

The History of
The Holy Bible
In The United States of America

Volume 3

Roanoke:
England's First Attempt
To Colonize North America

James W. Knox

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Volume 3

Roanoke: England's First Attempt To Colonize North America

*God is in His heaven
And we all want what's His.
But power and greed
And corruptible seed
Seem to be all that there is.*

BOB DYLAN
From *Blind Willie McTell*

THE COMING OF THE ENGLISH

On July 30, 1607, owing to a royal annulment of his monopoly, Lescarbot, with a heavy heart abandoned the French trading post so happily seated at Port Royal, Nova Scotia. Most of the colonists returned with him to France, but Poutrincourt, Champlain, and a handful of men remained. It must have seemed to them that all was over, that New France would now be victim of freebooters from all nations. Actually, the history of Canada and the United States had just begun. Unknown to the French, a band of enthusiastic Englishmen a few months earlier had founded Jamestown, nucleus of the Old Dominion of Virginia. Champlain began in 1608, under the Rock of Quebec jutting into the St. Lawrence River, the first French post in America destined to be a great city. There, more than 350 years later, the royal lilies of France are still displayed on the banners of the French-speaking Province of Quebec.

Another year passed, and the waters of the Hudson River, unruffled (so far as the record goes) by any European ship since the brief visit of Verrazano in 1524, were cloven by a little Dutch vessel called the *Half Moon*, captained by Henry Hudson. He was the herald of a short-lived Dutch empire in North America, as Cabot and Cartier were of the more permanent English and French empires. And, in 1620, a band of a hundred Pilgrims, as they called themselves, set up a trading post on the shores of Northern Virginia, which had just been renamed New England. Their Colony of New Plymouth became the second nucleus of the English American empire; and, in 1625, a third was established on the island of St. Kitts in the Caribbean.

Port Royal was not dead. Madame de Guercheville, a pious lady-in-waiting to the Queen Mother of France, paid the bills for a joint fur-trading and missionary expedition to reoccupy the almost deserted post, and to establish others. Her men found Port Royal so depressed that in 1613 they set up a missionary

station on the island of Mount Desert in the present State of Maine. This was wiped out the same year by Captain Samuel Argall in command of an armed ship from Virginia. He then inflicted the same punishment on Port Royal for venturing to exist on a continent claimed by England. In the valley of the St. Lawrence, French and Dutch had already taken sides in the bitter Indian rivalry of Iroquois and Huron, and the king of Spain almost decided to rub out Jamestown.

In the early 1500s, England had little interest in setting up colonies in North America. English explorers searched for a northwest passage and raided Spanish treasure ships. By the late 1500s, however, a few people began to dream of planting colonies.

We have already looked at the adventures of the French.¹ The arrival of the Dutch awaits a future volume. Herein we tell the tale of the English arrival in North America.

England did not plant a successful colony for over a hundred years after the discovery of America. During that century the English were growing into a powerful commercial nation. English ships and English seamen were laying the foundations of future greatness, but it was not until England turned Protestant that it acquired the passion for New World settlement.

Henry VIII, who led England in revolt against the pope in the 1530s, was more eager to control English life than he was to change Catholicism. Having turned his back on the pope not for spiritual or scriptural reasons, but in conflict over his marriages, he had dissolved the Roman Catholic monasteries. Without the strong arm of the Romish priests, Henry could not keep the scholars from teaching Protestant doctrines nor the people from reading the Bible in English. After 1547, during the regency of his son, Edward VI, Protestants became bolder in their break with Rome. Soon English Protestant leaders spoke as self-assuredly about their arrangements with God as did those in Spain on the Catholic side.

¹ See Volumes 1 and 2.

THE ENGLISH SEA DOGS

Before Columbus, English fishermen from Bristol may have touched on North American shores. Five years after Columbus's discovery, King Henry VII of England borrowed an Italian renamed John Cabot and sent him to "subdue, occupy, and possess any places of the heathen and infidels unknown to all Christians." Nothing permanent came of that probe, though at a later time England used the Cabot voyage as a proof of its right to lands in America.

Much later, after failing to find a northeast passage around Europe, Englishmen began to look for a northwest passage around North America. Martin Frobisher made three trips, the last one in 1578, and discovered Frobisher's Bay, Baffin's Land, and the Eskimos, but not the strait for which he had searched.

Year after year, other Englishmen kept up the quest, but to no avail.

Just before and during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) several large commercial companies were formed and trade was opened with Russia, countries about the Mediterranean Sea, the African coast, and finally with the Far East. English mariners raided the Spanish seas to sell cargoes of slaves and to capture Spanish treasure ships.

The exploits of John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake made their names familiar to every Englishman. On one of his voyages Drake, after doing much damage in the Caribbean, raided the western coast of South America, obtained a vast amount of treasure, and escaped with it to the California coast. From there he sailed across the Pacific and eventually reached England. It was a great day in Plymouth when Drake's vessel sailed into the harbor, the first boat to carry the English flag around the world.

In other attempts to find a shorter route to India, several English expeditions sailed without success into the polar seas.

RELIGION IN ENGLAND DURING THE COLONIAL ERA

To understand the Englishmen who arrived in North America, it will be necessary to examine the religious situation in England during the 16th and 17th centuries.

England passed through the Reformation without a Civil War, yet no country in Europe found greater difficulty in coming to a religious equilibrium after that change. Led by the strong-minded Henry VIII – motivated largely by personal ends – and taking advantage of a strong nationalistic movement already under way against foreign control, the English Church broke away from Rome and formed a national church. The Church of England had the king as the supreme governor, who appointed the bishops and otherwise controlled the ecclesiastical system. Aiding the king in the government of the church was the English parliament, which embodied in statute law the forms of worship and theological dogmas (which were framed by the clergy). Though the church thus established was limited by king and parliament, yet it possessed some privileges that tended to offset these restrictions. For instance, the bishops sat in parliament while the church received tithes charged upon the land and rates payable by all the people. The national church was the only form of religion possessing legal standing and all the people were required to attend its services.

This national church, as long as Henry VIII lived, was Roman Catholic in forms of worship and in its theology. But just as soon as Henry's son, Edward VI, came to the throne a movement got under way at once to make the English church Protestant in its forms and theology. At his ascension to the throne Edward was a mere boy, so the government was carried on by a council of regency. From the beginning this council was under the control of the reform party. Immediately radical changes were made in the national church. The result was the publication of Prayer Books, the first in 1549, the second in

1552, which transformed the worship of the English Church² from Catholic to Protestant forms:

- Latin gave way to English as the language of the service;
- the sermon was given a place of much larger importance;
- congregational singing was introduced;
- both the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper were henceforth to be administered to all communicants; and
- the term "altar" was to give place to "table" and the term "priest" to "minister."

Thus the English Church became definitely Protestant.

The swing of the English Church toward Protestantism during Edward's short reign came to a sudden halt with the coming to the throne of the Princess Mary, daughter of the much-wronged Catherine of Aragon. Naturally her consuming desire was to vindicate her mother and restore her mother's faith. To make things worse for the Protestant party, she had married the bigoted Philip II of Spain, the archenemy of Protestantism throughout Europe. Immediately a Catholic reaction began that lasted until the death of the queen five years later. Those who had been chiefly responsible for making the English church Protestant were driven from office. Some fled the country and found a refuge among the Protestants of Switzerland or in southern Germany, while others were imprisoned. These were years of horrible persecution that earned the queen the well-deserved title of "Bloody Mary." The total number of her victims was about three hundred, a number greater than in Henry VIII's reign of thirty-eight years or of Elizabeth's of forty-five.

The death of Mary and the coming to the throne of Elizabeth, the daughter of the sprightly Anne Boleyn, meant the

² Throughout, where the word *church* stands alone, upper case Church refers to state sanctioned entities, e.g. Church of England, while lower case church refers to the body of Christ.

resurgence of the Protestant party. In 1559 the Act of Supremacy declared the queen the Supreme Governor of the church, and a new revised Prayer Book, following that of 1552, was introduced, while the use of all others was prohibited. At once the Catholic party registered their opposition, not just to the Acts of Parliament, but to the new queen whose legitimacy they refused to recognize. The results were Roman Catholic plots on the one hand and anti-Catholic legislation on the other. In the struggle for supremacy which ensued, the great majority of the people of England rallied about their queen, and thus Protestantism and patriotism came to mean one and the same thing in sixteenth-century England.

The English Protestants who had fled to the continent to escape the wrath of Queen Mary now returned, bringing with them the more extreme Protestant notions which prevailed among the reformed congregations in Switzerland and southern Germany. These and other influences were responsible for increasing the Protestant feeling in the country, and as the sixteenth century wore on, it became evident that the English people were being led farther and farther along the path of reformation. The Thirty-Nine Articles adopted in 1563 expressed the views of Calvin, and in the Convocation of that year the proposal to simplify the rites of the Church received strong support.

These are but straws which indicate the direction in which the religious winds were blowing. If it had not been for the queen's liking for stately ceremony, which caused her to prevent more radical changes, it is probable that the English Church might have been purified in the Puritan sense, at this very time, and thus the whole Puritan movement, in both England and America, might have been radically changed. But the old medieval ritual triumphed and was prescribed for all Englishmen. No liberty of worship, whatever, was permitted, and any clergyman who deviated from it was liable to be treated as a criminal, while all nonconformists might be excommunicated and were liable to be imprisoned.

By the time of Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603, Anglicanism had become the national church in a sense in which it had never been before. At the beginning of her reign the people of England, religiously speaking, were a fluid mass, ready to change from Catholicism to Protestantism and back again, at the bidding of their sovereign. But now a new generation had grown up, which knew no other religion, and the fact that it had the authority of law gave Anglicanism a patriotic sanction that no other Church possessed.

In spite of these strong urges toward the national church, it failed to obtain the allegiance and affection of all of the English people. There were, first of all, the Catholics, a small group, it is true, but made up of many wealthy and influential people, the type which generally holds to the old and is slow to take up with the new. Their religion was outlawed, because Catholicism was considered the deadly enemy of the Elizabethan state (although the queen had no antagonism to Roman Catholicism as such) and long lists of anti-Catholic laws were placed upon the statute books by the English Parliament. Such laws were not only passed during the reign of Elizabeth, but even in the reign of James I – from whom the Catholics had expected more lenient treatment because of his Catholic mother, Mary Queen of Scots.

The severity of anti-Catholic legislation was increased, because of the fright the king experienced at the very opening of his reign over the Gunpowder Plot. This attempt by Roman Catholics to murder England's political leaders was discovered and exposed. Such intrigue confirmed the suspicions of many and gave credence to the cries of others that the Church of Rome was a murderous child of Satan. During the reign of Charles I the Catholics received better treatment, but from 1640 to 1660, the period of the triumph of extreme Protestantism under the Commonwealth, the Catholics were bitterly persecuted.

All this would seem to indicate that there would be a large Catholic exodus from England, yet few Catholics left England, and no English colony remained Catholic for any length of time. Perhaps the chief reason for this fact has already been suggested. The English Catholics were not of the emigrating class. They

represented the nobility and the landed gentry, and the conservative tendency which held them to the old religion would hold them to the old home. Then, being of the higher class, they had a better chance to escape the severity of the laws, and we know that the laws against them were seldom enforced, and they were never so badly treated as the anti-Catholic legislation might indicate. Nor were they ever without hope of a bettering of their condition, while toleration in the colonies was always as uncertain as in the homeland.

Of far greater importance, from the standpoint of English colonization of America, was the second group, composed of those who were dissatisfied with the newly established Church. These were the Puritans. It has been suggested that if the English government had not interfered, England would have divided naturally into two religious camps – the Catholic on the one hand and the Puritan on the other. The Anglican system was the artificial medium between the two extremes.

Throughout Elizabeth's reign the Puritan party was growing in influence and numbers. During its first two decades it was particularly concerned about purifying the English Church of all its Catholic practices. Done away with were such pagan vanities as:

- the use of vestments by the clergy;
- the using of the sign of the cross in baptism;
- the celebration of saints' days;
- kneeling to receive the communion; and
- the use of certain formulas in the service.

Failing to accomplish their ends in legislative convocations, many Puritan ministers began to disregard the law prescribing these formulas and practices, and changed the service to suit their puritanical taste, while some resigned their pastorates. It was at this time that the term "Puritan" came into use as a term of opprobrium, signifying those who insisted on an ultra-pure ritual.

The next stage in the development of English Puritanism began about 1570, and took the form of agitation to change the

government of the church. In 1572, in their “Admonition to Parliament” they declared that “the names archbishops, archdeacons, lord bishops, chancellors, etc., are drawn from the Pope’s shop, together with their offices, so the government...is anti-Christian and devilish, and contrary to the Scriptures.”

The system of church government which they advocated was the Presbyterian, which had been introduced from Scotland by the Book of Discipline of 1560. So strong was the movement in this direction that it appeared, for a time, as if the Church of England would be reorganized along Presbyterian lines; but, through the stern opposition of the queen and the rigorous administration of the Archbishop of Canterbury (Whitgift), the movement was held in check. Toward the close of Elizabeth’s reign the Puritans were emphasizing such matters as strict Sabbath observance, while attacking the immoralities and extravagances of the times.

The great body of the Puritans had no wish to destroy the Established Church, or to divide it. They were dominated by the ideal of a united national Church, a Church that would be one in form of worship, organization and doctrine.

Then, there were a few among them, who might be termed Puritan radicals, who advocated a return to the simplicity of organization of the early New Testament times. They advocated the plan of church government which they thought was to be found in the scriptures, namely, *the absolute independence of each congregation of believers* from any and all governmental interference. This group came to be called Separatists, because they held that there was no chance at purifying the state church by their remaining within it. They looked upon themselves as did the early Christians, as “saints, sacred and set apart from a wicked and persecuting world.”

The Separatists were never numerous, numbering only a few thousand. Their congregations generally met secretly, but some defied the law and met openly. Their attitude toward civil government is well summed up in a contemporary letter:

“Nevertheless, this is out of doubt, that the Queen’s highness hath not authority to compel any man to believe any thing

contrary to God's Word, neither may the subject give her Grace the obedience. Our bodies, goods, and lives be at her commandment, and she shall have them as of true subjects. But the soul of man for religion is bound to none but unto God and his holy word."

These ideals that we consider common and take for granted were shockingly radical in Elizabethan England. The wrath of civil government soon fell upon this little group. Their congregations were broken up; their members were imprisoned; they were deprived of their property; and many of them died under harsh treatment. By the end of the reign of Elizabeth these radicals, or Separatists, had either been driven into exile, or were silenced. We are to hear of them again, when in 1620, discouraged by their ten years of exile in Holland, a little group of them sailed away in the *Mayflower* to found the first Puritan colony in America.

The radical Puritans, however, were relatively unimportant as compared with the great and growing body of Puritans who remained within the Church of England. As this party within the church became more numerous, and their criticisms of the church more outspoken, a self-conscious High Church party arose, which defended the Church, asserting the divine (i.e., by the king or queen) appointment of episcopacy and upholding the symbolic ceremonials and ritual. Gradually the breach between these two parties widened, as the attitude of each became more and more dogmatic. Besides their original differences they began to develop doctrinal divergences, for the Puritans held to the doctrines of Calvin, while the High Church party more and more came to accept the newly advanced views of the Dutch theologian Arminius.

Such was the situation when James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603. The Puritans, now advocating Presbyterian organization and denouncing Episcopal, looked to James to favor their position since he had been trained a Calvinist under Scottish Presbyterianism. Even before he reached England a petition was presented to him signed by several hundred English clergymen, praying for a change in the

Prayer Book in the direction of a simpler service. Their hopes, however, were doomed to early disappointment. At a great conference called to discuss Church matters in 1604 (known as the Hampton Court Conference), King James angered the Puritans by declaring: “Scotch Presbytery agreeth as well with monarchy as God and the devil.” He concluded a long speech before the conference with the words: “If this be all your party hath to say, I will make them conform themselves or else I will harry them out of the land, or else do worse.”

When King James began his reign the people had been divided and discontented, and as his reign drew to its close it was clear that discontent and division had increased. The new king, Charles I, unlike his father, was young and full of vigor. But the royal energy, instead of being wisely used, only served to widen the breach between the religious parties in England. Charles had married a French princess, the sister of Louis XIII. Before his marriage he had promised to secure toleration for English Catholics. This, together with the tactless methods employed by Archbishop Laud in enforcing uniformity, cost him the favor of the moderates in his own party, and swelled the ranks of the Puritans.

The stronghold of Puritanism was the region in east-central England between the Thames and the Humber Rivers. This was the wool-growing district, in close touch with the continent, and especially with the United Netherlands, which had become one of the chief centers of Calvinism. The University of Cambridge was the intellectual center of this region and many a congregation became completely Puritan under the influence of clergymen educated at Cambridge. It was from this region also that Puritan migration to New England began. Here was located the village of Scrooby, the English home of the Plymouth colonists. It was in Lincolnshire that the Massachusetts Bay Company was born, formed by wealthy and influential Puritans of the region. The New England leaders were Cambridge men³.

³ Thus it was only natural that the first Puritan college in America should be located in the village which they had named Cambridge. Their infant

It was mainly from this region that some twenty to thirty thousand of England's strongest and most intelligent citizens left, between the years 1628 and 1642, to make their homes in the New England across the sea.

There was slowly but surely a reaction to the Reformation within the Church of Rome. While losing many lands to Lutheranism, Calvinism, or Anglicanism, the papal church undertook to reform itself and win back as much of the world as possible. This undertaking is known as the Catholic Reformation or the Counter-Reformation.

These religious developments of the sixteenth century affected the colonization of America in several ways:

1. Minority groups opposing the state religion – such as the Puritans in England and the Mennonites and Moravians in Germany – looked to the New World as a place where they might worship God according to their “lights” as they liked to call their consciences. Thus the number of willing colonists was larger than it might otherwise have been.
2. Protestantism encouraged business enterprise by emphasizing the virtues of thrift and hard work, and permitting loans at interest, which in Catholic doctrine was usury, a sin. Overseas trading ventures often required loans and in many cases led to the founding of colonies. Colonization, from the point of view of many colonial promoters, was big business, and such business thrived as never before in a Protestant atmosphere.
3. The rise of national religions, in which the Church was subordinate to the national sovereign, strengthened the nation-states. And the interests of the state, as well as the lure of private profit, provided a motive for the foundation of colonies.

institution was modeled after one of the colleges at Cambridge University, and named after a young Puritan minister, himself a graduate of Cambridge, John Harvard.

4. Besides personal and national aggrandizement, the spread of religion became a goal of colonization. The religious motive was sharpened by the contest between the forces of the Protestant Reformation and those of the Counter Reformation. The contest was extended from the Old World to the New. Catholics sought to keep America Catholic, and Protestants tried to frustrate Rome and win America, or at least a part of it, for their own particular faith.

LITERARY FORCES BEHIND ENGLISH COLONIZATION

The dream of America as a place of unique opportunity for liberty, abundance, security, and peace appeared in England soon after Columbus' discovery. This dream found a classic expression in *Utopia*, a book written by Sir Thomas More. Published in Latin in 1516 (translated into English in 1551), *Utopia* described society on an imaginary island supposedly discovered by a companion of Americus Vesputius in the waters of the New World. Life in Utopia was as nearly perfect as human beings guided by reason and good will could make it. Though the Utopians lived comfortably enough, they scorned the mere accumulation of material things, and while all were expected to keep busy, none was oppressed or overworked. They enjoyed complete freedom of thought but were careful not to offend one another in the expression of their beliefs. True lovers of peace, they went to war only to defend their neighbors and thereby insure their own ultimate safety. A six-hour work day would leave time "for the free liberty of the mind and garnishing of the same."

That book, which has given its name to all other utopias, may be called the blueprint to the American dream of a good life. More's imagination fused the ideal world of Plato's *Republic* and the New World of America. He foretold that a model republic

might be founded somewhere in the new countries recently discovered.

In presenting such a picture of an ideal community, the book commented indirectly upon the social and economic evils of More's England. It also presented the pitiful myth perpetuated in modern dream-lands like Disney World, EPCOT⁴ and the United Nations, that man can bring about his own peace and happiness without the love or law of a holy God to oversee his activities.

Historian John Foxe did as much as anyone to fire the anti-Catholic spirit that the English needed to spur them to mission and conquest. Foxe picked up Protestant ideas at Oxford University and then joined exiles on the continent after Catholic Mary Tudor made life dangerous for agitators. The printing press was still quite new, and Foxe understood the propaganda value of books in an age hungry for print. He resolved to fight the pope and Queen Mary by writing *Acts and Monuments*, also known as *The Book of Martyrs*, which was full of gruesome stories about how Catholics persecuted faithful servants of Christ. The original Latin edition published in Switzerland was only 750 pages long, but in England Foxe later kept up with current events, and, by adding illustrations depicting violence, made a best-seller out of an edition that ran to 2,314 pages. Despite its size and expense, *Acts and Monuments* sold over 10,000 copies, an unprecedented sale for those times.

Church leaders rendered the book available to the public and ministers were told to buy it for their families. Pirates took it to seas for inspiration when they chased Spanish ships.

Leading clergymen, too, struck blows for the faith of England. Their motives, like those of explorers and adventurers, could also be mixed. As Sir Walter Raleigh well wrote, "Men have traveled, as they have lived, for religion, for wealth, for knowledge, for pleasure, for power and the overthrow of rivals." The motive that Raleigh listed first, however, is fully evident in the promotion of Britain's colonial enterprise.

⁴ EPCOT – Experimental Prototype Community Of Tomorrow – There is no church in the place!

Sermons were preached by the hundreds, tracts and broadsides printed by the thousands, all pointing to the opportunities for England's Protestantism.

Religion, in the eyes of England's clergymen, could be advanced more through the creation of colonial towns than by the building of mission posts. When the planting of "true, Protestant Christianity" seemed possible, colonial enthusiasts insisted on the actual settlement of English families. This basic position shaped all British policy and changed American history.

For the expansion of England and the progress of Protestantism, two British clergymen merit the highest credit: Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas.

A graduate of Christ Church, Oxford, Hakluyt maintained a dual loyalty to geography and religion. It was not an unreasonable combination, for cartography and the art of navigation were essential to the spread of the gospel. And if it were to be the right gospel, the "true and sincere religion," in Hakluyt's words, then it must be England, not Spain, who would carry it. Hakluyt mourned that after ninety long years the Iberians still possessed a monopoly in the New World. The English must spread the true message of Christ, he urged, since by 1584 not one Indian infidel was yet an English Protestant convert, while the papists had reached "millions" of them.

In his *Discourse of Western Planting* (1584), Richard Hakluyt called on England to colonize in order to evangelize.

He wrote, "It remains to be thoroughly weighed and considered by what means and by whom this most godly and Christian work may be performed of enlarging the glorious gospel of Christ, and reducing (leading) of infinite multitudes of these simple people that are in error into the right and perfect way of their salvation. The blessed apostle Paul, converter of the Gentiles, Romans 10, writes in this manner: 'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except

they be sent?’ Then it is necessary, for the salvation of those poor people who sat so long in darkness and in the shadow of death, that preachers should be sent unto them. But by whom should these preachers be sent? By them no doubt who have taken upon them the protection and defense of the Christian faith. Now the Kings and Queens of England have the name of Defenders of the Faith. By which title I think they are not only charged to maintain and patronize the faith of Christ, but also to enlarge and advance the same.”

There is nothing in these words with which to differ. Yet, we see in them the dependence of the church upon the state, not the Savior. In these words we see the call to missionary activity that would burst forth in the Philadelphia church period 150 years later. In these words we see the allegiance with the state that would hinder the effort until that time.

Most systematically, persuasively, and exhaustively Hakluyt argued the allied causes of Protestantism and England. Working closely with Raleigh, he presented the *Discourse* to Queen Elizabeth in 1584. Here he pleaded for what became England’s distinctive approach: settlements, not outposts. If the nation’s energies be devoted to genuine colonization, he argued, then conversion of the heathen could go forward more surely and at less tragic cost. Missionaries could learn the language and customs of the Indians, then discreetly and diplomatically “distill into their purged minds the sweet and lively liquor of the gospel.” Otherwise, the English cleric wrote, “for preachers to come unto them rashly without some such preparation for their safety, it were nothing else but to run to their apparent and certain destruction; as it happened unto those Spanish friars that, before any planting, without strength and company, landed in Florida where they were miserably massacred by the savages.”

So England would plant colonies in the New World. But did not Spain hold title to North America, a title granted by Pope Alexander VI and confirmed by formal treaty? Nonsense, said Hakluyt, for “no Pope had any lawful authority to give any such dominion at all.” To prove this, he appealed to scripture, to history, to the voyages of John Cabot, and to common sense.

Most of his argument would strike modern readers as curiously dated, but then as now possession was nine-tenths of a valid claim. And possession was precisely what Hakluyt urged. “This enterprise may stay the Spanish King from flowing over all the face of that vast (land) of America, if we seat and plant there in time, in time I say.”

Watching French and Spanish explorations convinced Hakluyt that not much time remained. Aware of what Englishmen had done and hopeful about what England could do, he goaded the nation by describing the heroic adventurers of the British past. Hakluyt dramatized and popularized these exploits, rescuing the accounts that “lay so dispersed, scattered and hidden in several hucksters’ hands, that I now wonder at myself, to see how I was able to endure the delays, curiosity and backwardness of many from whom I was to receive my originals.” All were edited to form the basis of the most widely read of all Hakluyt’s works, *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, Traffics, And Discoveries of the English Nation, made by Sea or Over Land*, first published as one volume in 1589, then enlarged to three volumes in 1598-1600.

This multi-volume collection of wondrous derring-do, usually called simply *The Principal Navigations*, became England’s epic. It inspired the country. It stirred the heart. If so much had been done so grandly in the past, how then could England continue to sit in its “sluggish security”?

In his letter of dedication Hakluyt told of his consternation as he heard other nations “miraculously extolled for their discoveries and noble enterprises by sea,” while England was either “ignominiously reported, or exceedingly condemned.” After feasting on the delights of Hakluyt’s volumes, Englishmen agreed that the time for action had come.

Hakluyt’s Elisha was Samuel Purchas, a fellow clergyman of the Church of England. While not as acute as Hakluyt, he popularized even more successfully the cause of English expansion. His two major efforts were *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, published in 1613, three years before Hakluyt’s death, and

Hakluytus Posthumus (1625), which carried on the grand tradition of *The Principal Navigations*.

To a twentieth-century reader the writings of Purchas appear untidy. Religion gets mixed up with politics, anthropology is bedded with economics, and history with revelation. But the principal point is that all these things were in fact mixed in the minds and lives of Europeans in this age of exploration. Those interested in England's colonies could revel in Purchas' enthusiastic endorsement of the colonies for every cause: military defense, mercantile profits, national honor, population growth, scientific discovery, and – not at all an afterthought – the greater glory of God.

The title page describes *Purchas His Pilgrimage* as “a Theological and Geographical Historie of Asia, Africa, and America, with the Ilands Adiacent.”⁵ This was quite an undertaking – even in the days of universal history! But it was precisely this universality, at a time when Europe stood on the brink of a new age, which held so great an appeal. Moreover, to encompass the history of all the world, where better to begin than with “that soul of the world: Religion”? Here Samuel Purchas himself began, hoping that those many parts of the world now “in their withered and fouler hue of passed, worn-out rites, or present irreligious religions, not washed with the purer streams of sacred baptism,” may yet turn from error to truth.

Purchas His Pilgrimage (1614) is introduced by a sentiment that flavors not only this large work, but much of sixteenth-century thought as well. The reader opened the volume to be met with the following:

ON THE LEARNED PREACHER'S PILGRIMAGE

The Body of this Book is HISTORY
Clad in quaint garments of GEOGRAPHY
Adorn'd with Jewels of CHRONOLOGY

⁵ The letters *j* and *v* did not make their way into the English language until about 1630. Before this time *I* and *U* did double duty. See the author's work *By Definition*.

Fetch't from the Treasure of ANTIQUITY
The better part thereof THEOLOGY
Soul of the World: Religious PIETY
Adds life to all, and gives ETERNITY.

Looking over the world from his Olympus, Purchas saw how little of it was Christian. And looking over Christianity he was dismayed by the “infinite number of sects and superstitions.” The Reformation was less than a century old when he wrote but those who had broken with the papacy made a habit of breaking with each other, and the movement was constantly fragmenting into smaller and smaller groups.

Surveying England he found chiefly profanity, ingratitude, sedition, “the beastly sin of drunkenness, that biting sin of usury, that devilish sin of swaggering. These are payments we return unto the Lord, instead of prayers for, and loyalty to his majesty: peaceableness and charity to each other; modesty and sobriety in ourselves.”

His was a sermon to be sure, a sermon out of place in a history of the world – unless the point of the history was to change the future of that world. “To the glory of God and good of my Country” was more than a phrase in his note to the reader; it was the same duality which had inspired Hakluyt and was in the seventeenth century to inspire thousands upon thousands of his countrymen.

When Purchas died in 1626, the message of English expansion had been preached long enough. Action now replaced hesitation. Earlier Purchas had noted that while he held in high esteem the English liturgy, he was not overly fond of the English lethargy. He, with Hakluyt and a score of others, had overcome that lethargy. Before long preachers on the American side of the Atlantic echoed the urgent tones of *A Discourse of Western Planting* and *Purchas His Pilgrimage*. Only this time instead of shouting, “Go!” they cried, “Come!”

ECONOMIC FORCES BEHIND ENGLISH COLONIZATION

The Tudor age, for all its literary glory and its swashbuckling spirit, was not a happy time for most of the common people, who suffered not only from war and religious strife but also from the effects of a dismal economy. While the population of England grew steadily – from three million in 1485 to four million in 1603 – the food supply did not increase proportionately. Landowners concentrated on the production of wool. Neither cotton nor silk being yet in general use, wool was in great demand for making cloth. Land tilled at one time by serfs and later by rent-paying tenants, much of it better suited to raising sheep than to the production of crops, was readily enclosed for sheep-runs and taken away from the farmers who lived thereon. Thousands of evicted tenants roamed the countryside in gangs, to the alarm of more fortunate householders, whose feelings are preserved in the nursery rhyme: “Hark, hark! The dogs do bark: the beggars are coming to town.”

The Elizabethan government passed rather ineffectual laws for halting enclosures, relieving the worthy poor, and compelling the able-bodied or “sturdy beggars” to work. Relatively few of these could find re-employment in raising or manufacturing wool. All the while the cost of living rose, mainly because of an increased money supply arising from the output of Spanish gold and silver mines in America. England, it seemed, contained either too many sheep or too many people.

Amid the widespread distress, a rising class of merchant-capitalists prospered from the expansion of foreign trade as they turned from the export of raw wool to the export of woollen cloth. These merchant-capitalists gathered up the raw material, put it out for spinning and weaving in individual households, and then sold the finished product both in England and abroad. At first each exporter did business on his own, though he might belong to the Company of Merchant Adventurers. This company regulated

the activities of its members, secured trading privileges for them, and provided protection for their voyages. In time chartered companies sprang up, each with a monopoly from the sovereign of England for trading in a particular region, among them the Muscovy Company (1555), the Levant Company (1581), the Barbary Company (1585), the Guinea Company (1588), and the East India Company (1600). Some of these were regulated companies, similar to the Merchant Adventurers, with each member doing business separately, others were joint-stock companies, much like modern corporations, with stockholders sharing risk and profit either on single ventures or, as became more common, on a permanent basis. These investors often made fantastic profits from the exchange of English manufactures, especially woolens, for exotic goods, and they felt a powerful urge to continue with the expansion of their profitable trade.

To further this drive, spokesmen for the merchant-capitalists developed a set of ideas about the proper relation of government and business, ideas supporting the argument that (notwithstanding the sufferings of the dispossessed) the whole nation benefited from the activities of the overseas traders. The trade of England as a whole, it was said, was basically like that of any individual or firm: transactions were worthwhile if sales exceeded purchases in value. The difference in value would have to be paid in money (gold and silver), and the inflow of money into England would stimulate business and strengthen the national economy by rising commodity prices and lowering interest rates.

Merchant capitalists depended upon loans to carry on their business, and interest was considered now as a cost of production, whereas in medieval times it had been regarded as sinful usury. According to their theory, the government should act to encourage a “favorable” balance of trade – that is, an excess of exports over imports. This economic philosophy, restated by Thomas Mun in his book *England’s Treasure by Forraign Trade* (1664), came to be known in the eighteenth century as “mercantilism.” It guided the economic policies not

only of England, but also of Spain, France, and other nation-states.

Colonies would fit well into this mercantilistic program. They would also alleviate poverty and unemployment, and would serve other useful purposes, or so it seemed to a number of thoughtful Englishmen in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. These wealthy men argued that colonies would provide an additional market for English manufactures, and that the colonial demand would give employment in the mother country to the poor who lived there “idly to the annoy of the whole state.” Colonial commerce, while yielding profit for ship owners and customs duties for the government, would bring from the colonies products for which England previously had depended upon foreigners: products such as tobacco, lumber, naval stores, and above all, silver and gold. Colonies might also serve as bases for finding and controlling a westward passage to Asia, attacking the Spanish Empire, and converting the Indians to Protestantism so that the Catholic revival, the Counter-Reformation, would not spread to the New World.

THE SEA DOGS AND COLONIAL LEADERS, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO CHURCH AND STATE

Henry VII, first monarch of the House of Tudor, took over a small, weak, and war-weary England in 1485. Elizabeth I, last of that royal line, left an empire to her successor James I.

Since Henry VII had been second only to Ferdinand and Isabella in New World Discovery, it may seem strange that England was slow to follow up. But there were good reasons. Cabot found no passage to India and reported nothing of value in the land that he discovered. England was afraid of Spain, and the example of what happened to the French colony in Florida deterred her from attempts to settle near the Spaniards.⁶ The

⁶ See Volume 1.

English kings were chronically broke, largely because of their dependence on Parliament for money. And England needed time to accumulate venture capital so individuals could finance overseas enterprise.

English mariners reached America the hard way, the long way, and (as we shall see) the back way, instead of taking the short route traced by Cabot. The first big effort came in 1553 when the Muscovy Company was formed to find a northeast passage to the Indies. That was more than any ship without an icebreaker could get through, but the Muscovy Company did open a profitable trade with Russia, which at that time was hardly better known in England than the Iroquois Confederacy.

The next target for English overseas enterprise was West Africa, for gold, ivory, and slaves. These led to the voyages to America by Sir John Hawkins.

Under Elizabeth I (1558-1603), England embarked on a course of expansion, spiritual and material, such as few nations have ever experienced. It was the age of Sir Philip Sidney and Shakespeare, of Sir Humphrey⁷ Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh⁸, of highest skill in matters maritime, and of supreme achievement in poetry, prose, and music. In England during that happy era, the scholar, the divine, and the man of action were often one and the same.

Yet every attempt at colonization in Elizabeth's reign failed. The efforts of Philip II of Spain (Elizabeth's brother-in-law) to rub her out as a heretic and a usurper led to a breach between the two countries and a long war which was fought mostly on the ocean. Venture capital found it more profitable to finance pirating expeditions against Spanish treasure fleets than to search for a passage to India or to set up a North American trading post. Yet, somehow, the preliminary work got done.

⁷ Frequently spelled "Humfrey."

⁸ Rendered as "Ralegh" in many older volumes.

GILBERT AND DRAKE

The actual pioneers of English colonization were Sir Humphrey Gilbert and his half-brother Sir Walter Raleigh, both of whom were friends of Hakluyt and the Queen. Gilbert was the Englishman who sparked the westward movement. His first quest was the nonexistent Strait of Anian. In 1566, when he was twenty-seven years old, he wrote "*A Discourse To Prove a Passage by the Northwest to Cathaia,*" i.e., China. Eleven years later, Francis Drake departed on a voyage with the hope of finding it.

Gilbert obtained from Elizabeth a patent conferring upon him the exclusive right "to inhabit and possess at his choice all remote and heathen lands not in the actual possession of any Christian prince." In 1583 Gilbert took possession of Newfoundland in the Queen's name.

Pirates first challenged Spain in the name of England and Protestantism. It may seem strange to link holy wars and piracy as activities of people who claimed to be doing God's will. Yet religion, a force for ennobling life and giving it meaning, can also be used to justify the ugliest of human ventures. Crusaders and conquistadors, claiming to have heard or read the word of God, find themselves righteous as they stab "infidels." Both sides in holy wars regularly feel that they are acting out a divine drama that finds God on their side. So pirates, who plundered gold that shippers had plundered from mines on Indian soil, justified their ways by seeing themselves as divine instruments against the vessels of Antichrist.

For a decade or two, many English thought it foolish to plant in America if gold was available, and stupid to dig for gold if privateers could snatch it from Spanish ships. Plunder thus became an instrument of state. Monarchs pretended to close their eyes to it while they shared the loot and then honored the pirate heroes. Just as Columbus once called for crusades against the infidel, now Elizabethans wanted to charge out against the

Catholic Antichrist in the spirit of Sir Humphrey Gilbert in his pamphlet *How Her Majesty May Annoy the King of Spain*.

Piracy and religion are seldom considered companions, but in the age of Sir Francis Drake they sailed together. The first sea captain to survive a trip around the globe, Drake packed with care to make room both for expected Spanish goods and for the hefty books of his friend Foxe. In lonely hours during his great three-year trip that began in 1577 Drake doted on the bloody tales of Catholic treachery. When boredom threatened as his ship the *Golden Hind* rolled with the gentle waves, Drake retired to his cabin and applied tints – presumably blood red most of the time – to the woodcuts in the book by Foxe showing Protestant martyrs.

Drake had nurtured his anti-Catholicism ever since childhood, but made it an obsession after the Mexican viceroy in 1568 once tricked him and his relative John Hawkins in the West Indies. They barely made off with their lives.

Drake swore henceforth to become the avenging angel of God against the Catholic Antichrist. During a stop at one port he forced the Catholic vicar to look at the pictures in *The Book of Martyrs*. Drake also let his boatswain spit out, “Why do you wear this? It’s no good,” as he bit into an image of the Virgin Mary and then tore the prayer beads from the neck of a captured Catholic. The captain further forced the hated papists to break church laws by eating during Holy Week, and for good measure at Guatulco he despoiled a church, destroyed an altarpiece, defaced statues, and trampled communion wafers. The Spanish captains received special orders to get this “low man,” but he eluded them.

Drake raided the Isthmus of Panama in 1572, sighted the Pacific, and “resolved to sail an England ship in these seas.” He wished to check another unfounded geographical theory that a great Terra Australis ran around the world just below the Strait of Magellan. Sailing through that strait in the *Golden Hind*, he ascertained that there was no Terra Australis, only the barren Tierra del Fuego. He turned north, captured a rich treasure galleon off the coast of Peru, landed at or near the place now

called Drake's Bay not far north of San Francisco, and took possession of that country for Queen Elizabeth I, naming it Nova Albion – New England. He had no doubt that the western opening of the northern strait lay nearby, and he probably sailed as far north as Vancouver Island in the search. Not finding it, he turned west, picked up a valuable cargo of cloves in the Spice Islands, and returned to England having sailed around the world.

"Is the queen alive?" Drake's was a natural question when he reached home, and Elizabeth received him lavishly. The profits of this voyage were almost \$9 million in gold, and the Queen was so pleased with her share that she knighted Drake on the deck of the *Golden Hind*, which was as good as telling the King of Spain, "North America belongs to England – hands off!"

The era of such ceremonies was brief, however, because Spanish gold came in ever-shorter supply and the risks of taking it became too great a threat to international peace. England came to desire an empire more than it needed hit-or-miss raids.

Drake became a major maritime nuisance to the ships from the Spanish Main. He wrecked many a Spaniard's fortune, lined many an Englishman's pocket, and took the view, with surprising seriousness, that his efforts were a kind of Protestant crusade. Like Columbus before him, Drake enforced regular religious services aboard his ships – ships that carried Bibles, prayer books, and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. A blow against the fortunes of Spain was a blow for the faith of England, and in 1588 came the boldest blow of all: England's defeat of the Spanish Armada.

In the meantime Sir Humphrey Gilbert had obtained from the queen a charter. It commissioned him to discover "remote heathen and barbarous lands not actually possessed by any Christian prince or people ...and the same to have, hold, occupy and enjoy." It contained the striking provision that all settlers "shall enjoy all the privileges of free denizens and persons native of England." It added that any laws or ordinances that he may pass for his colony "be as neere (sic) as conveniently may, agreeable to the forms of the laws and policy of England."

Although Gilbert never made good on this grant, the last two principles were new in the history of colonization. They became basic in English colonial policy. A freeborn Englishman lost no rights by moving overseas; and the lord proprietor of a colony, such as Gilbert intended to be (and Lord Baltimore and William Penn later became), could not play dictator, but must govern by English law.

Gilbert was a rough man who combined a Protestant identity with the new Elizabethan scientific outlook. He seemed more ready to observe and invest in the New World than to win souls there. He was practical, too. If Elizabeth would send the needy and criminals to America, it would save wear and tear on the English gallows. He could handle such toughs; he practiced for America by serving the queen during her anti-Catholic Irish wars. There he mounted the heads of his victims along the walkway of his tent to impress his evening visitors.

After a poorly planned start, Gilbert waited four years and in June 1583 sailed from Plymouth with five ships, one of them owned by Raleigh, and 260 men. These included masons, carpenters, smiths and such like requisites, but also mineral men and refiners, indicating that Gilbert's mind, like those of most of the early adventurers, was still focused on gold.

His ultimate object was to find and secure the northwest passage, but he first took possession of Newfoundland, which he thought blocked its eastern entrance. Entering St. John's harbor in August, he set up a pillar with the English arms and told the fishermen from over thirty vessels which he found there at anchor that they must obey him and the queen. He attempted to explore the coast southward, sent one ship home, lost another on Cape Breton; and then, as the sailors became mutinous, turned homeward.

Gilbert sailed in the tiny pinnace *Squirrel*, which was only ten tons. The larger vessels tried to keep it in sight through raging gales and "outrageous seas." On a rough September day one ship closed in on the *Squirrel* so near that Gilbert with a book in hand (a typical Elizabethan touch) was heard to call out, "We are as near to heaven by seas as by land!" Then the sun set,

and all of a sudden the light on the pinnacle went out, for she had been devoured and swallowed up of the sea.

It became legend that the book that Gilbert was reading on the last day of his life was most likely Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, in which is found the maxim, "The way to heaven out of all places is of like length and distance."

Gilbert was gone; his Newfoundland project lay in neglect for three decades.

THE LOST COLONY

RALEIGH AND ROANOKE

Gilbert's charter was inherited by his thirty-one-year-old half-brother, Walter Raleigh. Raleigh was Gilbert's match in boldness and anti-Catholicism alike. Young Raleigh remembered seeing his fiercely Protestant father snatch a cross from a church and smash it because it recalled popery. At age fourteen he was already fighting in Huguenot campaigns in France, where he chased Catholics into a cave in Languedoc and let down bundles of lighted straw to kill them or choke them into surrender. Yet as a part-time skeptic Raleigh was cynical enough to observe that men on both sides commit atrocities in holy wars and mask their selfish goals with the face of religion.

Raleigh's own selfish goal was to win the favor of Queen Elizabeth. The handsome delight of haberdashers succeeded. She tried to keep him close to court, where the two found poetic ways to express their respect for each other.

Raleigh was, in a sense, a mold from which the "ideal American" would be formed. He had certain strongly marked characteristics which were to be associated with the American archetype. He was energetic, brash, hugely ambitious, money-conscious, none too scrupulous, far-sighted and ahead of his time, with a passion for the new and, not least, possessed a streak of idealism which clashed violently with his overweening desire to make a fortune. He was of an ancient family, but penniless, born in Devon about 1554. John Aubrey devoted one of his *Brief Lives* to him. He said Raleigh was "a tall, handsome and bold man, with a lot of swagger, damnably proud."

His good looks caught the Queen's eye when he came to court, for she liked necessitous youngsters from good families, who looked the part and whom she could "make." But what made her single him out from the crowd of smart-looking

gallants who jostled for attention was his sheer brainpower and his grasp of new, especially scientific, knowledge.

The court was amazed at his rapid rise in favor. As Sir Robert Naunton, an eyewitness, put it, “true it is, he had gotten the Queen’s ear at a trice, and she began to be taken with his elocution, and loved to hear his reasons to her demands. And the truth is, she took him for a kind of oracle, which nettled them all.”

Raleigh was one of the first young courtiers to make use of the new luxury, tobacco, which the Spaniards had brought back from America. Typical of the way he intrigued the queen was his demonstration, with the help of a small pair of scales, of how you measured the weight of tobacco-smoke, by first measuring the pristine weed, then the ashes. His mathematical friend, Hariot, fed him new ideas and experiments with which to keep up the queen’s interest.

Raleigh was not just an intellectual but a man of action from his youth. In addition to his military adventures, he had twice been in jail for “affrays.” But his main experience of action, which was directly relevant to the American adventure, was in Ireland. The English had been trying to subdue Ireland, and reduce it to civility, as they put it, since the mid-12th century. Their success had been very limited. From the very beginning English settlers who planted themselves in Ireland and took up lands to turn into English-style estates had shown a disturbing tendency to go native and join the wild Irish.

To combat this, the English government had passed a series of laws, in the 14th century, known as the Statutes of Kilkenny, which constituted an early form of apartheid. Fully Anglicized territory, radiating from Dublin, the capital, was known as the Pale, and the Irish were allowed inside it only under close supervision (hence, the expression, to within or without the pale). The English might not sell the Irish weapons or horses and under no circumstances were to put on Irish dress or speak the local Gaelic language. Conversely the Irish were banned from a whole range of activities and from acquiring land in the Pale, and from staying there overnight.

But these laws were constantly broken, and had to be renewed periodically, and even so English settlers continued to “degenerate” and intermarry with the Irish and become Irish themselves, and indeed foment and lead revolts against the English authorities.

One such uprising had occurred in 1580, in Munster, and Raleigh had raised a band of 100 footmen from the city of London and taken a ruthless part in suppressing it. He had killed hundreds of “Irish savages,” as he termed them, and hanged scores more for treason, and had been handsomely rewarded with confiscated Irish lands which he was engaged in planting.⁹

Had the adventure at Roanoke been a success, Raleigh would have gone down in history as one of America’s founding fathers. With such a past in Europe it is hard to imagine him inspiring reverence and honor. In the American enterprise, Ireland played the same part for the English as the war against the Moors had done for the Spaniards – it was a training ground both in suppressing and uprooting an alien race and culture, and in settling conquered lands and building towns. Raleigh set the standard for future Americans. All the misdeeds of the next 400 years had their model in Raleigh. And, just as the money from the *reconquista* went into financing the Spanish conquest of the Americas, so Raleigh put the profits from his Irish estates towards financing his transatlantic expedition.

A year after Gilbert’s death, Raleigh backed an expedition to North Carolina and Virginia. Raleigh’s colonizing venture is

⁹ Early in the 1600s Ulster was made the theater of the largest transfer of population ever carried out under the crown. Thousands of Scots Presbyterians were allocated parcels of confiscated Catholic land along a defensible military line running along the Ulster border. This line, which is still demographically significant, explains why the Ulster problem remains so intractable. At the risk of offending many, it must be stated that the problems in Ulster and those in Palestine have like causes, have had like results, and cannot be solved at this juncture without the return of the Governor (Isaiah 9:6). This major Ulster planting took root because it was based on agriculture and centered around hard-working, experienced Scots lowland farmers who were also ready to take up arms to defend their new possessions.

worth examining in detail because it held important lessons for the future. His first expedition of two ships, a reconnaissance, set out on April 27, 1584, watered at the Canaries and Puerto Rico, headed north up the Florida Channel, and reached the Carolina Banks at midsummer. On July 13, they found a passage through the banks leading to what they called Roanoke Island. “And after thanks given to God for our safe arrival hither, we manned our boats and went to view the land next adjoining, and to take possession of the same, in the right of the Queen’s most excellent Majesty.”

The men spent six weeks on the banks and noted deer, rabbits, birds of all kind, and in the woods pines, cypress, sassafras, sweet gum and “the highest and reddest cedars in the world.”

What struck them most was the total absence of any pollution: “sweet and aromatic smells lay in the air.”

On the third day they spotted a small boat paddling towards the island with three men in it. One of them got out at a point opposite the English ships and waited, “never making any show of fear or doubt” as a party rowed out to him. Then, “After he had spoken of many things not understood by us we brought him with his own good liking aboard the ships, and gave him a shirt, a hat and some other things, and made him taste of our wine and our meat, which he liked very well; and after having viewed both barks, he departed and went to his own boat again, which he had left in a little cove or creek adjoining; as soon as he was two bow shots into the water, he fell to fishing, and in less than half an hour he had laden his boat as deep as it could swim, with which he came again to the point of land, and there he divided his fish into two parts, pointing one part to the ships and the other to the pinnace: which after he had (as much as he might) requited the former benefits received, he departed out of our sight.”

There followed further friendly contact with the Indians, and exchanges of deerskins and buffalo hides, maize, fruit, and vegetables, on the one hand, and pots, axes, and tun dishes, from the ship’s stores, on the other. When the ships left Roanoke at

the end of August, two Indians, Manteo and Wanchese, went with them.

All were back in the west of England by mid-September, bringing with them valuable skins and pearls. Raleigh was persuaded by the detailed account of one of the masters, Captain Arthur Barlow, that the landfall of Roanoke was suitable for a plantation. Barlow wrote of a land “the most plentiful, sweet, fruitful and wholesome of the whole world,” and Indians who were a “kind and loving people.” This extravagant report was only the first of a series that advertised the delights of Virginia and, on occasion, tragically misled prospective colonists. It began a publicity campaign in which Raleigh used Hakluyt and other scribes to attract investors.

Raleigh had just become a member of Parliament for Devonshire, and in December he raised the matter in the Commons, elaborating his plans for a colony. On January 6, 1585, a delighted queen knighted him at Greenwich and gave him permission to call the proposed territory Virginia, after “the Virgin Queen.”

In April an expedition of seven ships, carrying 600 men, half of them soldiers, assembled at Plymouth. The fleet was put under the command of Raleigh’s cousin Sir Richard Grenville, with one experienced in the Irish campaigns, Ralph Lane, in charge of the troops. It carried aboard Thomas Hariot, as scientific expert. He had been learning the local language from the two Indians, and was given special instructions to make scientific measurements and observe flora and fauna, climate and geology. Also recruited was John White, England’s first watercolor-painter of distinction, who was appointed surveyor and painter. The company also included a Bohemian Jew named Joachim Ganz to prospect for minerals (he found none), and a number of other specialists – an apothecary, a surgeon, and skilled craftsmen.

After various misadventures, some losses and prize taking (stealing) from the Spaniards, and quarreling between Grenville and Lane, the bulk of the fleet reached the Roanoke area in July. There they discovered one of the main difficulties faced by early

colonists in America. "The sea coasts of Virginia," Hariot wrote, "are full of islands whereby the entrance into the mainland is hard to find. For although they be separated with divers and sundry large divisions, which seemed to yield convenient entrance, yet to our great peril we proved that they were shallow and full of dangerous flats."

There are literally thousands of islands off the American coasts, especially in the region of the great rivers which formed highways inland, and early voyagers could spend weeks or even months finding their way among them to the mainland, or to the principal river-system. And when they occupied a particular island, relief and reinforcement expeditions often found immense difficulty in identifying it. Moreover, the topography of the coast was constantly changing. Raleigh's Virginia lies between Cape Fear and Cape Henry, from latitude 33.50 to 36.56, mainly in what is now North Carolina, though a portion is in modern Virginia. The Carolina Banks, screening the Roanoke colony, are now greatly changed by wind and sea-action, though it is just possible to identify the 16th-century outlines.

No satisfactory harbor was found, though a fort was built on the north of Roanoke Island. Lane was left with 107 men to hold it, while Grenville returned to England in August to report progress. On the return voyage, Grenville took a 300-ton Spanish vessel, the *Santa Maria*, which had strayed from the annual treasure convoy, and brought it into Plymouth harbor on October 18. The prize and contents were valued at 15,000 pounds, which yielded a handsome dividend for all who had invested in the 1585 expedition. But the fact that Grenville had allowed himself to be diverted into commerce raiding betrayed the confused purposes of the Raleigh enterprise. Was its object to found a permanent, viable colony, with an eye to the long term, or was it to make quick profits by preying on Spain's existing empire? Raleigh himself could not have answered this question; or, rather, he would have replied, "Both," without realizing that they were incompatible.

Meanwhile Lane had failed to find what he regarded as essential to a settlement, a proper harbor. He had shifted the

location of the colony, fallen foul of the local Indians and fought a pitched battle with them.

Lane was a good soldier and resourceful leader, but he knew nothing about planting, especially crop-raising. The colonists he had with him were not, for the most part, colonists at all but soldiers and adventurers. Hariot noted: “Some also were of a nice bringing up, only in cities or towns, and such as never (as I may say) had seen the world before.” He said they missed their “accustomed dainty food” and “soft beds of down and feathers” and so were miserable. They thought they would find treasure and “after gold and silver was not to be found, as it was by them looked for, had little or no care for any other thing but to pamper their bellies.”

Lane himself concluded that the venture was hopeless as the area had fatal drawbacks. “For that the discovery of a good mine, by the goodness of God, or a passage to the south sea, or some way to it, and nothing else can bring this country in request to be inhabited by our nation.”

When a large expedition under Sir Drake was found to be cruising up the east coast of America after plundering the Spanish Caribbean, Lane decided to bring his men back to England, while he still had the means to do so.

The only tangible results of the venture were the detailed findings of Hariot, published in 1588 as *A Briefe and true report of Virginia*, and a number of high-quality watercolor drawings by White, now in the British Museum. These show the Indians, their villages, their dances, their agriculture, and their way of life. White also made a detailed map, and elaborate, colored sketches of flora and fauna, including a Hoopoe, a Blue-striped Grunt Fish, a Loggerhead Turtle, and a plantain. Hariot and White maintained that a colony, rightly managed and advantageously situated, could survive and even prosper.

A subsequent expedition of three ships set out for Roanoke on May 8, 1587, with anywhere from 117 to 150 colonists aboard (sources vary widely as to the exact number), this time including some women and children, and John White in charge as

governor. His journal is a record of the expedition. Again there were divided aims, for Captain Simon Fernandez, master of the fleet, was anxious to engage in piracy and so quarreled with White. Roanoke was reached, and on August 18 John White's daughter, Elenora, who was married to his assistant Ananias Dare, gave birth to a girl, who was named Virginia, "because this child was the first Christian born in Virginia." This gave all hopes that a lasting colony would be born through their efforts.

But there was more trouble with the Indians. The region around Pamlico Sound had a dense Indian population, and the local tribe did not appreciate the insatiable demands of Englishmen for food and labor. In addition, Fernandez was anxious to get his ships away to prey on the Spaniards while their treasure fleet was still on the high seas. So the colonists, including Elenora and little Virginia, sixteen other women, and ten children, were left behind while White sailed back with Fernandez to persuade Raleigh to send a back-up fleet quickly.

White reached Southampton on November 8 and immediately set about organizing relief. But he found the country in the midst of what was to be its first global conflict, preparing feverishly to resist the Spanish Armada invasion, which was expected in the spring. All shipping was stayed by government order in English ports, to be available for defensive flotillas. When Raleigh and Grenville got together eight vessels in Devon in March 1588, with the object of equipping them for Roanoke, the Privy Council commanded Grenville "on his allegiance to forbear to go his intended voyage." He was forced to place them under the flag of Drake, to join his anti-Armada fleet.

White's attempt to set out himself, with two small pinnaces, proved hopeless.

Spain's Philip II chartered a fleet of military vessels in 1588 to back up his army in the Netherlands that was waiting to invade England. The mission was ill-planned, for the 130 slow vessels with their twenty-seven thousand men aboard proved very vulnerable in Spain's effort to bring Catholicism back to England.

The English encountered the fleet off Cornwall but could not advantageously use Her Majesty's 197 ships, which could not maneuver well enough to make the British guns effective against the massive Spanish ships. The Spanish seamen escaped, but Philip's army in the Netherlands was not ready to join them.

When the British improved their tactics and the whole Armada venture turned into a fiasco, Spain retreated, with only 76 ships making it back home.

The invincibility of Spain had become a myth, and England's rise was an event of epochal significance – especially for North America, a large part of which was to become part of its empire.

The little colony at Roanoke was far removed from such stirring sea battles. Its settlers were engrossed in the mere act of survival.

As a result of the Armada campaign and its aftermath, White found it impossible to get his relief expedition to Virginia until August 17, 1590. He anchored at Roanoke Island at nightfall. He found that the island was lighted by the lurid flickers of a forest fire. He recorded: "We let fall our grapnel near the shore, and sounded with a trumpet and call, and afterwards many familiar English tunes and songs, and called to them friendly. But we had no answer."

When they landed the next day, White found no sign of his daughter or granddaughter, or anyone else. The colonists had disappeared. There was no word, no sign, no clue as to where they had gone or why.

Five chests were found, broken open, obviously by Indians. Three belonged to White himself, containing books, framed maps, and pictures with which he had intended to furnish the governor's mansion, to be built in the new town he had planned and called Raleigh. They were all, he said, "rotten and spoiled with raine."

They found three letters, "CRO," carved on a tree, and nearby the full word "Croatoan," carved on a post in block capital letters. White had agreed with the colonists that, if forced to quit Roanoke, they would leave behind a carved signpost of

their destination; and, in the event of trouble, they were to put a Maltese cross beside it. There was no cross. But all the other evidence – the defensive palisade and the cabins overgrown with weeds – indicated a hasty departure.

Croatoan was the native name of the island on which Cape Hatteras is situated, about a hundred miles southward of Roanoke. Some sources say White searched long and anxiously for the colonists. Others say bad weather moved in and he was never able to reach Croatoan Island. Still others say the notoriously superstitious sailors were so frightened by the scene at Roanoke they forced White to leave the area at once. Whatever the case, no trace of the lost colony was ever found.

Raleigh himself tried to sail past Virginia in 1595, on his way home from a voyage to Guyana, and he sent another search party in 1602. But nothing came of either attempt.

The most likely explanation is that the colony was overwhelmed by Indians on their way from Roanoke to Croatoan, the males killed, and the women and children absorbed into the tribe, as was the Indian custom.

If this was the case, the bloodline of the first Virginians merged with that of the Indians they intended to subdue. This may be more than conjecture. In 1719, venturesome white hunters entered the area now known as Robeson County, North Carolina, about 200 miles from Roanoke. There, in the villages of the Croatoan Indians, they found a most unusual race of people. They were lighter-skinned than the surrounding tribes, and lived in well-planned villages – something unknown among the natives of this region. Furthermore, these unusual “Indians” had a few Elizabethan English idioms in their speech, ones that had been in use at the time the colonists disappeared. They used captured Indians as slaves to till the soil.

The census of Robeson County for 1790 also furnishes some interesting material for speculation. Among the missing colonists there were ninety-five family names. Fifty-four of these names were found among the Indians. The same names were found nowhere else, even among the whites, in such concentration at that time.

Also of note is the fact that many of the missing colonists had come from Scoville Town, in England. The Croatoan village, which was replete with English family names similar to those of the missing Roanoke pioneers, was called Scuffletown, the common colloquialism for Scoville Town.

The Indians told the white hunters of their blue-eyed ancestors who “talked in books.”

To this day the Croatoan (now called Lumbee) Indians of southeastern North Carolina believe that the blood of Raleigh’s colonists runs in their veins.

It is not hard to imagine starving white men being taken by a tribe known to enslave its vanquished foes. Nor does it require any imagination to guess what became of the women and girls in such a circumstance.

A search party of sailors would hardly search one to two hundred miles inland for a handful of people presumed dead.

The mystery is a curious one, but never so baffling as some writers imply.

The failure of Roanoke and the cost of setting up a colony discouraged other settlements for a time. In the 1600s, however, the English found new ways to raise money to set up colonies in the New World.

THE LESSONS OF ROANOKE

Fruitless as were the Roanoke colonies, the English learned from them that the seating of a colony was a highly expensive business, ruinous to any individual or small group who attempted it. Raleigh is said to have lost 40,000 pounds in his efforts. The first twelve of the English continental colonies, and all English island colonies except Jamaica, were founded and settled by private enterprise, personal or corporate. The English crown, claiming the entire American continent north of Mexico, had neither the money nor the aptitude to found colonies. So it gave concessions to individuals and companies.

Most of the English colonies of the early seventeenth century, such as Jamestown (1607), Plymouth (1620), and Massachusetts Bay (1628), started as trading posts, owned by English merchants and settled by their employees. The first English colony to be agricultural from the beginning was Bermuda (1612), where there were no natives to trade with – only the wild hogs left by the Spaniards. In none of these colonies was private ownership of land permitted until communal ownership proved to be a failure. Except for a few gentlemen adventurers, the original planters were hired men working under a boss called a governor, who was responsible to owners living in England. This was true of Virginia until 1616, of Plymouth until 1623, of Massachusetts Bay until 1630, and of Canada and New Netherlands until much later.

It was not, however, the English colonial intention to be satisfied with mere trading posts. In the literature of English colonization at least six main ideas are stressed:

1. England was overpopulated. A popular ballad of the day ran, “The land grows weary of its people. The beggars are coming to town.” In London the unemployed slept in the streets. What better solution than to give the poor and unemployed a new lease on life overseas?
2. England wanted markets for her woolens. What better one could be found than North America, with its cold climate? Not only settlers but Indians might be persuaded to swap furs and skins for coats and blankets.
3. England sorely needed precious metals. Surely there was as good a chance to find gold in Virginia as in Hispaniola or Saguenay?
4. England had been paying good money to Mediterranean countries for olive oil, currants, and wine. If these could be produced in English colonies, she would be much better off. She was dependent on the Baltic countries for ship timber, tar, and cordage. Surely the Royal Navy would be better prepared if a source of supplies could be found in Virginia.

5. England needed a short route to the Indies. Maybe one could be found up one of the unexplored bays on the coast of Virginia.
6. England had the duty to propagate Protestant Christianity and to prevent the Catholic Church from converting the entire native population of America. And a Protestant refuge might there be found if a change of religion or civil war should happen at home.

These were the basic motives behind English colonization for a century and a half. And from the first it was understood that any English settlement must have English law and English liberty. The first charter of the Virginia Company (1606) declared that the colonists and their descendants would enjoy “all liberties...to all intents and purposes as if they had been abiding and born within this our realm of England.”

These became fighting words in the 1770s.

The colonizing efforts of Gilbert and Raleigh taught lessons and set examples for later and more successful promoters of colonization. After sending out his ill-fated settlers, Raleigh sought financial aid from merchants to whom he sold rights of trading with his proposed colony. He realized that the undertaking was too big for the purse of one man alone. Some of the colonizers after him raised funds for their ventures by forming companies and selling stock, but others, as individuals or unincorporated groups, depended on their own resources.

The English maritime intellectuals like Raleigh, Hakluyt, and Hariot were still obsessed with the possibility of quick riches and refused to accept the paramount importance of a food-growing capacity to any successful settlement. The Indians could and did grow food, especially maize, but not for cash. Once their own needs were satisfied there was little left over. Colonists had either to grow their own or to be dependent on continuing supplies from England – that was the great lesson of Roanoke. And the only way to insure that settlers grew food systematically and successfully was to send them out as entire

families. This emerged as the leading principle of English colonization. Hakluyt, in his practical book on planting, wrote in terms of commerce and trading posts. He even recognized that religion could be important. But he did not discuss the need to send out independent families. He thought agricultural labor could be supplied by criminals, civil debtors and the like, sent out to regain their freedom by work. The notion of using overseas colonies for getting rid of “human offal,” as it was termed, was coming to be accepted.

In 1625 Sir Francis Bacon, no friend of Raleigh, wrote an essay, *On Plantations*, in which he tried to sum up the lessons of the tragic lost colony. He pointed out that any expectation of quick profits was fatal, and that there was a need for expert personnel of all kinds, strongly motivated in their commitment to a long-term venture. He also said it was hopeless to try to win over the Indians with trifles “instead of treating them justly and graciously.” Above all, back-up expeditions were essential. “It is the sinfulness thing in the world to forsake or destitute a plantation once in forwardness; for besides the dishonour, it is the guiltiness of blood of many commiserable persons.”

Elizabethan England cared little about the mystery of the Roanoke disappearance. Raleigh soon fell out of favor with the Queen and spent much of his remaining time jailed in the Tower of London. When the mild King James I came to power in 1603, he wanted peace with Spain and found it advisable to restrict Raleigh, whom the Spaniards naturally despised. Yet he did not execute him until 1618.

“I have a long journey to take,” said the condemned seafarer, “and must bid the company farewell.”

None of his successors received grants so vast and undefined as both his and Gilbert’s had been. Thereafter the crown, in theory the owner as well as the sovereign of lands to be occupied by Englishmen, granted and re-granted territory to companies or

proprietors, on terms that imposed varying conditions, and with boundaries that often were conflicting and vague.

More challenging were the last words of the old pirate Drake, who had affirmed that God had many things in store, “and I know many ways to do her Majesty good services, and to make us rich.”

It was King James it was who chartered the settlements designed to make England rich and to serve the English God beyond the far western horizon.

NO BIBLE AT ROANOKE

There are two points which need to be added to the lessons learned at Roanoke. First, as the historian A. L. Rowse has pointed out, the failure of the Roanoke colony may have been a blessing in disguise.

Had it taken root, the Spanish would certainly have become aware of this English intrusion into a continent which they had claimed as their sole possession. They would have identified its exact location and strength and have sent out a powerful punitive expedition, as they did against the French in Florida in the 1560s. At that stage in the game they were still in a military and naval position to annihilate any English venture on the coast.

Moreover, Spain would almost certainly have built forts in the vicinity to deter further English ventures and have laid specific claim to the entire coast of what is now the eastern seaboard of the United States. This would have made it much less likely that the English would have returned after the turn of the 17th century and in the new reign of James I.

James was anxious to be on peaceful terms with Spain and would, in those circumstances, have forbidden any more attempts to colonize Virginia. So English America might never have come into existence.

Secondly, in listing the reasons why Roanoke failed, Francis Bacon omitted one important missing element. It was an entirely secular effort. It had no religious dimension.

This was in accordance with Raleigh's own sentiments. Though he was for form's sake an oath-taking, church-attending Protestant (like anyone else who wanted to rise to the top in Elizabethan England), religion meant nothing to him. He certainly practiced no form of Christianity, and there is no record of any statement on his part to indicate he believed in anything other than Protestant political principles.

It was darkly rumored by his enemies at the court that he and his friend Hariot, and others of their circle, were atheists. In that day the term did not then necessarily imply a denial of God's existence, but merely a rejection of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity; in our terminology, he was a deist of sorts. To those whose ambitions are wholly material and political, the advantage of Calvinist theology is obvious. Heaven and hell are beyond one's control, thus, the "true believer" pays them no mind. Raleigh's Protestantism left him to fight and build for a God he could not know, and did not need to know.

In any event, Raleigh was not the man to launch a colonizing venture with a religious purpose. The clergy do not seem to have figured at all in his plans. There was no attempt on his part to recruit God-fearing, prayerful men.

In these respects Raleigh was unusual for an Elizabethan sea-venturer. Most of the Elizabethan sea dogs were strict Protestants who had strong religious motives for resisting Spanish dominance on the high seas and in the western hemisphere. Drake was typical of them; his family were victims of the papist persecution under Queen Mary. He had been raised in a floating shack along the Thames River, educated to read and respect the Bible and to proselytize among the heathen and the benighted believers in Romish superstition. He held regular services on board his ships, preached sermons to his men, and tried to convert his Spanish prisoners. And of course, there was Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.

That compendium of the sufferings of English Protestants who resisted the Catholic restoration under 'Bloody Mary' and died for their faith has been carved into fragments to suit the tastes and attention span of modern readers. The copies available

in bookstores today give the highlights of many noble deaths but say little of the events that led to the executions and contain little or nothing of Foxe's running commentary. Those who read the entire work shall see that for all its greatness, Foxe's work was not just a history of persecution. It also embodied the English national-religious myth, which had been growing in power in the later Middle Ages and came to maturity during the Reformation decades – the myth that the English had replaced the Jews as the Elect Nation, and were divinely appointed to do God's will on earth.

This belief in divine appointment was to become an important factor in American as well as English history, because it was transmitted to the western side of the Atlantic when the English eventually established themselves here.

At the origin of the myth was the widely-held belief that the Christian faith had been brought to Britain directly by Joseph of Arimathea, on the express instructions of the Apostles. Some thought the agent was St. Paul; others believed that Christ himself had paid a secret visit.¹⁰ It was through Britain that the Roman Empire had embraced the faith: for the Emperor Constantine had been British – his mother Helena was the daughter of the British King Coilus.

So, wrote Foxe, "by the help of the British Army," Constantine "obtained...peace and tranquillity to the whole universal Church of Christ."

During the reign of Elizabeth the myth became a historical validation of England's role in resisting the Counter-Reformation and the Continental supremacy of the Catholic Habsburgs. The Elect Nation had imperative duties to perform which were both spiritual and geopolitical.

In the second year of the Queen's reign, John Aylmer wrote in his *An Harborow for faithful and true Subjects* that England was the virgin mother to a second birth of Christ. He stated flatly: "God is English. For you fight not only in the quarrel of

¹⁰ This notion would re-emerge in the imagination of Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism.

your country, but also and chiefly in defense of His true religion and of His dear son Christ. [England says to her children:] ‘God hath brought forth in me the greatest and excellentest treasure that He hath for your comfort and all the world’s.

“He would that out of my womb should come that servant of Christ John Wyclif, who begat Huss, who begat Luther, who begat the truth.”

The most strident in proclaiming the doctrine of the English as the Chosen Race were the explorers and navigators, the seamen and merchant adventurers, and the colonizers and planters. It was they who gave the myth its more direct geopolitical thrust by urging England’s divinely-appointed right to break open Spain’s doomed empire of the Scarlet Woman, the popish Whore of Babylon, and to replace it with an English Protestant kingdom of heaven.

One of them, John Davys, put the new English ideology thus: “There is no doubt that we of England are this saved people, by the eternal and infallible presence of the Lord, predestined to be sent into these Gentiles in the sea, to those isles and famous Kingdoms, there to preach the peace of the Lord; for are not we only set on Mount Zion to give light to all the rest of the world? It is only we, therefore, that must be these shining messengers of the Lord, and none but we!”

All that would later be termed British-Israelism, and would fuel the “Christian Identity” movement, dominion theology and Armstrong’s World Wide Church of God was well established in Elizabethan England.

A tract by John Aylmer included the marginal note, “God is English.” Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, also observed that Almighty God was “so much English.”

Had Roanoke, with no Bible and no preachers, no churches and no ministers, been the foundation of colonial America our nation’s history would have been scarcely less tragic than had Roman roots held in Florida or the Great Lakes region. A third time we see the hand of God in the failure of gallant human enterprise.