

Anne Bradstreet and Jonathan Edwards

Part A.

Directions: Read the following poem by Anne Bradstreet, a Puritan of the Boston area in the 1600s. Then answer the questions.

To My Dear and Loving Husband

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold 5
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee, give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay,
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray. 10
Then while we live, in love let's so persevere
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

—Anne Bradstreet

1. What is the main point in the first four lines?
2. What do the metaphors in lines 5–7 emphasize?
3. What beliefs does this poem reflect?
4. How can the poem help modern readers to connect with the lives of the early settlers?

Part B.

Directions: Jonathan Edwards, a noteworthy preacher and minister, lived during the 1700s, almost a century later than Anne Bradstreet. However, most scholars agree that his famous sermon, from which the following excerpt is taken, accurately reflects Puritan beliefs. Read the excerpt, and answer the questions.

From "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. . . .

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes, as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours.

—Jonathan Edwards

1. Sketch the images presented in the first paragraph. Explain the metaphor.
2. Sketch the images in the second paragraph. What does Edwards mean in his simile involving a spider and a fire?
3. What feelings does he seem to want to inspire in the congregation?
4. What do you think he wanted the people to do?
5. Do preachers today ever give sermons similar to this one?