

ABSTRACT

JOHN WINTHROP: SOCIAL BUILDER

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by

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During the 1630's, a large number of Puritan people under the leadership of John Winthrop and others migrated from England to the coast of America landing in the area what is presently known as Boston. This plantation sought religious and social freedom as well as new opportunities for individual expression. John Winthrop was elected governor of this colony holding this office on and off until his death in 1649.

These people established the Massachusetts Bay Colony hoping to make a new home for themselves away from the political and religious turmoil of England. Their hopes, dreams, and goals were met with several difficulties. Nonetheless, their governor, John Winthrop, attempted to maintain this commonwealth above all outside interference. In this respect, he was quite successful, but he overlooked the internal structure of this young colony.

From the very beginning, social and religious disruptions plagued the commonwealth forcing Winthrop and

other magistrates into "controversial" situations. With the actual landing, certain men and women together with the overwhelming environment that America afforded, began to flex this newly discovered freedom in the form of theological expression and social awareness. As a result of this "disruption" factions and divisions dominated the everyday lifestyle of the Puritan commonwealth. These factions gradually transformed Winthrop's Massachusetts Bay Colony from a theocracy to a secular society.

During the closing years of his life many of the dreams, hopes, and goals of John Winthrop and his Puritan following were profoundly changed and even lost. But the community continued to survive, prosper, and mature.

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The man, John Winthrop, has been labeled by some historians as a "slippery" character. He could write beautiful and moving letters to his wife Margaret, at the same time banish members of the Puritan community for expressing personal thoughts that were contrary to his own. Nevertheless, John Winthrop had attempted to secure a society that would preserve his commonwealth. He was a staunch leader who opposed social change and religious movements that seemed detrimental to the welfare of this "City Upon a Hill."

This thesis will attempt to discuss the role of John Winthrop as social builder in the face of persistent factions brought on by religious differences and cultural nuances.

PREFACE

In 1630, John Winthrop led a group of Puritans to the eastern shores of America. These people as well as their leaders were fleeing social and religious problems present in their native land of England. Many historians have attempted to study the growing process of these people after they had arrived in the Massachusetts area. During this process many important social and theological events took place shaping this community into a secular "American" society. It would be a grave injustice to John Winthrop and his people to speak only of the religious problems that confronted this Puritan commonwealth. Moreover, to concentrate only on the social issues of this time would also be an incomplete study.

The man, John Winthrop, has been labeled by some historians as a "slippery" character. He could write beautiful and moving letters to his wife Margaret, at the same time banish members of the Puritan community for expressing personal thoughts that were contrary to his own. Nevertheless, John Winthrop had attempted to secure a society that would preserve his commonwealth. He was a staunch leader who opposed social change and religious movements that seemed detrimental to the welfare of this "City Upon a Hill."

This thesis will attempt to discuss the role of John Winthrop as social builder in the face of persistent factions brought on by religious differences and cultural nuances.

During the course of this study, the dominant character will be John Winthrop. At times his personality and leadership will be overshadowed by these "religious differences" and "cultural nuances," but in the end, John Winthrop will prevail. His commonwealth would have been changed, but the spirit of New England would always remain.

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Winthrop and Anne Browne. This young man grew up on the Winthrop estate, Groton Manor, in an English heritage thoroughly influenced by a religious tradition called Puritanism. Puritanism was a Protestant religion somewhat related to Calvinism, but more concerned with a way of life. This way of life was strongly dependent upon the study and use of scripture, and a determined evangelical preaching ministry. This group of people also relied heavily upon the concept of conscience and the freedom to express that conscience. Moreover, Puritans wished to push aside the ceremony and priesthood characteristic of other religious entities. Their

CHAPTER I

John Winthrop: His Belief and Decision

The year 1588 was high-lighted by the English defeat of the Spanish Armada. It was a year marked by growing political and religious tension on the European continent. As a result of this tension, social conditions were eventually changed causing the migration of various groups of people from Europe to America. On a more local level, the year 1588 was also significant to a particular family in Suffolk county, England, for it was the birth of John Winthrop to Adam Winthrop and Anne Browne. This young man grew up on the Winthrop estate, Groton Manor, in an English heritage thoroughly influenced by a religious tradition called Puritanism. Puritanism was a Protestant religion somewhat related to Calvinism, but more concerned with a way of life. This way of life was strongly dependent upon the study and use of scripture, and a determined evangelical preaching ministry.¹ This group of people also relied heavily upon the concept of conscience and the freedom to express that conscience. Moreover, Puritans wished to push aside the ceremony and priesthood characteristic of other religious entities. Their

¹Samuel Eliot Morison, Builders of the Bay Colony (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1930), p. 9.

way was not for everyone. Puritanism entailed the idea that "man had to realize that they were merely God's creatures--servants and must be ever about God's work."²

It was not certain when and who really initiated the Puritan movement, but it has been traced back to the Elizabethan period of the 1550's.³ It was during this time that much of England remained indecisive about its religious affiliation. Finally, under the reign of Elizabeth I, the Elizabethan Settlement was promulgated making England Protestant, but allowing other beliefs, especially Catholics who felt that this decision would be "injurious to the conscience" to be tolerated.⁴ Sometime during the reign of Elizabeth I, certain factions of Protestants that strongly desired a cleansing or purifying from Catholic rituals and an improvement in the spiritual life emerged as the contemporary Puritans. Moreover, the idea of conscience, or "hidden faculty" became an extremely powerful force for these Puritan believers, especially at Cambridge University. Here such men as Richard Rogers, Richard Greenham, John Dod, Arthur Hildersam, and Lawrence Chaderton wrote and lectured

²Edmund S. Morgan, The Puritan Dilemma (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1958), p. 7-8.

³L. John Van Til, Liberty of Conscience (Nutley: The Craig Press, 1972), p. 11.

⁴W.K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, 4 vols. (Cambridge: 1932-1940) I, p. 17. ...toleration may be said to spring from the theory that the civil power has inalienable and absolute prerogatives. The Government thus elevated may allow certain persons to differ from it in theory and religious practice.

extensively on the issue of conscience.⁵ "It was fair to say that this Cambridge brotherhood viewed conscience as a means of grace, as a bridge between demands of the old law and the freedom taught in the gospels."⁶ It was later in Winthrop's life that the concept of "conscience" was utilized and expounded upon by certain men and women, causing a great deal of personal and public consternation.

In the meantime, William Perkins, another member of this Cambridge circuit extended this study of conscience and wrote more than any other Elizabethan Puritan on it.⁷ His predecessor, William Ames, continued where Perkins left off and developed a "conflict between toleration and liberty of conscience" during the reign of the Stuarts.⁸ It was under this William Ames school of theology that Winthrop was raised, and it was this same theological thinking that would be questioned by followers of the Perkin school during Winthrop's governorship of Massachusetts Bay.

Meanwhile, as a young man, Winthrop began to study at Trinity College. Two years later, John married Mary Forth of Essex county on March 28, 1605. Mary was the first of four marriages in Winthrop's life. In 1613 young Winthrop

⁵Van Til, Liberty of Conscience, p. 14.

⁶Ibid., p. 16.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 51.

entered Gray's Inn to study law. His classes and his practice forced him to leave the county on numerous occasions. But soon even this new opportunity was interrupted with the death of Mary in 1615. Winthrop immediately remarried but sickness took the life of his second wife, Thomasine Clopston, within a few months. Then in 1618, Winthrop contracted with Margaret Tyndale; who remained very close to him until her death in 1647. Between marriages, Winthrop continued his study at Gray's inn becoming more aware of court proceedings and various interpretations of law. But more important, Winthrop was able to meet other prominent Puritans, and from these men he was able to broaden his vision on the current political and religious situation.

As the years passed, Winthrop's interest in the Puritan faith grew. He began to question more, about himself and his religious beliefs. Puritanism demanded that man devote his life to seeking salvation, but at the same time he was helpless to do anything without God's help. During this state of reflection, Winthrop often read the words of Paul's Letter to the Romans 7,18, "I am carnal, sold under sin; dead in sins."⁹ A disease of the flesh, of the material world seemed to have overcome him, and this went contrary to the message which he had derived from his personal soul-searching. "I find by often experience that the most usual

⁹Paul, Letter to the Romans, 7, 18.

thing that breaks off my comfort in God and delight in heavenly things, is the entertaining love of earthly things."¹⁰

It was at this point in his life that Winthrop was faced with an important issue, a dilemma. Despondent over the death of his first two wives, and searching more into his own faith, Winthrop stood at a cross-roads in his life confused and troubled. "He had caught the fever of Puritanism."¹¹ He now had a new responsibility. Puritanism had released a type of tension in John Winthrop, a theological tension mixed in with a social undercurrent. There was a world outside the Puritan domain, a world with overwhelming problems that affected his life as well as other Puritans. Moreover, there was also the question of man's place in that world, that is, a Puritan world. The Puritan was a self-placed minority in this world embracing the idea that God had given specific places for men and that they were to work in these places in a quiet and humble fashion.¹² Winthrop knew which master he wanted to serve, but the world kept haunting him. He labeled this painful experience his own

¹⁰Massachusetts Historical Society, Winthrop Papers, 5 vols. (Boston: The Plimpton Press, 1929-1947), "John Winthrop's Experiencia," 1616-1618, pp. 190-191, vol. I, hereafter cited as Winthrop Papers.

¹¹Morgan, Puritan Dilemma, p. 7.

¹²Ibid., p. 8.

"personal affliction." "I find by often and evident experience, that when I should under the mind or outward senses to have every thing that they desire, and wean it from the love of the world."¹³

As this struggle continued, Winthrop began to search into the scriptures to appease his restless spirit. He discovered some comfort in the reading of the Song of Solomon, a short canticle from the Wisdom literature that gave him insight into the Christian concept of love. He also busied himself with the affairs of Groton Manor and the lifestyle of a well-educated member of the gentry. By the time he was in his thirties, Winthrop's occupational opportunities improved with his acceptance as an attorney in His Majesty's Court of Wards and Liveries in 1627. But his job was a disappointment, and after a while, Winthrop referred to this position as a "highly-paid errand boy." To further explore his feelings of inadequacy, Winthrop again reflected on passages from the Bible. In Ephesians 1,3 and Philippians 3,10, he discovered encouraging words and a reassurance that his energies should be channeled into another interest. "If anyone thinks he amounts to something when in fact he is nothing, he is only deceiving himself."¹⁴ Consequently, as he progressed in job and gentry-living, Winthrop began to understand that the world "demanded more than a comfortable

¹³Winthrop Papers I, p. 197.

¹⁴Paul, Letters to Ephesians and Philippians, 1,3 and 3,10.

heart, it demanded a sense of discipline." This discipline would shape the world from its false and plastic appearance into something solid, something dependable, and something that God and man would be proud of. But in order to accomplish this, a decision was needed, a decision that would greatly affect his life and that of his family's. "That the conscienable, and constant teachings of my family was a special business, wherein I might please my family and greatly further theirs and mine own salvation."¹⁵

Winthrop's decision to lend a "helping hand" inspired him to formulate a plan to resolve this Puritan dilemma. Puritans, he felt, must take a more active role in combating the present situation of a world filled with man-centered greed and selfishness. The country itself seemed to be under the spell of the devil or the wrath of an unhappy God. Economic depression had struck the textile industry especially in Suffolk county, unemployment was on the rise, and the religious environment was no longer "purifying" itself of outside influences.

In one of his many letters to his wife, Margaret, Winthrop expressed this feeling of evil times and the fear of the worst. "The hardest that can come shall be a means to mortify this body of Corruption, which is a thousand times more dangerous to us then any other outward tribulation."¹⁶

¹⁵Winthrop Papers, vol. I., p. 213.

¹⁶Ibid., vol. II., "John Winthrop to Margaret," May 15, 1629, p. 91.

Winthrop's words seemed to echo the political situation of the times, for on the continent Catholicism seemed to be gaining strength in areas where the Protestant revolt had taken root. Consequently, the country of England had been affected by these events. Ever since the Stuart monarch, James I, had risen to power in 1603, Catholic influence had achieved much success. It was during this first decade of the reign of James I, that the king had spoken of his affection for loyal "spiritual catholics," meaning laymen. It soon appeared that Elizabeth's policy of toleration seemed to be favoring the influx of Catholics rather than its proposed equal toleration for both Protestant and Catholics who dissented because of conscience. Finally, with the arrival of Charles I in 1625, the Catholics received even more status calling themselves the Anglo-Catholics as they rallied around their major spokesman, William Laud. Laud played both sides of the fence preaching and upholding Protestant doctrines while favoring a closer relationship with Rome.

The rise of Anglo-Catholicism under Charles I altered the policy on toleration created by Elizabeth and followed, more or less, James I. Earlier the success of the policy had depended upon its rather even application to both Catholic and Protestant dissenter. Now, however it seemed to Protestants that the government and leading Church officials were disposed to treat Catholics warmly.¹⁷

To make matters even worse, Charles I showed very little respect to the lonely Puritan stronghold in England,

¹⁷Van Tilt, Liberty of Conscience, p. 32.

Parliament. Then, what seemed to break the camel's back was a decision by Charles to marry a Catholic Princess. Next he openly began to display a fondness for the religious belief of Arminianism. This particular sect had begun to blossom in the Protestant Church during the early 1620's. It attempted to do away with the Orthodox notion of the Protestant religion, that God was the all powerful force element in man's life. The Arminians, "argued that while God freely offered a way to salvation, man at least had freedom to accept or reject that way."¹⁸ Moreover, these people emphasized "the rich mystery and ritual of Church service--the priesthood, communion, the Mass--as helpful to man in coming to a decision for God."¹⁹ This movement initiated a counter-reformation transforming England back to a more distinctive leaning towards Catholic beliefs. Naturally William Laud supported this action as well as Charles I. Almost immediately, the Arminians began to assume their authority even on the university level.²⁰

The crisis grew steadily worse with the fall of the Protestant stronghold in La Rochelle, France to Richlieu's forces. Elsewhere, Protestants were surrendering ground to

¹⁸ Darrett B. Rutman, John Winthrop's Decision for America: 1629 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencoth Co., 1975), p. 22

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 20.

Catholic armies in Germany. At one of his "boring" meetings at the Court of Wards, Winthrop expressed the sadness of his heart to his wife Margaret.

It is a Great favor, he told her, that we may enjoy so much comfort and peace in these so evil and declining times and when the increasing of our sins gives us so great cause to look for some heavy Scourge and Judgment to be coming upon us: the Lord hath admonished, threatened, corrected, and astonished us, yet we grow worse and worse, so as his spirit will not always strive with us. he must need to give way to his fury at last; he hath smitten all the other Churches (in Europe) before our eyes, and hath made them to drink of the bitter cup of tribulation; even unto death; we saw this, and humbled not ourselves, to turn from our evil ways, but have provoked him more than all the nations round about us: therefore he is turning the cup towards us also, and because the very days which remain: may dear wife, I am persuaded, God will bring some heavy affliction upon this land, and that speedily.²¹

At this point in his life, Winthrop envisioned some type of change, or at least a progressive move away from the current trend. His first step in this direction was to try and establish a better rapport with other members of the gentry which he had met in his work at the Court of Wards. In this way he could become more aware of the feelings of other prominent Puritans. To his surprise, the gentry especially those from the Lincolnshire area were far ahead of Winthrop's vision. These men had already laid the basic foundations for a great migration, a migration that would send them to another continent. "In the circle where John Winthrop moved

²¹Winthrop Papers, vol. II, p. 91, "John Winthrop to Margaret," May 15, 1629.

among the Puritan gentry of the eastern counties, there had been interest in colonization even before Charles I took command."²² Winthrop had recently contemplated such a plan, but this demanded a tremendous undertaking involving a great deal of personal sacrifice. Indecisiveness seemed to overcome him once again. He had achieved relative success in this country, had raised a good family, and was just beginning to understand the ideals of the Puritan Life. But still there was this duty to God that continued to haunt his troubled mind.

Besides Winthrop and members of the gentry, Puritan ministers were also preaching against the decadent state of affairs that plagued England. The words of Winthrop epitomized those of the ministers.

All other Churches of Europe are brought to desolation, and it cannot be, but the like Judgment is coming upon us: And who knows, but that God hath provided this place, to be a refuge for many who he means to save out of the general destruction.²³

The cry went out for a change, a change that would foster in a new environment giving them the ability to establish a religious and political autonomy. In a sense, these ministers and gentry wanted a New England, and it would be in the land across the sea where this New England would have its birth. All this discussion among these Puritan men was most admirable and truly inspiring, but it left many unanswered

²²Morgan, The Puritan Dilemma, p. 34.

²³Winthrop Papers, vol. II, p. 114; See Also Appendix

questions. The most significant question discussed among these leaders centered around the idea of "abandoning England simply because the going was rough." To think in this manner was contrary to the notion of Puritan involvement in the world. Thus, to undergo a complete break from England, required more than just pious slogans and empty promises. It demanded a commitment, a commitment that could lead to further splintering among the remaining steadfast Puritans or even a total destruction. Nonetheless, something had to be done for the odds were definitely stacked against them if they remained in England. Charles I continued to harass the Puritan leaders by dissolving Parliament on March 10, 1629, and on a more personal note Winthrop's family had been disgraced by his own son.²⁴

Gradually, Winthrop became closer to this "special" group of gentry and ministers who often spoke of this plantation in America. His first real contact was established when he met John Humphrey, a Dorchester parishioner and a friend, while working in the Court of Wards. From here he met John White, an attorney, and thus was able to meet other perspective "clients." In the meantime, Winthrop became even more frustrated with his position at the Court of Wards resigning his post in May of that same year.

During the early part of July, he began to attend some preliminary sessions, which eventually led to his encounter

²⁴ Winthrop Papers, vol. II, pp. 78-79, "Thomas Fones to John Winthrop," April 2, 1629. Henry's ambition was large; his debts sent to Winthrop for

in Tattershall at the home of Isaac Johnson on July 28, 1629. Johnson had been a member of the Massachusetts Bay Company, and it would be through this company that a plantation would be finalized. Apparently, an omission had been made when this particular company obtained its charter. For the most part, companies were directed to hold their meetings in London, but through oversight such was not the case with the Massachusetts Bay Company.

As a result the Massachusetts Bay Company was not specifically required to reside in England. Since about half of the charter members intended to emigrate to New England, Governor Matthew Cradock proposed to the company General Court in July 1629 that the colonists in Massachusetts shall be self-governing and not subordinate to the company in England.²⁵

payment. Henry had traveled to the Island of Barbados in the West Indies to seek his dream of fortune and success. His venture failed and his Father had to absorb most of his son's losses. Moreover, when his son returned to England, he took up residence at his uncle's, Thomas Fones. Henry's presence soon caused even more consternation in the Winthrop family. After a short period he became "involved" with his cousin, Besse and against his Uncle's and Father's wishes took her into matrimony. Uncle Fones' frustration with Winthrop's son was epitomized in this brief letter to him.

I cannot write you the many troubles of my mind...for my nephew says plainly if he cannot have her without: and though I have entreated him to forbear my house while he will not but comes and stays at unfitting hours...I am weak and cannot I see now be master in my own house...I long to hear from you for I doubt not he will draw her farther from my own house and marry her without any scruple.

Shortly afterwards, Winthrop's son did marry his cousin, Thomas Fones died, and with his personal life gravely disrupted, John Winthrop turned his attention to the plantation.

²⁵Richard S. Dunn. Puritans and Yankees, (New Jersey: Princeton University press, 1962.), p. 6.

Sometime between July 28 and August 12, John Winthrop submitted to the company his private thoughts concerning this plantation. It is debatable on which date Winthrop actually presented these observations but historians have concluded that they were prepared for the August 12th meeting at Bury or sometime thereafter.

The first part of Winthrop's statement listed eight reasons why the plantation was necessary. The second part included a number of possible objections and answers to the objections that were probably brought up in the course of the company's initial conferences.

Winthrop began this observation by mentioning the idea of service. This service would bring pride to the Puritan people and it would "raise a bullwarke against the kingdom of Antichrist."²⁶ Secondly, religious wars were being waged on the continent and the Protestant grip was becoming weaker. Winthrop saw this same situation eventually reaching the shores of England. Thirdly, man was being corrupted by the evil society which he had helped to make. The very land that he had lived on was "growing weary with its petious creatures."²⁷ As a result of this social deterioration man was not able to take charge of his own life. Furthermore, with man's stagnant situation, his offspring would soon be affected and the family structure along with it. Another aspect that Winthrop brought to their attention was the fact that

²⁶ Winthrop Papers, vol. II, pp. 106-107; 114. The arguments for the plantation of New England which take up thirty-five pages of this volume fall chronologically into two groups. The earlier group comprises three drafts of a

there was great opportunity across the ocean, opportunity to improve, grow, and habitate. "The whole earth is the Lord's garden, and he hath given it to the sons of men to be tilled and improved by them."²⁸

Winthrop's next reason for plantation spoke of the idea of raising a Church in a new territory and watching it grow from infancy to maturity. "What can be better work and more honorable and worthy (a Christian than to help) raise and support a Church while it is in the infancy, and join forces with such a Company of faithful people."²⁹ Winthrop deeply cherished the idea of watching the Puritan faith expand and nourish itself, just like it had done in his own life. Finally, Winthrop admitted that this venture would be filled with many unknown dangers, dangers that would generate the worse conditions. But he believed that these experiences would unite the Puritan people and strengthen their relationship with God.

single document, in different stages of its development; the later uses much of the material of this document, but presents also other arguments and employs a greater variety of forms. Whatever new matter appears in the second group is so closely connected with Winthrop's by external and internal evidence that no serious question concerning its authorship has been raised. The origin of the document of which the various forms make up the first group has however, at different times claimed also for the Reverend John White of Dorchester and for the Reverend Francis Higginson of Salem, so that it is in order to consider the evidence given by a comparison of the three drafts, which we may call B, C, and D. B, preserved among the Colonial Papers in the Public Record Office, has been printed in I Proceedings, VIII, pp. 428-430 (1885). It is endorsed not as there stated "in the same handwriting as the paper," but in a quite different hand probably that of a government clerk: C is a holograph of John Winthrop, handed down among the family papers and now first printed. D was

Following this statement, Winthrop analyzed objections that were made by his colleagues. First, he considered the fact that good people would be taken on this perilious voyage, and "we shall lay if the more open to the Judgment fear."³⁰ In response to this fear, Winthrop mentioned the idea of the "universal Church without any distinction." The Gospel must be preached to all people no matter what their background may be, even if they appeared to be dangerous to our welfare.

The Gospel should be revealed to all nations and though we know not, whether the Indians will receive it or not, yet it is good work, to observe God's will in offering it to them, for God shall have Glory by it, though they refuse it.³¹

The second objection concerned the complacency that had been established by the English Puritans while they "waited" for the final judgment. Winthrop saw this type of attitude as too cautious and very harmful. He pointed out to his fellow gentry that this was the same situation that the Protestants of France and Germany had found themselves in. "But the woeful spectacle of their

printed by Hutchinson in his collection of Original Papers (1769) from a manuscript now lost coming from the papers of Francis Higginson.

²⁷ See Appendix A.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

ruin, may teach us more wisdom, to avoid the plague when it is foreseen, and not to carry as they did until it overtakes us."³² In a sense, Winthrop predicted that England was next to receive this "religious plague."

The third objection discussed the fact that England was a land of plenty with many conveniences. Again Winthrop repeated the idea that without religious freedom and political stability "this land of plenty" would be no use to us. "That is at more freedom to die and the less comfort any hath in the things of this world, the more liberty and desire he may have to lay our treasure in heaven."³³

Fourthly, what if they were all to perish by hunger or the sword in this new land. Surely if they remained in England they were to receive the same fate. According to Winthrop there was no alternative left.

Fifthly, what right did the members of the plantation have to take this land. Winthrop approached this objection by saying that the savage peoples that presently inhabited this country did not have proper title to it and it was free for the taking. He also mentioned the fact that God had sent a plague among these people to pave the way for the Puritan landing.

Sixthly, some of the colleagues doubted that the better ministers and magistrates should go during the initial building of the colony. Winthrop thought otherwise, stating that the first few months of the plantation would need the more

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

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skilled people and the stronger administrators to lay a solid foundation.

Objection number seven made reference to the ill-fated past plantations. Many of the other leaders felt that their "investment" would encounter the same destiny. Winthrop was quick to point out that previous emigrations were carnal and not religious.

They aimed chiefly at profit, and not the propagating of religion. Secondly, they used unfit instruments, a multitude of rude and misgoverned persons the very scum of the land. Thirdly, they did not establish a right form of government.³⁴

After Winthrop's remarks had been submitted to the members of the Lincolnshire group, the committee reviewed these statements and by August 26th a formal agreement was reached. Later the actual completed statement was signed. This declaration against the present political and religious situation in England acted as a spearhead for world Protestantism.

This decision to leave England came about as a result of several important motives. The process by which these reactions unfolded was complex. According to Document I regarding social order, Winthrop emphasized the idea of obedience as the first priority. Winthrop was a man dedicated to obedience. Secondly, the concept of vocation was also significant in this decision process. Vocation was part of the early educational training among Puritans. This idea was especially vital to the dogmatic conclusions of Puritan theologian, William Perkins.

³⁴Ibid.

William Perkins said that the idea of vocation, was a calling to a certain kind of life, ordained and imposed on man by God for the common good. Two causes must be considered, first the efficient and second the final and proper. The author of every calling is God himself; and therefore as Paul said; 'as God called every man, let him walk.' And for this cause, the order and manner of living in this world is called a vocation, because every man is to live as he is called of God.³⁵

Winthrop truly felt that he had been called by God to serve God and his people. To be called was a honor and a distinction, a distinction which entailed leadership and courage.

Finally, in late August of 1629, Winthrop and eleven other Puritan gentlemen met at Cambridge and signed their formal agreement. This agreement would definitely change their religious and social perspectives.

For the better encouragement of ourselves and others that shall be with us in this action, and to the end that every man may without scruple dispose of his estate and affairs as may best fit his preparation for this voyage, it is fully and faithfully agreed among us... that we will so really endeavor the prosecution of this work, as by God's assistance we will be ready in our persons, and with such of our several families as are to go with us and such provisions as we are able conveniently to furnish ourselves with all, to embark for the said plantation (in New England) by the first of next March.³⁶

Between August of that year and mid-October, this group of men spent a great deal of their energy formally

³⁵William Perkins, A Treatise of the Vocations or Calling of Men (London: I Leggatt, 1612)., vol.I, pp. 750-752.

³⁶Winthrop Papers, vol.II, p. 151.

transferring the charter to the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Financial details had to be organized and a leader had to be elected. Several men were nominated to the governorship among them John Winthrop. On October 20, Winthrop received the majority of votes and was chosen governor of the colony. In another letter to his wife, Winthrop summed up the feelings which he had for this new position of leadership.

It hath pleased the Lord to call me to a further trust in this business of the plantation, then either I expected or find myself fit for...the only thing that I have comfort of in is, that hereby I have assurance that my charge is of the Lord and that he hath called me to this work.³⁷

In March of 1630, the Winthrop fleet with its flagship, the "Arbella" set sail for their two month voyage to New England. Nearly one thousand people made that crossing and sometime during their venture many of them heard Winthrop's own assessment of the purpose for this plantation. It was in a sermon entitled a "Modell of Christian Charity" that the new governor expressed his views on the commonwealth, a "City Upon the Hill," that would make all of this seem necessary, necessary in that it was directed by God. Much of this sermon was Winthrop's own redaction of the Gospel of Matthew.

We are a company, he said, professing ourselves fellow members of Christ, for which reason though we come from many regions and different classes, we ought to account ourselves knit together by this bond of love. Our immediate object is to seek out a new home under a direct form of government both civil and ecclesiastical. The end is to improve our lives to do

³⁷Ibid.

more service to the Lord...that ourselves and prosperity may be the better preserved from the common corruption of this evil world.³⁸

Winthrop wanted this new community to be one of stability, strength, and unity. They would be a people united towards the betterment of a New England. This New England would assume the characteristics of a city, a stronghold against all outside forces guided by the emotional outpouring of love. Obviously, this vision was very special to John Winthrop. "This vision of love involved more than mercy and charity, it embodied a rich desire for form, unity, and stability in society. Without this love, society would never be perfect."³⁹ If this love was not present, the people who ventured to New England would be concerned with personal success and economic gain rather than religious and political progress. These people would fail to achieve their goals and end up wallowing in their own selfish interests. There would be disunity and factionalism.

The principles that Winthrop spoke of were characteristic of other religious groups, groups that were also concerned with basic human rights. Unity and love would uphold these rights, but division and dissension would destroy them. If a fragmented society was allowed to exist, then the "City Upon the Hill" would come to a virtual standstill. "The

³⁸Winthrop Papers, vol. II, pp.282-295.

³⁹Ibid.

community resulting from such individuality would be no more than an association of independent objects as disproportionate and as much disordering as so many contrary qualities or elements."⁴⁰ Therefore, it would be love that would act as a tiny string holding this plantation together. Individual expression and thought would be tolerated, as long as it did not affect the growth and maturation of the entire community.

Consequently, since Winthrop was the head of this plantation, any act that would seem detrimental to its future prosperity would be dwelt with by him through the assistance of God. This theocracy of Winthrop's would be the ruling force throughout the commonwealth, but in no way could it actually dominate the very existence of each individual as Winthrop had intended it to. Nonetheless, John Winthrop remained governor of the colony for the next nineteen years and was properly addressed as the right worship, John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. During the other ten years he served as Deputy governor or assistant.⁴¹

As governor, Winthrop saw himself as the covenant link between God and the people of this colony. All carnal intentions and all material pleasures that interfered with this covenant would be stopped by him. To govern this community and maintain its covenant called for a simple

⁴⁰ Ibid.

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Richard S. Dunn, Puritans and Yankees, (New Jersey: Princeton University press, 1962.), p. 8, 16, 22, 28.

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but efficient legislative body guided by love and discipline. This entire governmental concept was initially mentioned by Winthrop in his sermon while on board the Arbella. "The nature of the state (government) was to hold that man in society selected the forms and personal of government by way of a compact, and then bound himself to that form of government."⁴²

Although much time and effort had been placed into the make-up of this government, many of Winthrop's ideas were adapted from the French Vindicae Contra Tyrannas, which encouraged the act of rebellion among Protestants against Catholic monarchs who suppressed certain religious groups.⁴³ Since the first part had been achieved with the departure from England, Winthrop then turned his attentions to the Ecclesiastica Policy of Richard Hooker. This piece of literature reinforced the idea that if a monarch was to maintain his authority over his people, he had to acknowledge God's directing providence over him. Consequently, "their welfare in all things, and the people would accept the government of these leaders out of their own God-ordained duty to faith, patience, and obedience."⁴⁴ Winthrop's plan of administration attempted to utilize Hooker's premise that the king, or in this case, the governor, was presiding for God for a specific purpose.

⁴²Winthrop Paper, vol, II, pp. 282-295.

⁴³Darrett B. Rutman, Winthrop's Boston: Portrait of a Puritan Town 1630-1649 (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 11.

Winthrop believed that the gentry, the wealthy, and the respected would conduct the actual ruling and organizing. Of course, the people at the top would "always" be subject to their creator. On the other end of the spectrum, those of lesser status would be the ones who comprised this theocracy. Thus, even though Winthrop and his fellow magistrates were not Puritan ministers per se, "they saw the Puritan commonwealth and its Church as an empty vessel, awaiting God's pleasure in a fitting way, mute, inactive, but recipient of God's free grace."⁴⁵ John Winthrop and his fellow magistrates were to be the instruments of this free grace.

In the meantime, the major problem while attempting to incorporate this type of thinking into the New England society was rooted in the English culture which Winthrop and the magistrates were born into. Obviously, the current situation in England did not promote the same values that these leaders desired for the plantation. Moreover, as in other Protestant faiths, factionalism and division which had begun in England would eventually find its home in New England. Although these elements were still "underground," they remained a viable force to be reckoned with.

Nevertheless, Winthrop was optimistic, an optimism that nourished his ability in dealing with any problem that the young colony encountered. "Indeed, much of the literature in

⁴⁴Thomas Hutchinson, comp., A Collection of Original Papers Relative to the History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay (Boston: 1769), p. 100.

⁴⁵Winthrop Papers, vol. II, pp. 282-295.

English Protestantism seemed to be a product of this same naive ministerial enthusiasm, which seemed to be constantly overstepping its bounds which logically it had set for itself."⁴⁶ English thought still remained in a state of religious "confusion." The question of who was really in charge often emerged both in Old and New England. As a result, the hierarchy of the Church and the individual congregation confronted each other on numerous occasions. According to some Puritan theologians, there existed two churches in England, one visible, and one invisible. This view was supported by the Puritan writers, William Ames and William Perkins, who believed that the current Puritan Church was a mixture of all men together with their diversified beliefs. Consequently, Winthrop's commonwealth would be affected by these theological variations adding more confusion between hierarchy and congregation.

As Winthrop and companions sailed, English religion and thought was as it had been for long, and would be for longer yet--in the heroes of a reconciliation of its innate contradictions. Orthodox Anglicanism was being hammered out, and with it dissent.⁴⁷

Thus it would be impossible for this plantation to be separated from other religious nuances. In the meantime, since very few ministers initially came with the migration, the colony assumed a social format rather than a religious one. As a result, the message of Christian love emphasized in Winthrop's Modell of Christian Charity, became passe even before the first anchor was laid outside of Charlestown.

⁴⁶Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. 14-15.

⁴⁷Ibid. p. 16.

Winthrop continued to warn them, "whatever we did or ought to have done when we lived in England, the same must we do and more all so wherever we do."⁴⁸ But his words were not heeded. It appeared as if history was repeating itself just as it had done in Winthrop's own life. These Puritan colonists along with their leaders fell victim to the material, carnal pleasures of the new world. New England became another Old England suffering with as many problems, and then some.

Blinded by the political and economic situation as well as personal calamity, John Winthrop had expected to "radically" change an environment and its people by moving elsewhere. Unaware that geography did not necessarily dictate a transformation in attitude, the Puritan plantation could not create a utopian society from a world dominated by adventure-seeking people, confused religious followers, and fanatic sectaries.

Reacting to the contemporary English scene, Winthrop pictured a society in which men would subordinate themselves to their brother's and community's welfare, but he sought to erect that society in a land where opportunity for individual profit lay ready to every hand.⁴⁹

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Winthrop Papers, vol. II, pp. 282-295.

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Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. 21.

CHAPTER II

INITIAL DISPUTES AND DISRUPTIONS

With the landing of the 380 ton "Arbella" and her sister ships, the "Talbot," "Ambrose," and "Jewell," Winthrop was faced with the problem of finding a suitable location for settlement and expansion. "Winthrop's first move was to look for a roomier place than Salem in which to settle. There was not enough open land there and the drab surroundings were bad for morale."⁵⁰

The second issue that confronted the governor was a personality conflict between him and some of the other magistrates. John Winthrop, Thomas Dudley, and John Endecott were the major antagonists in these early years. Later it would be Thomas Dudley who actually began to weaken Winthrop's hold on the colony. But for now their disagreement centered around the proposed sites for colonization. Winthrop emphasized the idea of community closeness to maintain solidarity. But the other leaders wanted to expand their boundaries almost immediately. Consequently, governmental control and religious unity were beginning to stretch beyond their limits.

Besides disputes over settlement, there was also the affects of New England climate upon the people's spirit. These new-comers were not used to the extremes in temperature

⁵⁰Morgan, The Puritan Dilemma, p. 58.

characteristic of this region. As a result, the people became even more restless and more argumentative. Finally, Winthrop gave into the idea for more expansion. An organized dispersal was initiated hoping to eliminate this constant bickering along with the overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Furthermore, from the opening days of the actual landing, Winthrop's people as well as those who had landed a year earlier, feared a possible invasion by the French. These people, weakened by disease and homesickness, were in no shape to mount a defense against an opponent who had plenty of supplies and manpower at his disposal. Dispersal seemed to be the only logical solution to these disruptive problems.

The first group of people were led by Sir Richard Saltonstall and Reverend Mr. Phillips to an area which later became known as Watertown. Following this excursion, William Pynchon's contingent ventured to Roxbury with Thomas Dudley's people occupying the area near the Charlestown River. Followers of Increase Nowell remained near the Shawmut peninsula later to be Boston. Finally, by mid-October John Winthrop took up residence in Shawmut. By December 26th, Boston was ready to establish its first Church.

Even though Winthrop had surrendered to this idea of expansion, he did not wish to abandon his notion of a central form of government. Nevertheless, those people who were loyal to the Governor constructed their homes near him, while others gathered around Deputy Governor Dudley and the Assistant, John Endecott. Within less than a year's time, the factionalism

had already commenced.

In the meantime, the magistrates did realize that their personality conflicts had to be put aside if they were to successfully instill an organization into this plantation. Their next priority was to plan a town. It was agreed that a logical framework was necessary to cope with the growing population in the Boston area.

The first part of the city would follow an old Indian path which skirted the Tramount. This included the sections known as Marbehead Neck and Roxbury. The second division would stand on the harborside adjacent to the swamp area. Finally, on the western end of the city there would be a small region that laid between Cotton Hill and Mill Cove.

The logistics and planning of Boston allowed the Bay to be utilized to its full potential. This location would be ideal for ship-building and trade. The Bay itself was deep enough for larger vessels and the cove offered natural protection from the elements of the ocean. Finally, it also provided outlets for construction of wharfs and piers.

With these proceedings underway, the leaders turned their attention to the governing of the Bay Colony.

The transfer of the charter did not give the Bay Colony a completely workable government; only a bare framework and practical independence. Fourteen years were required for the complete evolution of the government from that of trading corporation to commonwealth.⁵¹

⁵¹Samuel Eliot Morison, ed., The Founding of Massachusetts: Historians and the Sources (New York: Bobbs-Merrill company, Inc., 1964), p. 116.

Although democratic ideals were never adopted by the Puritan leaders, they did seek to abolish the European ways of feudalism and absolute monarchy. But this government was still not representative of the common people. The gentry still maintained a comfortable and controlling position in this theocracy. In the future, this theocracy would be battered by other religious expressions and economic instability.⁵²

As the years passed, the Puritan magistrates continued to organize their commonwealth.

The charter to be sure, established a definite form of government, and definite days of election: the Governor, Deputy-Governor and eighteen Assistants must be annually elected by the General Court, consisting of all freemen or stockholders of the Corporation; and the freemen in General Court had the supreme legislative power.⁵³

The government appeared to be simple and efficient. The freemen were to meet so many times each year to allow more freemen into the fold. Thus the legislative process expanded with the growth of the colony.

Very quickly, the assistants as a group regularized their local leadership, on August 23, appointing Winthrop Dudley, and Saltonstall, Johnson, Endecott, and Ludlow as Justices of the Peace with like power that Question of peace hath in England for reformation of abuses and punishing of offenders, presumably of Charlestown, Waterloo, Boston, Salem, and Roxbury.⁵⁴

⁵²Chapter four.

⁵³Samuel Eliot Morison, Builders of the Bay Colony, p. 85.

⁵⁴John Noble and John F. Cronin, eds. Records of the Court of Assistants of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, 1630-1692, 3 vols., (Boston: 1901-1928), p. 3 (vol. 3). hereafter cited as the Massachusetts Bay Records.

With these points established, the commonwealth assumed the appearance of a functioning unit. Legislation continued to be appropriated while offenders to these laws were quickly punished. At the same time more disruptions plagued this young community. Ever since the landing in 1630, spiraling prices among certain products forced the General Court to impose regulatory measures. These policies caused a great deal of tension between the agricultural community and those associated with the merchant class. Later this problem would explode with the arrival of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson.⁵⁵ Another area of concern was that of land. Initially, the Court of Assistants set aside one-half acre per fifty pounds invested for any family that came on Winthrop's fleet. Of course, this situation changed radically with the planning of Boston and the neighboring towns. Moreover, very few of the magistrates followed the rules for land distribution which the company had intended. Being from the wealthy class they could easily invest more money and gobble up all the choice land allotments. In the meantime, the commoner was left with very little. Land distribution was based on family wealth and status. The old ways still existed, only the geography was different. To make things even worse, the Court failed to act on land that had already been settled by certain magistrates long before a land distribution policy

⁵⁵Chapter four.

had been established.

The economic situation together with the land crisis inaugurated more challenges to the Winthrop administration. As the land became increasingly crowded and prices continued to soar, Bostonians began to realize that the commonwealth was no "promised land." Many of the common people had exhausted much of their life savings to make this venture, leaving themselves very little income for purchasing land or fighting inflation. Although Winthrop could do very little about the purchasing power of these Puritans, action was taken by the Court to allow more available land.

On November 7, 1632, the Court gave the town possession of the peninsula thrusting down from the North shore into the harbor to Pullen Point at the harbor's mouth. By then, too, the Court recognized Boston's interest on the mainland to the south, pushing the town boundaries outward to include the base of the neck.⁵⁶

Although this was a major concession on the part of the magistrates, two years later additional legislation was needed to curb the growing tension between the wealthy landowners (the gentry) and the common people (the generality) regarding land distribution.

In 1634, the gentry and generality formed two distinct interests with regard to the land. The latter advocated a quick division of all available acreage on an equal basis, whereas the gentry wanted a gradual selling of land at prices only they could afford.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. 69.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 75-76.

During these class disputes, Winthrop attempted to be "sympathetic" to the commoner's plight, "to him it would be very prejudiced if newcomers should be forced to go far off for land, while others had much and could make no use of it more than to please their eye with it."⁵⁸ But his feelings were not enough to end the unfair practices that occurred during this time period. Consequently, between the years 1634 and 1636 the gentry received over 5,000 acres with the average size of each allotment around 200 acres. Whereas, the generality received less than 1,500 acres with each portion less than 30 acres.⁵⁹

Since most of the gentry had taken up residence around Boston where their governor lived, this group of people remained loyal to his jurisdiction. But in the surrounding regions where the generality resided, dissension was more widespread. As a result, these neighboring communities who were already socially exiled from Boston, began to cry for their own religious community and minister as well. In a sense, their appeal to the General Court for "separate" congregations was a valid one. The dispersal in the opening months together with the unfair land practices, had isolated many families from the Central Church of Boston. If this situation was allowed to continue, religious attendance especially among the youth and the aged would begin to deminish. Even Winthrop realized that more congregations

⁵⁸ James Kendall Hosmer, ed., Winthrop's Journal: History of New England 1630-1649, 2 vols., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), pp. 143-144; hereafter cited as Winthrop's Journal.

and the pastors to run them were needed. Thus, the first wave of ministers brought men such as George Phillips, John Wilson, and Hugh Peter. Later these would be followed by Roger Williams and John Cotton.⁶⁰

In a short time, ministers were signing contracts with their respective congregations. But problems arose over who was to support the minister's expenses. Winthrop believed that each individual church which requested a minister was responsible for his needs. On the other hand, these same communities felt that the Central Church of Boston should foot the bill. Again, John Winthrop exercised his authority "strongly" recommending to these "separate" communities that they share in the economic as well as religious responsibilities. Once again, disagreement between government and people created more division.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 172.

⁶⁰Winthrop Papers, vol. II, p. 164.

The assessment for their maintenance of November 30, 1630 indicated that Boston, Charlestown, and Winnisimmet were being ministered to by Wilson; Watertown, Foxbury and Medford by Phillips; Saugus by virtue of its exclusion, from Salem; and Dorchester, by their exclusion by their own ministers. The contracts with Higginson and Skelton, together with an earlier contract with Francis Bright (Feb. 2, 1628/29) can be found in the early Files of Courts and Miscellaneous Papers, Office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court for the county of Suffolk, Boston. Skelton's three-year contract was assumed by the undertakers, the ten investors who, in return for commercial concessions, took on the obligations of the old company following the transfer of the charter to America.

As Winthrop continued to loose his influence on the neighboring settlements, he decided to concentrate his attention on his own community and church at Boston. Following the establishment of the other congregations, Winthrop believed that if Boston had its own covenant, he could maintain better control over its social and religious affairs. This covenant read:

We whose names here under written, being by His most wise, and good Providence brought together into this part of America in the Bay of Massachusetts, and desirous to unite ourselves into one Congregation, or Church, under the Lord Jesus Christ our Head, in such sort as becometh all whom He hath Redeemed, and Sanctified to Himself, do hereby solemnly, and religiously (as in His most holy Providence) Promise, and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the Rule of the Gospel, and in all sincere conformity to his Holy Ordinances, and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace.⁶¹

This covenant which the Church of Boston adopted hopefully would solidify the spiritual atmosphere of this community. But like the previous covenant which had been proposed for the entire plantation, it lacked an equal representation for its members. Again, the gentry was favored. Soon another division emerged. The gentry adhered to the jurisdiction of the Church community, while the generality found security in the town environment itself. At first, Winthrop and the magistrates paid little attention to these "town proceedings," feeling that the theocracy which they

⁶¹First Church of Boston Records and Baptism, 1630-1687. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society Library). In all discussions there was no indication of the thought that the division of the ministers and congregationalism would contribute to the demise of the single community idea and perpetuate the dispersal. That this was not considered, however, is evidence of nothing more than the confusion of the times.

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had established was sufficient to take on both social and religious matters. But as the population increased, the structure of the Church had to conform thereby delegating its authority to the growing town. "Exactly when the formal divisions of function took place, when public affairs formally recognized as separate from Church affairs is unknown."⁶²

The distinction between church and town offered the community new sources of fellowship, social service, and expression of thought. Nevertheless, there were several differences which resulted in this division. The main one being that the town did not distinguish between people as the Church did. The Church's distinction centered around the concept of "freemen."

The word 'freemen' as used in Massachusetts after 1630 mean something more and something less than was intended in the charter. The charter had used the word to designate the stockholders of the company, a body not too numerous to act as a legislative assembly. Before Winthrop extended the term to mean citizens of the colony, the settlers consented that the term should no longer include any legislative power. If freemanship had been extended to all church members without this rule, the effect would have been to make Massachusetts a simple democracy, with hundreds of citizens gathering in some huge field to make laws.⁶³

Originally, it was to be the freemen who elected the Court of Assistants as long as these freemen were Church members, and original stockholders in the company. But as the town grew, Winthrop was "forced" to extend the freemen clause to all citizens of the colony. The stipulation being that

⁶²Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. p. 64.

these "new" freemen would not have the right to participate in the current legislative process. By this action, Winthrop was able to keep the freemen who were churchmen and who shared in the colony's administration under his personal direction. This enabled the town to admit as many "new" freemen as it desired without interference to Winthrop's government.

At this point, Thomas Dudley stepped in and forced Winthrop to acknowledge the fact that his authority was derived from the original charter agreement. Once this was brought out into the open, all freemen were invited to examine the document discovering that they also had the right to govern. Thus, as the spring elections approached, Winthrop found himself making concessions to these freemen who had been "bestowed" with this new privilege. Whether Winthrop had purposely concealed provisions of the charter is not for certain. Nevertheless, he was still dedicated to the idea that an efficient government should be directed only by a "chosen few."

With the passing of these events, Winthrop surrendered his governorship to the likes of such men as Thomas Dudley, John Haynes, and Henry Vane. The town and its controversy over the freemen issue had loosened Winthrop's control over the colony. By March of 1636, town government was officially defined.

⁶³Morgan, The Puritan Dilemma, p. 111.

Then the General Court, voting that 'particular' towns have many things which every town, or major parts of them; the power to dispose of their own lands, and woods, with all the privileges and opportunities of the said town, to ground lots and make such orders as may concern the well ordering of their own towns not repugnant to the laws and orders here established by the General Court; as also to lay penalties for the breach of their orders, and to levy the same, not exceeding the sum of twenties; also to choose their own particular offices, as constables, surveyors, for the highways and the like.⁶⁴

The change in leadership along with the growth of factionalism among towns and congregations seriously impaired the stability of Winthrop's commonwealth. Furthermore, many citizens of the colony were substituting their Puritan values for secular needs.

To the leaders, during the first years, the social aspect of the Church was all important. Necessity, an indication toward the concept of congregationalism among some of them. With this congregationalism came a restructuring in Puritan ceremony and a falling away from basic Puritan dogma. Unity seemed to be the important question, and God, his scriptures, and covenant fell to the wayside.⁶⁵

Enter Roger Williams.

⁶⁴Winthrop's Journal I, p. 172.

The classic description of town formation in John's Wonder-Working Providence, writing in the early 1650's of a town founded in the early 1640's was describing an established pattern; Boston's town government emerged before that pattern had evolved.

⁶⁵Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. 99.

CHAPTER III

ROGER WILLIAMS

Roger Williams was the first very important challenge to the Puritan commonwealth. Here was a man who ventured beyond the problems of land distribution, inflation, and town planning directly confronting the theological and social environment that John Winthrop had labored to establish. Williams felt that Puritan ideals for the Boston Church had been corrupted.

They had become impure, and therefore he would not join with a congregation, which although driven into the wilderness by its persecuting spirit, refused to regard its hierarchy and worldly ceremonies as portions of the abominations of Anti-Christ.⁶⁶

Williams cried for a religious revival in order to "get back to the basics."

To recover a soul from Satan by repentance, to bring them from Anti-Christian doctrine or worship, to the doctrine or worship of Christian, is the least true internal or external submission, that only works the All-powerful God, by the word of the Spirit in the hand of his Spiritual officers.⁶⁷

Although this revival concept had begun during his youth as a result of the reformation, it was not certain

⁶⁶Rueben Aldridge Guild, The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, (New York: Russell and Russell Inc., 1963), Biographical Introduction, vol. I, p. 11.

⁶⁷Samuel L. Caldwell, ed., The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, "The Bloody Tenent of Persecution," vol. III, chapter 39, p. 136.

whether he fully accepted certain factions such as Presbyterianism or the new Congregationalism. Obviously, groups that promoted the idea of dissension may have drawn his attention.⁶⁸ Needless to say, from the very beginning, Roger Williams had displayed a keen interest towards individualism allowing himself to become involved with an insatiable spirit of rebellion. "In 1632 when alluding to his early trials, he declared that 'though in Christ called, yet had he been persecuted even in and out of my father's house these twenty years.'"⁶⁹

One might presume, although it was not certain, that Williams's parents were Puritans. Nevertheless, no matter what faith they adhered to, Roger Williams was inclined towards separatism. Little is known of his early childhood, but "in an obscure country village in 1599, amid the mountains of Wales he was born."⁷⁰ Later, after being raised by his parents, James and Alice Williams, he entered Cambridge University.⁷¹

Even though Cambridge was a famous center of learning for Puritan men, Williams did not accept all of its principles and after four years left the university to pursue his separatist beliefs.

⁶⁸ Samuel Hugh Brockunier, The Irrepressible Democrat: Roger Williams (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1940), p. 11.

⁶⁹ Narragansett Club, Narragansett Club Publications, Roger Williams to John Winthrop, vol. II, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Ruben Aldridge Guild, The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, pp. 5-6.

It was during this period that Williams became acquainted with the leading emigrants to America; and he appears to have been very decided even then in his opposition to the liturgy, the ceremonies, and hierarchy of the established church.⁷²

Sometime between 1627 and 1630, Roger Williams officially began his personal journey seeking a "more radical and non-conformist position." Like John Winthrop, he was also suffering from the political and economic turmoil that was gripping his homeland.

The infatuated Charles had decided on autocratic rule, and the utterance of the arbitrary principles from the pulpits of the court clergy was encouraged. Doctrines subversive of popular rights were freely taught, and the sermons containing them were published at the King's special command. Laud had recently been placed in the See of London, and temper of his party had become more persecuting, angry, and exclusive. With zeal and bitter hate he fought to exterminate Puritanism from the Church.⁷³

Finally, after a ten week voyage, Roger and his wife Mary arrived in the New World in February of 1631.

He was a Puritan and a fugitive from English persecution; but his wrongs had not clouded his accurate understanding; in the capacious recesses of his mind he had revolved nature of tolerance, and he, and he alone, had arrived at the great principle which is its sole effectual remedy.⁷⁴

⁷¹Ibid., p. 7.

⁷²Ibid., p. 8.

⁷³Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 10.

John Winthrop, ed. The Complete Letters of Roger Williams.

Roger Williams was seeking freedom, a freedom to revive the lost beliefs of his Puritan faith. "I am no elder in any Church, no more nor so much as your worthy self, nor ever shall be, if the Lord pleases to grant my desires that I may intend what I long after..."⁷⁵

John Winthrop welcomed the ship carrying Roger Williams, not knowing that this vessel had brought a man still filled with the fires of persecution and separatism. Winthrop recorded, "she brought Mr. Williams (a godly minister) with his wife, Mr. Throgomorton, and some others."⁷⁶ The arrival of Williams came at a perfect time. Currently there were several openings for a prominent minister in the Church of Boston. But somehow, Williams did not feel right about these positions. He did not share the same thoughts as other enthusiastic ministers who saw Boston as the "promised land" ripe for new markets of religious expression. Moreover, since other ministers such as John Cotton, Henry Shepard, and Nathaniel Ward had not arrived, Williams could have had any position in Boston that he desired. But he refused. "Being unanimously chosen teacher at Boston, I could not accept because I do not officiate to an unseparated people, as upon examination and conference I found them to be."⁷⁷

Consequently, it was not out of humility that Williams declined the offer in Boston. Rather it was his own

⁷⁵John Russell Bartlett, ed. The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, "The Letters of Roger Williams," vol. VI., p. 2.

⁷⁶Winthrop's Journal I, p. 49-51.

theological principles that prevented him from accepting this appointment. Williams wanted the Church of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to break totally away from the Church of England. Secondly, he accused the magistrates of punishing people for various offenses with unjust jurisdiction. "The Civil magistrates, he declared might not punish breaking of the Sabbath nor any other violations of the first table."⁷⁸ Williams explained his reasoning for this statement by saying:

The fundamental error of our ancestors which began with the very settlement of the colony was a doctrine which has since been happily exploded. I mean the necessity of a union between Church and State. To this they clung as the ark of their safety. They thought it the only sure way of founding a Christian commonwealth. They maintained that Church government and Civil government may very well band together, it being the duty of the magistrates to take care of religion and improve his civil authority for observing the duties commanded by it. They not only tolerated the civil power in the suppression of hereof, but they demanded and enjoined it. They preached it in the pulpit and the synod. It was in their closed prayers and in their public legislation. The arm of the civil government was constantly employed in support of the denunciations of the Church; and without its form, the Inquisition existed in substance, with a full share of its terrors and violence.⁷⁹

It was this abuse of authority together with an unseparated Puritan community which caused Williams to challenge the legislative power of the Winthrop administration.

⁷⁷Narragansett Club Publications, Williams to Cotton, vol. VI., p. 356.

⁷⁸Winthrop's Journal I, p. 63.

⁷⁹Guild, The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, "Mr. Cotton's Letter Examined and Answered," vol. I, p. 326.

In a sense Roger Williams was really saying:

Farewell, dear England! Farewell, the Church of God in England, and all the Christian friends there! We do not go to New England as Separatists from the Church of England though we cannot but separate from the corruption in it.⁸⁰

If these problems could be solved, men in the commonwealth would have the time to live a productive Christian life.

Shortly after his appearance in Boston, Williams departed to the community of Salem. On April 12th of that year, Governor Winthrop was informed that the Church of Salem had elevated Roger Williams to the office of teacher.⁸¹ This acceptance prompted several magistrates such as Coddington, Ludlow, Bradstreet, and others to seek action against the separatist ideas of Roger Williams.

The Church at Salem with the independence which marked its origin disregarded, it appears, the meditated interference of the General Court and on April 12, 1631, the same day which the court was held received Mr. Williams as her minister. The choice of pastors and teachers is one of the Church's most sacred rights, and most important duties. She is bound to exercise this high privilege, in humble dependence on the teachings of divine wisdom, but with a resolute resistance of attempts, from any quarter, to control her election. It was a violation of this first principle in church organization and government which caused the resistance of Williams to the ecclesial powers and led eventually to his banishment.⁸²

⁸⁰Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana (Hartford: 1852) Book III, chapter I.

⁸¹Brockunier, The Irrepressible Democract, p. 42.

⁸²Guild, The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, vol. I, p. 15.

As a result of this violation by Williams and the community of Salem, a letter was published by the magistrates, "charging that Mr. Williams had refused to join with the congregation at Boston because they would not make public repentance for having communion with the Churches of England, while they lived there"⁸³ John Cotton, a reputable minister of Boston, further responded to the statements of the magistrates by saying to Williams:

You choose to persist in your way; and to protest against all the Churches and Brethren that stand in your way; and thus the good hand of Christ that should have humbled you, to see and turn from the error of your way, hath rather hardened you therein, and quickened you only to see failings in all Churches and brethren, rather than in yourself.⁸⁴

The magistrates also reacted to Williams' remarks which declared that the leaders of Boston were not permitted to punish those who broke Church laws. Williams stated,

It is dangerous Doctrine to affirm it is a misery to live in that State where a Christian cannot enjoy the fellowship of the public Churches of God without fine or punishment. Was it then a mercy for all the inhabitants of Babel, to have been banished whom the Church of Jesus Christ does not have to received to holy fellowship?⁸⁵

In reality the magistrates had no real authority to interfere into the internal affairs of the Salem community or question the views of their new teacher. But nonetheless they did. The fear that Winthrop had was that Williams

⁸³ Brockunier, The Irrepressible Democrat, p. 42.
Winthrop's Journal, vol. I, p. 63.

⁸⁴ Complete Writings of Roger Williams, vol. I, p. 298,
"Cotton's Letter.

⁸⁵ Guild, ed., Complete Writings of Roger Williams,
vol. I, p. 336, "Cotton's Letter Examined and Answered."

was gradually pulling away from the Puritan school of theology instituted by William Ames. It was this theological framework that Winthrop and many of the magistrates adhered to. The religious ideas of Williams were founded in another theological school, that of William Perkins. Consequently, in December of 1633, Winthrop addressed the statements by Roger Williams by 'saying' that, "Roger Williams was emphasizing a typology as opposed to a federalism."⁸⁶ The federalism of Winthrop's colony relied heavily on the Old Testament idea of covenant. Williams did not oppose this dependence upon the Old Testament, but viewed this covenant concept as one which led the believer into a fuller knowledge of the New Testament. Responding only to the Old Testament for an understanding of this covenant theology was not enough. Williams saw most of these Old Testament passages as mere stories with no theological significance unless they were related to the New Testament. Thus with this understanding, the political and religious structure that was started in the Old Testament was fulfilled when Christ inaugurated the New Testament. This enabled the believer to grow in his own spirituality without the burdens of the law.

The Church of Christ admitted many thousands of Jews that believed in the name of Christ, although they were still zealous of the law, because Christ

⁸⁶Van Til, Liberty of Conscience, p. 66.

hath received them.⁸⁷

Another aspect of Williams' theology centered around two different views of conscience. Williams followed the ideas of William Perkins who believed that, "conscience played a vital role in determining the condition of the soul."⁸⁸ This definition of conscience embraced both the authority of scripture and the faculty of psychology.

"Pauline literature was the chief expounder of this idea of conscience and often mentioned the freedom and liberty that the Christian had by way of conscience."⁸⁹ With this New Testament idea reinforced, the idea of Biblical authority transcending state authority would be better understood.

Earlier it was stated that John Winthrop and other magistrates were educated in the Puritan tradition of William Ames. In this school, it was believed that conscience was tied to the "dialectic method," the method acting in an authoritative capacity as problems of conscience were solved.⁹⁰ Use of this method eliminated the need to think in terms of conscience as having liberty. It was this phrase, "liberty of conscience," which created the theological "schism" between Roger Williams and John Winthrop. William Perkins believed that using your conscience entailed this

⁸⁷Guild, ed. The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, "Mr. Cotton's Letter Examined and Answered," vol. I, p. 353.

⁸⁸Van Til, Liberty of Conscience, p. 16.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 17.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 57.

aspect of liberty, whereas William Ames did not. These ideas along with Williams' different approach to biblical interpretation allowed him to question the magistrate's authority for enforcing the laws of the Mosaic tradition (table of laws). To add to the fire, Williams publicly challenged the King's title to the lands of the Indians calling the Churches of England and New England anti-christian. The controversy over this title or patent was discussed at some length by Williams in letters to John Winthrop. "The condition of myself and those new families here planting with me, you know full well: we have no Patent: nor does the face of Magistracy have with our present condition."⁹¹ Williams further said that this Patent in the King's name was beneficial to England and not to the people who settled this wilderness.

We whose names are hereunder written, late inhabitants of the Massachusetts, (upon occasion of some difference of conscience) being permitted to depart from the limits of that Patent, under the which we came over into these parts, and being called by Providence of God of heaven, remote from others of our countrymen among the barbarians in this town of New Providence, do with free and joint content promise each unto other, that, for our commonpeace and welfare (until we hear further of the King's royal pleasure concerning ourselves) we will from time to time subject ourselves in active or passive obedience to such orders and agreements as shall be made by greater number of the householders, and such as shall be hereafter admitted by their content into the same privilege and covenant in our ordinary meeting.⁹²

⁹¹ John Russell Bartlett, ed., The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, "The Letters of Roger Williams," vol. VI, p. 4.

⁹² Ibid., p. 5

By November of 1634, the General Court submitted two counts against Roger Williams.

One was his unquenchable Separatism: he was preaching that the Churches of England were false churches: the other and more serious was that Williams had broken his promise to us, in teaching publicly against the King's patent and our great sin in claiming right thereby to this country.⁹³

On March 3, 1635, another meeting was called. But this time John Cotton pointed out to the Court that Williams was only following his conscience with his statements, and not really being "seditious." A month later Roger Williams was again summoned before the Court. Apparently it had been noticed that he had refused to take the Oath of Residence. This oath was first promulgated among the magistrates in April of 1634, shortly after Winthrop's authority had been tested by the freemen issue.⁹⁴ In this oath, the magistrates had "entrenched" themselves behind a new requirement compelling inhabitants who were not freemen to take a "resident's promise." This action "forced" them to swear allegiance to the laws and authority of the governor and magistrates, and to give speedy notice of any sedition plotted or intended against the government.⁹⁵

After a brief hearing, the magistrates failed in bringing up any specific charges against Williams regarding his steadfast refusal to take the oath. Apparently Williams

⁹³ Winthrop's Journal I, p. 180.

⁹⁴ Brockunier, Irrepressible Democrat, p. 58.

⁹⁵ Massachusetts Bay Records vol. I., pp. 115-116.

had not been the only freemn who had resisted in the taking of this oath. "The Court was forced to desist from that particular meeting."⁹⁶

In July of 1635, Williams was again brought before the magistrates. This time his words and protests had gone too far. Ever since his defiance of the Freeman's Oath, the situation had become more tense. The magistrates passed further legislation requiring that every person attend public worship. Once more Williams objected to this new law resulting in this court appearance. Whether the Court was dominated by a vindicative spirit or one which simply attempted to abide by the current system of law was debatable. Regardless of their reasoning, Roger Williams was definitely out-numbered. He had been declared a trouble-maker in the commonwealth and peace had to be restored. Even though his congregation had elected him as their minister, the magistrates openly condemned him as a "great contempt of authority." John Cotton commented on this situation by saying:

And yet it may be they passed that sentence against you not upon that ground, (that is, your separatist ideas), but for ought I know, upon your other corrupt doctrines, which tend to the disturbance both of civil and holy peace, as may appear by that answer which was sent to the Brethren of the Church of Salem, and to yourself.⁹⁷

While these proceedings were taking place, the congregation of Salem had petitioned the Court for permission

⁹⁶ Narragansett Club Publications, Cotton's Reply to Mr. Williams, vol. II, pp. 48-49

to obtain land adjacent to the Marblehead Neck. The Court refused citing that the Salem community had installed a separatist as their pulpit leader, namely Roger Williams. For the next few months both sides exchanged angry words and fiery letters, but in the end, Williams weakened by physical illness and emotional strain, was called before the Court for final sentencing. In September of that year, the Court struck out against the Salem community. "The proceedings of Williams and his children were followed by another atrocious violation of their rights. The deputies of Salem were deprived of their seats until an apology was made."⁹⁸ Moreover, the land claim to the Marblehead was refused until they renounced their decision to have Williams as their ministerial choice.⁹⁹ Roger Williams was faced with banishment and the Salem "disturbance" ended. On October 8, 1635, the following was read to Roger Williams.

Whereas Mr. Roger Williams...hath broached and divulged dangerous new opinions against the authorities of magistrates, as also written letters of defamation, both of the magistrates and churches here, and that before any conviction, and yet maintaineth the same without retraction, it is ordered that the said Mr. 100 Roger Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction.

Several years after the banishment of Roger Williams, John Winthrop continued to speak of his admiration for this

⁹⁷The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, "Letter of Mr. John Cotton," vol. I, pp. 297-298.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 26.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁰⁰Massachusetts Bay Records, I, pp. 160-161.

man, but his remarks still reflected his misunderstanding of Williams's idea of "liberty of conscience."

Winthrop said that those who complained of the yoke of authority that if they would not endure but would murmur, and oppose, they desired not liberty but only a corrupt license. By narrowing its definition, he emptied liberty of its essential content. Sedition, he declared, doth properly signify a going aside to make a party.¹⁰¹

Although the views of Roger Williams were suppressed and his community chastized, this congregational movement was only the forerunner to other expressions.

The name of Roger Williams has been handed down to us by Puritan writers loaded with reproach. He is described by Neal as a rigid Brownist, precise and uncharitable; and of the turbulent nature. Coddington accused him 'as a hireling,' who for the sake of money went to England for the charter."¹⁰²

Regardless of these judgments, Williams did rock the values and traditions of the Ames school of theology seeking other avenues of thought. He had refused appointment in Boston, and openly challenged the magistrates in areas that no one dare question.

I ask if it do not clearly follow, that (according to that most dangerous and seditious doctrine of some Papists and Protestants) such Magistrates who change their judgments and way of Worship, must lose their Headship in Spirituals, and consequently be found unfit at last to govern in Civils also.¹⁰³

Obviously, this individual was not the only person to uphold such beliefs. Other ministers came to the commonwealth hoping to rid themselves of the suppressive

¹⁰¹Winthrop's Journal II, p. 281.

¹⁰²Guild, ed., Complete Writings of Roger Williams, vol. I, pp. 47-48.

¹⁰³Complete Writings of Roger Williams, "The Examiner--
Defended in a Fair Sober Answer," vol. VII, pp. 211-212.

environment of Old England. "All the while, too, these new religious leaders were building upon the crude outlines of congregationalism which had been laid down during the discussion of the summer of 1630."¹⁰⁴

At this point one had to ask if the ministers came to Boston to offer help to the new colony or to start their own congregations, that is, congregations that followed the ministers' own personal views of Puritan theology.

A procedural question immediately arose: did they come as magistrates of the state, or as members of a neighboring congregation offering their help? Once the Bostonians established their positions as mere neighboring church members, the conference proceeded not to a resolution of the question but a reconciliation of the factions and a solemn uniting.¹⁰⁵

The influx of fresh, energetic ministers ushered in a different theological perspective for the Puritan Church. Magistrates and ministers became so concerned with dissent and factionalism, that Puritan dogma was pushed to the wayside and unity became the main attraction. In one of his letters to John Winthrop, John Cotton pointed out that this feeling which started with the arrival of Roger Williams continued even after the Hutchinsonian controversy.

Even as late as 1637 the bay leaders put unity above dogmatic truth, Cotton writing of the Hutchinsonian outbreak that Winthrop and Dudley were involved in, 'in a serious conference,' told him that they did not look at the differences between the elders and me, that is, between Cotton and the majority of the ministers-- to be fundamental matter: they were important inasmuch

¹⁰⁴Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. 100.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 100; Winthrop's Journal I, p. 66, 71-72.

as the difference of notion might be injurious to the peace of Churches and commonwealth.¹⁰⁶

This change in the theological environment of the colony was not generated solely by Roger Williams. Nor did it culminate with the trial of Anne Hutchinson. In the meantime, Puritan ministers such as John Cotton came to Boston seeking this religious freedom and the stimulating corner on the preaching market. Cotton was a product of Trinity and Emmanuel College, Cambridge and served some time at St. Botolph's Church during one of his early assignments. He was a dynamic preacher capable of reaching his congregation with a distinctive linguistic and theological flair. He was a welcomed addition to the plantation arriving in time for the Roger Williams incident.

In a sense, it was John Cotton who made the initial change away from traditional Puritan thinking for New England. His words were inspirational calling for repentance and personal reformation. He challenged and questioned the attitudes of the people hoping to bring about a spiritual up-lifting for the new world. Even John Winthrop liked his style calling him a leader who would heal the wounds of this young community.

The elder Winthrop in describing the first six months of Cotton's ministry stated, 'dangerous' profane and notorious evil persons confessing their sins and being comfortably received into the bosom of the Church. More were converted and added to the Boston Church than in all other churches in the Bay...Yes, the Lord gave witness to the exercise of prophecy, so as thereby some were converted and others edified.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 66, 71-72.

Cotton as well as many other ministers reinforced this concept of unity and solidarity. The scars of Roger Williams were still lingering, and many of the magistrates were pleased that these young ministers were doing their job. Unity had to be maintained if the Puritan faith was to be sustained. The people were to be members of the covenant community, a community which the leaders had intended from the outset. "The people of Boston were to be a covenant group bound together to walk as a right ordered congregation, and Church of Christ, all ways of his worship according to the holy rules of the word of God."¹⁰⁸

These ministers also brought an expertise to the preaching field which had been lacking in the commonwealth. They were eloquent speakers for their congregations and good "advisers" to the magistrates in matters related to morals. They became prophets for the "New Israel." Like the magistrates, they wished to develop an orthodoxy that would unite the believers of the community. Their influence became so strong that by 1635, they were looked upon as a "second" government.

Even the General Court entreated the elders and brethren of every church to consult and advise of one uniform order of discipline in the Churches agreeable to the scriptures and then to consider how far the magistrates might act for preservation of that uniformity and peace of the Churches.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Winthrop Papers III, "Edward Howes to John Winthrop Jr.," p. 134, Winthrop's Journal I, p. 116.

¹⁰⁸ Winthrop Papers III, pp. 223-225.

¹⁰⁹ Winthrop's Journal I, p. 179.

The ideals that these ministers incorporated into the community were admirable, but being human they soon fell victim to the theological "freedom" which the New World offered. They began to disagree with each other opening the doors for more internal problems.

The initial days of turmoil occurred in the early part of 1636 when Thomas Shepard, another prominent churchmen who arrived with the ministerial migration, locked horns with John Cotton. Shepard had recently listened to some of Cotton's lectures, and he did not agree with Cotton's statements on faith and sanctification.

It is the earnest desire not only of myself, but of certain members, whose hearts are much endeared to you, that for the further clearing up of the truth, you would be pleased to give us satisfaction by way of writing rather than by speech for this one time to these particulars...The term sanctification had much to do with the building up of the Church, a church with high moral standards and a system of solid values.¹¹⁰

Shepard's idea of institutional church was centered around visible saints all seeking their salvation through the church as a united group. On the other hand, John Cotton envisioned this concept of sanctification on a more personal, individual level feeling that the institutional church should not be impartial to those whose external actions depicted a behavior contrary to Puritan belief. Cotton also believed that the Church should recognize the internal working of Christ in all persons no matter what their religious or social background was. With this

¹¹⁰ Writings of Rev. John Cotton, Bibliographical Essays: A Tribute to Wilberforce Eames, (Cambridge: 1924), Henry Shepard to John Cotton, April 1636.

acknowledged, there would be no real stumbling block to one's admission to the Church. This internal working of God in the individual or Grace, would allow the person to become more aware of his or her personal salvation, a salvation that did not have to rely on a structured Church. Cotton claimed that those who professed this personal salvation through grace were the actual visible saints.¹¹¹

Cotton wished to turn gradually from the notion of only accepting people into the Puritan fold on pure conduct. He emphasized the fact that God was constantly at work in the individual leading him into a fuller revelation of salvation. Once they became comfortable with this feeling, their faith in a caring and saving God would become stronger.

But Henry Shepard feared that the individual might take this concept of personal salvation one step too far endangering their outlook on the validity of an institutional Church.

To stress to such an extent, the personal quest for evidence of God's graces, to dismiss the ordinances of the Church as comforting but in ineffectual, to preach God's spirit rather than the moral law, absolute faith rather than conduct was to unleash an individual's approach to God undermining all formal religion.¹¹²

Enter Mrs. Anne Hutchinson.

¹¹¹ Edmund S. Morgan, Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea (New York: Cornell University Press, 1963), pp. 95-99

¹¹² Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. 117. The Implications of this doctrine in the England of Puritan Revolution are suggested in Goeffre F. Nuttal's, The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience (Oxford: 1946).

CHAPTER IV

ANNE HUTCHINSON

Before one can discuss the personality of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson and the influence she had on the commonwealth, one must first consider the concept of Antinomianism. Obviously, from a theological and social perspective the two were definitely intertwined in the Massachusetts Bay Colony during the 1630's. Antinomianism in its root sense, meant "against or opposed to the law."¹¹³ Theologically this belief held that "the moral law was not binding upon Christians who were under the law of grace."¹¹⁴ In New England, Antinomianism meant "the opposition between man's obedience to the law, or his works and the saving grace commemorated by the Holy Spirit."¹¹⁵ This movement dominated the Bostonian scene from October of 1636 to March of 1638. It was the Antinomians who did away with the Biblical understanding of law in the Old Testament, similar to the ideas surrounding the case of Roger Williams. This sect relied heavily on the freedom of the individual to receive a dispensation of grace proffered in the New Testament. Consequently, individuals who followed this belief did not have to observe laws for moral conduct.

¹¹³ David D. Hall, ed., The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

In the past people were guided by the precepts or laws of the Roman Catholic Church. "This arrangement provided powerful sanctions for the enforcement of Christian deportment and also offered the individual communicant concrete tokens of assurance."¹¹⁶ With the passing of the Middle Ages, the 12th century gave birth to many outspoken believers who openly criticized this ritualistic legalism. They felt that theology had swayed away from the original Gospel message.

The teaching of these spiritual reformers was often charged with innatest conceptions which propounded a mystical infusion of the Divine Spirit into the soul of the believer of such effect as to abolish the distinction between creature and creator and preclude any possibility of the free operation of the human will.¹¹⁷

As a result of this belief, moral law was done away with. By the 15th century many groups of these "reformers" began to display such a moral laxity in their own personal lives that the Inquisition was initiated to rid the continent of them. For the most part a great majority of their following was stamped out, but segments of this movement still remained. Finally, in the 16th century, after nearly a hundred years of underground existence, the Antinomians emerged in the lime-light of the Protestant Revolt.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 3

¹¹⁶ Emery Battis, Saints and Sectaries: Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Virginia: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 40.

¹¹⁷Ibid.,

Luther's revolt raised the floodgate, and soon the plain of northwestern Europe was affected with these pietistic and enthusiastic sects. The epithet 'Antinomian' was first specifically applied to the followers of John Agricola, a disciple of Luther.¹¹⁸

Agricola, like Anne Hutchinson, pushed religious doctrine into another direction. This time it was Luther's justification by faith concept. Following Agricola came other sects that did far-reaching more damage than Agricola. One such group of spiritual reformers was called the enthusiasts. They were have said to have found their religion not from the Bible, but from some "guiding light in themselves." "More often these sectaries were Biblicists appealing to some favored section of the New Testament as authority for their actions."¹¹⁹ An example of this type of sect was the Anabaptists. This particular following relied solely upon the Synoptic traditions of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, hoping to achieve some better understanding of the kingdom of God. Still another group was the Millenarians. These fanatic people adhered to the Apocalypse, the Book of Revelations, envisioning the kingdom of God in 1000 year time sequences. The Millenarians were obsessed by the symbolic apocalyptic literature in Revelations interpreting many of these images literally.

In the year 1635 overwhelmed by the need for bold action and dangerous risks in order to hasten the coming of the new era, they seized churches such as the Cathedral of Munster putting people to the sword for not following their ways.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸James Hastings, ed., The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (New York: 1908), vol. I, p. 581.

¹¹⁹Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 41.

Finally, another religious sect that was present during these times was the Familists. Henrik Niclaes was their founder promoting the idea that a special guiding light was present inside them. Through this guiding light one could better understand the law and the fulfillment of the law through the virtue of love.

As these movements and their individual theologies traveled throughout Europe gaining followers and strength, Anne Hutchinson began to read and hear more about them. Their influences were subtly embraced by her especially the sect that had established itself on the Isle of Ely.

One place in particular seems to have become notorious as a center for erronists and enthusiasts of all types. A prototype of Rhode Island in this respect, the Isle of Ely in Cambridgeshire.¹²¹

Among some of these sectaries came the usual distinction of female authority being exercised. Although Anne Hutchinson never knew the certain woman or name of the religious sect, somehow "she did exceedingly magnify her to be a woman of a thousand, hardly any like to her."¹²²

¹²⁰ Battis, Saints and Sectaries, pp. 41-42.

¹²¹ Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, (London: 1646), Part II, p. 29.

¹²² Franklin B. Dexter, ed., A Report of the Trial of Mrs. Hutchinson before the Church in Boston 1638 (The Massachusetts Historical Society: 1889), second series, p. 184. During the course of Mrs. Hutchinson's examination before the Church of Boston, the Reverend Hugh Peter remarked to the assembly: 'I would say this; when I was once speaking with her (Mrs. Hutchinson) about the woman Elis, she did exceeding magnify her to be a woman of a thousand, hardly any like her and yet we know the woman Elis is a dangerous woman and holds forth grievous things and fearful errors.' This reference to the woman Elis has been variously interpreted as

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Anne became involved in the idea that here was a woman preacher who was doing a "man's job" in a male dominated society. The very notion made quite an impression upon her. Her thoughts and religious convictions progressed in a gradual way bolstered by Cotton's speeches. Yet this religious "responsibility" that she was experiencing was somewhat new. "The fervent temper of her religious activity in New England also suggested the relative novelty of her ideas. While in Massachusetts she proselytized with the unfettered zeal of a neophyte."¹²³ Like the other "male ministers" Anne discovered the inexhaustive opportunity of this new land.

The fate of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson seemed to be guided by her incessant conscience and her bold religious convictions. Eventually her beliefs and actions brought her to trial and banishment just like her predecessor, Roger Williams. She

a Classical or Biblical allusion, but in the succeeding sentence Mrs. Hutchinson refers to her as though she were a living, contemporaneous person: 'I said of the woman of Elis but what I heard, for I knew her not nor saw her.' This rather puzzling exchange is considerably illuminated by the following passage in Thomas Edwards, Gangraena, part II, p. 29: 'There are also some woman preachers in our times who keep constant lectures, preaching weekly to many men and women. In Lincolnshire, in Holland and other parts (that is, the parts about Holland and Lincolnshire), there is a woman preacher who preaches. It is certain and reported that she also baptized, but this not for certain. In the Isle of Ely (that land of errors and sectaries) is a woman preacher also. In indexes of English towns Ely is the only town which even approximates in sound or appearance the word 'Elis,' and the identification seems reinforced by the fact that Ely had long been notorious as a gathering place for radical sectaries.

¹²³Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 45.

came to Boston with her husband and family under the watchful eye of John Winthrop, who was quick to notice this particular woman. "John Winthrop, Nestor of the Massachusetts Saints, sober Puritan though he was had a keen and appreciative eye for a pretty face, even in those women he disliked."¹²⁴ When describing her, the governor utilized the word "fierce" to portray the climate of New England and the temperment of Anne Hutchinson.

Although he fastened on her short-comings and ignored her conspicuous virtues so strenuously did he accentuate the fierceness of her temper, her manner, her carriage, her speech, and her countenance that there must have been substantial reason for concentrating on this particular attribute. Winthrop cites at least one public display of violent temper on her part, and others are depicted from the content of her history.¹²⁵

Anne Hutchinson quickly became an intricate part of this "fierce environment" which Winthrop spoke of. Her personality and influence was noticed almost immediately by the Bay Colony. Her spirit was indeed here to stay. She was a determined individual searching, challenging, and disrupting. She was in Winthrop's mind, "a woman of ready wit and bold spirit."¹²⁶ Consequently, the battle commenced not in the courtroom, but at the moment she arrived in Boston.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

¹²⁵ Charles Francis Adams, ed., Antinomianism in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, 1636-1638 (Boston: 1894), p. 157. John Winthrop: "A Short Story of the Rise, Reign, and Ruin of the Antinomians, Familists, Libertines, that affected the churches of New England..." 1644, hereafter cited as Antinomianism.

¹²⁶ Winthrop's Journal I, p. 195.

As a young girl, Anne Hutchinson was a well-educated Puritan, gifted in the discipline of Biblical exegesis and Puritan dogma. She was an emotional person known for her sharp outbursts and persuasive tongue. Even during the final days of her trial, John Cotton spoke with respect and admiration of her. He felt that this woman and her stubborn spirit were a true sign of independence and expression of conscience. "I have often feared the height of her spirit, Cotton later told her, and being puffed up with your own spirit."¹²⁷

Anne Hutchinson was more than just an outspoken woman with temper and harsh words. She was also a sensitive person who relied upon her own personal convictions. Whether this emotionalism that she displayed interfered with her theological views remained to be seen.

She was a woman who through some impulse now obscure, sought an emotional outlet which seemed to resolve itself most effectively in the acquisition of power and influence over the lives and spiritual destinies of her fellows.¹²⁸

Anne Hutchinson planted her foot into the door of theology sometime between 1628 and 1630. Her primary teacher in these matters was John Cotton. It was his inspiring homilies and enthusiastic spirit that literally swept Anne off her feet plunging her into new avenues of thought. Cotton also added a sense of stability to her life. In her past,

¹²⁷ Antinomianism, p. 313.

¹²⁸ Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 6.

Anne had experienced much trouble. First, there was the untimely death of her father. Secondly, her husband, William, had failed to stimulate her mind with any intellectual closeness or religious direction.

In Cotton's mind and manner she saw the authority she sought, a firm intellect to provide the mental direction that William had failed to provide, and yet a gentle disposition that would not inhibit her own spontaniety.¹²⁹

Cotton was her crutch and promoter. "A rapport was established which she rationalized into absolute dependence on his presence and teaching."¹³⁰ But still even Cotton did not give Anne complete satisfaction. From the very beginning she adhered to a theology that de-emphasized traditional belief in the concept of good works. John Cotton had been one of the first to question the role of good works in the Puritan Church.

In his determination to minize the role of moral effort in the regenerative process, Cotton had established an equipoise of grace and works so delicate that the weight of a hair might upset the balance.¹³¹

While speaking of man's relationship to Christ, Cotton believed that Christ was truly present in the person long before he achieved any plateau of what would be called good moral behavior. Consequently, it was these same remarks

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 38.

¹³⁰ Lawrence Shaw Mayo, ed., The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts-Bay, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), vol. II, pp. 384-385. hereafter cited as Hutchinson, History.

¹³¹Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 38.

that had initiated Shepard's attack on Cotton in an earlier confrontation. Nevertheless, Cotton continued to press this issue attempting to convince his listeners that the "indwelling" of Christ was grace. This alone was sufficient for one's acceptance to Christ.

Anne Hutchinson carried Cotton's position to another dimension and openly criticized those who were in authority.

There were, to Anne's mind too many 'hypocrites' who masqueraded as the elect of God. A more unerring method was required for telling sheep from goats than federal theology provided, and what could be more conclusive, she thought than an immediate awareness of God's presence in the heart of the believer.¹³²

Anne felt that the Divine spirit was infused in the person as they gained an "immediate personal union with the Holy Ghost." As a result of this special indwelling, one was able to rise above his or her present state and not be concerned with good works. They were now elevated into a "spirit of grace." "I live, but not I but Jesus Christ lives in me."¹³³ It became quite obvious that the current leaders, according to Anne, had not received this "spirit of grace."

These statements challenged John Calvin's fixation on spirit and works and then proceeded toward a different direction away from John Cotton. At first, her doctrines were not "disruptive" to the Church of Boston, but eventually they were identified with those of the Antinomian sect. This in itself was enough to place Anne Hutchinson in a "dangerous" position.

¹³²Ibid., p. 39.

¹³³Antinomianism, "A Report of the Trial of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson before the Church in Boston," p. 328.

Meanwhile, Anne's personal life continued to be victimized by tragic events. Her fourteen year-old daughter, Susanna, and her eight year-old daughter, Elizabeth died of fever. Because of these unfortunate circumstances, Anne withdrew into herself exploring her beliefs and giving careful examination to the scriptures.

In the gloomy stillness of her room, she felt the spirit of God descend bringing to her the words of the Apostle John: every spirit that confesseth not, that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh, is the spirit of the Antichrist.¹³⁴

For almost a year Anne remained hidden from public activities. She pondered over the words of the scriptures for hours. Physically, she had begun to recover from her aloneness and the loss of her children. She also discovered that she was pregnant again allowing her mind to be more at ease. Within a short time she had acquired a better comprehension of her religious beliefs sensing that God had directly filled her with the wisdom to learn more. She often repeated, "he that denies the testament denies the testator."¹³⁵ With these words she believed that her eyes and spirit had been opened to the "covenant of grace." She also realized that many people in Boston were not responding to this "new" covenant.

It is at this point that one must ask how Anne came to this "controversial" revelation. It was quite possible that her thoughts materialized during this period of

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 173.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 173. Hutchinson, History, vol., II, pp. 383-384.

solitude and reflection. On the other hand, it might have been her psychological state of mind which some women undergo during a time of pregnancy, that affected her reasoning. But this is pure speculation. In any event,

Mrs. Anne Hutchinson like her colleagues in this terrestrial enterprise, was impelled to invoke the unknown in divine terms that satisfied not only her cultural preconceptions but the modifying force of her emotional needs.¹³⁶

This investigation of Anne's personal, emotional, and theological background might be continued, but this was not the primary concern. The main issue which disrupted the Church of Boston and seriously damaged the religious and social atmosphere of the Bay Colony was the fact that Anne Hutchinson had overstepped her grounds as a woman and defied the political and secular dimensions of an established order. Her convictions, her beliefs, and her opinions together with her affiliation with the Antinomians opposed the concept of law whether it be Church or Civil. It was this opposition that could not be tolerated by John Winthrop and the other leaders of the commonwealth.

In a short time Anne's opinions began to influence other people, people who were prominent members of the Boston gentry. "Later she was to form a similiar attachment to Henry Vane, a young aristocract who was for a time her neighbor in Massachusetts."¹³⁷ As her reputation grew, her

¹³⁶ Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 50.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 106-107.

theological doctrines became more apparent. She openly professed that this revelation which she had received was the same "type" of revelation characteristic of the Bible. "As true as the scriptures and professed to that she had never had any great thing done about her but it was revealed to her beforehand."¹³⁸

Initially, Anne had a difficult time convincing her followers that she had received such a revelation. Needless to say, other Puritans reminded her of the loss of her children, asking how God could reveal himself to a woman whom he had just "punished." Anne overlooked these accusations and pressed onward. "Wracked with unbearable doubt, the unhappy woman was in all probability driven forward on a restless and impulsive quest for certainty."¹³⁹ She was confident, well-read, and obtained an indirect support from some of the ministers.

She was assured that God would ultimately support her and that her presumed orthodox persecutors-- those who insisted on the legal correlation of conduct and retribution would be forever cast down."¹⁴⁰

Following this display, Anne rested on her theological pronouncements for the next few months. She made no real attempt to explore any other possibilities nor did she

¹³⁸Hutchinson, History, II, p. 385.

¹³⁹Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 53.

¹⁴⁰Hutchinson, History, II, pp. 383-384 , Antinomianism, pp. 173-174.

try to retreat from her newly found "faith." Her situation resembled that of an Old Testament prophet crying in a wilderness of silence and orthodoxy.

Later John Wheelwright spoke slightly of the strange fancies and erroneous tenets which possessed her especially during her confinement where she felt some effects too from the quality of humorous, together with the advantage the devil took of her condition attended with melancholy.¹⁴¹

One of the earliest views presented by Anne Hutchinson dealt with the concept of God. Here she seemed to believe that God was linked with the temperment of the individual. Thus the believer shared in a "special" relationship with God. Winthrop often spoke of this relationship with God when he was making his decision to leave England. But his view did not reject theological dogma such as the Covenant of Works as Anne did. Nor did his concept of God allow him to feel that he had a "personal" revelation or indwelling of the Spirit. For John Winthrop, revelation came from scripture and only scripture. Anne's idea of revelation "amounted to an assertion of unqualified personal power and autonomy." It was this autonomy especially in a male dominated society that irked John Winthrop and the other magistrates.

¹⁴¹ Charles H. Bell, ed., John Wheelwright: His Writings, Including His Fast-Day Sermon, 1637, and His Mercurius Americanus, 1645, (Boston: 1876), p. 197. Wheelwright may also have remembered similar expression which he had seen her undergo when they were neighbors in Lincolnshire. hereafter cited as Wheelwright, Writings.

Thus Anne Hutchinson together with her Antinomian beliefs provided compensation for other women by reducing the significance of certain male powers. From this perspective the feminine experience of humility was extended to both sexes, which in turn paradoxically created the possibility of feminine pride.¹⁴²

Anne's next move was to expand her circle of friends hoping to receive more support for her doctrines. It was at this point that she embraced the personage of the Reverend John Wheelwright. Wheelwright was distantly related to the Hutchinson family and soon a closer relationship ensued. Wheelwright was another theological stepping stone for which to build her case on. In these early days he acted as another John Cotton.

For Anne, Wheelwright's office was largely to confirm and strengthen the conviction Cotton had ignited in her mind. Great as her esteem for her brother-in-law, for Anne Hutchinson it was always Pastor Cotton's light which burned most brightly.¹⁴³

For the next few months Anne was content to nurse her new-born child and reflect on her growing admiration for Cotton and Wheelwright. "During this time, God came often to her bringing assurance of His support and stern declarations that all her persecutors would be cast down and scattered."¹⁴⁴ Meanwhile, besides the theological issues of her beliefs, there was also the very important social

¹⁴² Lyle Koehler, The Case of the American Jezebels: Anne Hutchinson and Female Agitation during the years of Antinomian Turmoil, 1636-1640, (William and Mary Quarterly), January 1974, p. 63.

¹⁴³ Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 57.

¹⁴⁴ Antinomianism, p. 173. Hutchinson, History, II, pp. 383-384.

and economic factors vital to her and the Antinomians.

Ever since the colony's earliest days, the population had grown so rapidly that the "supply of food, clothing, and housing could never keep pace with the demand."¹⁴⁵ Eventually certain items such as corn became scarce forcing the magistrates to levy import regulations to prevent further shortages. In the meantime, other necessities such as fabrics, tools, household utensils, and livestock were "subject to exorbitant pricing by merchants and shipmasters."¹⁴⁶ As the protests from the consumers mounted, it became apparent that Winthrop would have to introduce strict regulatory measures to bolster the economy. Thus the General Court, comprised mostly of gentry and yeomen, began making plans for new restrictive measures. As a result of these procedures, the merchants and tradesmen would be the ones suffering the brunt of this regulatory policy.

The merchants and craftsmen, although they controlled indispensable goods and skills, found themselves in a minority, cast in the role of public enemy pitted against the substantial political strength of the agricultural community.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 96; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay (Boston: 1853), vol. I, p. 92, 97, and 140. hereafter cited as Colony Records; Winthrop's Journal I, p. 64, 131.

¹⁴⁶Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 96.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 100

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This agricultural community was controlled by the gentry and yeomen. Thus as the tension heightened, the "permissive doctrines" of Anne Hutchinson attracted the merchants and businessmen who had suffered from the restrictive legislation of the General Court. This class of people still considered themselves members of the Church of Boston, but other Puritans viewed their actions as detrimental to the spiritual health of the commonwealth. Consequently, this group of people became alienated from the rest of the "visible saints" as they gathered around the person of Anne Hutchinson. "Here they were offered an alternative, as Mrs. Hutchinson happily supplied by contending for the primacy of the Covenant of Grace, the essential witness of the Holy Spirit."¹⁴⁸ With this Covenant of Grace they were "assured" that God considered them to be his people. Moreover, their own personal dignity was preserved giving them a sense of solidarity. Although many of these merchants did not grasp the full significance of her doctrines, nonetheless, "Mrs. Hutchinson had unwittingly provided a felicitous conjunction, a conjunction that orthodox ideology had failed to satisfy."¹⁴⁹

Theology was one matter for John Winthrop and the magistrates, but now Anne Hutchinson had threatened the social structure of the commonwealth. As her following increased, so did her opposition. Her first major opponent

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

was Pastor John Wilson. In the past, Wilson's popularity had been undisputed among the people of Boston. But after a period of time, "his violent and arbitrary manner" caused many people to turn against him especially the merchants and business class. Furthermore, John Cotton had often clashed with some of Wilson's pastoral views. Cotton's theology was contrary to Wilson's emphasis on public morality and the "infamous" Covenant of Works. With Cotton against him, Anne openly challenged this Pastor saying, "that he was not an able minister of the New Testament: he has deceived us by suggesting that by adhering to moral law we might take an active part in our own salvation."¹⁵⁰

Anne's remarks opened up a real theological "can of worms." Wilson rallied his support which included the orthodox magistrates and many of the inhabitants of Boston. Meanwhile, Anne's sphere of influence came from the nearby communities especially from the town of Salem where the scars of Roger Williams were still evident. Anne also received help from Henry Vane, who had been elected governor in May of 1636. As her opposition to Wilson increased, "the heterodoxy of her convictions could not remain long under the cover."¹⁵¹ The magistrates soon began to fortify themselves against this religious and social "disease." John Cotton then stepped into this mess and called for a

¹⁵⁰Hutchinson, History II, p. 370.

¹⁵¹Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 107.

meeting with Mrs. Hutchinson and some of her friends in order to clarify her recent statements. Cotton also "repeated the accusations, pointed out the error of their opinions and took them to task for too generously fathering their heresies on him."¹⁵² It was during this time that spying from both camps took place with neither side accomplishing anything. Furthermore, John Cotton continued to deny that he was theologically linked with the beliefs of Mrs. Hutchinson.

In any case, the issue at last came into the open in the summer of 1636. In the town of Boston the lines of division were clearly drawn; a firm majority of the Church aligned in support of Mrs. Hutchinson and a small but potent minority rallied around Pastor Wilson. With the exception of John Cotton, that is, who hovered uncertainly between heaven and earth, of which party no man knew.¹⁵³

Amist all of this confusion, John Wheelwright moved into the picture. Wheelwright was a flamboyant man possessing a bold spirit with an itch for confrontation. Even in one of his opening homilies, he caused John Winthrop to sit "on the edge of his seat." Wheelwright preached that "when faith is at last bestowed by God with a real union between the believer and the person of the Holy Ghost, the believer then becomes something more than a mere creature."¹⁵⁴ Winthrop later commented that these opinions and terms, "real union--the person of the Holy Ghost" have no footing in scripture.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁵⁴Antinomianism, p. 164.

¹⁵⁵Winthrop's Journal I, p. 197.

Wheelwright failed to understand the seriousness of the current situation. The merchants had been protesting against the Court's regulatory policy, and a woman had been spouting off theological statements in support of this social upheaval. Confusion reigned on all fronts.

Presumably he was content to accept Anne's description of the prevailing differences of opinion within the community and unwisely failed to ask his fellow ministers their own interpretation of the situation.¹⁵⁶

Apparently, Wheelwright believed that the orthodoxy was not prepared to interfere with his outspokenness. Like Mrs. Hutchinson, he overlooked the fact that Puritan roots had been founded upon a religious spirit of self-preservation. This spirit had stood up against an English King and threatening Catholics. Now it was faced with a new obstacle. In the words of Nathaniel Ward,

only direct war with this infestation could return the Bay Colony. To authorize an untruth, by a toleration of state, is to batter God out of his chair...polypiety is the greatest impiety in the world. To say that men ought to have liberty of conscience is impious ignorance.¹⁵⁷

Winthrop and his magistrates based much of their theological counter-attack on the message found in the book of Deuteronomy. They referred to their position as the "new Israel" and the religious troublemakers as the "pagans of Palestine." Deuteronomy gave them encouragement in the face of these disruptions by saying:

¹⁵⁶ Antinomianism, pp. 200-202.

¹⁵⁷ Peter Force, ed., Tracts and Other Papers Relating Principally to the Colonies in North America, 3 vols., (Washington: 1836-1846), "The Simple Cofler of Aggawam in America," vol. III, No. 8, pp. 8-9.

If thy brother or thy son, or thy daughter or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul enter thee saying, let us go and serve other gods... thou shall not consent unto him; thine shall be the first upon him to put him to death.¹⁵⁸

Anne's Antinomian tendency was contrary to the unity of the commonwealth. It defied the words of Winthrop's "Modell of Christian Charity;" "the society must not only function as a unit, but in order to do so must remain narrowly exclusive in content."¹⁵⁹ Winthrop could "tolerate" a quiet expression of conscience and even a subtle religious disagreement, but they could not condone nor accept the outspoken and tempermental words of a woman.

The initial step in combating this problem was to ask the members of this faction to refute their past opinions. "If argument failed to persuade the hapless culprit, he or she was then cut off from the community not for cause of conscience, but for sinning against his own conscience."¹⁶⁰ At the present time a trial was not really necessary. The ministers under Pastor Wilson wanted to try and outreach this Hutchinsonian faction. These heated exchanges did not accomplish this goal, and Winthrop grew more impatient with each passing day.

Winthrop had slight patience for women who 'meddle in such things as are proper for men, whose minds our stronger.' One Mrs. Hutchinson, a member of the Church of Boston, a woman of ready wit and bold spirit, brought over with her two dangerous errors. First, that the Holy Spirit dwells in a justified person. Second, that no

¹⁵⁸ Deuteronomy, 13, 6-9.

¹⁵⁹ Winthrop Papers, vol. II, pp. 282-294.

¹⁶⁰ John Cotton, The Controversie Concerning Liberty of Conscience in Matters of Religion (London: 1649), pp. 7-8.

sanctification can help to evidence to us our justification. From these two grew many branches; our union with the Holy Spirit, so as a Christian remains dead to every spiritual action, and hath no gifts nor graces, other than such as are in hypocrites,¹⁶¹ no any other sanctification but the Holy Ghost Himself.

Finally, the exchanges between these two groups came to a head when the followers of Anne Hutchinson demanded that Pastor Wilson be removed from office. "During the service one of the faction rose in the meeting-house and suggested that John Wheelwright be called as an additional teacher to the Church of Boston."¹⁶² The Hutchinsonians had now openly challenged a ministerial appointment by the magistrates. Consequently, by October 25th, a preliminary Court session was called by the magistrates. Here they attempted to examine the doctrines that John Cotton and John Wheelwright aspired to. From the outset, Cotton had maintained a low profile, but his name and theological statements had continued to surface. On the other hand, John Wheelwright was very much involved with the opposition. The proceedings commenced with the asking of the question to both ministers if they believed that sanctification was any help to evidence the concept of justification .

Both ministers readily acceded to this point. Mr. Cotton firmly reminded his brethren that she Mrs. Anne Hutchinson had delivered that doctrine plainly in public many times. But he added warily, no sanctification can be an evidence without a concurrent sign of our justification.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Winthrop's Journal I, p. 183, 186, 194.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 197.

¹⁶³ Hutchinson, History, I, p. 51; Winthrop's Journal I, p. 196.

With this point established, the hearing then touched upon another issue, that being the "indwelling of the Holy Spirit." Henry Vane, John Wheelwright, and John Cotton all agreed that this was theologically possible and accepted it. But as far as "personal properties and the communication of it," this was an entirely different story. As for Winthrop, this divine immanence or "indwelling" was not Biblically founded and thus was contrary to Puritan dogma.

Some accepted the mildly innatist view of Cotton and Wheelwright, others followed Pastor Wilson and Winthrop who rejected the idea of divine immanence in any form.¹⁶⁴

Since little progress was made, Winthrop then turned his energies towards the persistent problem involving Pastor Wilson's position. Mr. Wheelwright was a good minister.

Indeed he was a godly and able man, Winthrop conceded, but he could not assent to the nomination of one who was apt to raise doubtful disputations. Lacking unanimity, as required for such actions the proposal to have Pastor Wilson replaced by Wheelwright was abandoned.¹⁶⁵

Although Wheelwright had been refused this position, a subsequent move found him an assignment at Wollaston. There he could surround himself with the Hutchinsonian ring.¹⁶⁶ As a result of this decision, polemic exchanges increased between the two sides.

For the peace sake of the Church, which all were tender of, the debate was mainly confined to writing. Letters, protests, propositions, and declarations flew to

¹⁶⁴ Hutchinson, History, I, p. 51.

¹⁶⁵ Winthrop's Journal I p.

¹⁶⁶ The Hutchinsonian group will be explained later in this chapter.

and fro with such zealous animosity that soon the peace of which all were so tender was reduced to sheds and tattlers.¹⁶⁷

The war heightened when Winthrop turned on Henry Vane. Ever since his election to the governorship, Vane had found himself in a precarious position. Upon receiving a correspondence from England, he attempted to use this as an excuse to leave the colony. At this point the social and religious tension was beginning to take its toll on his administration. Vane reported this letter to Winthrop and Dudley and then called for a meeting of the General Court for the first week of December. At this conference Vane confessed his "cowardly" intentions to his fellow magistrates. He admitted that he could no longer control the current situation in Boston, and thus felt that he should no longer be in this position of authority. "After some further discussion, it was agreed to hold new elections on the fifteenth of the month and the Court stood adjourned for the following Tuesday."¹⁶⁸ As soon as the Hutchinsonians heard that their political ally, Henry Vane, was in trouble, they created such a consternation that the election had to be canceled for a few months. While this was going on, Winthrop gathered his allies for the next political showdown.

Meanwhile, John Cotton attempted to clean up the theological end of this problem by having Anne Hutchinson

¹⁶⁷ Winthrop's Journal I, p. 201; Winthrop Papers vol. III, p. 328.

¹⁶⁸ Winthrop's Journal I, pp. 201-202; Colony Records, I, p. 185.

attend a meeting at his home along with other ministers.

The dialogue that followed stood as it was remembered by the participants a year later at Mrs. Hutchinson's trial, so it presumably at best was only an approximation of their actual words at that time.¹⁶⁹

Ministers such as Nathaniel Ward, Thomas Weld, John Eliot, Zachariah Symmes, George Phillips, and Pastor Wilson were present representing the orthodox. On Anne's side were John Wheelwright, John Leverett, and John Coggeshall.

This confrontation opened with the orthodox asking Anne why she had cast aspersions upon certain ministers in the commonwealth. Anne remained silent to this first question adding to the tension and frustration of the ministers. Peter Weld then pressed her for a clarification of the Covenant of Grace doctrine. Again Anne said very little. This was followed by Henry Shepard's insistence on a biblical reference, preferably from the New Testament, to reinforce her idea of this Covenant of Grace. Anne immediately responded that the Pentecost event in the Acts of the Apostles gave the apostles this indwelling of the spirit allowing them to preach a Covenant of Grace. Anne continued by saying that John Cotton and John Wheelwright had already received this indwelling of the spirit and were preaching it.

Observing the venturesome liberality of her statement, George Phillips thought to trick her into an embarrassing libel. Although he knew she had never heard him preach, he slyly asked her opinion of his ministry. The ruse apparently succeeded, for Anne's mind was firmly closed to the possibility that anyone but Cotton and

¹⁶⁹Hutchinson, History, II, p. 372, 381.

and Wheelwright, of those present could be adequately sealed in the spirit.¹⁷⁰

This attempt by the ministers was not enough to convict Anne of any wrong-doing. They continued to argue among themselves concerning Ann's usage of certain terms, such as "witness of the spirit," and "seal of the spirit." For the time being, this problem of semantics delayed any further progress and the meeting was adjourned.¹⁷¹

On the following day the ministers gathered again, but Cotton and Wheelwright were not invited. The remaining Churchmen "carefully drafted sixteen questions of curious and necessary consequences" dealing with Cotton's opinions. This questionnaire was then given to John Cotton whereby he was to respond in the spirit of freedom and diligence.¹⁷²

As a result of this "unscheduled" meeting, the Hutchinsonians unleashed another barrage of verbal and written attacks upon the magistrates for "allowing" Anne to be questioned outside the General Court. Henry Vane was the leading antagonist of this protest. Immediately, Weld and Wilson struck back at the governor and the other dissenters especially Mr. Cotton. Winthrop recorded the following statement.

Wilson insinuated that perhaps Mr. Cotton was practically responsible for this dissension. He made reference to Cotton's sermon. Knowing full well what the answer must be, he pointedly raised the question whether any of these forms of sanctification that Cotton had adhered could provide sufficient evidence of election without concurrent right of justification. Cotton was honestly obliged to concede that to his mind they could

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 373-374.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 382.

not, in which opinion Vane supported him, and his attempted reconciliation was perverted into an additional source of grievance. In conclusion, Wilson's speech was apparently moved to represent the sense of the meeting and as such was approved by all the magistrates and ministers with the notable exception of Vane, Coddington, Drummer, Cotton, and Wheelwright.¹⁷³

Cotton was seriously taken a back by Wilson's remarks.

The mood in the city of Boston turned from heated argument to bitter warfare. This tense atmosphere persisted until Wilson made a conciliatory gesture in one of his sermons.

The next morning Pastor Wilson, if not chastened at least enjoined to casuation preached a Sunday sermon of such conciliatory tone that at its conclusion Governor Vane prompted to rise and give public witness of his approval.¹⁷⁴

This action on the part of Wilson was admirable, but it did not ease the situation surrounding John Cotton. In fact, many Hutchinsonians began to increase their animosity against the orthodox whether it was minister or magistrate. They even boycotted religious services throughout the Boston area.

And so the bitter words flew back and forth throughout the cold winter months and it began to be as common... to distinguish between men by being under a covenant of grace or a covenant of works, as in other countries between Protestants and papists.¹⁷⁵

It was during this time that John Winthrop emerged as the powerful leader that he had been since the founding of the commonwealth.

¹⁷²Winthrop's Journal I, p. 203.

¹⁷³Ibid., p. 204.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 204-205.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 209.

On January 12th, his 50th birthday, the gaunt and bearded Puritan secluded himself at his desk and in that process of self-mortification which afforded the Puritan mind such comfortable assurance of its inherent superiority, he poured out an anguished account of his religious experiences from his youthful days to the present. The burden of this relation confirmed his belief that grace and works were inextricably interwoven in the working out of God's chosen design for his Saints.¹⁷⁶

Winthrop then wrote to John Cotton for a summary of his theological views. He then searched into the scriptures preparing himself theologically for a showdown with Anne Hutchinson.

Winthrop offered a declaration expounding his conviction that faith must precede justification and is part a cause of it. The second paper, his so-called 'pacification' contained seven propositions designed to quiet¹⁷⁷ and still those turmoils in the Church of Boston.

But Winthrop's ideas did not meet with much support from his fellow leaders. His paper, according some of the magistrates, was filled with theological inconsistencies, making it difficult to use in a court of law. Nevertheless, he did not give up. "Gagged by his own allies, Winthrop sought to gain his ends within the more congenial accommodation of the political arena."¹⁷⁸ Meanwhile, John Cotton finally got around to responding to the ministers' sixteen questions. As usual, Cotton's answers were shrewd enough to avoid any embarrassment. His efforts confirmed,

his persuasion that as long as justification remains dark and uncertain, apparent sanctification cannot be

¹⁷⁶ Winthrop Papers, vol. III, p. 338ff.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 327, 328, 329.

¹⁷⁸ Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 140.

applied as an evidence of grace. To find one's hope solely in the performance of good works, he insisted is to go under a Covenant of Works.¹⁷⁹

On January 19th a day of fast was declared for the purpose of trying to resolve this division in the commonwealth. Both Cotton and Wheelwright preached to their congregations, with Wheelwright definitely upholding the idea that a Covenant of Works was not sufficient for one's salvation.¹⁸⁰

Brethren, those under a covenant of works, the more holy they are, the greater enemies they are to Christ. Let us have a care that we show ourselves in all manners of good conversion--let us carry ourselves that may be ashamed to blame us...And let us have a care that we give not occasion to others to say that we are libertines or Antinomians, but Christians.¹⁸¹

This sermon was intended to reconcile, but Wheelwright inadvertently added fuel to the fire. His speech challenged the magistrates and failed to recognize the growing strength of the Hutchinsonians. "Instead he had chosen in content and delivery--to unloose another bombshell on the unhappily town of Boston.¹⁸² It was at this point that the magistrates decided to deal with John Wheelwright before his "tongue" did any more damage. A Court session was called and Wheelwright was asked if he "knew that most of the ministers in this jurisdic-

¹⁷⁹John Cotton, Sixteene Questions of Serious and Necessary Consequence propounded unto Mr. John Cotton of Boston in New England Together with his answers to each question (London: 1644), pp. 272-272.

¹⁸⁰John Wheelwright, His Writings, p. 160.

¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 160.

¹⁸²Winthrop Papers, vol IV, p. 414.

tion did teach that doctrine which he referred to in his sermon as the Covenant of Works."¹⁸³ But Wheelwright remained silent. Other attempts to examine previous sermons hoping to link Wheelwright with the Hutchinsonians also failed. Disturbed at this impasse, the Court appealed to the clergy for assistance. The question was asked if other ministers taught "such a way of salvation and evidencing thereof as brother Wheelwright had termed a Covenant of Works?"¹⁸⁴ The ministers agreed that Wheelwright's remarks were contrary to what they preached. With this clerical support, the Court found John Wheelwright guilty of sedition and contempt.¹⁸⁵ It was decided that further action against this minister would be considered at another hearing.

Winthrop then used his clerical allies for the town's up-coming election. On May 27th in 1637, the elections commenced. "Until the actual election process began, tempers flaired and bitter words almost gave way to physical fighting as angry zealots on both sides struck out for their opinions."¹⁸⁶ Governor Vane tried desperately to control the chaotic scene, but the "impatient overheated crowd responded with noisy cheers and cries of 'Election, Election.'¹⁸⁷ With all this commotion, it became quite evident that the present governor

¹⁸³ Antinomianism, pp. 194-195.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 200.

¹⁸⁵ Concept of sedition and contempt will be explained later in this chapter.

¹⁸⁶ Winthrop's Journal I, p. 215.

had very little influence over the people of Boston. Lurking in the shadows was the watchful John Winthrop. His power and his coolness decisively overwhelmed the weakness and frustration of Henry Vane. "Governor Vane was swept from the exclusive circle of magistracy. Once more Winthrop was elevated to the governor's chair with Dudley as his deputy."¹⁸⁸

Moreover, any attempt by the Hutchinsonians to install their new representatives to the chairs as magistrates was met with failure as Winthrop reminded the Court of certain election regulations. Thus, newly elected deputies could not assume their positions in the Court because some of Boston's freemen had not been properly notified of the election.

As governor, Winthrop now proceeded to the formal sentencing of John Wheelwright. Earlier, the clergy had found him guilty of sedition and contempt. Now it was the Court's turn to complete this action. Winthrop, with all due respect for Wheelwright, motioned for a weak sentence, but the outspoken Wheelwright shouted back at his accusers refusing to accept their clemency.

If he were really guilty of sedition, he hotly challenged they should put him to death. But if they intended to proceed in this case he, for his part, meant to appeal to the King's Court.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Hutchinson, History, I, p. 54.

¹⁸⁸ Colony Records, I, p. 194.

¹⁸⁹ Winthrop's Journal I, pp. 217-218.

Although Winthrop was sure that this minister's appeal would not be heard, legislation was needed to prevent any further "wheelwrights" from coming to Boston. Consequently, the Alien Act was proposed. With this law the Court had the power to weed out any newcomer who preached against the authority of the magistrates. It further stated that, "no person should be allowed to purchase habitation or remain more than three weeks within any town without the express consent of one of the council or two of the other magistrates."¹⁹⁰ This particular ruling not only doomed John Wheelwright to subsequent banishment, but it also displayed the power of Boston's "new" governor. Winthrop further stated,

If we are bound to keep off whatsoever appears to tend to our ruin or damage, then we may lawfully refuse to receive such whose dispositions suit not with ours, and whose society (we know) will be hurtful to us, and therefore it is lawful to take knowledge of all men before we receive them.¹⁹¹

This Alien Act was reinforced by the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company. The charter read in part:

That it shall and may be lawful to and for the chiefs, commanders, governors, and officers, of the said company... for their special defense and safely to encounter, expulse, repel, and resist by force of arms...and by all fitting ways and means whosoever, all such persons as shall at any time hereafter attempt to enterprise the destruction, invasion, detriment, or annoyance to the said plantation or inhabitants.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰Colony Records I, p. 196.

¹⁹¹Winthrop Papers, vol., III, p. 423.

¹⁹²Colony Records I, p. 17

Regarding John Wheelwright, Winthrop believed that "it was worse, to receive a man whom we must cast out again than to deny him admittance."¹⁹³ The ex-governor, Henry Vane violently protested this Alien Act, but finally, he also gave up seeing that his influence was no match for John Winthrop's. That same summer Henry Vane departed from the colony. Eight years later John Winthrop still spoke highly of Mr. Vane. "Henry Vane showed himself a true friend to New England, and a man of noble and generous mind."¹⁹⁴ John Wheelwright had been brought to trial and sentenced. It would only be a matter of time before this verdict could be carried out. As for Henry Vane, his time had already come.

With these two opponents out of the way, Winthrop once more turned his energies toward John Cotton. A synod was called in attempt to clear up the theological mess that had gripped this city for the last year. If this synod was successful, then the social stability of the colony might return.

From all over the colony ministers converged on Boston and for a crowded three weeks busied themselves at private councils, fast days, and lectures. Meeting in closed session they spread a dragnet to bring in all errors which the Hutchinsonians held, or were presumed to hold, or might conceivably, by logical derivation hold at some time in the future.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³Winthrop Papers, vol. III, p. 424.

¹⁹⁴Winthrop's Journal II, p. 256.

¹⁹⁵Winthrop's Journal I, p. 230.

Once again Cotton was the first to come under examination. The opening question concerned his opinion on the subject of faith. Cotton had made a statement saying that "faith was an instrument cause in applying Christ's righteousness to our own justification."¹⁹⁶ Faith, according to Cotton, "was like an urn that is emptied of its contents, it stands clean and ready to be filled with oil. But an empty urn does not cause the pouring of the oil."¹⁹⁷ Cotton believed that man was as passive in his regeneration as in his first generation, that is, a Covenant of Works was not always necessary.

As Cotton cleverly defended his religious doctrines, the synod decided to investigate the concept of Antinomianism together with personage of Mrs. Hutchinson. It was already late August and something had to be done.

The opinions of John Cotton and the outspokenness of John Wheelwright could be shelved for the time being, but the errors of Anne Hutchinson needed immediate attention. The synod concluded that Error 40 was the real problem of Anne's motives. In this error Mrs. Hutchinson had claimed that "there was a testimony of the spirit, and voice unto the soul, nearby immediate without any respect unto, or concurrence with the word."¹⁹⁸ This idea was also linked with another error

¹⁹⁶ John Cotton, Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared (London: 1648), p. 41, 43.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 41-43.

¹⁹⁸ Antinomianism, p. 108, 118.

saying that immediate "revelation of her good estate, without any respect to the scriptures, was as dear to her as the voice of God from heaven to Paul."¹⁹⁹ To further complicate matters, Anne had already mentioned that "the spirit does not work in hypocrites by gifts and graces, but in God's children immediately and we must not pray for gifts and graces, but only for Christ."²⁰⁰ This allowed the believer to share in the actual properties of Christ.²⁰¹

Once these errors had been presented to the Court, John Cotton finally realized that his theology had been tampered with by the Hutchinsonians. A compromise was now necessary between his position and that of the orthodox. The following statement summarized this accommodation.

After some further discussion it was agreed among them that we are not united and married unto the Lord Jesus Christ without faith, giving an actual consent of the soul unto it: that's God effectual calling of the soul unto the Lord Jesus Christ, the soul's apprehending by an act of faith the offered righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ is in order of nature before God's act of justification upon the soul.²⁰²

Moreover, the ministers seemed to be united on the fact that there were no gracious condition or qualifications in the soul before faith on which the promise of grace was in any way contingent. But faith in general they conceded, must not be regarded as a means by which man might actively lay hold on Christ before he had freely imparted his spirit.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 108, 118.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 116, 103, 100, 97; Winthrop's Journal II, pp. 196-201.

²⁰¹ Ibid.; Ibid.

²⁰² Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana, or Ecclesiastical History of New England, 2 vols. (Hartford: 1820), vol. II, p. 514.

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The synod continued for the next three weeks concluding that it was Anne Hutchinson who had created most of Boston's internal problems.

It was resolved that henceforth private meetings such as Mrs. Hutchinson had sponsored were to be discouraged as disorderly and without rule. A further restraint on the Hutchinsonians was obtained in such a way as to appease the doctrines delivered in their sermons.²⁰⁴

With this resolved, John Wheelwright who had been kept in silence for the past few weeks, was once more summoned before the Court.

Wearying at last of argument, the Court declared Wheelwright guilty for troubling the civil peace, for his corrupt and dangerous opinions, and for his contemptuous behavior toward the magistrates. He was sentenced to be disfranchised and banished in accordance with the Alien Act and the Charter of the colony.²⁰⁵

Earlier, Wheelwright had threatened the Court with an appeal to the King, but this claim (as noted by Winthrop) never materialized.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ John Cotton, Gospel Conversion, (London: 1646), p. 40.

²⁰⁴ Winthrop's Journal I, p. 234.

²⁰⁵ Antinomianism, p. 146-147.

The Alien Act and the Colony's Charter came under the heading of "ordinañces." This will be explained in the following note regarding Wheelwright's claim to the King's Court on behave of his sentence and defense.

²⁰⁶ Colony Records I, p. 10, 12, 16, 17.

This was perhaps a questionable claim although the governor and company could and may be capable and enabled as well to implead and to be impleaded, and to prosecute, demaund, answer, and to be answered unto, in all singular suites, causes quarells, and actions of what kind or nature soever and they had full and absolute power and authority to correct, punish, pardon, govern, and rule all such subjects...that shall at any time hereafter inhabit within the precinct, and part of New

Finally, the day came when Anne Hutchinson was called before the Court. John Winthrop greeted her with the following statement.

Mrs. Hutchinson you are called here as one of those that have troubled the peace of the commonwealth and the churches here: you are known to be a woman of those opinions that are causes of this trouble.²⁰⁷

Winthrop then proceeded to lay before her the charges. This action immediately touched off Anne's fiery spirit, shouting to him that her opinions and his accusations were a matter of conscience. She further stated that her private conversations with the ministers could not be used against her in court. Indignantly she demanded, "what rule in Holy Writ made it right for the elders of the Church to question one in my confinement pretending they sought light, but seeking to entrap me in my own words."²⁰⁸ Before Winthrop could respond, she again shouted, asking the Court what law she had violated. Winthrop replied, the Fifth Commandment, that is, honor of authority. He then asked her about the meetings which had been held at her house.²⁰⁹ Anne replied that these gather-

England, this was to be done according to the laws and statutes and ordinances...not contrary or repugnant to the laws and understanding that all inhabitants in all have and enjoy all liberties and immunities of free and natural subjects within any of...the King's dominions...to all intents, constructions, purposes whatsoever, as if they and every of them were being within the realm of England.

²⁰⁷ Hutchinson, History II, p. 366.

There are two accounts of Mrs. Hutchinson's trial, a stenographic transcript in the Appendix to Hutchinson's History and a narrative description in Winthrop's The Short Story. In the following chapter I have used the transcript from Hutchinson's History just as Emery Battis has done. Winthrop's description appears to be unclear in certain areas.

ings were used for the exploration of the scriptures.²¹⁰

Winthrop then asked Anne exactly how she and her group viewed the scriptures. He was most careful to see if she had utilized private interpretation.

At this point, Thomas Dudley intervened calling on the governor to be more direct with his questions regarding the actual doctrines of the Hutchinsonians. In Dudley's eyes "she had traduced the ministers by saying that they preached a Covenant of Works only, and Mr. Cotton a Covenant of Grace."²¹¹ Anne defended herself, by asking for proof that she had actually said these things. "I pray sir prove it that I said they preached nothing but a Covenant of Works."²¹² With this statement Dudley exploded, "nothing but a Covenant of Works, why a Jesuit may preach truth sometimes!"²¹³

Regardless of what Dudley claimed, one of the ministers who had met with Anne during that fateful meeting had not kept their discussion confidential. He had revealed what Anne had said about the magistrates and the other ministers. This was quite embarrassing for Winthrop's Court. Nevertheless,

²⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 367-378.

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 367.

²¹⁰Antinomianism, pp. 168-169.

²¹¹Hutchinson, History II., pp. 369-370.

²¹²Ibid.

²¹³Ibid.

the hearing continued as each minister came forward presenting their testimonies against the theology of Anne Hutchinson. Through all of this Anne continued to deny each statement.

"Prove that I said these things," shouted the frustrated defendant.²¹⁴

"Did you say so?" Winthrop challenged.²¹⁵

"No sir, it is your conclusion," exclaimed Anne.²¹⁶

Winthrop then called for a recess ending the first day of proceedings by saying:

Mrs. Hutchinson, the court see hath labored to bring you to acknowledge the error of your way that so you might be reduced, the time grows late, and therefore give you a little more time to consider of it and therefore desire that you attend the Court again in the morning.²¹⁷

The next morning John Cotton came to Anne's defense saying that he did not remember Anne accusing the ministers of not being able preachers.²¹⁸ It was at this point that if the Court was truly a court of justice, the defendant would have been set free on the grounds of contradictory and insufficient evidence. But the charges were upheld and the session continued.²¹⁹

²¹⁴Ibid.

²¹⁵Ibid.

²¹⁶Ibid.

²¹⁷Ibid., p. 376.

²¹⁸Ibid., pp. 381-382.

²¹⁹Ibid., p. 383; Antinomianism, p. 172.

If Anne had kept silent at this point while her accusers muddled over their previous statements, and Cotton's intervention, she probably would have been dismissed. But instead, she went on the offensive with a solid but devastating attempt to explain her own beliefs.

Being much troubled to see the falseness of the constitution of the Churches of England, she told them, I had like to have turned separatist; whereupon I kept a day of solemn humiliation and pondering of the thing. This scripture was brought unto me, He that denies Jesus Christ to be come in the flesh is antichrist. After she had long weighed the meaning of this scripture without obtaining satisfaction the Lord brought her another citation: He that denies the testament denies the testator. From this she had concluded that those who did not preach the Covenant of Grace had the spirit of the antichrist. And ever since I bless the Lord, he hath let me see which was the clear ministry and which the wrong. Since that time I confess I have been more choice and hath left me to distinguish between the voice of my beloved and the voice of Moses, the voice of John Baptist, and the voice of antichrist...Now, she triumphantly concluded, if you condemn me for speaking what is in my conscience I know to be truth, I must commit myself unto the Lord.²²⁰

Following this statement, the judges still confused and somewhat dismayed by this recent turn of events, sat with downcast expressions attempting to collect their thoughts for the next round. There was a short deliberation and then Increase Nowell moved forward to question the confident looking Mrs. Hutchinson. He began by asking, "how do you know that this (whatever you call) was the spirit?"²²¹

Anne in turn asked the magistrates the very same question. "How did Abraham know that it was God that bid him

²²⁰ Hutchinson, History II, pp. 383-384.

²²¹ Ibid.

to offer his son, being it a breach of the sixth commandment?"²²²

Increase Nowell took a back seat to this verbal exchange allowing Dudley to step in "with raised eyebrows and a special interest."²²³ Dudley replied, "by an immediate voice."²²⁴

After a brief pause, Anne confidently said that she had received the same revelation by the same immediate voice.

At this point, Dudley asked with great enthusiasm and astonishment, "how by an immediate revelation."²²⁵

Anne shouted, "by the voice of his own spirit to my soul."²²⁶

With these words, the trial of Anne Hutchinson began and ended. She tried desperately to shout down the vindictive expressions of her accuser. But this was to no avail. She had claimed revelation, and none of the orthodox ministers or magistrates could accept this "doctrine." John Cotton interrupted this scene attempting to distinguish for the court and for Anne two forms of revelation. Cotton made this motion hoping to get Anne off the judgment seat and into a position where she would be able to confess that she had confused the meaning of revelation. But Winthrop did not accept this

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 203.

²²⁴ Hutchinson, History II, pp. 383-384.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

concession. Moreover, Winthrop did not want any "crusades" by the magistrates against Cotton's opinions. In his eyes, Anne was the culprit who had to be punished.

On the following day, with their leader cornered by Winthrop's magistrates many of the Hutchinsonians sought clemency. All those who had supported Anne were forced to swear alligence to the decisions of the Court or face the same sentence as their leader.

Upon analysis of these trial proceedings, one would have discovered many miscarriages of justice. For the most part, the accusations brought against Anne were presented in an atmosphere of political intrigue and theological chaos. In all due respects, the Court seemed to have acted out of a "malicious conspiracy" to eliminate Anne Hutchinson and the people who followed her.

Anne never received counsel during her trial nor was she given a copy of the indictment. She was harassed from the moment she stepped into the courtroom. (Although verbal harassment was typical of the 17th century English courts). Secondly, there was no real trial by jury. "The act of the General Court of May 14, 1636, stipulated that no trial shall pass upon any, for life or banishment but by a jury so summoned or by the General Court."²²⁷ This very decree was totally abused at the Hutchinson trial. Consequently, Winthrop and his fellow magistrates acted as judges and

²²⁷Colony Records I, p. 118.

prosecutors without a jury. "The fact is the governor and company of Masaachusetts Bay had a substantial case against their procedure, they created what even a 17th century lawyer must have regarded as a mistrial."²²⁸

However, one must also consider the concept of sedition in relation to the complicated secular and political dimensions of the entire affair. When John Wheelwright was charged with sedition in March of 1637, the stage was set. Sedition was the center of this controversy.

The idea of sedition has to be applied to practices which tend to disturb internal public tranquility by deed, word or writing, but which do not amount to treason and are not accompanied by or conducive to open violence... The English courts have recognized as misdemeanors at common law seditious words, seditious libels, and seditious conspiracies. The use of the adjective signifies that the practices are accompanied by a seditious intent, the legal definition of which has changed, however, with the development of toleration and political rights.²²⁹

Looking back at the way the John Wheelwright case was handled, the words of the Fast Day sermon which brought him into trouble must be examined within the context "of a matter of law and a matter of fact." That is to say, were his words seditious and threatening to the government or were they an expression of theological conscience. Again one must be reminded that Wheelwright was labeled a disruptive element because he spoke out against the authority during a time when economic tension and social unrest dominated the scene.

²²⁸Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 221.

²²⁹Zechariah Chafee Jr., Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, "Sedition," (New York: 1934), vol. XIII, p. 636.

Although his words were probably meant to correct the current situation and not to destroy the religious and social framework of the commonwealth, nonetheless, his views were interpreted as seditious and contrary to the interests of the colony.

This concept of sedition was even more important to the sentencing of Anne Hutchinson. Anne was not only guilty of sedition, but seditious libel, a verdict which found her "critical to the operations of the government and the people running the government."²³⁰ Again it must be remembered that certain groups of people from the agricultural class "had sought to control the inflationary spiral that seemed to be pressed upward by labor costs and imported commodity prices."²³¹ This same class was comprised of gentry and yeomen who dominated the seats of the General Court. Thus they were the ones who pushed for regulatory legislation to control the economic situation and the business community. Instead, the measures failed resulting in a class struggle between merchants and agriculturalists. Since Anne's statements and her Covenant of Grace supported this disenchanted business community and this social unrest, she was labeled a libelous and seditious element in the town of Boston.

Thus whether it was theological or social, "the problem of the Court was two-fold: to determine if the defendant's words and deeds constituted a libel or an act of sedition."²³²

²³⁰ William Searle Holdsworth, A History of English Law (Boston: 1926), vol.V, p. 208.

²³¹ Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 96, 97, 263.

²³² Cotton, Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared, p. 52, 57, 58.

Secondly, the Court had to find sufficient evidence for these charges.

Following this trial, Winthrop made sure that the Court's authority would be maintained. Thus the magistrates drafted their own law against seditious libel.

This Court being sensible of the great disorders growing in this commonwealth through the contempts which have late been put upon the civil authority and intending to provide remedy for the same in time doth order and decree, that whosoever shall hereafter openly or willingly defame any court of justice, or the sentences and proceedings of the same, or any of the magistrates or other judges of any such court, in respect of any act or sentence therein passed and being there of lawfully convict in any General Court, or Court of Assistants shall be punished for the same by fine, imprisonment, or disfranchisement, or banishment as the quality and measure of the offense shall deserve.²³³

Winthrop would then strip any magistrate or minister of their duties if they did not agree to this proclamation. In a speech before the Boston congregation, he reinforced the legislative process of the Court saying, "that the Churches could not curtail or inhibit political authority on what purported to be religious grounds."²³⁴ This speech was drafted into an essay emphasizing the fact that,

if the Church had power to call Civil Magistrates to give account of his Judicial proceedings, in any Court of Civil Justice...the Church should become supreme Court in the Jurisdiction, and capable of all Appeals. This would bestow upon the Church a power that it lacked the means to employ, for the Church cannot call in force witnesses: nor examine witnesses upon Oath, nor require the view of the Records of the Court, all which may be needful for finding out the truth in many cases.²³⁵

²³³ Colony Records I, pp. 221-223.

²³⁴ Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 223.

²³⁵ Winthrop Papers, vol. III, p. 505.

The trial of Anne Hutchinson did not end the preaching of this spirited woman. Her ministry had affected many people, leaving the Boston community confused and fragmented.²³⁶ Her "friend" John Cotton had suffered immensely from his association with her. Theologically, his reputation had been tarnished. He firmly believed that he had been "exploited" both politically and theologically during Anne's trial. "Cotton was rightly or wrongly, persuaded that his parishioners had gulled him that they used him as their dupe and stalking horse."²³⁷ Nevertheless, he remained in Boston abandoning his plans to go to New Heaven.

On Tuesday, March 22, Pastor Wilson delivered the official sentence of banishment to Mrs. Anne Hutchinson.

For as much as you Mrs. Hutchinson have highly transgressed and offended...and troubled the Church with your Errors and have drawn away many a poor soul, and have upheld your revelations, and for as much as you have made a lie...Therefore in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...I do cast you out and deliver you up to Satan...and account you from this time forth to be a Heathen and a Publican...I command you as a Leper to withdraw yourself out of the Congregation.²³⁸

Even after this devastating pronouncement, Winthrop recorded in his Journal that it appeared that Anne's pride and self-esteem still remained intact. She was the same woman who had disembarked onto Boston nearly three years ago.²³⁹

²³⁶Winthrop's Journal I, p. 259.

²³⁷Ibid.

²³⁸Antinomianism, p. 336.

²³⁹Winthrop's Journal I, p. 264.

On March 28, 1638, Anne Hutchinson and her husband turned toward their new home in Rhode Island. In 1643, Mrs. Hutchinson and five of her six children were killed by Indians.

In retrospect, the Hutchinsonian movement emerged in a society which was ripe for diversity and factionalism. The first element that must be considered is the "cultural confusion" which had begun in Winthrop's commonwealth long before the arrival of Anne Hutchinson.

When the cultural norms are weak or ambiguous, when certain norms have become dysfunctional without being abandoned, or when new and strange conditions have emerged for which there are as yet no adequately defined norms, there is large scope for individual dissatisfaction.²⁴⁰

The second factor is that of social heterogeneity.²⁴¹ As the colony of Massachusetts Bay expanded more groups and subgroups appeared on the scene. Thus, with more people, the individual's role became confused and misplaced.

The weak and diffuse cultural integration of complex societies created a situation in which large numbers of people had only a chaotic understanding, and inadequate data for solving problems which confronted them.²⁴²

In the end these various groups of individuals emerged into three distinct categories. The first being the goal-oriented group, the second, the utilitarian, and the third, the altruistic.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 251.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 252.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 253.

In the Hutchinsonian movement as in Winthrop's own migration all three categories of people were present. The goal-oriented sought an end to justify the means. The utilitarian sought material benefits and the altruistic was dedicated to particular ideals and the living out of these ideals in society. Furthermore, all of this took place in an era of religious transformation. As a result,

these internal struggles became even more confusing since the progressive secularizing forces often defined their objectives in religious terms, while the conservative religious forces were quite unconsciously encouraging secular values and objectives.²⁴⁴

The relationship between the religious and secular was so close that eventually one overcame the other with the secular on top.

For the Puritan the term 'non-religious' was meaningless. Consequently, any social movement directed at alternation of the prevailing normative pattern would impinge directly upon the theological assumptions which gave that pattern its form and meaning. Indeed, such a movement must be concerned basically with the religious tenets that supported the norms in question.²⁴⁵

Another aspect of this movement was the fact that Protestantism by its very nature was rebellious against any state of authority. As a result, insurgents came from Old England to New England. It was a small wonder then that John Winthrop's revolt against "Pope Laud" could be translated into Roger William's and Anne Hutchinson's revolt against "Pope Winthrop."²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 254.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 262.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 255.

Finally, one must carefully look at the men and women who became involved in the Hutchinsonian event. Approximately one hundred and eighty-seven males took part in this situation. This can be divided into three separate groups. The first group was called the core totalling thirty-eight persons. Interesting enough many of these people came from the Lincolnshire area with others raised in the city of London. These people took up residence in Boston becoming skilled craftsmen, merchants and professional people.²⁴⁷ Most of these individuals had held public office at one time, or were in the process of holding office. Henry Vane, a member of this group, became governor. For the most part, the core group was comprised of wealthy, educated, and influential people.

At this point one must ask if the Hutchinsonian affair allowed the members of this core group to act as a social outlet for them. "It is a sociological commonplace that religious differences reflect and define differences in social conduct."²⁴⁸ Furthermore, it is known that "a newly created religion is specifically alienated from the usually opposed to the social order within which it emerges."²⁴⁹ For example, it became apparent in the early days of the Hutchinsonian movement that wealthy merchants began to clash with the agricultural people. These merchants soon came under

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 256.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 262.

²⁴⁹ Robin Williams, American Society, A Sociological Interpretation (New York: 1955), p. 310.

the scrutiny of the General Court. In the end this core group was able to utilize the Hutchinsonian movement to their advantage.

The second category of people was called the support group. There were thirty-eight men in this group. They were early arrivals in the colony and seemed to tag along with the Hutchinsonians out of sheer curiosity.

The final group was the peripheral one. This gathering totaled ninety men. They were late arrivals to the commonwealth, but like the members of the other groups were born and raised in the Lincolnshire area. Unlike the other two groups, these men were not associated with the Church of Boston nor were they occupied by professional or influential fields. Many of them joined the process to see what they could materially gain from the Hutchinsonian association. Only a few shared in the religious ideals of their leader.

Where John Winthrop stood in all of this is not quite certain. "This man and his colleagues were buffeted about by the contrary winds of a chaotic century, a century which was painfully undergoing a 'revolutionary' shift in values."²⁵⁰ Changes in the Boston community were occurring socially and theologically. The Antinomians had penetrated into the so-called "secure" environment of the commonwealth. Puritan solidarity gave way to freedom and heterogeneity. Orthodoxy became infested with heterodoxy. Religious values

²⁵⁰Battis, Saints and Sectaries, p. 287.

were overcome by secular values. "The Church, the society that it existed in, and its leaders such as John Winthrop fell victims to ambiguous attitudes, changing ideas, and growing individualism."²⁵¹

After they leave England, the planning of the "City Upon a Hill," the forming of a government, and the theological and social problems surrounding Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson were the major contributions and disruptions to John Winthrop's commonwealth. Winthrop attempted to build a society, a society in which many other forces were growing each day. New people, new thought, and new opportunities gradually changed and molded the Massachusetts Bay Colony into a different community, a community comprised of social divisions and religious sectaries. This community was no longer a Puritan state, or a Bible commonwealth.²⁵² Although some of the basic beliefs and practices were still evident, this plantation had undergone progressive changes that gave its original covenant a new meaning. This meaning was something unique, something different, and probably something not quite comprehensible. Maybe it was now modern, or perhaps even American, but it was definitely not John Winthrop's.

²⁵¹Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. 244.

²⁵²Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. 274.

CONCLUSION

The decision to leave England, the planning of the "City Upon a Hill," the forming of a government, and the theological and social problems surrounding Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson were the major contributions and disruptions to John Winthrop's commonwealth. Winthrop attempted to build a society, a society in which many other forces were growing each day. New people, new thought, and new opportunities gradually changed and molded the Massachusetts Bay Colony into a different community, a community comprised of social divisions and religious sectaries. This community was no longer a Puritan state, or a Bible commonwealth.²⁵² Although some of the basic beliefs and practices were still evident, this plantation had undergone progressive changes that gave its original covenant a new meaning. This meaning was something unique, something different, and probably something not quite comprehensible. Maybe it was now modern, or perhaps even American, but it was definitely not John Winthrop's.

²⁵²Rutman, Winthrop's Boston, p. 274.

APPENDIX A

ARGUMENTS FOR THE PLANTATION OF NEW ENGLAND

General Observations

It wilbe a service to the Church of great Consequence to carrye the Gospell in those partes of the world, and to raise a bullwarke against the kingdom of Antichrist which the Jesuits labour to reare up in all places of the worlds.

All other Churches of Europe are brought to desolation, and it cannot be, but the like Judgment is coming upon us: and who knows, but God hath provided this place, to be a refuge for manye, whom he meanes to save out of the general destruction?

This lande growes weary of her inhabitants, so as man which is the most pretious of all Creatures, is heere more vile and base, then the earthe they treade upon: so as children, neighbours, and friendes (especially) if they are poore are rated the greatest burdens, which if things were right, would be the cheifest earthly blessings.

We are growne to that height of Intemperance in all excesse of Ryot, as no mans estate all most will suffice to keepe sayle with his equalls: and he that fayles in it, must live in scorn and contempt: hence it comes, that all artes and trades are carried in that deceitfull and unrighteous course, as it is allmost impossible for a good and upright man to maintaine his charge and live comfortably in any of them.

The fountains of learninge and Religion are so corrupted, as (besides the unsupportable charge of their eduaction) most Children, even the best wittes and fayrest hopes, are perverted, corrupted, and utterly overtrowne by the multitude of evill examples and the licentious government of those seminaries.

The whole earthe is the Lordes garden: and he hath given it to the sons of men to be tilled and improved by them: why then should we stand striving heere for places of habitation etc. (many men spending as much labor and cost to recover or keepe sometye an Acre or 2 of lande, as would procure him many C (hundred) acres as bood or better in another place) and in the mene tyme suffer whole countrys as fruifull and convenient for the use of man, to lye waste without any improvement?

What can be a better worke and more honorable and worthy (a Christian then to helpe) rayse and supporte a particular Church while it is in infancye, and to joine our forces with suche a Companye of faithfull people, as by a tymely assistance maye growe stronge and prosper, and for want of it may be putt to great hazard, if not wholly ruined?

If suche as are knowne to be godly and live in wealthe and prosperitee heere, shall forsake all this to joine themselves to this Church, and to runne the hazard with them of a harde and meane condition, it wilbe an example of great use, bothe for removinge the scandale of worldly and sinister respects to give more life to the Faithes and Godes people in their prayers for the plantation, and allso to encourage others to join the more willingly in it.

Ob. 1: It wilbe a great wronge to our owne Church and Countreye, to take awaye the good people, and we shall laye it the more open to the Judgment feared.

Ans. 1: the number wilbe nothing in respecte of those that are lefte: 2 many that live to no use heere, more then for their owne private familys, may be employed to a common good in another place: 3: suche as are of noe use heere, may yet be so employed, as the Church shall receive no losse: and since Christes tyme the Church is to be considered as universall, without distinction of countrys, so as he that dothe good in any one place serves the Church in all places in regarde of the unitye. lastly it is the revealed will of God, that the Gospell should be preached to all nations: and though we knowe not, whither the Indians will receive it or not, yet it is a good worke, to observe Godes will in offering it to them, for God shall have Glory by it, though they refuse it.

Ob. 2. We have feared a Judgment a longe tyme, but yet we are safe, soe it were better to stave till it come, and either we may flye then, or if we be overtaken in it we may well contente our selves to suffer with suche a Church as ours is.

Ans. It is that this consideration made the Churches beyonde the seas (as the Palatinate Rochell etc) to sitt still at home, and not look out for shelter while they might have founde it: but the woefull spectacle of their ruine, may teache us more wisdome, to avoyde the plague when it is foreseene, and not to tarrye, as they did, till it overtake us: if they were now at their former libertye, we may be sure, they would take other Course for their safety: and though most of them had miscarried in their escape, yet it had not been halfe so miserable to them selves, nor scandalous to Religion, as this desperate backslidinge, and abusing the trueth, which many of the ancient professors amonge them, and the whole posterity that remaine are now plunged into.

Ob. 3. We have heere a fruitfull lande with peace and plenty of all thinges etc.

Ans. our superfluties expected we are like to be followed with as good consequences remaininge there in a shorte tyme, and be far from many temptations meet with here. yet we must leave all this abondance, if it be not taken from us: and when we are in our graves it wilbe all one to have lived in plentye or penurye, whither we had dyed in a bedd of downe, or a lock of strawe, and onely this is the advantage of a meane condition, that it is at more freedom (to dye and the lesse comfort any hathe in the things of this world, the more) liberty and desire he may have to lay us treasure in heaven.

Ob. 4. But we may perishe by the waye or when we come there, either hanginge, hunger, or the sworde etc., and how uncomfortable it would be to see our wives, children, and freindes come to suche misery by our occasion?

Ans. Suche objection savours to muche of the flesh: who can save him selfe or his familye from calamityes heere? if this course be warrantable we must trust Godes providence for these thinges, either he will keepe these evils from us, or will dispose them for our good, and enable us to beare them.

Ob. 5: But what warrant have we to take that lande which is and hathe been of longe tyme possessed by other sonnes of Adam?

sol. That which is common to all is proper to none, these salvadge people ramble over muche lande without title or propertye: 2: there is more then enough for them and us; 3: God hathe consumed the natives with a miraculous plague, wheby a great parte of the Country is left voyde of inhabitants. 4. We shall come in with good leave of the natives.

Ob. 6. we should yet send yonge ones, and suche as may best be spared, and not of our best ministers and magistrates.

sol. It is a greater worke and requires more skillfull artizans, to laye the foundation of a newe building, then to uphold or repaire one that is ready built: if great things be attempted by weake instrumentes, the effectes willbe answerable:

Ob. 7. We see those plantations, which have been formerly made, succeeded ill.

Ans. the fruit of any publick designe is not to be discerned by the immediate successe, 2: it may appeare in tyme, that they were all to good use. 2: there were great fundamentall errors in the other, which are like to be

avoyded in this: for 1: their maine ende and purpose was carnall and not religious; they aymed cheifly at profitt, and not the propagating of Religion. 2: they used unfitt instrumentes, a multitude of Rude and misgoverned persons the verve scomme of the lande. 3: they not establish a right forme of Government.

Source: Winthrop Papers, vol. II, pp. 114-117.

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