

Anne Hutchinson – Part I

Lead: In the 1630s thousands of Puritans migrated to New England. More than one would be considered a rebel. One such troublemaker was Anne Hutchinson.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Anne Marbury Hutchinson was born in Alford, Lincolnshire, England, in 1591. The daughter of an English clergyman, a troublemaker in his own right, who frequently clashed with Anglican leaders, Anne grew up to be an

educated, independent thinker and trained midwife. She married an English merchant, William Hutchinson in 1612 and in 1634 they and their eleven children immigrated to the Massachusetts to escape what they considered to be religious persecution.

Anne was an eloquent and persuasive speaker. She organized a weekly discussion group in her home to examine sermons being preached in Boston and other religious topics. At first, only a handful of women attended, but her audience grew and eventually included men. She believe in the equality of all people under God's eyes and that the colony's leaders were intolerant and enforced

a narrow view of morality. Her most controversial belief was the “Covenant of Grace.” That is that an individual, through personal meditation with God, could receive grace and salvation. This contradicted the rather severe puritan notion of the “Covenant of Works” which Anne believed Boston clergymen were teaching, that is, salvation was achieved through good deeds and obedience to church and community laws. So powerful did her influence become that she seemed to become a threat to the social and religious order of the colony. Her opponents accused her of “antinomianism,” the view that because of God’s grace a believer doesn’t have to obey the teachings of the Bible or the moral

requirements of the community. The founders of Massachusetts were not about to allow this challenge to community values to go unchecked. Governor John Winthrop, in 1637, put Anne Hutchinson on trial. Next time: Excommunication.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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