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5. NATHANIEL WARD, 1578-1652

[Within a year or two after the outbreak of the war prevented either king or Parliament from maintaining a firm control over England, sect after sect emerged, until by 1645 the religious situation, from the old point of view, was entirely out of hand. The Independents, faced with extermination by the Presbyterians, formed an alliance with these sectaries by converting themselves to the idea of

toleration. Oliver Cromwell became the Independents' leader and dictator of the nation in order to enforce religious liberty with the sword.

This transformation of the English brethren utterly astounded New England Congregationalists. They had come to the wilderness assuming, as the wisdom of several centuries had assumed, that the notion of a state's permitting different religions or polities to exist side by side was unthinkable. In 1635 Massachusetts exiled Roger Williams for propounding this dangerous absurdity, and remained convinced that the unruly groups he tried to organize into the plantation of Rhode Island would end in savage anarchy. Now in the 1640's they beheld their own group in England following Williams's lead and treating him as a great man.

The New Englanders had not been fighting at home for any milk-and-water toleration. They were assured that they knew the exact truth, just as it is in the Bible; when they could not impose this truth on England, they came to America where they could establish their own society and within it make God's Word prevail forever. They were in no sense pioneers of religious liberty, and when their English counterparts went whoring after this strange perversion of political orthodoxy, they resolved to stand all the more resolutely in New England for an absolute uniformity, for a rigorous suppression of all dissent, by capital punishment if necessary.

Nathaniel Ward took his M.A. at Emmanuel College in 1603, but studied law and traveled on the Continent before becoming a minister in 1618. He came to New England in 1634 and served as minister in Ipswich (of which the Indian name was Aggawam). In 1641 he drew up the first codification of Massachusetts statutes, *The Body of Liberties*. He returned to England in 1648 and ended his days as a minister in Essex. He wrote his book in 1645; it was published in London in 1647 with a lengthy and spirited title:

The Simple Cobler of Aggawam in America. Willing to help 'mind his Native Country, lamentably tattered, both

in the upper-Leather and sole, with all the honest stiches he can take.

And as willing never to bee paid for his work, by Old English wonted pay.

It is his Trade to patch all the year long, gratis

Therefore I pray Gentlemen keep your purses.

It was announced as by "Theodore de la Guard."

Because Ward had a larger secular experience than most of the clergy, he could write in a more worldly vein, and his digression on women's fashion, as well as his whole tenor, show that Puritans possessed their full share of that vitality and exuberance to which we apply the adjective "Elizabethan."]

THE SIMPLE COBLER OF AGGAWAM

Either I am in an apoplexy, or that man is in a lethargy who does not now sensibly feel God shaking the heavens over his head and the earth underneath his feet—the heavens so as the sun begins to turn into darkness, the moon into blood, the stars to fall down to the ground so that little light of comfort or counsel is left to the sons of men; the earth so as the foundations are failing, the righteous scarce know where to find rest, the inhabitants stagger like drunken men; it is in a manner dissolved both in religions and relations, and no marvel, for they have defiled it by transgressing the laws, changing the ordinances, and breaking the everlasting covenant. The truths of God are the pillars of the world whereon states and churches may stand quiet if they will; if they will not, He can easily shake them off into delusions and distractions enough.

Satan is now in his passions, he feels his passions approaching, he loves to fish in roiled waters. Though that dragon cannot sting the vitals of the elect mortally, yet that Beelzebub can fly-blow their intellectuals miserably. The finer religion grows, the finer he spins his cobwebs; he will hold pace with Christ so long as his wits will serve him. He sees himself beaten out of gross idolatries, here-sies, ceremonies, where the light breaks forth with power.

He will, therefore, bestir him to prevaricate evangelical truths and ordinances, that if they will needs be walking yet they shall *laborare varicibus* ["work with straddlings"] and not keep their path, he will put them out of time and place, assassinating for his engineers, men of Paracelsian parts, well complexioned for honesty; for such are fittest to mountebank his chemistry into sick churches and weak judgments.

Nor shall he need to stretch his strength overmuch in this work. Too many men, having not laid their foundations sure nor ballasted their spirits deep with humility and fear, are pressed enough of themselves to evaporate their own apprehensions. Those that are acquainted with history know it has ever been so in new editions of churches: such as are least able are most busy to pudder in the rubbish and to raise dust in the eyes of more steady repairers. Civil commotions make room for uncivil practices; religious mutations, for irreligious opinions; change of air discovers corrupt bodies; reformation of religion, unsound minds. He that has any well-faced fancy in his crown and does not vent it now, fears the pride of his own heart will dub him dunce forever. Such a one will trouble the whole Israel of God with his most untimely births, though he makes the bones of his vanity stick up, to the view and grief of all that are godly wise. The devil desires no better sport than to see light heads handle their heels and fetch their careers in a time when the roof of liberty stands open.

The next perplexed question with pious and ponderous men will be: What should be done for the healing of these comfortless exulcerations? I am the unablest adviser of a thousand, the unworthiest of ten thousand; yet I hope I may presume to assert what follows without just offense.

First, such as have given or taken any unfriendly reports of us New English should do well to recollect themselves. We have been reputed a colluvies of wild opinionists, swarmed into a remote wilderness to find elbow room for our fanatic doctrines and practices. I trust our diligence past and constant sedulity against such persons and courses will plead better things for us. I dare take upon me to be the herald of New England so far as to proclaim to the

world, in the name of our colony, that all Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and other enthusiasts shall have free liberty to keep away from us; and such as will come to be gone as fast as they can, the sooner the better.

Secondly, I dare aver that God does nowhere in His word tolerate Christian states to give toleration to such adversaries of His truth, if they have power in their hands to suppress them.

Here is lately brought us an extract of a Magna Carta, so called, compiled between the sub-planters of a West Indian island, whereof the first article of constipulation firmly provides free stableroom and litter for all kind of consciences, be they never so dirty or jadish, making it actionable—yea, treasonable—to disturb any man in his religion or to discommend it, whatever it be. We are very sorry to see such professed profaneness in English professors, as industriously to lay their religious foundations on the ruin of true religion, which strictly binds every conscience to contend earnestly for the truth; to preserve unity of spirit, faith, and ordinances; to be all like minded, of one accord, every man to take his brother into his Christian care, to stand fast with one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel; and by no means to permit heresies or erroneous opinions. But God, abhorring such loathsome beverages, has in His righteous judgment blasted that enterprise, which might otherwise have prospered well, for aught I know; I presume their case is generally known ere this.

If the devil might have his free option, I believe he would ask nothing else but liberty to enfranchise all false religions and to embondage the truth; nor should he need. It is much to be feared that lax tolerations upon state pretenses and planting necessities will be the next subtle stratagem he will spread to dista[s]te the truth of God and supplant the peace of the churches. Tolerations in things tolerable, exquisitely drawn out by the lines of the scripture and pencil of the spirit, are the sacred favors of truth, the due latitudes of love, the fair compartments of Christian fraternity; but irregular dispensations, dealt forth by the facilities of men, are the frontiers of error, the redoubts of

schism, the perilous irritaments of carnal and spiritual enmity.

My heart has naturally detested four things: the standing of the Apocrypha in the Bible; foreigners dwelling in my country to crowd out native subjects into the corners of the earth; alchemized coins; tolerations of divers religions, or of one religion in segregant shapes. He that willingly assents to the last, if he examines his heart by daylight, his conscience will tell him he is either an atheist or a heretic or a hypocrite, or at best a captive to some lust. Poly-piety is the greatest impiety in the world. True religion is *ignis probationis* ["fire of proof"], which doth *congregare homogenea & segregare heterogenea* ["unite the homogeneous and separate the heterogeneous"].

Not to tolerate things merely indifferent to weak consciences argues a conscience too strong; pressed uniformity in these causes much disunity. To tolerate more than indifferents is not to deal indifferently with God; he that does it takes His scepter out of His hand and bids Him stand by. Who hath to do to institute religion but God? The power of all religion and ordinances lies in their purity, their purity in their simplicity; then are mixtures pernicious. I lived in a city where a Papist preached in one church, a Lutheran in another, a Calvinist in a third; a Lutheran one part of the day, a Calvinist the other, in the same pulpit. The religion of that place was but motley and meager, their affections leopard-like.

If the whole creature should conspire to do the Creator a mischief or offer Him an insolency, it would be in nothing more than in erecting untruths against His truth, or by sophisticating His truths with human medleys. The removing of some one iota in scripture may draw out all the life and traverse all the truth of the whole Bible; but to authorize an untruth by a toleration of state is to build a scone against the walls of heaven, to batter God out of His chair. To tell a practical lie is a great sin, but yet transient; but to set up a theoretical untruth is to warrant every lie that lies from its root to the top of every branch it hath, which are not a few.

I would willingly hope that no member of the Parliament

has skillfully ingratiated himself into the hearts of the House that he might watch a time to midwife out some ungracious toleration for his own turn; and for the sake of that, some other, I would also hope that a word of general caution should not be particularly misapplied. I am the freer to suggest it because I know not one man of that mind. My aim is general, and I desire may be so accepted. Yet, good gentlemen, look well about you and remember how Tiberius played the fox with the senate of Rome and how Fabius Maximus cropped his ears for his cunning.

That state is wise that will improve all pains and patience rather to compose than tolerate differences in religion. There is no divine truth but hath much celestial fire in it from the spirit of truth, nor no irreligious untruth without its proportion of antifire from the spirit of error to contradict it: the zeal of the one, the virulency of the other, must necessarily kindle combustions. Fiery diseases seated in the spirit embroil the whole frame of the body; others more external and cool are less dangerous. They which divide in religion, divide in God; they who divide in Him, divide beyond *genus generalissimum* ["the most general genus"], where there is no reconciliation without atonement: that is, without uniting in Him who is one, and in His truth which is also one.

Wise are those men who will be persuaded rather to live within the pale of truth where they may be quiet than in the purlieu where they are sure to be hunted ever and anon, do authority what it can. Every singular opinion hath a singular opinion of itself, and he that holds it a singular opinion of himself, and a simple opinion of all contrasentients. He that confutes them must confute all three at once, or else he does nothing—which will not be done without more stir than the peace of the state or church can endure.

And prudent are those Christians that will rather give what may be given than hazard all by yielding nothing. To sell all peace of country to buy some peace of conscience unseasonably is more avarice than thrift, imprudence than patience: they deal not equally that set any

truth of God at such a rate; but they deal wisely that will stay till the market is fallen.

My prognostics deceive me not a little if, once within three seven years, peace prove not such a pennyworth at most marts in Christendom that he that would not lay down his money, his lust, his opinion, his will—I had almost said the best flower of his crown—for it while he might have had it will tell his own heart he played the very ill husband.

Concerning tolerations I may further assert:

That persecution of true religion and toleration of false are the *Jannes* and *Jambres* to the kingdom of Christ, whereof the last is far the worst. Augustine's tongue had not owed his mouth one pennyrent though it had never spake word more in it but this; *Nullum malum pejus libertate errandi* ["No evil is worse than liberty for the erring"].

He that is willing to tolerate any religion or discrepant way of religion besides his own, unless it be in matters merely indifferent, either doubts of his own or is not sincere in it.

He that is willing to tolerate any unsound opinion, that his own may also be tolerated, though never so sound, will for a need hang God's Bible at the devil's girdle.

Every toleration of false religions or opinions hath as many errors and sins in it as all the false religions and opinions it tolerates; and one sound, one more.

That state that will give liberty of conscience in matters of religion must give liberty of conscience and conversation in their moral laws, or else the fiddle will be out of tune and some of the strings crack.

He that will rather make an irreligious quarrel with other religions than try the truth of his own valuable arguments and peaceable sufferings, either his religion or himself is irreligious.

Experience will teach churches and Christians that it is far better to live in a state united, though somewhat corrupt, than in a state whereof some part is incorrupt and all the rest divided.

I am not altogether ignorant of the eight rules given by

orthodox divines about giving tolerations, yet with their favor I dare affirm:

That there is no rule given by God for any state to give an affirmative toleration to any false religion or opinion whatsoever; they must connive in some cases, but may not concede in any.

That the state of England (so far as my intelligence serves) might in time have prevented with ease, and may yet without any great difficulty deny both toleration, and connivances *salva Republica* ["without violation of the state"].

That if the state of England shall either willingly tolerate or weakly connive at such courses, the church of that kingdom will sooner become the devil's dancing-school than God's temple, the civil state a bear-garden than an exchange, the whole realm a *pays bas* than an England. And what pity it is that the country which hath been the staple of truth to all Christendom should now become the aviary of errors to the whole world, let every fearing heart judge. . . .

Concerning novelties of opinions, I shall express my thoughts in these brief passages: First, that truth is the best boon God ever gave the world; there is nothing in the world any further than truth makes it so; it is better than any created *Ens* or *Bonum*, which are but truth's twins. Secondly, the least truth of God's kingdom doth in its place uphold the whole kingdom of His Truths; take away the least *vericulum* ["javelin"] out of the world, and it unworlds all potentially, and may unravel the whole texture actually, if it be not conserved by an arm of extraordinary power. Thirdly, the least evangelical truth is more worth than all the civil truths in the world, that are merely so. Fourthly, that truth is the parent of all liberty, whether political or personal: so much untruth, so much thralldom (John 8. 32).

Hence it is that God is so jealous of His truths, that He hath taken order in His due justice: First, that no practical sin is so sinful as some error in judgment; no men so accursed with indelible infamy and dedolent impenitency as authors of heresy. Secondly, that the least error, if grown

sturdy and pressed, shall set open the spittle-door of all the squint-eyed, wry-necked, and brazen-faced errors that are or ever were of that litter; if they be not enough to serve its turn, it will beget more, though it hath not one crust of reason to maintain them. Thirdly, that that state which will permit errors in religion shall admit errors in policy unavoidably. Fourthly, that that policy which will suffer irreligious errors shall suffer the loss of so much liberty in one kind or other: I will not exempt Venice, Rhaguse, the Netherlands, or any.

An easy head may soon demonstrate that the prementioned planters by tolerating all religions had immazed themselves in the most intolerable confusions and inextricable thralldoms the world ever heard of. I am persuaded the devil himself was never willing with their proceedings, for fear it would break his wind and wits to attend such a province. I speak it seriously according to my meaning. How all religions should enjoy their liberty, justice its due regularity, civil cohabitation, moral honesty, in one and the same jurisdiction, is beyond the artique of my comprehension. If the whole conclave of hell can so compromise exadverse and diametrial contradictions as to compolitize such a multimonstrous maufrey of heteroclytes and quicquidlibets quietly, I trust I may say with all humble reverence, they can do more than the senate of heaven. My *modus loquendi* ["mode of speaking"] pardoned, I entirely wish much welfare and more wisdom to that plantation. . . .

[On Women's Fashions]

Should I not keep promise in speaking a little to women's fashions, they would take it unkindly. I was loath to pester better matter with such stuff; I rather thought it meet to let them stand by themselves, like the *Quae Genus* in the grammar, being deficient, or redundants, not to be brought under any rule. I shall therefore make bold for this once to borrow a little of their loose-tongued liberty, and misspend a word or two upon their long-waisted but

short-skirted patience. A little use of my stirrup will do no harm.

Ridentem dicere verum, quid prohibet? ["What prohibits speaking truth with a smile?"]

Gray gravity itself can well beteam
That language be adapted to the theme.
He that to parrots speaks, must parrotize;
He that instructs a fool, may act th' unwise.

It is known more than enough that I am neither niggard nor cynic to the due bravery of the true gentry; if any man mislikes a bullimong drassock more than I, let him take her for his labor; I honor the woman that can honor herself with her attire; a good text always deserves a fair margin; I am not much offended if I see a trim far trimmer than she that wears it; in a word, whatever Christianity or civility will allow, I can afford with London measure. But when I hear a nugiperous gentledame inquire what dress the Queen is in this week, what the nudiustertian fashion of the court, with edge to be in it in all haste, whatever it be; I look at her as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of a quarter of a cipher, the epitome of nothing, fitter to be kicked, if she were of a kickable substance, than either honored or humored.

To speak moderately, I truly confess it is beyond the ken of my understanding to conceive how those women should have any true grace or valuable virtue that have so little wit as to disfigure themselves with such exotic garbs as not only dismantles their native lovely lustre but transclouts them into gant bar-geese, ill-shapen, shotten shellfish, Egyptian hieroglyphics, or at the best into French flirts of the pastry, which a proper Englishwoman should scorn with her heels; it is no marvel they wear drails on the hinder part of their heads, having nothing as it seems in the fore part but a few squirrels' brains to help them frisk from one ill-favored fashion to another.

These whim-crowned shes, these fashion-fancying wits,
Are empty thin-brained shells and fiddling kits.

The very troublers and impoverishers of mankind; I can hardly forbear to commend to the world a saying of a lady living sometime with the Queen of Bohemia; I know not where she found it, but it is pity it should be lost:

The world is full of care, much like unto a bubble,
Women and care, and care and women, and women and
care and trouble.

The verses are even enough for such odd pegmas. I can make myself sick at any time with comparing the dazzling splendor wherewith our gentlewomen were embellished in some former habits, with the gut-foundered goosedom wherewith they are now surcingled and debauched. We have about five or six of them in our colony; if I see any of them accidentally, I cannot cleanse my fancy of them for a month after. I have been a solitary widower almost twelve years, purposed lately to make a step over to my native country for a yoke-fellow; but when I consider how women there have tripe-wifed themselves with their cladments, I have no heart to the voyage, lest their nauseous shapes and the sea should work too sorely upon my stomach. I speak sadly; methinks it should break the hearts of Englishmen to see so many goodly Englishwomen imprisoned in French cages, peering out of their hood-holes for some men of mercy to help them with a little wit; and nobody relieves them.

It is a more common than convenient saying that nine tailors make a man; it were well if nineteen could make a woman to her mind; if tailors were men indeed, well furnished but with mere moral principles, they would disdain to be led about like apes by such mimic marmosets. It is a most unworthy thing for men that have bones in them to spend their lives in making fiddle-cases for futile women's fancies, which are the very pettitoes of infirmity, the giblets of perquisquilian toys. I am so charitable to think that most of that mystery would work the cheerfuller while they live if they might be well discharged of the tiring slavery of mis-tiring women; it is no little labor to be continually putting up Englishwomen into outlandish casks, who, if they be not shifted anew once in a few months,

grow too sour for their husbands. What this trade will answer for themselves when God shall take measure of tailors' consciences is beyond my skill to imagine. There was a time when

The joining of the red rose with the white
Did set our state into a damask plight.

But now our roses are turned to fleur-de-lis, our carnations to tulips, our gilliflowers to daisies, our city-dames to an indemoninable quaemalry of overturcated things. He that makes coats for the moon had need to take measure every noon; and he that makes for women, as often, to keep them from lunacy.

I have often heard divers ladies vent loud feminine complaints of the wearisome varieties and chargeable changes of fashions; I marvel themselves prefer not a bill of redress. I would Essex ladies would lead the chore, for the honor of their county and persons; or rather the thrice honorable ladies of the court, whom it best beseems; who may well presume of a *le roy le veult* ["the King wills it"] from our sober King, a *les seigneurs ont assentus* ["the Lords approve it"] from our prudent Peers, and the like *assentus* ["approval"] from our considerate, I dare not say wife-worn Commons, who I believe had much rather pass one such bill than pay so many tailors' bills as they are forced to do.

Most dear and unparalleled ladies, be pleased to attempt it; as you have the precellency of the women of the world for beauty and feature, so assume the honor to give and not take law from any, in matter of attire; if ye can transact so fair a motion among yourselves unanimously, I dare say they that most renite will least repent. What greater honor can your honors desire than to build a promontory president to all foreign ladies, to deserve so eminently at the hands of all the English gentry present and to come; and to confute the opinion of all the wise men in the world, who never thought it possible for women to do so good a work?

If any man think I have spoken rather merrily than seriously, he is much mistaken; I have written what I write with all the indignation I can, and no more than I ought.

I confess I veered my tongue to this kind of language *de industria* though unwillingly, supposing those I speak to are incapable of grave and rational arguments. . . .

There is a quadrobulary saying which passes current in the western world: that the Emperor is King of kings; the Spaniard, King of men; the French, King of asses; the King of England, King of devils. By his leave that first brayed the speech, they are pretty wise devils and pretty honest; the worst they do is to keep their kings from devilizing, and themselves from assing: were I a king (a simple supposal) I would not part with one good English devil for two of the Emperor's kings nor three of the Spaniard's men nor four French asses; if I did, I should think myself an ass for my labor. I know nothing that Englishmen want, but true grace and honest pride: let them be well furnished with those two, I fear they would make more asses than Spain can make men, or the Emperor kings. You will say I am now beyond my latchet; but you would not say so, if you knew how high my latchet will stretch, when I hear a lie with a latchet that reaches up to his throat that first forged it.

He is a good king that undoeth not his subjects by any one of his unlimited prerogatives; and they are a good people that undo not their prince by any one of their unbounded liberties, be they the very least. I am sure either may, and I am sure neither would be trusted, how good soever. Stories tell us in effect, though not in terms, that over-risen kings have been the next evils to the world unto fallen angels, and that over-franchised people are devils with smooth snaffles in their mouths. A king that lives by law lives by love; and he that lives above law shall live under hatred, do what he can. Slavery and knavery go as seldom asunder as tyranny and cruelty.

I have a long while thought it very possible, in a time of peace and in some king's reign for disert statesmen to cut an exquisite thread between and quite through kings' prerogatives and subjects' liberties of all sorts, so as Caesar might have had his due and people their share, without

such sharp disputes. Good casuists would case it and case it, part it and part it, now it and then it, punctually. Aquinas, Suarez, or Valentia would have done it long ere this, had they not been Popish—I might have said knavish; for, if they be so anywhere, it is in their "Tractates of Privileges." Our common law doth well but it must do better before things do as they should. There are some maxims in law that would be taught to speak a little more mannerly, or else well anti-maximed: we say, the King can do a subject no wrong; why may we not say, the Parliament can do the King no wrong? We say, *Nullum tempus occurrit Regi* ["No occasion opposes the King"] in taking wrong; why may we not say, *Nullum tempus succurrit Regi* ["No occasion assists the King"] in doing wrong? Which I doubt will prove a better canon, if well examined.

Authority must have power to make and keep people honest; people, honesty to obey authority; both, a joint council to keep both safe. Moral laws, royal prerogatives, popular liberties are not of man's making or giving, but God's. Man is but to measure them out by God's rule: which if man's wisdom cannot reach, man's experience must mend. And these essentials must not be ephorized or tribuned by one or a few men's discretion, but lineally sanctioned by supreme councils. In *pro-re-nascent* occurrences (which cannot be foreseen) diets, parliaments, senates or accountable commissions must have power to consult and execute against intersilient dangers and flagitious crimes prohibited by the light of nature; yet it were good if states would let people know so much beforehand, by some safe-woven *manifesto*, that gross delinquents may tell no tales of anchors and buoys, nor palliate their presumptions with pretense of ignorance. I know no difference in these essentials between monarchies, aristocracies or democracies: the rule and reason will be found all one, say Schoolmen and Pretorians what they will. And in all, the best standard to measure prerogatives is the ploughstaff; to measure liberties, the scepter: if the terms were a little altered into loyal prerogatives and royal liberties, then we should be sure to have royal kings and loyal subjects.

Subjects their King, the King his subjects greets,
Whilome the scepter and the ploughstaff meets.

But progenitors have had them for four and twenty predecessions; that would be spoken in the Norman tongue or Cimbrian, not in the English or Scottish: when a conqueror turns Christian, Christianity turns conqueror. If they had had them time out of mind of man, before Adam was made, it is not a pin to the point in *foro rectae rationis* ["in the forum of right reason"]. Justice and equity were before time, and will be after it: time hath neither politics nor ethics, good nor evil in it; it is an empty thing, as empty as a New English purse, and emptier it cannot be. A man may break his neck in time, and in a less time than he can heal it.

THE
AMERICAN
PURITANS

THEIR
Prose and Poetry

Edited by Perry Miller

DOUBLEDAY ANCHOR BOOKS
Doubleday & Company, Inc.
Garden City, New York, 1956

Cover and Typography by Edward Gorey

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 56-7536

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Printed in the United States of America
First Edition