

## CHAPTER

# 2

## The Threat of Anne Hutchinson

I

### The Problem

On the first day of April 1638, Anne Hutchinson, accompanied by nine of her children and three grandchildren, fled the Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay. She joined her husband, William, and a small band of their friends in Rhode Island. Just a year before, Anne and William had been respected members of the First Church of Boston. But in November 1637, she was tried by the Massachusetts Bay

General Court and banished from the colony; she was kept under house arrest that winter, awaiting a separate church trial that would result in her excommunication and final exile.

What had Anne Hutchinson done? Why did Massachusetts leaders find her “a woman not fit for our society”? **Why was Anne Hutchinson too dangerous to remain in the Puritan colony?**

### Background

Anne and William Hutchinson left their home in England as part of the “Great Migration” of the 1630s. During that decade, some 14,000 Puritans moved to the New World, principally to New England. These colonists sought, as did Anne, a place to practice what they believed was “true” Christianity, purified of the corruptions they saw running amuck in the Church of England.

“Puritan” was, in fact, a disparaging term in the early seventeenth century. Leaders of the Church of England (Anglican Church) used the word to dismiss reformers who objected to the course the established church was pursuing. Nevertheless, it remains a term that historians (intending no judgment at all) nearly universally use to designate the English Protestant migrants who came to colonial New England.

Puritans in England in the early 1600s generally believed that the Protestant Reformation had not gone far enough in their country; too many Roman Catholic influences remained. Puritans did not, for example, approve of high church liturgy, and they rejected priests' authority to administer sacraments. To Puritans, the ceremonialism within the Church of England seemed too similar to Catholicism—and so a heresy. Any Roman influences in the architecture, teachings, or rituals of the Church of England the Puritans scornfully labeled “popery.” And since the Puritans believed that “popery” actually obstructed the ties between God and humankind, it had to be eliminated.<sup>1</sup>

The contempt that Puritans felt for the Roman Church is hard to overestimate. Puritans believed “papists” (another term Protestants used to denigrate Roman Catholics) were deluded if not actually in league with the devil. Puritans even referred to the Roman Church as the “Great Whore of Babylon.” While the Church of England differed in many and profound ways from the Roman Church, Puritans did not necessarily see it that way.

In addition to the outward appearances and practices of the established Anglican Church, Puritans held theological differences with Anglican leaders, particularly regarding the nature of salvation. After the ascension of King James in 1606, Puritans began

to worry about the Anglican Church drifting toward a theology known as Arminianism. This theology emerged from the teachings of Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch preacher. Arminius believed that God wanted to save all people but that God's design could be resisted by the free will of individuals.<sup>2</sup> In other words, people could reject the salvation God offered. Puritans, on the other hand, followed the teachings of John Calvin. Calvinists believed that God chose only some people for “election”—eternal salvation—and that his will was irresistible. Individuals could do nothing to alter God's plan for their eternal soul. One of the main theological disagreements, then, between Arminians and Calvinists centered on predestination: whether or not God alone decided who was saved and who was damned.

Puritans considered themselves, in the tradition of Abraham, bound to God by a “covenant of grace.” They submitted to God's laws and sought His will, and in return, God would not afflict them unjustly. But they also believed that good works in this world offered no assurance of salvation in the next: eternal salvation came only through God's grace, which even the most pious of believers could neither know nor influence. Puritans claimed that Arminianism promoted what they called a “covenant of works”—the misguided and arrogant assumption that individuals could earn salvation through good behavior. This, in the

1. For an introduction to the evolution of religious values in early modern England, see Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society Under the Tudors* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

2. The famous Methodist minister George Whitefield embraced Arminian teaching, as did most Baptists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

eyes of Puritans, was little better than the heretical "popery" of the Roman Church.

Despite these important theological disagreements, during the reign of King James, Anglicans and Puritans tolerated one another without too much open conflict. (James's commission of an English Bible remains extraordinarily influential among modern-day evangelical Christians). Under James, Puritan ministers led many Anglican parishes and the Church of England relaxed some of its ceremonial practices.

The death of King James and the accession of King Charles in 1625 ended all of that. Charles wanted to restore the ceremonialism his father, James, had allowed to erode, and to that end in 1628 he installed as the Bishop of London William Laud, a strong advocate of high church ritual. In 1633, he promoted Laud to Archbishop of the Church of England. Laud wanted to return the "beauty of holiness" to the Anglican Church: to institute across England uniform religious services, to make churches more attractive, to insert more ceremonialism into the liturgy, and to convey an image of elegance and order. The latter point suited King Charles's interests, too. He wanted to preside over a stable, peaceful social hierarchy. But the changes Laud promoted struck Puritans as even more dangerous than Arminianism: they seemed like a return to the diabolical "popery" of the Catholic Church.

By the time Charles appointed Laud Archbishop, Puritan ministers who resisted and even overtly condemned these policy changes were being fired from their church positions. Church

courts were also prosecuting Puritans who refused to renounce their beliefs. Puritans first sought relief from Parliament. But in 1629, shortly after the House of Commons passed a resolution making the practice of either "popery" or Arminianism a capital offense, King Charles dissolved Parliament. By 1629, a growing number of Puritans believed their country and their souls in such peril that they made the radical decision to leave England. Deciding it was impossible to effect their reforms in England, some Puritans sought "voluntary banishment," as one of them called it, to the New World. There they imagined building a model godly community, based solely on their understanding of God's laws and commandments. "We shall be as a city upon a hill," proclaimed Puritan leader and colonial governor John Winthrop, "the eyes of all people are upon us." The earliest migrants to Massachusetts Bay intended to create an example of Christian goodness so compelling that their countrymen in England would be inspired to reform. The Puritans would save the Church of England from diabolical "popish" influences by living in that model community. The stakes for the colonists, then, were extraordinarily high. Puritan leaders expected every man and woman in the settlement to focus on making this vision of the Massachusetts Bay Colony a reality.

Anne and William Hutchinson remained in England until 1634. William was a wealthy merchant, and Anne the mother of twelve children; a perilous Atlantic crossing was not to be undertaken lightly. Besides, even in the early 1630s, despite

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the crackdown on Puritan dissenters, the Hutchinsons were still able to attend church services led by two Puritan ministers they greatly admired: the Reverend John Cotton and the Reverend John Wheelwright, the latter the husband of William Hutchinson's youngest sister, Mary. But in 1633, Cotton's preaching and teaching caught the attention of Archbishop Laud. Summoned to London to answer for his unsanctioned behavior, Cotton fled to Massachusetts Bay instead. Wheelwright was banned from preaching around the same time, and Anne concluded "there was none in England that I durst heare." She and William soon departed for New England with eleven of their children.

William, Anne, and their family, along with some 200 other passengers, arrived in Boston on September 18, 1634. John Cotton had been there nearly a year, and in that time had acquired a reputation for excellent preaching; Governor John Winthrop numbered among his admirers. Anne quickly reconnected with John Cotton. She was particularly drawn to his very strong defense of the covenant of grace.

While all New England Puritans believed that salvation came through God's grace alone, divisions were already appearing in the early 1630s about how exactly to live that theology. Some ministers stressed to their congregations the importance of preparing to receive God's grace—of living just, ordered lives so as to be ready should God decide to grant them faith and salvation. And many Puritans read events in this world—productive crops, respectful children, ordered communities—

as signs of their election. God, after all, smiled on his chosen people. John Cotton and his protégée Anne Hutchinson roundly rejected all of this. From the pulpit, Cotton condemned this drift toward Arminianism and embracing of a covenant of works. Hutchinson, who was extraordinarily intelligent and deeply pious, expanded on these ideas in meetings she hosted at her home.

In addition to being highly regarded as a devout Christian, Anne Hutchinson gained respect in Boston for her skills as a midwife. In the early seventeenth century, caring for pregnant women and delivering infants were totally female centered. Midwives like Anne were also healers of a sort, greatly needed and therefore esteemed by women. Anne's skills gave her special authority within the female world of Massachusetts Bay. Men in the community respected her talents and knowledge, too. From that valued position as a midwife, Anne began to conduct religious discussions in her home. Her concerns in these meetings echoed those of her spiritual advisor Reverend Cotton: particularly the tendency of Bostonians to slide into Arminianism when they should focus instead on the omnipotence of God. While not a theologian, Hutchinson was extremely learned and able to hold her own with prominent ministers in Massachusetts.

Debates of the sort that engaged Cotton and Hutchinson were not uncommon in Massachusetts Bay. Religious squabbles often arose over biblical interpretation, the theological correctness of ministers, and the behavior of fellow colonists. To a limited extent, Puritan leaders accepted

these discussions because they seemed to demonstrate that religion was a vital part of colonists' lives. However, there were very strict limits to what kinds of religious disputes were acceptable. It was one thing for members of a church to contend over a particular Bible passage or discuss how Christians should live in community. But dissent from Puritan tenets and social disruptions that threatened the mission of building their "city upon a hill" simply could not be tolerated.

Contemporary Americans like to believe that the Puritans came to the New World to build a colony (and nation) dedicated to freedom of religion. Puritans did want to be free from Anglican interference to practice their faith as they saw fit. But they most assuredly *did not* believe in freedom of religion. Seeing themselves as the new Israelites, Puritans believed that God had entered into a special covenant with them. As John Winthrop explained, "Thus stands the cause between God and us: we are entered into covenant with Him. . . . The God of Israel is among us." To Puritans, this covenant meant that the entire community had to follow God's laws as interpreted by Puritan leaders. If they did, God would reward them; if they did not, the whole community would be grievously punished. Therefore, community solidarity was essential, and individual desires and thoughts always were subjugated to the needs of the larger society. "We must be knit together in this work as one man," Winthrop insisted. Discord would lead to the breakdown of community cohesion, violation of the covenant, and God's wrath. Therefore, individuals following

other Christian faiths—Baptists and Quakers, for example—were fined, imprisoned, "warned out" (expelled from the colony), and even executed if they refused to repent.<sup>3</sup> Drawing on Old Testament laws, Puritan leaders made adultery, blasphemy, and witchcraft capital offenses, deserving of the same punishment as treason and murder. God's law was strictly enforced in Puritan New England. Violating a Biblical commandment, for example, was not only a spiritual failing but also a civil crime.

The need for Puritans to be "knit together in this work" meant that every part of an individual's life was subject to community oversight, starting with his or her religious faith. New England Puritans placed a tremendous emphasis on having a publicly-validated conversion experience. Only a confirmed conversion would admit a person into full church membership. Men who were not full members of a church could not vote in elections or hold public office. To become a confirmed "saint"—a person whose conversion was validated by the community—one had to be examined by a church committee and demonstrate that he or she had experienced the presence of God and the Holy Spirit. There was no universal agreement among ministers about the exact nature of this revelation. For most it

3. Quakers began arriving in Massachusetts Bay in 1656, hoping to practice their religion and evangelize among the Puritans. Many were jailed, whipped, and banished. Between 1659 and 1661, four were executed for refusing to leave the colony. To learn more, see Carla Gardina Pestana, "The Quaker Executions as Myth and History," *Journal of American History* 80 (September 1993): 441–469.

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was closely connected with studying the Bible; God communicated with believers not in direct, immediate revelations, but rather through His word. A few ministers described hearing the voice of God; however, this was quite controversial. And, as you will see in Anne Hutchinson's trial, a layperson claiming so direct a revelation—to say nothing of a woman's doing so—was shocking.

Family life was another essential part of the community order Puritan leaders demanded. Anne Hutchinson's testimony cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of how families were organized in the seventeenth century and how men and women were supposed to interact. Husbands were supposed to head their families just as Christ was head of the church. Wives and children were to defer to that patriarchal authority. While women could become confirmed saints in their churches, as Anne Hutchinson did, they had no separate economic or political identity. According to the legal doctrine of coverture, women were subsumed under the law first by their fathers and then by their husbands. Women rarely owned property, they certainly could not vote, and they were forbidden from speaking at public gatherings that men attended. They did not even have a right to custody of their children should a divorce occur.<sup>4</sup> Signifying the importance of family duty and submission in their lives,

4. Puritans did not consider marriage a sacrament but rather a civil, secular relationship. Divorce was legal for several reasons, including adultery, abandonment, and impotence.

Puritan wives were often referred to not by their own names but as "Goodwife" Smith or "Goody" Jones.

The same kind of hierarchy that prevailed in family life underlay both the colony's churches and its government. Within this hierarchy, ministers played a crucial role. Expected to be highly educated and articulate, the minister of each Puritan church was to be the teacher and leader of his congregation. Of course, the civil officials of Massachusetts Bay, such as the governor and his council, were good Puritans and full members of their churches. The political leaders' job was to ensure that the laws and practices of the colonial government accorded with the requirements of living in a godly community. Civil authorities, then, were expected to support religious authorities, and vice versa. Good Puritans honored both. It is in this light that you should consider Reverend Hugh Peter's charge that Anne Hutchinson had "stepped out of place" and that she "had rather been a husband than a wife; and a preacher than a hearer; and a magistrate than a subject."

By the summer of 1636, Massachusetts Bay was embroiled in a controversy that threatened all these values: the covenant with God, the city upon a hill that would redeem England, the community ethic on which that mission was built, and the souls of true believers. Some Puritans, including Anne's brother-in-law John Wheelwright, had begun to espouse an extreme version of the covenant of grace: they believed that, having been assured of salvation, an individual was virtually freed

from the man-made laws of both church and state, taking commands only from God, who communicated his wishes to the saints. Called Antinomians (from *anti*, "against," and *nomos*, "law"), these Puritan extremists attacked what one of them called the "deadness" of church services and charged that several ministers had started preaching a covenant of works. This accusation was extremely offensive to Puritan ministers, who flatly rejected the idea that they were promoting the idea that salvation could be earned through good behavior. Rather, they said they tried to teach their congregants to prepare themselves for the possibility of God's grace by honoring Massachusetts and Biblical values. The Antinomians countered that "sanctification"—living a good life—was no evidence of "justification"—numbering among the elect. In other words, what one did in this world had absolutely nothing to do with his or her fate in the next.

Carried to its logical extension, Antinomianism threatened to overthrow the authority of the ministers and even the colonial government. Growing in number and intensity, the Antinomians in 1636 were able to vote in one of their own, Francis Vane, to replace Winthrop as colonial governor. Vane lodged with Reverend Cotton and attended Anne Hutchinson's meetings. Although Winthrop managed to return to office the next year, he and many of the leading men of Massachusetts Bay understood perfectly the threat this Antinomian crisis posed to everything they were trying to build.

The meetings Anne Hutchinson led at her home thus became the source of increasing distress to Governor Winthrop. Initially, she used those sessions to discuss the previous Sunday's sermon. Then she began to expound on her own religious ideas. At first she drew only a few women. But then scores came, and soon they were joined by men, including some wealthy merchants and political elites like Francis Vane. So many people attended that by 1636 Anne began offering two sessions each week. Governor Winthrop saw it all, for he lived across the road from the Hutchinson family in Boston.

In November 1637, Anne's brother-in-law, Reverend Wheelwright, was banished from the colony because of his radical sermons. Then the General Court sent for Anne. With Governor Winthrop presiding, the court met to decide her fate. Privately, Winthrop called Hutchinson "a woman of ready wit and bold spirit," which was *not* a compliment in seventeenth-century Massachusetts. The governor was determined to be rid of her.

Why were Winthrop and other orthodox Puritans so opposed to Hutchinson? Some of Wheelwright's followers had been punished for having signed a petition supporting him, but Hutchinson had not signed it. Many other Puritans had held religious discussions in their homes, and more than a few had opposed the views of their ministers, but they were not singled out by the General Court. Technically, in fact, Hutchinson had broken no law. Why, then, was she considered such a threat that she was brought to trial and ultimately banished from the colony?

## ◆ The Method

For two days, Anne Hutchinson stood before the General Court, presided over by Governor John Winthrop. Forty magistrates filled the meeting-house, along with six ministers who offered testimony against Anne. Nearly a dozen judges interrogated the forty-six-year-old mother of twelve living children.

Fortunately, a fairly complete transcript of the civil proceedings has been preserved.<sup>5</sup> That transcript holds the clues that you, as the historian-detective, will need to piece together to understand Hutchinson's expulsion from Massachusetts Bay. Although spelling and punctuation have been modernized in most cases, the portions of the transcript you are about to read are reproduced verbatim. At first some of the seventeenth-century phraseology might seem a bit strange. As are most spoken languages, English is constantly changing (think of how much

English has changed since Chaucer's day, or even since Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke on the radio). Yet if you read slowly and carefully, the document should give you no problem.

Before you begin studying the transcript, keep in mind two additional instructions:

1. Be careful not to lose sight of the central question: Why was Anne Hutchinson such a threat to the Massachusetts Bay Colony? There is no single answer, but many, which explains why the threat was so grave as to require her permanent expulsion. The trial record raises several other issues, some of them so interesting that they might pull you off the main track. As you read through the transcript, make a list of the various ways you think Hutchinson might have threatened Massachusetts Bay.
2. Be willing to read between the lines. As you read the primary source, try to deduce what is actually meant by what is being said and done in the context of the early 1600s. Start with the individuals present: what would it feel like to be the only woman publicly confronted by so many powerful men? Sometimes people say exactly what they mean, but often they do not. They might intentionally or unintentionally disguise the real meaning of what they are saying, but the real meaning can usually be found. In face-to-face conversation with a person, voice inflection, body

5. Anne Hutchinson also faced a church trial in March 1638. She was judged guilty there, too, and excommunicated from her church. In 1771, Ezra Stiles, a congregational minister, educator, and later president of Yale University, made a copy of the original church trial manuscript. Alas, the manuscript he used has been lost. But his work survives, housed in the Ezra Stiles Papers at the Beinecke Library at Yale University. In 1888, Franklin Bowditch Dexter, an administrator and librarian at Yale, shared Stiles' transcription with the Massachusetts Historical Society, which published it for the first time in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 2nd series, volume 4 (1888): 161–191. Many university libraries have digital access to that source.

language, and other visual clues often provide the real meaning to what is being said. In this case, where personal observation is impossible, you must use both logic and imagination to read between the lines. For example, what inferences can you draw about Hutchinson's perception of Winthrop—and vice versa—when she asked him, since “you think it is not lawful for me to teach women,”

then “why do you call me to teach the court?” And you must always keep the context—the nature of Puritan society and the seventeenth-century worldview—in mind. Consider, for instance, the audacity of and likely unspoken reaction to the first words Anne Hutchinson spoke in court: “I am called here to answer before you but I hear no things laid to my charge.”

## ♦ The Evidence

Source 1: Excerpts from “The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson at the court at Newtown,” November 1637, in Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of Massachusetts, from the Settlement thereof in 1628, until the year 1750* 2 volumes, 3rd edition (Boston: Manning and Loring, 1795), Appendix II, 423–447.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. The 1637 Examination of Anne Hutchinson in Newton, Massachusetts.<sup>7</sup>

#### CHARACTERS

Mrs. Anne Hutchinson, the accused

General Court, consisting of the governor, deputy governor, assistants, and deputies

Governor, John Winthrop, chair of the court

Deputy Governor, Thomas Dudley

Assistants, Mr. Bradstreet, Mr. Nowel, Mr. Endicott, Mr. Harlakenden, Mr. Stoughton

Deputies, Mr. Coggeshall, Mr. Bartholomew, Mr. Jennison, Mr. Coddington, Mr. Colborn

6. Thomas Hutchinson was a descendent of Anne Hutchinson. In the 1770s, he also was one of the most prominent and hated Loyalists in British America. He rose to the position of Lt. Governor (and acting Governor) in Boston during the revolutionary crisis and became a prime target of the Patriots' contempt.

7. Normally the trial would have been held in Boston, but Anne Hutchinson had numerous supporters in that city, so the proceedings were moved to the small town of Newton, where she had few allies. The manuscript heading spells the town name Newtown, but the name is Newton.

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Clergymen and Ruling Elders:

Mr. Peters, minister in Salem

Mr. Leveret, a ruling elder in a Boston church

Mr. Cotton, minister in Boston

Mr. Wilson, minister in Boston, who supposedly made notes of a previous meeting between Anne Hutchinson, Cotton, and the other ministers

Mr. Sims, minister in Charlestown

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 causes of this trouble, and to be nearly joined not only in affinity and affection with some of those the court had taken notice of and passed censure upon, but you have spoken divers things as we have been informed very prejudicial to the honour of the churches and ministers thereof, and 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 so that 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 assent and hold 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.

GOV. Have I not named some already?

MRS. H. What have I said or done?

*[Here, in a portion of the transcript not reproduced, Winthrop accused Hutchinson of harboring and giving comfort to a faction that was dangerous to the colony.]*

MRS. H. Must not I then entertain the saints because I must keep my conscience?

GOV. Say that one brother should commit felony or treason and come to his brother's house. If he knows him guilty and conceals him he is guilty of the same. It is his conscience to entertain him, but if his conscience

comes into act in giving countenance and entertainment to him that hath broken the law he is guilty too. So if you do countenance those that are transgressors of the law you are in the same fact.

MRS. H. What law do they transgress?

GOV. The law of God and of the state.

MRS. H. In what particular?

GOV. Why in this among the rest, whereas the Lord doth say honour thy father and thy mother.<sup>8</sup>

MRS. H. Ey, Sir, in the Lord.

GOV. This honour you have broke in giving countenance to them.

MRS. H. In entertaining those did I entertain them against any act (for there is the thing) or what God hath appointed?

GOV. You knew that Mr. Wheelwright did preach this sermon and those that countenance him in this do break a law?

MRS. H. What law have I broken?

GOV. Why the fifth commandment.<sup>9</sup>

MRS. H. I deny that for he [Wheelwright] saith in the Lord.

GOV. You have joined with them in the faction.

MRS. H. In what faction have I joined with them?

GOV. In presenting the petition.

MRS. H. Suppose I had set my hand to the petition. What then?

GOV. You saw that case tried before.

MRS. H. But I had not my hand to the petition.

GOV. You have counselled them.

MRS. H. Wherein?

GOV. Why in entertaining them.

MRS. H. What breach of law is that, Sir?

GOV. Why dishonouring of parents.

MRS. H. But put the case, Sir, that I do fear the Lord and my parents. May not I entertain them that fear the Lord because my parents will not give me leave?

GOV. If they be the fathers of the commonwealth, and they of another religion, if you entertain them then you dishonour your parents and are justly punishable.

MRS. H. If I entertain them, as they have dishonoured their parents I do.

GOV. No but you by countenancing them above others put honour upon them.

8. Exodus 20:12. Anne Hutchinson's natural father was in England and her natural mother was dead. To what, then, was Winthrop referring?

9. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Exodus 20:12.

MRS. H. I may put honour upon them as the children of God and as they do honour the Lord.

GOV. We do not mean to discourse with those of your sex but only this: you do adhere unto them and do endeavour to set forward this faction and so you do dishonour us.

MRS. H. I do acknowledge no such thing. Neither do I think that I ever put any dishonour upon you.

GOV. Why do you keep such a meeting at your house as you do every week upon a set day?...

MRS. H. It is lawful for me so to do, as it is all your practices, and can you find a warrant for yourself and condemn me for the same thing? The ground of my taking it up was, when I first came to this land because I did not go to such meetings as those were, it was presently reported that I did not allow of such meetings but held them unlawful and therefore in that regard they said I was proud and did despise all ordinances. Upon that a friend came unto me and told me of it and I to prevent such aspersions took it up, but it was in practice before I came. Therefore I was not the first.

GOV. For this, that you appeal to our practice you need no confutation. If your meeting had answered to the former it had not been offensive, but I will say that there was no meeting of women alone, but your meeting is of another sort for there are sometimes men among you.

MRS. H. There was never any man with us.

GOV. Well, admit there was no man at your meeting and that you was sorry for it, there is no warrant for your doings, and by what warrant do you continue such a course?

MRS. H. I conceive there lies a clear rule in Titus<sup>10</sup> that the elder women should instruct the younger and then I must have a time wherein I must do it.

GOV. All this I grant you, I grant you a time for it, but what is this to the purpose that you Mrs. Hutchinson must call a company together from their callings to come to be taught of you?

MRS. H. Will it please you to answer me this and to give me a rule for then I will willingly submit to any truth. If any come to my house to be instructed in the ways of God what rule have I to put them away?

10. Here Hutchinson is referencing Titus 2:3-5, which in the New International Version reads, "Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God." The text in the Geneva Bible, which was popular among seventeenth-century Puritans, reads: "The elder women likewise, that they be in such behaiour as becommeth holinesse, not false accusers, not subject to much wine, but teachers of honest things, That they may instruct the yong women to be sober minded, that they loue their husbands, that they loue their children, That they be temperate, chaste, keeping at home, good & subject unto their husbands, that the word of God be not euill spoken of."

GOV. But suppose that a hundred men come unto you to be instructed. Will you forbear to instruct them?

MRS. H. As far as I conceive I cross a rule in it.

GOV. Very well and do you not so here?

MRS. H. No, Sir, for my ground is they are men.

GOV. Men and women all is one for that, but suppose that a man should come and say, "Mrs. Hutchinson, I hear that you are a woman that God hath given his grace unto and you have knowledge in the word of God. I pray instruct me a little." Ought you not to instruct this man?

MRS. H. I think I may. Do you think it is not lawful for me to teach women and why do you call me to teach the court?

GOV. We do not call you to teach the court but to lay open yourself.

*[In this portion of the transcript not reproduced, Hutchinson and Winthrop continued to wrangle over specifically what law she had broken.]*

GOV. Your course is not to be suffered for. Besides that we find such a course as this to be greatly prejudicial to the state. Besides the occasion that it is to seduce many honest persons that are called to those meetings and your opinions being known to be different from the word of God may seduce many simple souls that resort unto you. Besides that the occasion which hath come of late hath come from none but such as have frequented your meetings, so that now they are flown off from magistrates and ministers and since they have come to you. And besides that it will not well stand with the commonwealth that families should be neglected for so many neighbours and dames and so much time spent. We see no rule of God for this. We see not that any should have authority to set up any other exercises besides what authority hath already set up and so what hurt comes of this you will be guilty of and we for suffering you.

MRS. H. Sir, I do not believe that to be so.

GOV. Well, we see how it is. We must therefore put it away from you or restrain you from maintaining this course.

MRS. H. If you have a rule for it from God's word you may.

GOV. We are your judges, and not you ours and we must compel you to it.

*[Here followed a discussion of whether men as well as women attended Hutchinson's meetings. In response to one question, Hutchinson denied that women ever taught at men's meetings.]*

DEPUTY GOVERNOR. I would go a little higher with Mrs. Hutchinson. About three years ago we were all in peace. Mrs. Hutchinson from that time she came

hath made a disturbance, and some that came over with her in the ship did inform me what she was as soon as she was landed. I being then in place dealt with the pastor and teacher of Boston and desired them to enquire of her, and then I was satisfied that she held nothing different from us. But within half a year after, she had vented divers of her strange opinions and had made parties in the country, and at length it comes that Mr. Cotton and Mr. Vane<sup>11</sup> were of her judgment, but Mr. Cotton had cleared himself that he was not of that mind. But now it appears by this woman's meeting that Mrs. Hutchinson hath so forestalled the minds of many by their resort to her meeting that now she hath a potent party in the country. Now if all these things have endangered us as from that foundation and if she in particular hath disparaged all our ministers in the land that they have preached a covenant of works, and only Mr. Cotton a covenant of grace, why this is not to be suffered, and therefore being driven to the foundation and it being found that Mrs. Hutchinson is she that hath depraved all the ministers and hath been the cause of what is falled out, why we must take away the foundation and the building will fall.

MRS. H. I pray, Sir, prove it that I said they preached nothing but a covenant of works.

DEP. GOV. Nothing but a covenant of works. Why a Jesuit<sup>12</sup> may preach truth sometimes.

MRS. H. Did I ever say they preached a covenant of works then?

DEP. GOV. If they do not preach a covenant of grace clearly, then they preach a covenant of works.

MRS. H. No, Sir. One may preach a covenant of grace more clearly than another, so I said.

DEP. GOV. We are not upon that now but upon position.

MRS. H. Prove this then Sir that you say I said.

DEP. GOV. When they do preach a covenant of works do they preach truth?

MRS. H. Yes, Sir. But when they preach a covenant of works for salvation, that is not truth.

DEP. GOV. I do but ask you this: when the ministers do preach a covenant of works do they preach a way of salvation?

MRS. H. I did not come hither to answer to questions of that sort.

11. Henry Vane, supported by the Antinomians and merchant allies, was elected governor of Massachusetts Bay colony in 1636 and lost that office to Winthrop in 1637.

12. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) is a Roman Catholic order that places special emphasis on missionary work. The Jesuits were particularly detested by the Puritans for their evangelical efforts in the New World. Jesuits played a prominent role in founding New France, which was just to the north of Massachusetts Bay, and in spreading Catholicism among the Native American nations there. That Catholic, French colony represented both a secular and a sacred rival to the New Englanders.

DEP. GOV. Because you will deny the thing.

MRS. H. Ey, but that is to be proved first.

DEP. GOV. I will make it plain that you did say that the ministers did preach a covenant of works.

MRS. H. I deny that.

DEP. GOV. And that you said they were not able ministers of the New Testament, but Mr. Cotton only.

MRS. H. If ever I spake that I proved it by God's word.

COURT. Very well, very well.

MRS. H. If one shall come unto me in <sup>I</sup>private, and desire me seriously to tell then what I thought of such an one, I must either speak false or true in my answer.

*[In this lengthy section, Hutchinson was accused of having gone to a meeting of ministers and accusing them all—except John Cotton—of preaching a covenant of works rather than a covenant of grace. The accusation, if proved, would have been an extremely serious one. Several of the ministers testified that Hutchinson had made this accusation.]*

DEP. GOV. I called these witnesses and you deny them. You see they have proved this and you deny this, but it is clear. You said they preached a covenant of works and that they were not able ministers of the New Testament; now there are two other things that you did affirm which were that the scriptures in the letter of them held forth nothing but a covenant of works and likewise that those that were under a covenant of works cannot be saved.

MRS. H. Prove that I said so.

GOV. Did you say so?

MRS. H. No, Sir. It is your conclusion.

DEP. GOV. What do I do charging of you if you deny what is so fully proved?

GOV. Here are six undeniable ministers who say it is true and yet you deny that you did say that they did preach a covenant of works and that they were not able ministers of the gospel, and it appears plainly that you have spoken it, and whereas you say that it was drawn from you in a way of friendship, you did profess then that it was out of conscience that you spake and said, "The fear of man is a snare. Wherefore shall I be afraid, I will speak plainly and freely."

MRS. H. That I absolutely deny, for the first question was thus answered by me to them: They thought that I did conceive there was a difference between them and Mr. Cotton. At the first I was somewhat reserved. Then said Mr. Peters, "I pray answer the question directly as fully and as plainly as you desire we should tell you our minds. Mrs. Hutchinson we come for plain dealing and telling you our hearts." Then I said I would deal as plainly as I could, and whereas they say I said they were

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under a covenant of works and in the state of the apostles why these two speeches cross one another. I might say they might preach a covenant of works as did the apostles, but to preach a covenant of works and to be under a covenant of works is another business.

DEP. GOV. There have been six witnesses to prove this and yet you deny it.

MRS. H. I deny that these were the first words that were spoken.

GOV. You make the case worse, for you clearly shew that the ground of your opening your mind was not to satisfy them but to satisfy your own conscience.

*[There was a brief argument<sup>1</sup> here about what Hutchinson actually said at the gathering of ministers, after which the court adjourned for the day.]*

*[The next morning.]*

GOV. We proceeded the last night as far as we could in hearing of this cause of Mrs. Hutchinson. There were divers things laid to her charge: her ordinary meetings about religious exercises, her speeches in derogation of the ministers among us, and the weakening of the hands and hearts of the people towards them. Here was sufficient proof made of that which she was accused of in that point concerning the ministers and their ministry, as that they did preach a covenant of works when others did preach a covenant of grace, and that they were not able ministers of the New Testament, and that they had not the seal of the spirit, and this was spoken not as was pretended out of private conference, but out of conscience and warrant from scripture alleged the fear of man is a snare and seeing God had given her a calling to it she would freely speak. Some other speeches she used, as that the letter of the scripture held forth a covenant of works, and this is offered to be proved by probable grounds. If there be any thing else that the court hath to say they may speak.

*[At this point, a lengthy argument erupted when Hutchinson demanded that the ministers who testified against her be recalled as witnesses, put under oath, and repeat their accusations. One member of the court said that "the ministers are so well known unto us, that we need not take an oath of them."]*

GOV. I see no necessity of an oath in this thing seeing it is true and the substance of the matter confirmed by divers. Yet that all may be satisfied, if the elders will take an oath they shall have it given them. . . .

MRS. H. I will prove by what Mr. Wilson hath written<sup>13</sup> that they [the ministers] never heard me say such a thing.

MR. SIMS. We desire to have the paper and have it read.

13. Wilson had taken notes at the meeting between Hutchinson and the ministers. Hutchinson claimed that these notes would exonerate her. They were never produced and are now lost.

MR. HARLAKENDEN. I am persuaded that is the truth that the elders do say and therefore I do not see it necessary now to call them to oath.

GOV. We cannot charge any thing of untruth upon them.

MR. HARLAKENDEN. Besides, Mrs. Hutchinson doth say that they are not able ministers of the New Testament.

MRS. H. They need not swear to that.

DEP. GOV. Will you confess it then?

MRS. H. I will not deny it or say it.

DEP. GOV. You must do one.

*[More on the oath followed.]*

DEP. GOV. Let her witnesses be called.

GOV. Who be they?

MRS. H. Mr. Leveret and our teacher and Mr. Coggeshall.

GOV. Mr. Coggeshall was not present.

MR. COGGESHALL. Yes, but I was. Only I desired to be silent till I should be called.

GOV. Will you, Mr. Coggeshall, say that she did not say so?

MR. COGGESHALL. Yes, I dare say that she did not say all that which they lay against her.

MR. PETERS. How dare you look into the court to say such a word?

MR. COGGESHALL. Mr. Peters takes upon him to forbid me. I shall be silent.

MR. STOUGHTON. Ey, but she intended this that they say.

GOV. Well, Mr. Leveret, what were the words? I pray, speak.

MR. LEVERET. To my best remembrance when the elders did send for her, Mr. Peters did with much vehemency and intreaty urge her to tell what difference there was between Mr. Cotton and them, and upon his urging of her she said, "The fear of man is a snare, but they that trust upon the Lord shall be safe." And being asked wherein the difference was, she answered that they did not preach a covenant of grace so clearly as Mr. Cotton did, and she gave this reason of it: because that as the apostles were for a time without the spirit so until they had received the witness of the spirit they could not preach a covenant of grace so clearly.

*[Here Hutchinson admitted that she might have said privately that the ministers were not able preachers of the New Testament.]*

GOV. Mr. Cotton, the court desires that you declare what you do remember of the conference which was at the time and is now in question.

MR. COTTON. I did not think I should be called to bear witness in this cause and therefore did not labour to call to remembrance what was done; but the greatest passage that took impression upon me was to this purpose. The

elders spake that they had heard that she had spoken some condemning words of their ministry, and among other things they did first pray her to answer wherein she thought their ministry did differ from mine. How the comparison sprang I am ignorant, but sorry I was that any comparison should be between me and my brethren and uncomfortable it was. She told them to this purpose that they did not hold forth a covenant of grace as I did. . . . I told her I was very sorry that she put comparisons between my ministry and theirs, for she had said more than I could myself, and rather I had that she had put us in fellowship with them and not have made the discrepancy. She said she found the difference. . . . And I must say that I did not find her saying they were under a covenant of works, not that she said they did preach a covenant of works.

*[Here John Cotton tried to defend Hutchinson, mostly by saying he did not remember much about the events in question.]*

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, the 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<sup>14</sup> did not deny him to 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. So after that being unsatisfied in the thing, the Lord was pleased to bring this scripture out of the Hebrews. He that denies the testament denies the testator, and in this did open unto me and give me to see that those which did not teach the new covenant had the spirit of antichrist, and upon this he did discover the ministry unto me, 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 he 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, 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. How do you know that 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?<sup>15</sup>

DEP. GOV. By an immediate voice.

14. *Papists* is a derisive Protestant term for Roman Catholics, referring to the papacy.

15. The sixth commandment prohibited murder.

MRS. H. So to me by an immediate revelation.

DEP. GOV. How! an immediate revelation.

MRS. H. By the voice of his spirit to my soul. . . .

*[In spite of the general shock that greeted her claim that she had experienced an immediate revelation from God, Hutchinson went on to state that God had compelled her to take the course she had taken and that God had said to her, as He had to Daniel of the Old Testament, that "though I should meet with affliction, yet I am the same God that delivered Daniel out of the lion's den, I will also deliver thee."]*

MRS. H. You have power over my body but the Lord Jesus hath power over my body and soul, and assure yourselves thus much: 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.<sup>16</sup>

DEP. GOV. What is the scripture she brings?

MR. STOUGHTON. Behold I turn away from you.

MRS. H. But now having seen him which is invisible I fear not what man can do unto me.

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 took that the Lord should deliver me by his providence.

MR. HARLAKENDEN. I may read scripture and the most glorious hypocrite may read them and yet go down to hell.

MRS. H. It may be so.

*[Hutchinson's "revelations" were discussed among the stunned court.]*

MR. BARTHOLOMEW. I speak as a member of the court. I fear that her revelations will deceive.

*[More on Hutchinson's revelations followed.]*

DEP. GOV. I desire Mr. Cotton to tell us whether you do approve of Mrs. Hutchinson's revelations as she hath laid them down.

MR. COTTON. I know not whether I do understand her, but this I say: If she doth expect a deliverance in a way of providence, then I cannot deny it.

DEP. GOV. No, sir. We did not speak of that.

MR. COTTON. If it be by way of miracle then I would suspect it.

DEP. GOV. Do you believe that her revelations are true?

MR. COTTON. That she may have some special providence of God to help her is a thing that I cannot bear witness against.

DEP. GOV. Good Sir, I do ask whether this revelation be of God or no?

16. The Bible contains several references to punishing subsequent generations, including Exodus 20:5, Numbers 14:18, and Deuteronomy 5:9.

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MR. COTTON. I should desire to know whether the sentence of the court will bring her to any calamity, and then I would know of her whether she expects to be delivered from that calamity by a miracle or a providence of God.

MRS. H. By a providence of God I say I expect to be delivered from some calamity that shall come to me.

*[Hutchinson's revelations were further discussed.]*

DEP. GOV. These disturbances that have come among the Germans<sup>17</sup> have been all grounded upon revelations, and so they that have vented them have stirred up their hearers to take up arms against their prince and to cut the throats of one another, and these have been the fruits of them, and whether the devil may inspire the same into their hearts here I know not, for I am fully persuaded that Mrs. Hutchinson is deluded by the devil, because the spirit of God speaks truth in all his servants.

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

*[All the court but some two or three ministers cried out, "We all believe—we all believe it." Hutchinson was found guilty. Coddington made a lame attempt to defend Hutchinson but was silenced by Governor Winthrop.]*

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. Those that are contrary minded hold up yours.

*[Only Mr. Coddington and Mr. Colborn did so.]*

MR. JENNISON. I cannot hold up my hand one way or the other, and I shall give my reason if the court require it.

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.

17. This reference is to the bloody and violent fighting that took place between orthodox Protestants and the followers of the radical Anabaptist John of Leiden in 1534 and 1535.

## Questions to Consider

Now that you have examined the evidence, at least one point is clear: the General Court of Massachusetts Bay was determined to get rid of Anne Hutchinson, whether or not she actually had broken any law. They tried to bait her, force admissions of guilt from her, confuse her, browbeat her. Essentially, they had already decided on the verdict before the trial began. So we know that Anne Hutchinson was a threat—and a serious one—to the colony.

And yet the colony had dealt quite differently with Roger Williams, a Puritan minister banished in 1635, also because of his controversial religious beliefs. Williams was given every chance to mend his ways, Governor Winthrop remained his friend throughout Williams' appearances before the General Court, and it was only with great reluctance that the Court finally decided to exile him.

Anne's brother-in-law, Reverend Wheelwright, was banished before her, but his actions were far different than hers. At the close of an afternoon lecture by Reverend Cotton, Wheelwright rose before the crowd to give his own sermon against men who thought living a virtuous life was somehow evidence of their salvation. "The more holy they are," he proclaimed, "the greater enemies they are to Christ." Then he called on the "true" Christians, the ones who still acknowledged the omnipotence of God, to rise up against these "enemies of Christ"—which, he implied, included most of the ministers in Massachusetts and most of the civil authorities: "We must lay load upon them, we must

kill them with the worde of the Lorde." He was consequently convicted of sedition. Even then the General Court, under Governor Winthrop's leadership, delayed sentencing and sought reconciliation with Wheelwright for months before banishing him.

Why, then, was Anne Hutchinson's case so threatening and her punishment so swift and severe? Obviously, she did pose a religious threat. As you look back through the evidence, try to clarify the exact points of religious disagreement between Hutchinson and the ministers. What specific challenges did she present to Puritan orthodoxy? What was the basis of the argument over covenants of grace and works? What was Hutchinson supposed to have said? Under what circumstances had she allegedly said this? To whom? What was the role of her minister, John Cotton, in the trial?

Remember that Hutchinson's trial took place in the midst of the Antinomian crisis. What social and political threat did Antinomianism pose to the stability of Massachusetts Bay? What threat did it pose to the mission of building a "city upon a hill"? Did Hutchinson say anything in her testimony that would indicate she was an Antinomian? How would you prove whether or not she was?

A pivotal moment in the trial came when Hutchinson announced that she had received an immediate revelation from the voice of God. Why? And why was Anne's likening of herself to Daniel and Abraham so upsetting to

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the Court? What theological beliefs and what social values did she violate with these statements?

Hutchinson's role in the community also came into question during the trial. What do the questions about the meetings she held in her home reveal? Look beyond what the governor and members of the court actually said. Try to imagine what they might have been thinking. How did Hutchinson's meetings pose a threat to the larger community?

Finally, the transcript provides many clues, some subtle and some overt, about the roles of and relationships between men and women in colonial Massachusetts. How did Anne's gender factor into her examination? What

did it mean when Governor Winthrop said: "We do not mean to discourse with those of your sex"? Would the same thing have happened during the proceedings were Anne a man? Or did the fact that Anne was a woman play a crucial role in her treatment before the General Court? What Puritan assumptions about how women should behave and how they should relate to men was Hutchinson accused of violating? Why was this dangerous enough to require her expulsion?

In conclusion, try to put together all you know from the evidence to answer the central question: Why was Anne Hutchinson too dangerous to remain in the Massachusetts Bay Colony?

## ◆ Epilogue

After her civil case concluded, Anne Hutchinson was kept in Roxbury, under house arrest, during the winter of 1637–1638, awaiting a church court trial. She had been deemed a heretic in the civil trial, so ministers and elders from churches throughout Massachusetts needed to either cleanse her of her sins or, failing that, excommunicate her from the community of saints. The latter is exactly what happened in March 1638. Expelling a congregant was a public affair, just like confirming a saint. The meetinghouse at Boston was packed when Hutchinson was excommunicated. "I not only pronounce you worthy to be cast out, but I do cast you out," proclaimed one of the ministers who participated in the trial, "And in the name of Jesus Christ, I do deliver you up to Satan."

After the civil trial, John Cotton distanced himself from Anne Hutchinson. As to their two-decade-long friendship, he now claimed, "Mistress Hutchinson seldom resorted to me and when she did come to me, it was seldom or never . . . that she tarried long. I rather think she was loathe to resort much to me . . . lest she might seem to learn somewhat from me." He joined the ministers and elders who sat in judgment of her during the church trial. Cotton conceded that when she first came to Massachusetts Hutchinson had "been an instrument for doing some good." But forced to choose between allying with his fellow ministers and defending his protégée, Cotton succumbed to the pressure. "I do admonish you and charge you," he proclaimed, "in the name of



Jesus Christ, in whose place I stand, that you would sadly consider the just hand of God against you, the great hurt you have done to the churches, the great dishonour you have brought to Jesus Christ, and the evil that you have done to many a poor soul."

Most of Anne's supporters had fled Massachusetts or been exiled or silenced in the months following her civil trial. A handful of friends stood with her at the church proceedings; many of them joined her in the new settlement in Rhode Island. She and William were reunited, after living six months apart, in mid-April.

John Winthrop kept himself well informed of his vanquished rival's new life in Rhode Island. When a mild earthquake struck the settlement a few weeks after Anne's arrival, he pronounced the tremor proof of "God's continued disquietude against the existence of Anne Hutchinson." And when the forty-six-year-old suffered a miscarriage, Winthrop—along with Reverend Cotton—publicly proclaimed the "monster" birth proof of Hutchinson's religious heresy. Winthrop counted the number of fetal deformities—thirty—as exactly matching the number of "misshapen opinions" Hutchinson voiced while in Massachusetts Bay. "See how the wisdom of God fitted this judgment to her sin every way," he exclaimed.

In 1642, William Hutchinson died, and Anne moved with her six youngest children to the Dutch colony of New Netherland in what is now the Bronx borough of New York City. The next year, she and all but one of her children were killed in an Indian raid. The leading men of Boston rejoiced at

her murder. They saw "God's hand" in her death. "The Lord heard our groans in Heaven," concluded one minister, "and freed us from this great and sore affliction."

Six years after Hutchinson died, in March 1649, John Winthrop passed away, having spent nearly twenty years at the center of political power in Massachusetts Bay. Winthrop believed to the end of his life that he had had no choice but to expel Hutchinson. However, even one of Winthrop's most sympathetic biographers, historian Edmund S. Morgan, described the Hutchinson trial and its aftermath as "the least attractive episode" in Winthrop's long public career.

John Winthrop triumphed over Anne Hutchinson, but he was unable to leave to the Massachusetts Bay Colony a permanent legacy of religious uniformity. The second and third generations of colonists did not always share their parents' zeal for building a model Christian community. New migrants came, bringing different ideas and building new towns. As the colony's size increased and its population diversified, religious conformity became more and more difficult to enforce. Growth and prosperity seemed to foster an increased interest in individual wealth and a corresponding decline in religious fervor. In the mid-seventeenth century, reports of sleeping during sermons, blasphemous language, and growing attention to physical pleasures were numerous, as were election disputes, declining conversions among young people, and intra-church squabbling.

For more than a century after the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, New Englanders struggled

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with tensions over drifting toward Arminianism versus reasserting Calvinism. Jeremiads—sermons predicting disasters because of declining religious zeal that were especially popular in the 1660s—offered one example of this pattern. The witchcraft trials that consumed Salem in 1692 provided another.<sup>18</sup> Although the Puritans' congregational church

remained the established religion of Massachusetts until 1833—two centuries after the Great Migration—New Englanders had long since abandoned John Winthrop's practical plans for being "knit together in this work" and creating a "city upon a hill." His conviction that America held a special, preordained destiny lingered, though, and lingers still.

18. There are many outstanding books on the Salem witchcraft ordeal. Classics include Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England*

(New York: W.W. Norton, 1987); and Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).