

Week 1 Documents

Christianity in America



Original Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony

For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others' necessities. We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make others' conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as

members of the same body. . . . If our hearts shall turn away, so that we will not obey, but shall be seduced, and worship other Gods, our pleasure and profits, and serve them; it is propounded unto us this day, we shall surely perish out of the good land whither we pass over this vast sea to possess it.

John Winthrop *A Model of Christian Charity* – 1630

And those that first entered found sharp resistance from the enemy who both shot at and grappled with them; others ran into their houses and brought out fire and set them [Pequots' homes inside the fort] on fire, which soon took in their mat [bark covering over tree-limb frame]; and standing close together, with the wind all was quickly on a flame, and thereby more were burnt to death than was otherwise slain. It burnt their bowstrings and made them unserviceable; those that [e]scaped the fire were slain with the sword, some hewed to pieces, others run through with their [the English] rapiers, so as they were quickly dispatched and very few escaped. It was conceived they thus destroyed about 400 at this time. It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching the same, and horrible was the stink and scent thereof; but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the praise thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them, thus to enclose their enemies in their hands and give them so speedy a victory over so proud and insulting an enemy.

From William Bradford's account of the Pequot War from Of Plymouth Plantation 1637.

The Holy God having by a long and Continued Series of his Afflictive dispensations in & by the present Warr with the Heathen Natives of this Land, written and brought to pass bitter things against his own Covenant people in this wilderness, yet so that we evidently discern that in the midst of his judgements he hath remembered mercy, having remembered his Footstool in the day of his sore displeasure against us for our sins, with many singular Intimations of his Fatherly Compassion, and regard: reserving many of our Towns from Desolation Threatened, and attempted by the Enemy, and giving us especially of late with our Confederates many signal Advantages against them, without such Disadvantage to our selves as formerly we have been sensible of, if it be of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, it certainly bespeaks our positive Thankfulness, when our Enemies are in any measure disappointed or destroyed: and fearing the Lord should take notice under so many Intimations of his returning mercy, we should be found an Insensible people, as not standing before him with Thanksgiving, as well as lading him with our Complaints in the time of pressing Afflictions:

THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION, MASSACHUSETTS BAY

At a COUNCIL, Held at Charlestown, June the 20th, 1676.

Instr. 1. *We may here take notice that the nature of man is woefully corrupted and depraved*, else they would not be so apt to sleep when the precious Truths of God are dispensed in his name, yea, and men are more apt to sleep then, than at any other time. Some woeful creatures, have been so wicked as to profess they have gone to hear sermons on purpose, that so they might sleep, finding themselves at such times much disposed that way. This argueth as Satan's malice, so the great corruption and depravation of the nature of when, whence it is that they are inclined unto evil, and indisposed to the thing that good is. Yea, some will sit and sleep under the best preaching in the world. When Paul was alive, there was not a better preacher upon the earth than he. . . . But notwithstanding Paul's being so excellent a preacher, there were some that could sit and sleep under his ministry. When soul-melting sermons are preached about Christ the Saviour, that will sleep under them. When soul-awakening sermons are preached, enough to make rocks to rend and to bleed; when the word falls down from heaven like thunder, the voice of the Lord therin being very powerful and full of majesty, able to break the cedars of Lebanon, and to make the wilderness to shake; yet some will sit and sleep under it; such is the woeful corruption and desperate hardness of the hearts of the children of men.

From a Sermon of Increase Mather 1682: