

## READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Winthrop uses the metaphor of a "body" to describe the Puritan community he envisions for Massachusetts Bay. What was his vision for this "body"?
2. Compare the values expressed here with your own. What value do you think Winthrop might have placed on such contemporary "American" values as individualism and privacy?

### 2-3 | The Limits of the Puritan Community *The Trial of Anne Hutchinson (1637)*

The Christian charity that John Winthrop (Document 2-2) extolled did not extend to all members of the new colonial society. Anne Hutchinson (1591–1643) arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1634 and within a few years was embroiled in a religious and political crisis. Like all Calvinists, Hutchinson believed that God's grace alone could save one's soul and that individuals could not earn their way to heaven through good deeds. While some ministers had accepted outward signs of grace as evidence of salvation, assuming that only the elect could lead saintly lives, Hutchinson rejected this. When she began holding prayer meetings and questioning the doctrines of some Bay Colony ministers, Hutchinson was put on trial and eventually banished. This selection comes from the transcript of Hutchinson's trial. The governor who leads the questioning is Winthrop.

*Mr. Winthrop, governor.* 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 that hath had a great share in the promoting and divulging of those opinions that are the cause of this trouble . . . you have maintained a meeting and an assembly in your house that hath been condemned by the general assembly as a thing not tolerable nor comely in the sight of God nor fitting for your sex, and notwithstanding that was cried down you have continued the same. Therefore we have thought good to send for you to understand how things are, that if you be in an erroneous way we may reduce you that so you may become a profitable member here among us, otherwise if you be obstinate in your course that then the court may take such course that you may trouble us no further. Therefore I would intreat you to express whether you do not hold and assent in practice to those opinions and factions that have been handled in court already, that is to say, whether you do not justify Mr. Wheelwright's sermon and the petition.

*Mrs. Hutchinson.* I am called here to answer before you but I hear no things laid to my charge.

*Gov.* I have told you some already and more I can tell you.

*Mrs. H.* Name one, Sir.

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Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay* (Boston: Thomas and John Fleet, 1767), 482–483, 507–509, 515, 519–520.

*Gov.* Have I not named some already?

*Mrs. H.* What have I said or done?

*Gov.* Why for your doings, this you did harbor and countenance those that are parties in this faction that you have heard of.

*Mrs. H.* That's matter of conscience, Sir.

*Gov.* Your conscience you must keep, or it must be kept for you. . . .

*Mrs. H.* If you please to give me leave I shall give you the ground of what I know to be true. Being much troubled to see the falseness of the constitution of the Church of England, 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. This I considered of and in considering found that the papists did not deny him to be come in the flesh, nor we did not deny him—who then was antichrist? Was the Turk antichrist only? The Lord knows that I could not open scripture; he must by his prophetic office open it unto me. . . . 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 he hath left me to distinguish between the voice of my beloved and the voice of Moses, the voice of John the Baptist and the voice of antichrist, for all those voices are spoken of in scripture. Now if you do condemn me for speaking what in my conscience I know to be truth I must commit myself unto the Lord.

*Mr. Nowel [assistant to the Court].* How do you know that was the spirit?

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

*Dep. Gov.* By an immediate voice.

*Mrs. H.* So to me by an immediate revelation.

*Dep. Gov.* How! an immediate revelation.

*Mrs. H.* By the voice of his own spirit to my soul. I will give you another scripture, Jer[emiah] 46: 27-28—out of which the Lord showed me what he would do for me and the rest of his servants. But after he was pleased to reveal himself to me I did presently, like Abraham, run to Hagar. And after that he did let me see the atheism of my own heart, for which I begged of the Lord that it might not remain in my heart, and being thus, he did show me this (a twelvemonth after) which I told you of before. . . . Therefore, I desire you to look to it, for you see this scripture fulfilled this day and therefore I desire you as you tender the Lord and the church and commonwealth to consider and look what you do. You have power over my body but the Lord Jesus hath power over my body and soul; and assure yourselves thus much, you do as much as in you lies to put the Lord Jesus Christ from you, and if you go on in this course you begin, you will bring a curse upon you and your posterity, and the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. . . .

*Gov.* Daniel was delivered by miracle; do you think to be deliver'd so too?

*Mrs. H.* I do here speak it before the court. I look that the Lord should deliver me by his providence. . . .

Gov. I am persuaded that the revelation she brings forth is delusion. . . .

Gov. 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 did so.]

Gov. Mrs. Hutchinson, the sentence of the court you hear is that you are banished from out of our jurisdiction as being a woman not fit for our society, and are to be imprisoned till the court shall send you away.

Mrs. H. I desire to know wherefore I am banished?

Gov. Say no more. The court knows wherefore and is satisfied.

### READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to the transcript, why did Hutchinson run afoul of the colony's leaders? What is the charge against her?
2. Why do the colony's leaders react so strongly when Hutchinson claimed a divine revelation?
3. To what extent were Hutchinson's problems a result of her being female? What does her case reveal about the extent (or absence) of gender equality in Puritan society?

## 2-4 | Maryland Protects Religious Beliefs *Maryland Act of Religious Toleration (1649)*

Only a dozen years after Anne Hutchinson was banished from Massachusetts Bay, the Maryland Assembly passed the 1649 Toleration Act, which guaranteed religious freedom to all Christians in the colony. This was important to the colony's many Catholics, who feared persecution from the growing presence of Protestants. Protestants had recently threatened the power of the Catholic proprietor Cecilius Calvert, Lord Baltimore, and Calvert urged passage of the Toleration Act just months after the Catholic-sympathizing Charles I of England was beheaded.

Forasmuch as in a well governed and [Christian] Com[m]on Wea[l]th matters concerning Religion and the honor of God ought in the first place to bee taken, into serious consideration and endeavoured to bee settled. Be it therefore ordered and enacted by the Right [Honorable] Cecilius Lord Baron of Baltimore absolute Lord and Proprietary of this Province with the advise and consent of this Generall

*Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland*, ed. William Hand Browne (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883), 244-247.

Assembly. That whatsoever p[er]son or p[er]sons within this Province and the Islands thereunto belonging shall from henceforth blaspheme God, that is Curse him, or deny our Saviour Jesus Christ to bee the sonne of God, or shall deny the holy Trinity the father sonne and holy Ghost, or the Godhead of any of the said Three p[er]sons of the Trinity or the Unity of the Godhead, or shall use or utter any reproachfull Speeches, words or language concerning the said Holy Trinity or any of the said three p[er]sons thereof, shall be punished with death and confiscation or forfeiture of all his or her lands and goods to the Lord Proprietary and his heires, And bee it also Enacted by the Authority and with the advise and assent aforesaid. That whatsoever p[er]son or p[er]sons shall from henceforth use or utter any reproachfull words or Speeches concerning the blessed Virgi Mary the Mother of our Saviour or the holy Apostles or Evangelists or any of them shall in such case for the first offence forfeit to the said Lord Proprietary and his heires Lords and Proprietaries of this Province the sume of five pound Sterling or the value thereof to be Levyed on the goods and chattells of every such p[er]son soe offending, but in case such Offender or Offenders, shall not then have goods and chattells sufficient for the satisfye of such forfeiture, or that the same bee not otherwise speedily satisfyed that then such Offender or Offenders shall be publicly whipt and bee ymprisoned during the pleasure of the Lord Proprietary or the [Lieutenant] or cheife Governor of this Province for the time being. And that every such Offender or Offenders for every second offence shall forfeit tenne pound sterling or the value thereof to be levyed aforesaid, or in case such offender or Offenders shall not then have goods and chattells within this Province sufficient for that purpose then to bee publicly and severely whipt and imprisoned as before is expressed. And that every p[er]son or p[er]sons before mentioned offending herein the third time, shall for such third Offence forfeit all his lands and Goods and bee for ever banished and expelled out of this Province. And be it also further Enacted by the same authority advise and assent that whatsoever p[er]son or p[er]sons shall from henceforth upon any occasion of Offence or otherwise in a reproachfull manner or Way declare call or denominate any p[er]son or p[er]sons whatsoever inhabiting residing traffiqueing trading or comerceing within this Province or within any the Ports, Harbors, Creeks or Havens to the same belonging an heritick, Scismatick Idolator, puritan, Independant, Prespiterian popish prest, Jesuite, Jesuited papist, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anabaptist, Brownist, Antinomian, Barrowist, Roundhead, Sep[ar]atist, or any other name or terme in a reproachfull manner relating to matter of Religion shall for every such Offence forfeit and loose the some [of] tenne shillings sterling or the value thereof to bee levyed on the goods and chattells of every such Offender and Offenders, the one half thereof to be forfeited and paid unto the person and persons of whom such reproachfull words are or shall be spoken or uttered, and the other half thereof to the Lord Proprietary and his heires Lords and Proprietaries of this Province, But if such p[er]son or p[er]sons who shall at any time utter or speake any such reproachfull words or Language shall not have Goods or Chattells sufficient and overt within this Province to be taken to satisfye the penalty aforesaid or that the same bee not otherwise speedily