

Completing the Thirteen Colonies

To Banbury [England] came I, O profane one!
Where I saw a Puritan once
Hanging of his cat on Monday,
For killing of a mouse on Sunday.

Richard Brathwaite, 1638

Prologue: The English authorities, angered by the efforts of Puritans further to de-Catholicize the established Church of England, launched persecutions that led to the founding of Plymouth in 1620 and the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. The Bay Colony early fell under the leadership of Puritan (Congregational) clergymen. Although they had been victims of intolerance in old England, they understandably sought to enforce conformity in New England by persecuting Quakers and banishing dissenters like Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams. Partly as a result of the uncongenial atmosphere in Massachusetts Bay, settlements in Connecticut and Rhode Island sprang into existence. These offshoot colonies, as well as the older ones, developed the pure-democracy town meeting and other significant institutions. A more hospitable atmosphere in the Quaker colonies, notably William Penn's Pennsylvania, attracted heavy immigration, largely German. The Dutch in New Netherland, after a precarious existence from 1624 to 1664, were finally absorbed by the English, who renamed the colony New York.

A. The Planting of Plymouth

I. The Pilgrims Leave Holland (1620)

William Bradford, then a youth of nineteen, was one of the small group of Puritan Separatists who in 1609 fled from England to Holland in search of religious freedom. But the new home proved to be unsatisfactory. The Pilgrims complained of theological controversy, unremitting toil, grinding poverty, and the unhealthy condition of their children, who were becoming "Dutchified" and developing "licentious habits." It seemed better to make a new start in the New World, where they could all live and die as Englishmen while advancing the "gospel of the Kingdom of Christ."

¹William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647*, ed. S. E. Morison (1952), pp. 26–27. By permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Bradford became not only the leader of Plymouth but also its distinguished historian, as his classic History of Plymouth Plantation attests. As the selection opens, Bradford has just reported that the Pilgrims first discussed the perils of the long sea voyage, the dangers of famine and nakedness, and the diseases that might come from the "change of air, diet, and drinking water." In his account of the decision to leave Holland, were the Pilgrims fully aware of their perils? What light does his analysis cast on their character?

And also those which should escape or overcome these difficulties should yet be in continual danger of the savage people, who are cruel, barbarous, and most treacherous, being most furious in their rage, and merciless where they overcome; not being content only to kill and take away life, but delight to torment men in the most bloody manner that may be; flaying some alive with the shells of fishes, cutting off the members and joints of others by piecemeal and broiling on the coals, eat the collops [slices] of their flesh in their sight whilst they live, with other cruelties horrible to be related.

And surely it could not be thought but the very hearing of these things could not but move the very bowels of men to grate within them and make the weak to quake and tremble.

It was further objected that it would require greater sums of money to furnish such a voyage, and to fit them with necessaries, than their consumed estates would amount to; and yet they must as well look to be seconded with supplies as presently to be transported. Also many precedents of ill success and lamentable miseries befallen others in the like designs were easy to be found, and not forgotten to be alleged; besides their own experience, in their former troubles and hardships in their removal into Holland, and how hard a thing it was for them to live in that strange place, though it was a neighbor country and a civil and rich commonwealth.

It was answered that all great and honorable actions are accompanied with great difficulties, and must be both enterprised and overcome with answerable courages. It was granted the dangers were great, but not desperate. The difficulties were many, but not invincible. For though there were many of them likely, yet they were not certain. It might be sundry of the things feared might never befall; others by provident care and the use of good means might in a great measure be prevented. And all of them, through the help of God, . . . might either be borne or overcome.

True it was that such attempts were not to be made and undertaken without good ground and reason, not rashly or lightly, as many have done for curiosity or hope of gain, etc. But their condition was not ordinary, their ends were good and honorable, their calling lawful and urgent; and therefore they might expect the blessing of God in their proceeding. Yea, though they should lose their lives in this action, yet might they have comfort in the same and their endeavors would be honorable.

They lived here [in Holland] but as men in exile and in a poor condition, and as great miseries might possibly befall them in this place. For the twelve years of truce were now out,* and there was nothing but beating of drums and preparing for war, the events whereof are always uncertain. The Spaniard might prove as cruel as the savages

*The twelve years' truce in Holland's bitter war of independence against Spain had been negotiated in 1609.



The Landing of the Pilgrims, 1620
(The Granger Collection)

of America, and the famine and pestilence as sore here as there, and their liberty less to look out for remedy.

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

2. Framing the Mayflower Compact (1620)

Leaving Plymouth (England) in the overburdened Mayflower, the plucky band of Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic. After severe storms and much seasickness, they sighted the Cape Cod coast of Massachusetts, far to the north of the site to which they had been granted patent privileges by the Virginia Company. The absence of valid rights in the Plymouth area, so William Bradford recorded, caused "some of the strangers amongst them" to utter "discontented and mutinous speeches" to the effect that when they "came ashore they would use their own liberty; for none had the power to command them, the patent they had being for Virginia, and not for New England. . . ." In an

²B. P. Poore, ed., *The Federal and State Constitutions*, 2nd ed. (1878), part 1, p. 931.

effort to hold the tiny band together, the leaders persuaded forty-one male passengers to sign a solemn pledge known as the Mayflower Compact. A constitution is "a document defining and limiting the functions of government." Was the Compact, as is often claimed, the first American constitution? In what ways did it foreshadow the development of democratic institutions?

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

3. *Abandoning Communism at Plymouth (1623)*

Some wag has said that the Pilgrims first fell on their knees, and then on the aborigines. The truth is that a plague—probably smallpox, possibly measles—had virtually exterminated the Indians near Plymouth, and the Pilgrims got along reasonably well with the few survivors. The Native Americans taught the whites how to grow maize (corn), which did much to rescue the ragged, starving, disease-decimated newcomers. The story of the first Thanksgiving (1621) is well known, but less well known is the fact that the abundant harvest of 1623 was made possible by the abandonment of the Pilgrims' early scheme of quasi-communism. For seven years there was to have been no private ownership of land, and everyone was to have been fed and clothed from the common stock. William Bradford, the historian and oft-elected governor of the colony, here tells what happened when each family was given its own parcel of land. Why did individual ownership succeed where communal enterprise had failed?

This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field and took their little ones with them to set corn, which before would allege weakness and inability, whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression.

The experience that was had in this common course and condition, tried sundry years and that amongst godly and sober men, may well evince the vanity of that conceit

³William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647*, ed. S. E. Morison (1952), pp. 120–121. By permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

of Plato's and other ancients, applauded by some of later times, that the taking away of property and bringing in community [communism] into a commonwealth would make them happy and flourishing, as if they were wiser than God. For this community (so far as it was) was found to breed much confusion and discontent and retard much employment that would have been to their benefit and comfort. For the young men that were most able and fit for labor and service did repine that they should spend their time and strength to work for other men's wives and children, without any recompense. The strong, or man of parts, had no more in division of victuals and clothes than he that was weak and not able to do a quarter the other could; this was thought injustice. The aged and graver men to be ranked and equalized in labors and victuals, clothes, etc., with the meaner and younger sort, thought it some indignity and disrespect unto them. And for men's wives to be commanded to do service for other men, as dressing their meat, washing their clothes, etc., they deemed it a kind of slavery, neither could many husbands well brook it.

B. Conformity in the Bay Colony

I. John Cotton Describes New England's "Theocracy" (1636)

Already a prominent Puritan minister in England, John Cotton arrived in Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1633 to become the principal preacher to the Boston Puritans. Something of a liberal in old England, he became an increasingly conservative defender of orthodoxy in the New World, as shown by his role in the banishment of Anne Hutchinson. Shortly after Cotton's arrival, he was asked by his fellow colonists to respond to inquiries (or "demands") from a group of English Puritan noblemen who desired to settle in Massachusetts, on the condition that the colony alter its form of government. Cotton's response constitutes a succinct statement of Puritan political theory. What social elements or interests did Cotton think government should represent? How did he define the relation of church and state? What did he think of "democracy"?

Demand 1. That the common-wealth should consist of two distinct ranks of men, whereof the one should be for them and their heirs, gentlemen of the country, the other for them and their heirs, freeholders.

Answer. Two distinct ranks we willingly acknowledge, from the light of nature and scripture; the one of them called Princes, or Nobles, or Elders (amongst whom gentlemen have their place), the other the people. Hereditary dignity or honours we willingly allow to the former, unless by the scandalous and base conversation of any of them, they become degenerate. Hereditary liberty, or estate of freemen, we willingly allow to the other, unless they also, by some unworthy and slavish carriage, do disfranchise themselves.

¹ Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony of Massachusetts's Bay*, 2nd ed. (London: M. Richardson, 1765), pp. 490–501.

Demand 2. That in these gentlemen and freeholders, assembled together, the chief power of the common-wealth shall be placed, both for making and repealing laws.

Answer. So it is with us.

Demand 3. That each of these two ranks should, in all public assemblies, have a negative voice, so as without a mutual consent nothing should be established.

Answer. So it is agreed among us.

Demand 4. That the first rank, consisting of gentlemen, should have power, for them and their heirs, to come to the parliaments or public assemblies, and there to give their free votes personally; the second rank of freeholders should have the same power for them and their heirs of meeting and voting, but by their deputies.

Answer. Thus far this demand is practised among us. The freemen meet and vote by their deputies; the other rank give their votes personally, only with this difference, there be no more of the gentlemen that give their votes personally, but such as are chosen to places of office, either governors, deputy governors, councillors, or assistants. All gentlemen in England have not that honour to meet and vote personally in Parliament, much less all their heirs. But of this more fully, in an answer to the ninth and tenth demand.

Demand 5. That for facilitating and dispatch of business, and other reasons, the gentlemen and freeholders should sit and hold their meetings in two distinct houses.

Answer. We willingly approve the motion, only as yet it is not so practised among us, but in time, the variety and discrepancy of sundry occurrences will put them upon a necessity of sitting apart.

Demand 6. That there shall be set times for these meetings, annually or half yearly, or as shall be thought fit by common consent, which meetings should have a set time for their continuance, but should be adjourned or broken off at the discretion of both houses.

Answer. Public meetings, in general courts, are by charter appointed to be quarterly, which, in this infancy of the colony, wherein many things frequently occur which need settling, hath been of good use, but when things are more fully settled in due order, it is likely that yearly or half yearly meetings will be sufficient. For the continuance or breaking up of these courts, nothing is done but with the joint consent of both branches.

Demand 7. That it shall be in the power of this parliament, thus constituted and assembled, to call the governor and all publick officers to account, to create new officers, and to determine them already set up: and, the better to stop the way to insolence and ambition, it may be ordered that all offices and fees of office shall, every parliament, determine, unless they be new confirmed the last day of every session.

Answer. This power to call governors and all officers to account, and to create new and determine the old, is settled already in the general court or parliament, only it is not put forth but once in the year, viz. at the great and general court in May, when the governor is chosen.

Demand 8. That the governor shall ever be chosen out of the rank of gentlemen.

Answer. We never practice otherwise, chusing [sic] the governor either out of the assistants, which is our ordinary course, or out of approved known gentlemen, as this year [1636] Mr. Vane.

Demand 9. That, for the present, the Right Honorable the Lord Viscount Say and

Seale, the Lord Brooke, who have already been at great disbursements for the public works in New-England, and such other gentlemen of approved sincerity and worth, as they, before their personal remove, shall take into their number, should be admitted for them and their heirs, gentlemen of the country. But, for the future, none shall be admitted into this rank but by the consent of both houses.

Answer. The great disbursements of these noble personages and worthy gentlemen we thankfully acknowledge, because the safety and presence of our brethren at Connecticut is no small blessing and comfort to us. But, though that charge had never been disbursed, the worth of the honorable persons named is so well known to all, and our need of such supports and guides is so sensible to ourselves, that we do not doubt the country would thankfully accept it, as a singular favor from God and from them, if he should bow their hearts to come into this wilderness and help us. As for accepting them and their heirs into the number of gentlemen of the country, the custom of this country is, and readily would be, to receive and acknowledge, not only all such eminent persons as themselves and the gentlemen they speak of, but others of meaner estate, so be it is of some eminency, to be for them and their heirs, gentlemen of the country. Only, thus standeth our case. Though we receive them with honor and allow them pre-eminence and accommodations according to their condition, yet we do not, ordinarily, call them forth to the power of election, or administration of magistracy, until they be received as members into some of our churches, a privilege, which we doubt not religious gentlemen will willingly desire (as David did in Psal. xxvii. 4.) and christian churches will as readily impart to such desirable persons. . . .

Demand 10. That the rank of freeholders shall be made up of such, as shall have so much personal estate there, as shall be thought fit for men of that condition, and have contributed, some fit proportion, to the public charge of the country, either by their disbursements or labors.

Answer. We must confess our ordinary practice to be otherwise. For, excepting the old planters, i.e. Mr. Humphry, who himself was admitted an assistant at London, and all of them freemen, before the churches here were established, none are admitted freemen of this commonwealth but such as are first admitted members of some church or other in this country, and, of such, none are excluded from the liberty of freemen. And out of such only, I mean the more eminent sort of such, it is that our magistrates are chosen. Both which points we should willingly persuade our people to change, if we could make it appear to them, that such a change might be made according to God; for, to give you a true account of the grounds of our proceedings herein, it seemeth to them, and also to us, to be a divine ordinance (and moral) that none should be appointed and chosen by the people of God, magistrates over them, but men fearing God. . . .

Now, if it be a divine truth, that none are to be trusted with public permanent authority but godly men, who are fit materials for church fellowship, then from the same grounds it will appear, that none are so fit to be trusted with the liberties of the commonwealth as church members. For, the liberties of the freemen of this commonwealth are such, as require men of faithful integrity to God and the state, to preserve the same. Their liberties, among others, are chiefly these. 1. To chuse all magistrates, and to call them to account at their general courts. 2. To chuse such burgesses, every general court, as with the magistrates shall make or repeal all laws. Now both these liberties are such, as carry along much power with them, either to establish or subvert

the commonwealth, and therewith the church, which power, if it be committed to men not according to their godliness, which maketh them fit for church fellowship, but according to their wealth, which, as such, makes them no better than worldly men, then, in case worldly men should prove the major part, as soon they might do, they would as readily set over us magistrates like themselves, such as might hate us according to the curse . . . and turn the edge of all authority and laws against the church and the members thereof, the maintenance of whose peace is the chief end which God aimed at in the institution of Magistracy. . . .

It is better that the commonwealth be fashioned to the setting forth of Gods house, which is his church: than to accommodate the church frame to the civill state. Democracy. I do not conceyve that ever God did ordeyne as a fitt government eyther for church or commonwealth. If the people be governors, who shall be governed? As for monarchy, and aristocracy, they are both of them clearely approved, and directed in scripture, yet so as referreth the soveraigntie to himselfe, and setteth up Theocracy in both, as the best forme of government in the commonwealth, as well as in the church.

2. Anne Hutchinson Is Banished (1637)

The powerful Massachusetts Bay Colony soon became a Bible Commonwealth, centered at Boston, and the clergymen who dominated it could not permit heretics to undermine their authority. Mistress Anne Hutchinson, who bore her husband fourteen children, was a kindly woman of nimble wit and even more nimble tongue. Gathering a select group at her home, she would review and even reinterpret the ministers' sermons in the light of her own brand of Calvinism. Haled before the General Court, she was subjected to a rigid cross-examination. The case against her seemed to be breaking down when her voluble tongue revealed that she was in direct communication with God—a heresy that the religious leaders could not tolerate. What does this record of the court reveal about the Puritan way of thinking and the justice or injustice of these proceedings?

[Anne Hutchinson.] Therefore take heed what ye go about to do unto me. You have power over my body, but the Lord Jesus hath power over my body and soul; neither can you do me any harm, for I am in the hands of the eternal Jehovah, my Saviour. I am at his appointment, for the bounds of my habitation are cast in Heaven, and no further do I esteem of any mortal man than creatures in his hand. I fear none but the great Jehovah, which hath foretold me of these things, and I do verily believe that he will deliver me out of your hands. Therefore take heed how you proceed against me; for I know that for this you go about to do to me, God will ruin you and your posterity, and this whole state.

Mr. Nowell. How do you know that it was God that did reveal these things to you, and not Satan?

Mrs. Hutchinson. How did Abraham know that it was God that bid him offer [sacrifice] his son, being a breach of the sixth commandment?

²C. F. Adams, *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1892), vol. 1, pp. 501–502, 507–508.

Deputy-Governor Dudley. By an immediate voice.

Mrs. Hutchinson. So to me by an immediate revelation.

Deputy-Governor. How! an immediate revelation?

Mrs. Hutchinson. By the voice of his own spirit to my soul.

Governor Winthrop. Daniel was delivered by miracle; do you think to be delivered so too?

Mrs. Hutchinson. I do here speak it before the Court. I look that the Lord should deliver me by his providence. . . .

Governor Winthrop. The Court hath already declared themselves satisfied concerning the things you hear, and concerning the troublesomeness of her spirit, and the danger of her course amongst us, which is not to be suffered. Therefore, if it be the mind of the Court that Mrs. Hutchinson, for these things that appear before us, is unfit for our society, and if it be the mind of the Court that she shall be banished out of our liberties, and imprisoned till she be sent away, let them hold up their hands.

All but three held up their hands.

[*Governor Winthrop.*] Those that are contrary minded, hold up yours.

Mr. Coddington and Mr. Colburn only.

Mr. Jennison. I cannot hold up my hand one way or the other, and I shall give my reason if the Court require it.

Governor Winthrop. Mrs. Hutchinson, you hear the sentence of the Court. It is that you are banished from out our jurisdiction as being a woman not fit for our society. And you are to be imprisoned till the Court send you away.

Mrs. Hutchinson. I desire to know wherefore I am banished.

Governor Winthrop. Say no more. The Court knows wherefore, and is satisfied.

3. Winthrop's Concept of Liberty (1645)

Governor John Winthrop, who pronounced Anne Hutchinson's banishment, was the most distinguished lay leader in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Cambridge-educated and trained in the law, he was modest, tender, self-sacrificing, and deeply religious. After a furious quarrel had broken out at Hingham over the election of a militia leader, he caused certain of the agitators to be arrested. His foes brought impeachment charges against him, but they instead were fined. After his acquittal, Winthrop delivered this famous speech to the court. It illustrates the close connection between the aristocratic lay leaders of the Bay Colony and the leading clergymen. Would the kind of liberty that Winthrop describes be regarded as liberty today?

There is a twofold liberty: natural (I mean as our nature is now corrupt) and civil or federal. The first is common to man with beasts and other creatures. By this, man, as he stands in relation to man simply, hath liberty to do what he lists. It is a liberty to evil as well as to good. This liberty is incompatible and inconsistent with authority, and cannot endure the least restraint of the most just authority. The exercise and maintain-

³John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1853), vol. 2, pp. 281–282.

ing of this liberty makes men grow more evil, and in time to be worse than brute beasts. . . .

The other kind of liberty I call civil or federal. It may also be termed moral, in reference to the covenant between God and man in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions amongst men themselves. . . . Whatsoever crosseth this, is not authority, but a distemper thereof. This liberty is maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority. It is of the same kind of liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

The woman's own choice makes such a man her husband; yet being so chosen, he is her lord, and she is to be subject to him, yet in a way of liberty, not of bondage. And a true wife accounts her subjection her honor and freedom, and would not think her condition safe and free, but in her subjection to her husband's authority.

Such is the liberty of the church under the authority of Christ, her king and husband. His yoke is so easy and sweet to her as a bride's ornaments; and if through frowardness or wantonness, etc., she shake it off at any time, she is at no rest in her spirit until she take it up again. And whether her lord smiles upon her, and embraceth her in his arms, or whether he frowns, or rebuketh, or smites her, she apprehends the sweetness of his love in all, and is refreshed, supported, and instructed by every such dispensation of his authority over her. On the other side, ye know who they are that complain of this yoke and say, let us break their bands, etc., we will not have this man to rule over us.

Even so, brethren, it will be between you and your magistrates. If you stand for your natural corrupt liberties, and will do what is good in your own eyes, you will not endure the least weight of authority, but will murmur, and oppose, and be always striving to shake off that yoke. But if you will be satisfied to enjoy such civil and lawful liberties, such as Christ allows you, then will you quietly and cheerfully submit unto that authority which is set over you, in all the administrations of it, for your good. Wherein if we [magistrates] fail at any time, we hope we shall be willing (by God's assistance) to hearken to good advice from any of you, or in any other way of God. So shall your liberties be preserved, in upholding the honor and power of authority amongst you.

4. Puritan Mistreatment of Quakers (1660)

The peace-loving Quakers, who opposed a paid clergy and a tax-supported church, likewise felt the restraining hand of Massachusetts authority. The Reverend Increase Mather wrote in 1684 that they were "under the strong delusion of Satan." Their stubborn devotion and courage under punishment were so exasperating as to provoke increasingly severe measures. Edward Burrough, one of their co-religionists in England, presented the following appeal on their behalf to the king, who thereupon sent orders to Massachusetts to end the persecutions. What were alleged to be the chief offenses of the Quakers? What were the most serious injustices, aside from physical abuse, that they suffered?

⁴[Edward Burrough], *A Declaration of the Sad and Great Persecution and Martyrdom of the People of God, Called Quakers, in New England* . . . ([1660]), pp. 17–19.



Quakers Abused in England

New England persecutions were on a smaller scale.
S. Seyer, *Memoirs Historical and Topographical of Bristol*, 1823, vol. 2.

2. Twelve strangers in that country [Massachusetts], but free-born of this [English] nation, received twenty-three whippings, the most of them being with a whip of three cords, with knots at the ends, and laid on with as much strength as they could be by the arm of their executioner, the stripes amounting to three hundred and seventy. . . .
3. Eighteen inhabitants of the country, being free-born English, received twenty-three whippings, the stripes amounting to two hundred and fifty.
4. Sixty-four imprisonments of the Lord's people, for their obedience to his will, amounting to five hundred and nineteen weeks, much of it being very cold weather, and the inhabitants kept in prison in harvest time. . . .
5. Two beaten with pitched ropes, the blows amounting to an hundred thirty-nine. . . .
6. Also, an innocent man, an inhabitant of Boston, they banished from his wife and children, and put to seek a habitation in the winter. And in case he returned again, he was to be kept prisoner during his life; and for returning again, he was put in prison, and hath been now a prisoner above a year.
7. Twenty-five banishments, upon the penalties of being whipped, or having their ears cut; or branded in the hand, if they returned.
8. Fines laid upon the inhabitants for meeting together, and edifying one another, as the saints ever did; and for refusing to swear [take oaths], it being contrary to Christ's command, amounting to about a thousand pound. . . .
9. Five kept fifteen days (in all) without food, and fifty-eight days shut up close by the jailor. . . .
10. One laid neck and heels in irons for sixteen hours.
11. One very deeply burnt in the right hand with the letter H [for *heretic*], after he had been whipped with above thirty stripes.
12. One chained the most part of twenty days to a log of wood in an open prison in the winter-time.
13. Five appeals to England, denied at Boston.

14. Three had their right ears cut by the hangman in the prison, the door being barred, and not a friend suffered to be present while it was doing, though some much desired it. . . .

15. One of the inhabitants of Salem, who since is banished upon pain of death, had one half of his house and land seized on while he was in prison, a month before he knew of it.

16. At a General Court in Boston, they made an order, that those who had not wherewithal to answer the fines that were laid upon them (for their consciences) should be sold for bond-men and bond-women to Barbados, Virginia, or any of the English plantations. . . .

17. Eighteen of the people of God were at several times banished upon pain of death. . . .

18. Also three of the servants of the Lord they put to death [hanged], all of them for obedience to the truth, in the testimony of it against the wicked rulers and laws at Boston.

19. And since they have banished four more, upon pain of death. . . .

These things, O King, from time to time have we patiently suffered, and not for the transgression of any just or righteous law, either pertaining to the worship of God or the civil government of England, but simply and barely for our consciences to God. . . .

C. The Rule of Biblical Law

I. The Blue Laws of Connecticut (1672)

Blue laws—or statutes of extreme rigor—were to be found both in Europe and in all of the American colonies. They obviously could not be enforced with literal severity, and they generally fell into disuse after the Revolution. Connecticut's blue laws received unpleasant notoriety in the Reverend Samuel Peters's General History of Connecticut (1781), which fabricated such decrees as "No woman shall kiss her child on the Sabbath or fasting-day." But the valid laws of Connecticut, some of which are here reproduced with biblical chapter and verse, were harsh enough. How did the punishment fit the crime? Which offenses would still be regarded as criminal today?

1. If any man or woman, after legal conviction, shall have or worship any other God but the Lord God, he shall be put to death. (Deuteronomy 13.6. Exodus 22.20.)

2. If any person within this colony shall blaspheme the name of God, the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, with direct, express, presumptuous, or high-handed blasphemy, or shall curse in the like manner, he shall be put to death. (Leviticus 24.15, 16.)

3. If any man or woman be a witch, that is, has or consults with a familiar spirit, they shall be put to death. (Exodus 22.18. Leviticus 20.27. Deuteronomy 18.10, 11.)

4. If any person shall commit any willful murder, committed upon malice, hatred, or cruelty, not in a man's just and necessary defense, nor by casualty [accident] against his will, he shall be put to death. (Exodus 21.12, 13, 14. Numbers 35.30, 31.)

¹George Brinley, ed., *The Laws of Connecticut* (Hartford: printed for private distribution, 1865), pp. 9–10.

5. If any person shall slay another through guile, either by poisoning or other such devilish practices, he shall be put to death. (Exodus 21.14.) . . .

10. If any man steals a man or mankind and sells him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall be put to death. (Exodus 21.16.)

11. If any person rise up by false witness wittingly and of purpose to take away any man's life, he or she shall be put to death. (Deuteronomy 19.16, 18, 19.) . . .

14. If any child or children above sixteen years old, and of sufficient understanding, shall curse or smite their natural father or mother, he or they shall be put to death, unless it can be sufficiently testified that the parents have been very unchristianly negligent in the education of such children, or so provoked them by extreme and cruel correction that they have been forced thereunto to preserve themselves from death or maiming. (Exodus 21.17. Leviticus 20.9. Exodus 21.15.)

15. If any man have a stubborn or rebellious son, of sufficient understanding and years, viz. sixteen years of age, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him, he will not harken unto them; then may his father or mother, being his natural parents, lay hold on him, and bring him to the magistrates assembled in court, and testify unto them that their son is stubborn and rebellious, and will not obey their voice and chastisement, but lives in sundry notorious crimes, such a son shall be put to death. (Deuteronomy 21.20, 21.) . . .

2. A Defense of Buying Indian Land (1722)

The Reverend Solomon Stoddard, for fifty-six years pastor of the Congregational Church in Northampton, was easily the most influential figure of his day in western Massachusetts. Tall, dignified, and domineering, he was dubbed by his critics "the Pope." He advocated the frequent preaching of hell-fire as a restraint against sin, and he bitterly opposed long hair and wigs for men, extravagance in dress, and intemperance in drink. The following is part of a tract that he published in 1722 entitled An Answer to Some Cases of Conscience Respecting the Country. Which of his arguments is the most convincing? In what sense could the land be said to have "belonged" to the Indians in the first place?

Question VIII. Did we any wrong to the Indians in buying their land at a small price?

Answer. 1. There was some part of the land that was not purchased, neither was there need that it should; it was *vacuum domicilium* [a vacant dwelling place]; and so might be possessed by virtue of God's grant to mankind, Genesis 1.28: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." The Indians made no use of it but for hunting. By God's first grant men were to subdue the earth. When Abraham came into the land of Canaan, he made use of vacant land as he pleased; so did Isaac and Jacob.

²Solomon Stoddard, *An Answer to Some Cases of Conscience Respecting the Country* (Boston: B. Green, 1722; reprinted Tarrytown, N.Y.: W. Abbott, 1917), pp. 14–15.

2. The Indians were well contented that we should sit down by them. And it would have been for great advantage, both for this world and the other, if they had been wise enough to make use of their opportunities. It has been common with many people, in planning this world since the Flood, to admit neighbors, to sit down by them.

3. Though we gave but a small price for what we bought, we gave them their demands. We came to their market, and gave them their price. And, indeed, it was worth but little; and had it continued in their hands, it would have been of little value. It is our dwelling on it, and our improvements, that have made it to be of worth.

D. Founding the Middle Colonies

I. The Misrule of "Peter the Headstrong" (1650)

Henry Hudson's famous voyage in 1609 laid the foundations for the formal establishment of New Netherland (New York) in 1624. Hotheaded Peter Stuyvesant, who had lost a leg in the service of the Dutch West India Company, became governor in 1647, following several inept predecessors. Stuyvesant announced at the outset that he would be "as a father over his children." He proved to be covetous, dictatorial, and tyrannical. But he did attempt to curb drunkenness and knife-wielding in the streets, and ultimately instituted some overdue reforms. After three years of his misrule, eleven prominent members of the colony protested as follows over the head of the Dutch West India Company to the "High Mightinesses" of the Dutch government in Holland. What was the condition of "democracy" in the colony at this stage?

The fort under which we shelter ourselves, and from which as it seems all authority proceeds, lies like a mole-heap or a tottering wall, on which there is not one gun carriage or one piece of cannon in a suitable frame or on a good platform. . . .

His [Stuyvesant's] first arrival . . . was like a peacock, with great state and pomp. The declaration of His Honor that he wished to stay here only three years, with other haughty expressions, caused some to think that he would not be a father. The appellation of Lord General, and similar titles, were never before known here. Almost every day he caused proclamations of various import to be published, which were for the most part never observed, and have long since been a dead letter, except the wine excise, as that yielded a profit. . . .

At one time, after leaving the house of the minister, where the consistory had been sitting and had risen, it happened that Arnoldus Van Herdenbergh related the proceedings relative to the estate of Zeger Teunisz, and how he himself, as curator, had appealed from the sentence. Whereupon the Director [Stuyvesant], who had been sitting there with them as an elder, interrupted him and replied, "It may during my administration be contemplated to appeal, but if any one should do it, I will make him a foot shorter, and send the pieces to Holland, and let him appeal in that way." . . .

¹*The Representation of New Netherland* (1650), in New York Historical Society, *Collections*, Second Series (1849), vol. 2, pp. 298, 308, 309, 319.

In our opinion this country will never flourish under the government of the Honorable [West India] Company, but will pass away and come to an end of itself, unless the Honorable Company be reformed. And therefore it would be more profitable for them, and better for the country, that they should be rid thereof, and their effects transported hence.

To speak specifically. Care ought to be taken of the public property, as well ecclesiastical as civil, which, in beginnings, can be illy dispensed with. It is doubtful whether divine worship will have to cease altogether in consequence of the departure of the minister and the inability of the Company.

There should be a public school, provided with at least two good masters, so that first of all in so wild a country, where there are many loose people, the youth be well taught and brought up, not only in reading and writing, but also in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. As it is now, the school is kept very irregularly, one and another keeping it according to his pleasure and as long as he thinks proper. There ought also to be an almshouse, and an orphan asylum, and other similar institutions. The minister who now goes home can give a much fuller explanation thereof. The country must also be provided with godly, honorable, and intelligent rulers who are not very indigent, or, indeed, are not too covetous. . . .

[In 1664, fourteen years after this remonstrance, an English fleet, without firing a shot, forced a fuming Stuyvesant to surrender his flimsily fortified colony.]

2. Early Settlers in Pennsylvania (1682)

Richard Townsend, a Quaker who had come from England with William Penn in the ship Welcome, remembered through the haze of the years the founding of the colony. He set down his recollections about 1727, when he was eighty-three years old. What peculiar advantages did this colony have that the others had not enjoyed?

At our arrival [in Pennsylvania] we found it a wilderness. The chief inhabitants were Indians, and some Swedes, who received us in a friendly manner. And though there was a great number of us, the good hand of Providence was seen in a particular manner, in that provisions were found for us, by the Swedes and Indians, at very reasonable rates, as well as brought from divers other parts that were inhabited before.

Our first concern was to keep up and maintain our religious worship; and, in order thereunto, we had several meetings in the houses of the inhabitants; and one boarded meeting-house was set up, where the city was to be, near Delaware. And, as we had nothing but love and good will in our hearts, one to another, we had very comfortable meetings from time to time; and after our meeting was over, we assisted each other in building little houses, for our shelter.

After some time I set up a mill, on Chester creek, which I brought ready framed from London; which served for grinding of corn and sawing of boards, and was of great use to us. Besides, I with Joshua Tittery made a net and caught great quantities of fish, which supplied ourselves and many others; so that, notwithstanding it was

²Robert Proud, *The History of Pennsylvania* . . . (1797), vol. 1, pp. 229–231.

thought near three thousand persons came in the first year, we were so providentially provided for that we could buy a deer for about two shillings, and a large turkey for about one shilling, and Indian corn for about two shillings and sixpence per bushel.

And, as our worthy Proprietor [Penn] treated the Indians with extraordinary humanity, they became very civil and loving to us, and brought in abundance of venison. As in other countries the Indians were exasperated by hard treatment, which hath been the foundation of much bloodshed, so the contrary treatment here hath produced their love and affection.

About a year after our arrival, there came in about twenty families from high and low Germany, of religious, good people; who settled about six miles from Philadelphia, and called the place Germantown. The country continually increasing, people began to spread themselves further back. . . .

About the time in which Germantown was laid out, I settled upon my tract of land, which I had purchased of the Proprietor in England, about a mile from thence; where I set up a house and a corn mill, which was very useful to the country for several miles round. But there not being plenty of horses, people generally brought their corn on their backs many miles. . . .

As people began to spread and improve their lands, the country became more fruitful; so that those who came after us were plentifully supplied; and with what we abounded we began a small trade abroad. And as Philadelphia increased, vessels were built, and many employed. Both country and trade have been wonderfully increasing to this day; so that, from a wilderness, the Lord, by his good hand of Providence, hath made it a fruitful field. . . .

Thought Provokers

1. In regard to the Plymouth Pilgrims, what support does one find for this statement: "The cowards never started; the weak died on the way"? An English writer claims that the brave ones were actually those who stayed at home and fought the authorities for religious freedom instead of fleeing from them. Comment.
2. How can one justify the so-called intolerance of the Puritans, especially since they were the victims of intolerance at home? What light does this statement of Pope Leo XIII in 1885 throw on the problem: "The equal toleration of all religions . . . is the same thing as atheism"?
3. It has been said that the Puritans were misguided in following biblical law, which did not fit conditions of the seventeenth century. Comment. The blacks of South Africa have this proverb: "At first we had the land and the white man had the Bible. Now we have the Bible and the white man has the land." Comment with reference to North America.
4. In which of the colonies from Pennsylvania to Massachusetts would you have preferred to be a settler? Explain fully why.