, English settlers had built almost ninety towns across the New England frontier. While occasional frictions occurred with the native Algonquin and Narragansett tribes, instances of violence were extremely rare. Treaties and bribes maintained an uneasy peace. Christian missionaries and merchants were free to travel safely through the wilderness, while settlers continued to carve out isolated farms and homesteads from the thick New England forest lands. And as settlements and villages grew, Indian farming and hunting grounds shrunk.

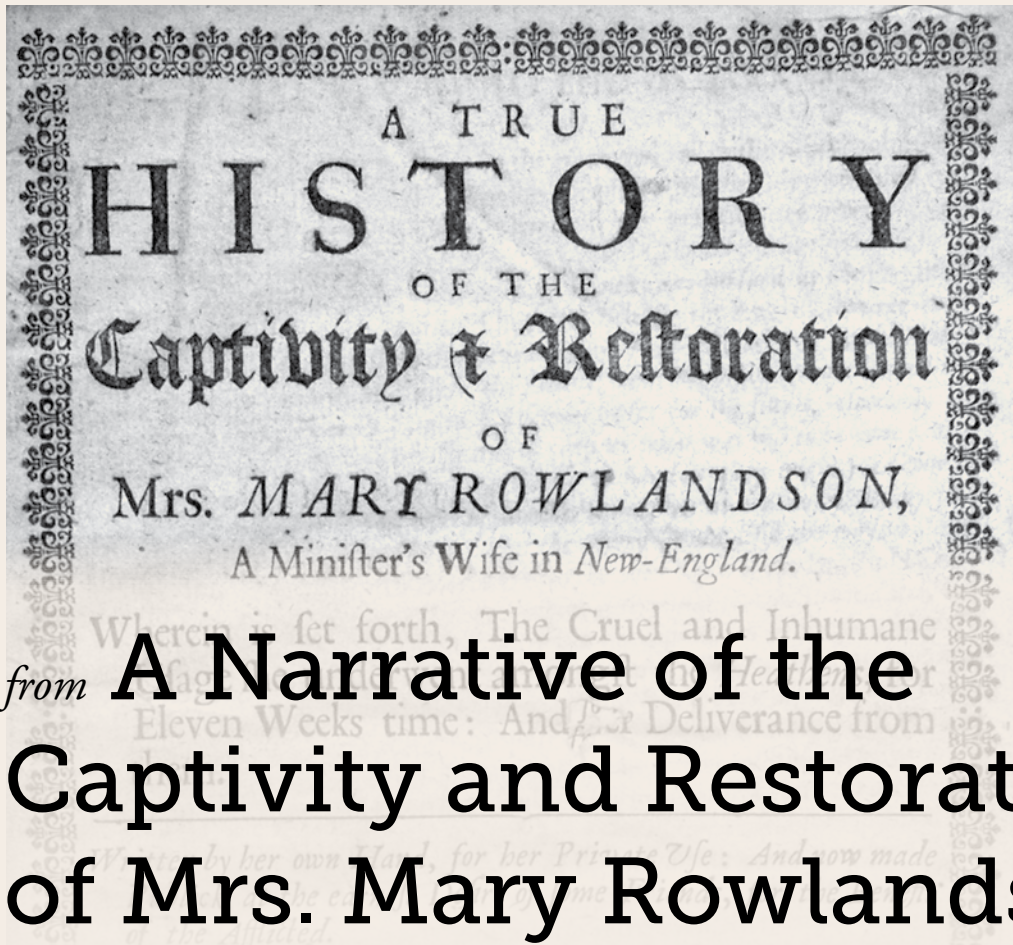
The tribes were not unified and were individually weak, exchanging land easily for iron and weapons. Indians who converted to Christianity were caught between cultures—

most of the time they had to leave their tribes and live with Puritans or in “Praying Towns” set aside to provide sanctuary and English cultural education to the converts. Native peoples considered many of these converts spies and deeply detested them. So when John Sassamon, a native Christian convert, came to Plymouth Plantation with news of a secret plan for an Indian raid, an already tense situation turned bloody. Native American tribesmen murdered Sassamon and dumped his body in a pond. Plymouth authorities were able to apprehend the three men suspected of committing the crime; they were tried by a jury that included three Indians and were hanged.

Justice, however, was not so simple. The three men were Wompanoags under the command of a strong, brutal leader who came to be known as “King Phillip.” Indian raiding parties attacked dozens of towns, burning crops and farms and killing or enslaving hundreds of settlers. Those who were able to escape fled to larger fort towns where colonial militias organized retaliatory strikes on Indian villages. It was a brutal war of ambushes and atrocities on both sides. It was during this conflict that Mary Rowlandson, an English settler in Lancaster, Massachusetts, was kidnapped with her family during an Indian raid.

Early on a frigid winter morning, Lancaster was attacked by a Narragansett raiding party. In the confusion, Mary was separated from her husband and dragged off into the woods with her children. For more than eleven weeks, Rowlandson was held captive in the February snows. Her captors were always on the run from colonial militia, so she was dragged many miles across the wilderness, cold, starving, and traumatized. Her youngest child, Sarah, died of exposure and a gunshot wound incurred during the kidnapping. With only acorns, buckeyes, and carrion for food, Rowlandson underwent many hardships. However, her spirit stayed strong, taking comfort in her Bible and her strong faith in God. She even began to make herself useful by sewing for her captors. By the time she was ransomed, she had lived through a nightmare with remarkable courage, hope, and peace.

Reunited with her family at last, Rowlandson returned to Boston. There she began to write a narrative of her captivity, and this work was published in 1682. Rowlandson’s book was very popular in both the colonies and Great Britain, and it went through four printings that first year, making it one of America’s first “best sellers.” Feeding on the curiosity that most Europeans had of Native Americans, Rowlandson’s memoirs dealt honestly with the hardships she endured, yet she refused to dehumanize her captors. Published in Boston as *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, the work emphasized God’s care for her in the midst of terrible circumstances. In England, the work was published as *The True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* and inspired the publication of many more (fictional) stories about Indian captives surviving against all odds. Indeed, Rowlandson’s story, with its many twists and turns, reads like fiction but is unparalleled in its honesty and influence.



from **A Narrative of the
Captivity and Restoration
of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson**

The sovereignty and goodness of God, together with the faithfulness of his promises displayed, being a narrative of the captivity and restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, commended by her, to all that desires to know the Lord's doings to, and dealings with her. Especially to her dear children and relations. The second addition corrected and amended. Written by her own hand for her private use, and now made public at the earnest desire of some friends, and for the benefit of the afflicted.¹

I make alive, I wound and I heal, neither is there any can deliver out of my hand."

Deuteronomy 32:39

On the tenth of February 1675, came the Indians with great numbers upon Lancaster: their first coming was about sunrise; hearing the noise of some guns, we looked out; several houses were burning, and the smoke ascending to heaven. There were five persons taken in one house; the father, and the mother and a sucking child,² they knocked on the head; the other two they took and carried away alive. There were two others, who being out of their

1. Greatly troubled, in great pain or distress.

2. A nursing child.

garrison upon some occasion were set upon; one was knocked on the head, the other escaped; another there was who running along was shot and wounded, and fell down; he begged of them his life, promising them money (as they told me) but they would not hearken³ to him but knocked him in head, and stripped him naked, and split open his bowels. Another, seeing many of the Indians about his barn, ventured and went out, but was quickly shot down. There were three others belonging to the same garrison who were killed; the Indians getting up upon the roof of the barn, had advantage to shoot down upon them over their fortification. Thus these murderous wretches went on, burning, and destroying before them.

At length they came and beset⁴ our own house, and quickly it was the dolefullest⁵ day that ever mine eyes saw. The house stood upon the edge of a hill; some of the Indians got behind the hill, others into the barn, and others behind anything that could shelter them; from all which places they shot against the house, so that the bullets seemed to fly like hail; and quickly they wounded one man among us, then another, and then a third. About two hours (according to my observation, in that amazing time) they had been about the house before they prevailed to fire it (which they did with flax and hemp,⁶ which they brought out of the barn, and there being no defense about the house, only two flankers at

two opposite corners and one of them not finished); they fired it once and one ventured out and quenched it, but they quickly fired it again, and that took. Now is the dreadful hour come, that I have often heard of (in time of war, as it was the case of others), but now mine eyes see it. Some in our house were fighting for their lives, others wallowing⁷ in their blood, the house on fire over our heads, and the bloody heathen ready to knock us on the head, if we stirred out. Now might we hear mothers and children crying out for themselves, and one another, "Lord, what shall we do?" Then I took my children (and one of my sisters, hers) to go forth and leave the house: but as soon as we came to the door and appeared, the Indians shot so thick that the bullets rattled against the house, as if one had taken an handful of stones and threw them, so that we were fain to give back. We had six stout dogs belonging to our garrison, but none of them would stir, though another time, if any Indian had come to the door, they were ready to fly upon him and tear him down. The Lord hereby would make us the more acknowledge His hand, and to see that our help is always in Him. But out we must go, the fire increasing, and coming along behind us, roaring, and the Indians gaping before us with their guns, spears, and hatchets to devour us. No sooner were we out of the house, but my brother-in-law (being before wounded, in defending the house, in or

3. To listen to.
4. Surrounded.
5. Most sorrowful or gloomy.
6. Dried plant fibers.
7. To roll around or tumble.



PART I: THE COLONIAL AGE

near the throat) fell down dead, whereat the Indians scornfully shouted, and hallowed, and were presently upon him, stripping off his clothes, the bullets flying thick, one went through my side, and the same (as would seem) through the bowels and hand of my dear child in my arms. One of my elder sisters' children, named William, had then his leg broken, which the Indians perceiving, they knocked him on [his] head. Thus were we butchered by those merciless heathen, standing amazed, with the blood running down to our heels. My eldest sister being yet in the house, and seeing those woeful⁸ sights, the infidels⁹ hauling mothers one way, and children another, and some wallowing in their blood: and her elder son telling her that her son William was dead, and myself was wounded, she said, "And Lord, let me die with them," which was no sooner said, but she was struck with a bullet, and fell down dead over the threshold. I hope she is reaping the fruit of her good labors, being faithful to the service of God in her place. In her younger years she lay under much trouble upon spiritual accounts, till it pleased God to make that precious scripture take hold of her heart, "And he said unto me, my Grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12.9). More than twenty years after, I have heard her tell how sweet and comfortable that place was to her. But to return: the Indians laid hold of us, pulling me one way, and the children another, and

said, "Come go along with us"; I told them they would kill me: they answered, if I were willing to go along with them, they would not hurt me.

Oh the doleful sight that now was to behold at this house! "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he has made in the earth." Of thirty-seven persons who were in this one house, none escaped either present death, or a bitter captivity, save only one, who might say as he, "And I only am escaped alone to tell the news" (Job 1:15). There were twelve killed, some shot, some stabbed with their spears, some knocked down with their hatchets. When we are in prosperity, Oh the little that we think of such dreadful sights, and to see our dear friends, and relations lie bleeding out their heart-blood upon the ground. There was one who was chopped into the head with a hatchet, and stripped naked, and yet was crawling up and down. It is a solemn sight to see so many Christians lying in their blood, some here, and some there, like a company of sheep torn by wolves, all of them stripped naked by a company of hell-hounds, roaring, singing, ranting, and insulting, as if they would have torn our very hearts out; yet the Lord by His almighty power preserved a number of us from death, for there were twenty-four of us taken alive and carried captive.

5 I had often before this said that if the Indians should come, I should choose rather to be

8. Sorrowful.

9. Those who do not believe in God or religion.



Map of Mary Rowlandson's captivity.

killed by them than taken alive, but when it came to the trial my mind changed; their glittering weapons so daunted my spirit, that I chose rather to go along with those (as I may say) ravenous¹⁰ beasts, than that moment to end my days; and that I may the better declare what happened to me during that grievous captivity, I shall particularly speak of the several removes we had up and down the wilderness.

THE FIRST REMOVE

Now away we must go with those barbarous¹¹ creatures, with our bodies wounded and bleeding, and our hearts no less than our bodies. About a mile we went that night, up upon a hill within sight of the town, where they intended to lodge. There was hard by a vacant house (deserted by the English before, for fear of the Indians). I asked them whether I might not lodge in the house that night, to which they answered, "What, will you love English men still?" This was the dolefullest night that ever my eyes saw. Oh the roaring, and singing and dancing, and yelling of those black creatures in the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell. And as miserable was the waste that was there made of horses, cattle, sheep, swine, calves, lambs, roasting pigs, and fowl (which they had plundered in the town), some roasting, some lying and burning, and some boiling to feed our merciless enemies; who were joyful enough, though we were disconsolate¹². To add to

the dolefulness of the former day, and the dismalness of the present night, my thoughts ran upon my losses and sad bereaved¹² condition. All was gone, my husband gone (at least separated from me, he being in the Bay; and to add to my grief, the Indians told me they would kill him as he came homeward), my children gone, my relations and friends gone, our house and home and all our comforts—within door and without—all was gone (except my life), and I knew not but the next moment that might go too. There remained nothing to me but one poor wounded babe, and it seemed at present worse than death that it was in such a pitiful condition, bespeaking¹⁴ compassion, and I had no refreshing for it, nor suitable things to revive it. Little do many think what is the savageness and brutishness of this barbarous enemy, Ay, even those that seem to profess more than others among them, when the English have fallen into their hands. . . .

THE SECOND REMOVE

But now, the next morning, I must turn my back upon the town, and travel with them into the vast and desolate wilderness, I knew not whither.¹⁵ It is not my tongue, or pen, can express the sorrows of my heart, and bitterness of my spirit that I had at this departure: but God was with me in a wonderful manner, carrying me along, and bearing up my spirit, that it did not quite fail. One of the Indians carried

10. Having animal-like ferocity, usually in regards to appetite.

11. Barbarian.

12. Unhappy, unable to be consoled.

13. Deprived, lacking.

14. Speaking of or about.

15. Where.



Battle during King Philip's war.

my poor wounded babe upon a horse; it went moaning all along, "I shall die, I shall die." I went on foot after it, with sorrow that cannot be expressed. At length I took it off the horse, and carried it in my arms till my strength failed, and I fell down with it. Then they set me upon a horse with my wounded child in my lap, and there being no furniture¹⁶ upon the horse's back, as we were going down a steep hill we both fell over the horse's head, at which they, like inhumane creatures, laughed, and rejoiced to see it, though I thought we should there have ended our days, as overcome with so many difficulties. But the Lord renewed my strength still, and carried me along, that I might see more of His power; yea, so much that I could never have thought of, had I not experienced it.

After this it quickly began to snow, and when night came on, they stopped, and now down I must sit in the snow, by a little fire, and a few boughs¹⁷ behind me, with my sick child in my lap; and calling much for water, being now (through the wound) fallen into a violent fever. My own wound also growing so stiff that I could scarce sit down or rise up; yet so it must be, that I must sit all this cold winter night upon the cold snowy ground, with my sick child in my arms, looking that every hour would be the last of its life; and having no Christian friend near me, either to comfort or help me. Oh, I may see the wonderful power of God, that my Spirit did not utterly sink

under my affliction: still the Lord upheld me with His gracious and merciful spirit, and we were both alive to see the light of the next morning.

THE THIRD REMOVE

The morning being come, they prepared to go on their way. One of the Indians got up upon a horse, and they set me up behind him, with my poor sick babe in my lap. A very wearisome and tedious day I had of it; what with my own wound, and my child's being so exceeding sick, and in a lamentable¹⁸ condition with her wound. It may be easily judged what a poor feeble condition we were in, there being not the least crumb of refreshing that came within either of our mouths from Wednesday night to Saturday night, except only a little cold water. This day in the afternoon, about an hour by sun, we came to the place where they intended, viz.¹⁹ an Indian town, called Wenimesset, northward of Quabaug. When we were come, Oh the number of pagans (now merciless enemies) that there came about me, that I may say as David, "I had fainted, unless I had believed, etc." (Psalm 27:13). The next day was the Sabbath. I then remembered how careless I had been of God's holy time; how many Sabbaths I had lost and misspent, and how evilly I had walked in God's sight; which lay so close unto my spirit, that it was easy for me to see how righteous it was with God to cut off the thread of my life and cast me out of His

16. Saddle or bridle that the rider could hold onto.

17. Tree limbs.

18. Sad, pitiful.

19. That is, or namely.



Site of Mary Rowlandson's abduction.

presence forever. Yet the Lord still showed mercy to me, and upheld me; and as He wounded me with one hand, so he healed me with the other. This day there came to me one Robert Pepper (a man belonging to Roxbury) who was taken in Captain Beers's fight, and had been now a considerable time with the Indians; and up with them almost as far as Albany, to see King Philip, as he told me, and was now very lately come into these parts. Hearing, I say, that I was in this Indian town, he obtained leave to come and see me. He told me he himself was wounded in the leg at Captain Beer's fight; and was not able some time to go, but as they carried him, and as he took oaken leaves and laid to his wound, and through the blessing of God he was able to travel again. Then I took oaken leaves and laid to my side, and with the blessing of God it cured me also; yet before the cure was wrought, I may say, as it is in Psalm 38:5-6 "My wounds stink and are corrupt, I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long." I sat much alone with a poor wounded child in my lap, which moaned night and day, having nothing to revive the body, or cheer the spirits of her, but instead of that, sometimes one Indian would come and tell me one hour that "your master will knock your child in the head," and then a second, and then a third, "your master will quickly knock your child in the head."

10 This was the comfort I had from them, miserable

comforters are ye all, as he said. Thus nine days I sat upon my knees, with my babe in my lap, till my flesh was raw again; my child being even ready to depart this sorrowful world, they bade me carry it out to another wigwam²⁰ (I suppose because they would not be troubled with such spectacles) whither I went with a very heavy heart, and down I sat with the picture of death in my lap. About two hours in the night, my sweet babe like a lamb departed this life on Feb. 18, 1675. It being about six years, and five months old. It was nine days from the first wounding, in this miserable condition, without any refreshing of one nature or other, except a little cold water. I cannot but take notice how at another time I could not bear to be in the room where any dead person was, but now the case is changed; I must and could lie down by my dead babe, side by side all the night after. I have thought since of the wonderful goodness of God to me in preserving me in the use of my reason and senses in that distressed time, that I did not use wicked and violent means to end my own miserable life. In the morning, when they understood that my child was dead they sent for me home to my master's wigwam (by my master in this writing, must be understood Quinnapin, who was a Sagamore, and married King Philip's wife's sister; not that he first took me, but I was sold to him by another Narragansett Indian, who took me when first I came out of the garrison). I went to take

20. A dome-shaped dwelling.



21. This is probably a Native American who had professed Christian faith.

22. She is quoting Genesis 42:36. In this verse the Israelite patriarch Jacob laments because he thinks he has lost his son Joseph (whom the brothers had reported dead years ago) and Simeon, whom Joseph, now ruler of Egypt though unrecognized by his brothers, has detained in Egypt. Further, Joseph has asked that the brothers bring Benjamin with them back into Egypt, so Jacob now fears losing a third son as well.

23. Addressed with the intent of making a request.

24. State, situation.

25. Group.

26. A respectful term for a woman, generally one in a position of authority.

27. True, genuine.

up my dead child in my arms to carry it with me, but they bid me let it alone; there was no resisting, but go I must and leave it. When I had been at my master's wigwam, I took the first opportunity I could get to go look after my dead child. When I came I asked them what they had done with it; then they told me it was upon the hill. Then they went and showed me where it was, where I saw the ground was newly digged, and there they told me they had buried it. There I left that child in the wilderness, and must commit it, and myself also in this wilderness condition, to Him who is above all. God having taken away this dear child, I went to see my daughter Mary, who was at this same Indian town, at a wigwam not very far off, though we had little liberty or opportunity to see one another. She was about ten years old, and taken from the door at first by a Praying Indian²¹ and afterward sold for a gun. When I came in sight, she would fall a-weeping; at which they were provoked, and would not let me come near her, but bade me be gone; which was a heart-cutting word to me. I had one child dead, another in the wilderness, I knew not where, the third they would not let me come near to: "Me (as he said) have ye bereaved of my Children, Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin also, all these things are against me."²² I could not sit still in this condition, but kept walking from one place to another. And as I was going along, my heart was even overwhelmed with

the thoughts of my condition, and that I should have children, and a nation which I knew not, ruled over them. Whereupon I earnestly entreated²³ the Lord, that He would consider my low estate²⁴, and show me a token for good, and if it were His blessed will, some sign and hope of some relief. And indeed quickly the Lord answered, in some measure, my poor prayers; for as I was going up and down mourning and lamenting my condition, my son came to me, and asked me how I did. I had not seen him before, since the destruction of the town, and I knew not where he was, till I was informed by himself, that he was amongst a smaller parcel²⁵ of Indians, whose place was about six miles off. With tears in his eyes, he asked me whether his sister Sarah was dead; and told me he had seen his sister Mary; and prayed me, that I would not be troubled in reference to himself. The occasion of his coming to see me at this time, was this: there was, as I said, about six miles from us, a small plantation of Indians, where it seems he had been during his captivity; and at this time, there were some forces of the Indians gathered out of our company, and some also from them (among whom was my son's master) to go to assault and burn Medfield. In this time of the absence of his master, his dame²⁶ brought him to see me. I took this to be some gracious answer to my earnest and unfeigned²⁷ desire. The next day, viz. to this, the Indians returned from Medfield, all the

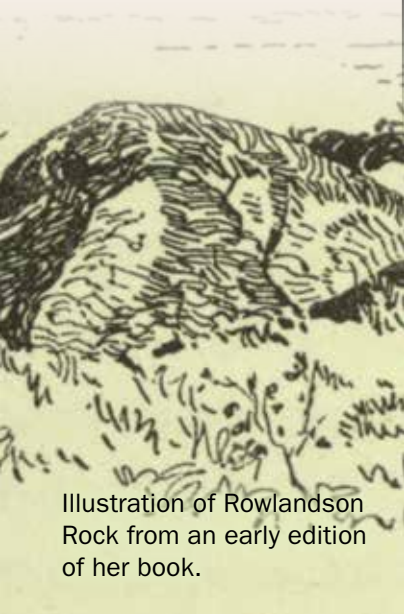


Illustration of Rowlandson Rock from an early edition of her book.

company, for those that belonged to the other small company, came through the town that now we were at. But before they came to us, Oh! the outrageous roaring and hooping that there was. They began their din²⁸ about a mile before they came to us. By their noise and hooping they signified how many they had destroyed (which was at that time twenty-three). Those that were with us at home were gathered together as soon as they heard the hooping, and every time that the other went over their number, these at home gave a shout, that the very earth rung again. And thus they continued till those that had been upon the expedition were come up to the Sagamore's wigwam; and then, Oh, the hideous insulting and triumphing that there was over some Englishmen's scalps that they had taken (as their manner is) and brought with them. I cannot but take notice of the wonderful mercy of God to me in those afflictions, in sending me a Bible. One of the Indians that came from Medfield fight, had brought some plunder, came to me, and asked me, if I would have a Bible, he had got one in his basket. I was glad of it, and asked him, whether he thought the Indians would let me read? He answered, yes. So I took the Bible, and in that melancholy²⁹ time, it came into my mind to read first the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, which I did, and when I had read it, my dark heart wrought³⁰ on this manner: that there was no mercy for me, that the blessings

were gone, and the curses come in their room, and that I had lost my opportunity. But the Lord helped me still to go on reading till I came to Chap. 30, the seven first verses, where I found, there was mercy promised again, if we would return to Him by repentance; and though we were scattered from one end of the earth to the other, yet the Lord would gather us together, and turn all those curses upon our enemies. I do not desire to live to forget this Scripture, and what comfort it was to me.

Now the Indians began to talk of removing from this place, some one way, and some another. There were now besides myself nine English captives in this place (all of them children, except one woman). I got an opportunity to go and take my leave of them. They being to go one way, and I another, I asked them whether they were earnest with God for deliverance. They told me they did as they were able, and it was some comfort to me, that the Lord stirred up children to look to Him. The woman, viz. goodwife³¹ Joslin, told me she should never see me again, and that she could find in her heart to run away. I wished her not to run away by any means, for we were near thirty miles from any English town, and she very big with child, and had but one week to reckon, and another child in her arms, two years old, and bad rivers there were to go over, and we were feeble³², with our poor and coarse entertainment.³³ I had my Bible with me, I pulled it out, and asked her whether she

28. Loud and confused noise.

29. Depressing, sad.

30. Thought, pondered.

31. A mistress of a household.

32. Weak.

33. By "entertainment" here Rowlandson is referring to the way the Indians have treated them—the lack of decent food, rest, and medical care.



would read. We opened the Bible and lighted on Psalm 27, in which Psalm we especially took notice of that, ver. ult., "Wait on the Lord, Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine Heart, wait I say on the Lord."

THE FOURTH REMOVE

And now I must part with that little company I had. Here I parted from my daughter Mary (whom I never saw again till I saw her in Dorchester, returned from captivity), and from four little cousins and neighbors, some of which I never saw afterward: the Lord only knows the end of them. Amongst them also was that poor woman before mentioned, who came to a sad end, as some of the company told me in my travel: she having much grief upon her spirit about her miserable condition, being so near her time, she would be often asking the Indians to let her go home; they not being willing to that, and yet vexed with her importunity, gathered a great company together about her and stripped her naked, and set her in the midst of them, and when they had sung and danced about her (in their hellish manner) as long as they pleased they knocked her on head, and the child in her arms with her. When they had done that they made a fire and put them both into it, and told the other children that were with them that if they attempted to go home, they would serve them in like manner. The children said she did not shed one tear, but prayed all the while. But to return to my

own journey, we traveled about half a day or little more, and came to a desolate place in the wilderness, where there were no wigwams or inhabitants before; we came about the middle of the afternoon to this place, cold and wet, and snowy, and hungry, and weary, and no refreshing for man but the cold ground to sit on, and our poor Indian cheer.

Heart-aching thoughts here I had about my poor children, who were scattered up and down among the wild beasts of the forest. My head was light and dizzy (either through hunger or hard lodging, or trouble or all together), my knees feeble, my body raw by sitting double night and day, that I cannot express to man the affliction that lay upon my spirit, but the Lord helped me at that time to express it to Himself. I opened my Bible to read, and the Lord brought that precious Scripture to me. "Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy" (Jeremiah 31:16). This was a sweet cordial³⁴ to me when I was ready to faint; many and many a time have I sat down and wept sweetly over this Scripture. At this place we continued about four days. . . .

THE EIGHTH REMOVE

On the morrow morning we must go over the river, i.e. Connecticut, to meet with King Philip.³⁵ Two canoes full they had carried over; the next turn I myself was

34. Good-smelling food or drink that is good for the heart.

35. This is the Indian chief Metacom, who was ordering and leading all these Indian raids in which white people were killed and captured.

to go. But as my foot was upon the canoe to step in there was a sudden outcry among them, and I must step back, and instead of going over the river, I must go four or five miles up the river farther northward. Some of the Indians ran one way, and some another. The cause of this rout was, as I thought, their espying some English scouts, who were thereabout. In this travel up the river about noon the company made a stop, and sat down; some to eat, and others to rest them. As I sat amongst them, musing of things past, my son Joseph unexpectedly came to me. We asked of each other's welfare, bemoaning³⁶ our doleful condition, and the change that had come upon us. We had husband and father, and children, and sisters, and friends, and relations, and house, and home, and many comforts of this life: but now we may say, as Job, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return: the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." I asked him whether he would read. He told me he earnestly desired it, I gave him my Bible, and he lighted upon that comfortable Scripture "I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord: the Lord hath chastened me sore yet he hath not given me over to death" (Psalm 118:17-18). "Look here, mother," says he, "did you read this?" And here I may take occasion to mention one principal ground of my setting forth these lines: even as the psalmist says, to

declare the works of the Lord, and His wonderful power in carrying us along, preserving us in the wilderness, while under the enemy's hand, and returning of us in safety again. And His goodness in bringing to my hand so many comfortable and suitable scriptures in my distress. But to return, we traveled on till night; and in the morning, we must go over the river to Philip's crew. When I was in the canoe I could not but be amazed at the numerous crew of pagans that were on the bank on the other side. When I came ashore, they gathered all about me, I sitting alone in the midst. I observed they asked one another questions, and laughed, and rejoiced over their gains and victories. Then my heart began to fail: and I fell a-weeping, which was the first time to my remembrance, that I wept before them. Although I had met with so much affliction, and my heart was many times ready to break, yet could I not shed one tear in their sight; but rather had been all this while in a maze, and like one astonished. But now I may say as Psalm 137:1, "By the Rivers of Babylon, there we sate down: yea, we wept when we remembered Zion." There one of them asked me why I wept. I could hardly tell what to say: Yet I answered, they would kill me. "No," said he, "none will hurt you." Then came one of them and gave me two spoonfuls of meal to comfort me, and another gave me half a pint of peas; which was more worth than many bushels

36. Weeping or mourning about.



37. A married male.

at another time. Then I went to see King Philip. He bade me come in and sit down, and asked me whether I would smoke it (a usual compliment nowadays amongst saints and sinners) but this no way suited me. For though I had formerly used tobacco, yet I had left it ever since I was first taken. It seems to be a bait the devil lays to make men lose their precious time. I remember with shame how formerly, when I had taken two or three pipes, I was presently ready for another, such a bewitching thing it is. But I thank God, He has now given me power over it; surely there are many who may be better employed than to lie sucking a stinking tobacco-pipe.

15 Now the Indians gather their forces to go against Northampton. Over night one went about yelling and hooting to give notice of the design. Whereupon they fell to boiling of ground nuts, and parching of corn (as many as had it) for their provision; and in the morning away they went. During my abode in this place, Philip spake to me to make a shirt for his boy, which I did, for which he gave me a shilling. I offered the money to my master, but he bade me keep it; and with it I bought a piece of horse flesh. Afterwards he asked me to make a cap for his boy, for which he invited me to dinner. I went, and he gave me a pancake, about as big as two fingers. It was made of parched wheat, beaten, and fried in bear's grease, but I thought I never tasted pleasanter meat in my life. There was a

squaw who spake to me to make a shirt for her sannup³⁷, for which she gave me a piece of bear. Another asked me to knit a pair of stockings, for which she gave me a quart of peas. I boiled my peas and bear together, and invited my master and mistress to dinner; but the proud gossip, because I served them both in one dish, would eat nothing, except one bit that he gave her upon the point of his knife. Hearing that my son was come to this place, I went to see him, and found him lying flat upon the ground. I asked him how he could sleep so? He answered me that he was not asleep, but at prayer; and lay so, that they might not observe what he was doing. I pray God he may remember these things now he is returned in safety. At this place (the sun now getting higher) what with the beams and heat of the sun, and the smoke of the wigwams, I thought I should have been blind. I could scarce discern one wigwam from another. There was here one Mary Thurston of Medfield, who seeing how it was with me, lent me a hat to wear; but as soon as I was gone, the squaw (who owned that Mary Thurston) came running after me, and got it away again. Here was the squaw that gave me one spoonful of meal. I put it in my pocket to keep it safe. Yet notwithstanding, somebody stole it, but put five Indian corns in the room of it; which corns were the greatest provisions I had in my travel for one day.

The Indians returning from Northampton, brought with



Metacomb, also known as King Philip.

them some horses, and sheep, and other things which they had taken; I desired them that they would carry me to Albany upon one of those horses, and sell me for powder: for so they had sometimes discoursed. I was utterly hopeless of getting home on foot, the way that I came. I could hardly bear to think of the many weary steps I had taken, to come to this place. . . .

THE TWELFTH REMOVE

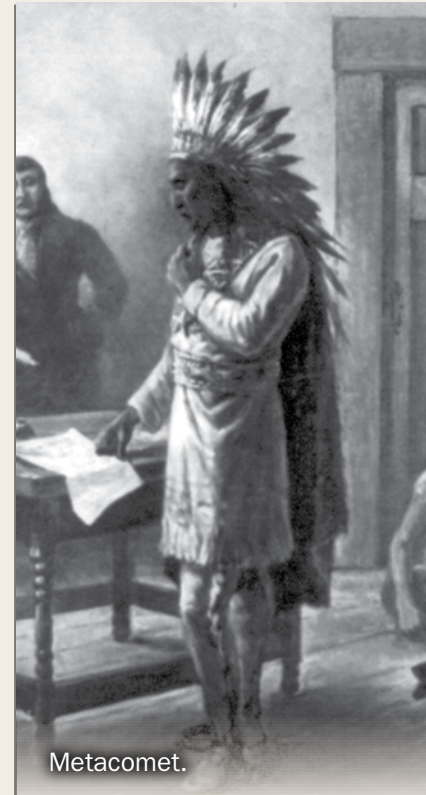
It was upon a Sabbath-day-morning, that they prepared for their travel. This morning I asked my master whether he would sell me to my husband. He answered me "Nux," which did much rejoice my spirit. My mistress, before we went, was gone to the burial of a papoose, and returning, she found me sitting and reading in my Bible; she snatched it hastily out of my hand, and threw it out of doors. I ran out and caught it up, and put it into my pocket, and never let her see it afterward. Then they packed up their things to be gone, and gave me my load. I complained it was too heavy, whereupon she gave me a slap in the face, and bade me go; I lifted up my heart to God, hoping the redemption was not far off; and the rather because their insolency³⁸ grew worse and worse.

But the thoughts of my going homeward (for so we bent our course) much cheered my spirit, and made my burden seem light, and almost nothing at all. But (to my amazement and great perplexity) the scale was soon

turned; for when we had gone a little way, on a sudden my mistress gives out; she would go no further, but turn back again, and said I must go back again with her, and she called her sannup, and would have had him gone back also, but he would not, but said he would go on, and come to us again in three days. My spirit was, upon this, I confess, very impatient, and almost outrageous. I thought I could as well have died as went back; I cannot declare the trouble that I was in about it; but yet back again I must go. As soon as I had the opportunity, I took my Bible to read, and that quieting Scripture came to my hand, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Which stilled my spirit for the present. . . .

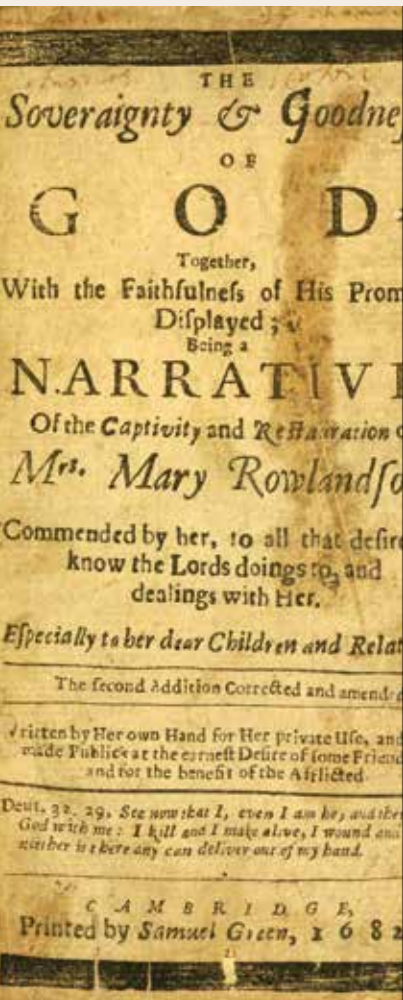
THE FOURTEENTH REMOVE

Now must we pack up and be gone from this thicket, bending our course toward the Baytowns; I having nothing to eat by the way this day, but a few crumbs of cake, that an Indian gave my girl the same day we were taken. She gave it me, and I put it in my pocket; there it lay, till it was so moldy (for want of good baking) that one could not tell what it was made of; it fell all to crumbs, and grew so dry and hard, that it was like little flints; and this refreshed me many times, when I was ready to faint. It was in my thoughts when I put it into my mouth, that if ever I returned, I would tell the world what a blessing the Lord gave to such mean food. As we went along they killed a deer,



Metacomet.

38. Arrogance, spitefulness.



39. Careful, particular.

40. Sexual impurity. She is thanking God that none of the Indians molested her sexually or raped her.

with a young one in her, they gave me a piece of the fawn, and it was so young and tender, that one might eat the bones as well as the flesh, and yet I thought it very good. When night came on we sat down; it rained, but they quickly got up a bark wigwam, where I lay dry that night. I looked out in the morning, and many of them had lain in the rain all night, I saw by their reeking. Thus the Lord dealt mercifully with me many times, and I fared better than many of them. In the morning they took the blood of the deer, and put it into the paunch, and so boiled it. I could eat nothing of that, though they ate it sweetly. And yet they were so nice³⁹ in other things, that when I had fetched water, and had put the dish I dipped the water with into the kettle of water which I brought, they would say they would knock me down; for they said, it was a sluttish trick. . . .

THE TWENTIETH REMOVE

20 . . . On Tuesday morning they called their general court (as they call it) to consult and determine, whether I should go home or no. And they all as one man did seemingly consent to it, that I should go home; except Philip, who would not come among them.

But to return again to my going home, where we may see a remarkable change of providence. At first they were all against it, except my husband would come for me, but afterwards they assented to it, and seemed much

to rejoice in it; some asked me to send them some bread, others some tobacco, others shaking me by the hand, offering me a hood and scarf to ride in; not one moving hand or tongue against it. Thus hath the Lord answered my poor desire, and the many earnest requests of others put up unto God for me. In my travels an Indian came to me and told me, if I were willing, he and his squaw would run away, and go home along with me. I told him no: I was not willing to run away, but desired to wait God's time, that I might go home quietly, and without fear. And now God hath granted me my desire. O the wonderful power of God that I have seen, and the experience that I have had. I have been in the midst of those roaring lions, and savage bears, that feared neither God, nor man, nor the devil, by night and day, alone and in company, sleeping all sorts together, and yet not one of them ever offered me the least abuse of unchastity⁴⁰ to me, in word or action. Though some are ready to say I speak it for my own credit; but I speak it in the presence of God, and to His Glory. God's power is as great now, and as sufficient to save, as when He preserved Daniel in the lion's den; or the three children in the fiery furnace. I may well say as his Psalm 107:12, "Oh give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, especially that I should come away in the midst

of so many hundreds of enemies quietly and peaceably, and not a dog moving his tongue. So I took my leave of them, and in coming along my heart melted into tears, more than all the while I was with them, and I was almost swallowed up with the thoughts that ever I should go home again. About the sun going down, Mr. Hoar, and myself, and the two Indians came to Lancaster, and a solemn sight it was to me. There had I lived many comfortable years amongst my relations and neighbors, and now not one Christian to be seen, nor one house left standing. We went on to a farmhouse that was yet standing, where we lay all night, and a comfortable lodging we had, though nothing but straw to lie on. The Lord preserved us in safety that night, and raised us up again in the morning, and carried us along, that before noon, we came to Concord. Now was I full of joy, and yet not without sorrow; joy to see such a lovely sight, so many Christians together, and some of them my neighbors. There I met with my brother, and my brother-in-law, who asked me, if I knew where his wife was? Poor heart! he had helped to bury her, and knew it not. She being shot down by the house was partly burnt, so that those who were at Boston at the desolation⁴¹ of the town, and came back afterward, and buried the dead, did not know her. Yet I was not without sorrow, to think how many were looking and longing, and my own children amongst the rest, to enjoy that deliverance that I had

now received, and I did not know whether ever I should see them again. Being recruited with food and raiment we went to Boston that day, where I met with my dear husband, but the thoughts of our dear children, one being dead, and the other we could not tell where, abated our comfort each to other. I was not before so much hemmed in with the merciless and cruel heathen, but now as much with pitiful, tender-hearted and compassionate Christians. In that poor, and distressed, and beggarly condition I was received in; I was kindly entertained in several houses. So much love I received from several (some of whom I knew, and others I knew not) that I am not capable to declare it. But the Lord knows them all by name. The Lord reward them sevenfold into their bosoms of His spirituals, for their temporals.⁴² The twenty pounds, the price of my redemption, was raised by some Boston gentlemen, and Mrs. Usher, whose bounty and religious charity, I would not forget to make mention of. Then Mr. Thomas Shepard of Charlestown received us into his house, where we continued eleven weeks; and a father and mother they were to us. And many more tender-hearted friends we met with in that place. We were now in the midst of love, yet not without much and frequent heaviness of heart for our poor children, and other relations, who were still in affliction.⁴³ The week following, after my coming in, the governor and council sent



Settlers protecting against an Indian attack during King Philip's war.

41. Destruction.

42. Rowlandson seems to be asking God to reward these kind people with great spiritual blessings for their temporal (worldly, physical) kindness and sacrifice.

43. Suffering.

forth to the Indians again; and that not without success; for they brought in my sister, and goodwife Kettle. Their not knowing where our children were was a sore trial to us still, and yet we were not without secret hopes that we should see them again. That which was dead lay heavier upon my spirit, than those which were alive and amongst the heathen: thinking how it suffered with its wounds, and I was no way able to relieve it; and how it was buried by the heathen in the wilderness from among all Christians. We were hurried up and down in our thoughts, sometime we should hear a report that they were gone this way, and sometimes that; and that they were come in, in this place or that. We kept inquiring and listening to hear concerning them, but no certain news as yet. About this time the council had ordered a day of public thanksgiving. Though I thought I had still cause of mourning, and being unsettled in our minds, we thought we would ride toward the eastward, to see if we could hear anything concerning our children. And as we were riding along (God is the wise disposer of all things) between Ipswich and Rowley we met with Mr. William Hubbard, who told us that our son Joseph was come in to Major Waldron's, and another with him, which was my sister's son. I asked him how he knew it? He said the major himself told him so. So along we went till we came to Newbury; and their minister being absent, they desired my husband

to preach the thanksgiving for them; but he was not willing to stay there that night, but would go over to Salisbury, to hear further, and come again in the morning, which he did, and preached there that day. At night, when he had done, one came and told him that his daughter was come in at Providence. Here was mercy on both hands. Now hath God fulfilled that precious Scripture which was such a comfort to me in my distressed condition. When my heart was ready to sink into the earth (my children being gone, I could not tell whither) and my knees trembling under me, and I was walking through the valley of the shadow of death; then the Lord brought, and now has fulfilled that reviving word unto me: "Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for thy Work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the Land of the Enemy." Now we were between them, the one on the east, and the other on the west. Our son being nearest, we went to him first, to Portsmouth, where we met with him, and with the Major also, who told us he had done what he could, but could not redeem him under seven pounds, which the good people thereabouts were pleased to pay. The Lord reward the major, and all the rest, though unknown to me, for their labor of Love. My sister's son was redeemed for four pounds, which the council gave order for the payment of. Having now received one of our children,

we hastened toward the other. Going back through Newbury my husband preached there on the Sabbath day; for which they rewarded him many fold.

On Monday we came to Charlestown, where we heard that the governor of Rhode Island had sent over for our daughter, to take care of her, being now within his jurisdiction; which should not pass without our acknowledgments. But she being nearer Rehoboth than Rhode Island, Mr. Newman went over, and took care of her and brought her to his own house. And the goodness of God was admirable to us in our low estate, in that He raised up passionate friends on every side to us, when we had nothing to recompense any for their love. The Indians were now gone that way, that it was apprehended dangerous to go to her. But the carts which carried provision to the English army, being guarded, brought her with them to Dorchester, where we received her safe. Blessed be the Lord for it, for great is His power, and He can do whatsoever seemeth Him good. Her coming in was after this manner: she was traveling one day with the Indians, with her basket at her back; the company of Indians were got before her, and gone out of sight, all except one squaw; she followed the squaw till night, and then both of them lay down, having nothing over them but the heavens and under them but the earth. Thus she traveled three days together, not knowing whither

she was going; having nothing to eat or drink but water, and green hirtle-berries. At last they came into Providence, where she was kindly entertained by several of that town. The Indians often said that I should never have her under twenty pounds. But now the Lord hath brought her in upon free-cost, and given her to me the second time. The Lord make us a blessing indeed, each to others. Now have I seen that Scripture also fulfilled, "If any of thine be driven out to the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them which hate thee, which persecuted thee" (Deuteronomy 30:4-7). Thus hath the Lord brought me and mine out of that horrible pit, and hath set us in the midst of tender-hearted and compassionate Christians. It is the desire of my soul that we may walk worthy of the mercies received, and which we are receiving.

Our family being now gathered together (those of us that were living), the South Church in Boston hired a house for us. Then we removed from Mr. Shepard's, those cordial friends, and went to Boston, where we continued about three-quarters of a year. Still the Lord went along with us, and provided graciously for us. I thought it somewhat strange to set up house-keeping with bare walls; but as Solomon says, "Money answers all things" and that we had through the



Metacombet.

benevolence of Christian friends, some in this town, and some in that, and others; and some from England; that in a little time we might look, and see the house furnished with love. The Lord hath been exceeding good to us in our low estate, in that when we had neither house nor home, nor other necessaries, the Lord so moved the hearts of these and those towards us, that we wanted neither food, nor raiment for ourselves or ours: "There is a Friend which sticketh closer than a Brother" (Proverbs 18:24). And how many such friends have we found, and now living amongst? And truly such a friend have we found him to be unto us, in whose house we lived, viz. Mr. James Whitcomb, a friend unto us near hand, and afar off.

I can remember the time when I used to sleep quietly without workings in my thoughts, whole nights together, but now it is other ways with me. When all are fast about me, and no eye open, but His who ever waketh, my thoughts are upon things past, upon the awful dispensation⁴⁴ of the Lord towards us, upon His wonderful power and might, in carrying of us through so many difficulties, in returning us in safety, and suffering none to hurt us. I remember in the night season, how the other day I was in the midst of thousands of enemies, and nothing but death before me. It was then hard work to persuade myself, that ever I should be satisfied with bread again. But now we are fed with the

finest of the wheat, and, as I may say, with honey out of the rock. Instead of the husk, we have the fatted calf. The thoughts of these things in the particulars of them, and of the love and goodness of God towards us, make it true of me, what David said of himself, "I watered my Couch with my tears" (Psalm 6:6). Oh! the wonderful power of God that mine eyes have seen, affording matter enough for my thoughts to run in, that when others are sleeping mine eyes are weeping.

25 I have seen the extreme vanity of this world: One hour I have been in health, and wealthy, wanting nothing. But the next hour in sickness and wounds, and death, having nothing but sorrow and affliction.

Before I knew what affliction meant, I was ready sometimes to wish for it. When I lived in prosperity, having the comforts of the world about me, my relations by me, my heart cheerful, and taking little care for anything, and yet seeing many, whom I preferred before myself, under many trials and afflictions, in sickness, weakness, poverty, losses, crosses, and cares of the world, I should be sometimes jealous lest I should have my portion in this life, and that Scripture would come to my mind, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6). But now I see the Lord had His time to scourge and chasten me.⁴⁵ The portion of some is to have their afflictions by drops,

44. Giving out or distributing; dispensing.

45. To punish, for the good of the one receiving punishment.

now one drop and then another; but the dregs of the cup, the wine of astonishment, like a sweeping rain that leaveth no food, did the Lord prepare to be my portion. Affliction I wanted, and affliction I had, full measure (I thought), pressed down and running over. Yet I see, when God calls a person to anything, and through never so many difficulties, yet He is fully able to carry them through and make them see, and say they have been gainers thereby. And I hope I can say in some measure, as David did, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." The Lord hath showed me the vanity of these outward things. That they are the vanity of vanities, and vexation⁴⁶

of spirit, that they are but a shadow, a blast, a bubble, and things of no continuance. That we must rely on God Himself, and our whole dependence must be upon Him. If trouble from smaller matters begin to arise in me, I have something at hand to check myself with, and say, why am I troubled? It was but the other day that if I had had the world, I would have given it for my freedom, or to have been a servant to a Christian. I have learned to look beyond present and smaller troubles, and to be quieted under them. As Moses said, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (Exodus 14:13).

Finis.

46.Irritation



Redemption Rock, where the release of Mary Rowlandson was negotiated.
Photo: Sfoskett (CC-BY-SA 2.5).

Questions on *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*

1. Paragraph 1: What is Rowlandson trying to communicate to the reader by quoting Deuteronomy 32:39?
2. Paragraph 3: Why do you think Rowlandson quotes 2 Corinthians 12:9 as she describes her sister's death?
3. Paragraph 6: What is Rowlandson particularly sorrowful about with regard to her family that first night of her captivity, where she stays just a mile from her home?
4. Paragraphs 7–8: Rowlandson writes at the end of the Second Remove, “Oh, I may see the wonderful power of God, that my Spirit did not utterly sink under my affliction: still the Lord upheld me with His gracious and merciful spirit, and we were both alive to see the light of the next morning.” Describe a couple of scenes from this first captive journey that might have caused her to despair.
5. Paragraph 9: As they come to a Native American “town,” Rowlandson describes one source of comfort, one source of guilt, and at least two sources of grief. List each of these.
6. Paragraph 10: At one point in this long paragraph, Rowlandson writes, “I could not sit still in this condition, but kept walking from one place to another.” Her words are an understatement. From the rest of the paragraph we can see that she is literally frantic with grief and worry, so upset that she literally cannot be physically still. She quotes the lament of Jacob in Genesis, when he believes he has lost three sons. What has happened regarding her wounded youngest daughter? What is she deprived of doing with her other daughter Mary?
7. Paragraph 10: Rowlandson, near despair, writes, “Whereupon I earnestly entreated the Lord, that He would consider my low estate, and show me a token for good, and if it were His blessed will, some sign and hope of some relief.” What answer to this prayer does she receive almost immediately? How is she comforted? Also, what does an Indian—who has come from the raid on the white town of Medfield—give her that is also a blessing?
8. Paragraph 10: Rowlandson then reads from Deuteronomy 28 and then from Deuteronomy 30. What discouraging words does Rowlandson read in chapter 28 (clarify to whom and why these words are spoken), and what encouragements does she read in chapter 30? In several sentences, explain how she applies these words to her own predicament.
9. Paragraph 11: How does Rowlandson counsel and encourage Goodwife Joslin? How does Rowlandson use her Bible in this process?

10. Paragraph 12: What happened to Goodwife Joslin and her two-year-old and unborn child? Is there any hope in this story of their end?
11. Paragraph 13: What Bible verse does Rowlandson read and how does it comfort her? Comment in several sentences on the way Rowlandson interprets and applies Scripture.
12. Paragraphs 14–15: God can bless us in little ways as well as big ones, and sometimes when we are tired and discouraged, a small blessing or comfort can mean a very great deal. Looking over these two paragraphs, list three small comforts that Rowlandson experiences.
13. Paragraphs 17–18: Rowlandson hears news that greatly cheers her. What is it? After hearing this news and having her hopes increased, she meets with frustration. What is the source of her frustration and why is it so vexing? Finally, what Bible verse comforts her in her frustration?
14. Paragraph 19: List three small comforts she experiences in her Fourteenth Remove. Also identify the cultural difference we see at the end of this paragraph. What do the Indians eat and drink that Rowlandson could never stomach? What had she done that they thought unsanitary?
15. Paragraph 21: To which Old Testament hero does Rowlandson compare herself as she praises God for her own deliverance?
16. Paragraph 21: What are three sources of sadness or anxiety for Rowlandson as she meets her brother-in-law and is reunited with her husband?
17. List two acts of graciousness that Rowlandson and her husband experience back in white civilization.
18. Paragraph 24: One might expect Rowlandson to share that she has constant nightmares about the horrors she has experienced. Instead, what is she thinking and feeling when she can't sleep at night?
19. Paragraph 25: Rowlandson writes, "I have seen the extreme vanity of this world: One hour I have been in health, and wealthy, wanting nothing. But the next hour in sickness and wounds, and death, having nothing but sorrow and affliction." What book of the Bible is she alluding to, one that talks of the foolishness of vanity and the uncertainty of all life?
20. Paragraph 26: What does Rowlandson say she's learned from her affliction?
21. Rowlandson is not a professional writer, but her narrative is nevertheless quite powerful. What about the way she writes makes it so? Answer in several sentences.