

Of their Religion.

It has bin a common received opinion from Cicero, that there is no people so barbarous but have some worhipp or other. In this particular, I am not of opinion therein with Tully; and, surely, if hee had bin amongst those people so longe as I have bin, and conversed so much with them touching this matter of Religion, hee would have changed his opinion. Neither should we have found this error, amongst the rest, by the helpe of that wodden prospect,* if it had not been so unadvisedly built upon such highe land as that Coast. (all mens judgements in generall,) doth not yeeld, had hee but taken the judicall councill of Sir William Alexander, that settis this thing forth in an exact and conclusive sentence; if hee be not too obstinate? hee would graunt that worthy writer, that these people are *sine fide, sine lege, & sine rege*, and hee hath exemplified this thinge by a familiar demonstration, which I have by longe experience observed to be true.

And, me thinks, it is absurd to say they have a kinde of worship, and not able to demonstrate whome or what it is they are accustomed to worship. For my part I am more willing to beleve that the Elephants (which are reported to be the most intelligible of all beasts) doe worship the moone, for the reasons given by the author of this report, as Mr. Thomas May, the minion of the Muses dos recite it in his continuation of Lucans historically poem, rather then this man: to that I must bee constrained, to conclude against him, and Cicero, that the Natives of New England have no worship nor religion at all; and I am sure it has been so observed by those that neede not the helpe of a wodden prospect for the matter.

*The reference here is to Wood's *New England's Prospect* (p. 70). In regard to the time when this work was written and published, see Mr. Deane's preface to the edition in the publications of the Prince Society. Morton makes numerous references to it in the *New Canaan*. . . . The present reference is one of the few unintelligible passages in the book. Wood's language, to which Morton apparently takes exception, is as follows: "As it is natural to whom their worship is chiefly bent, is very difficult; they acknowledge especially two, Ketan, who is their good God, to whom they sacrifice after their garners be full with a good crop; upon this God likewise they invoke for fair weather, for rain in time of drought, and for the recovery of their sick; but if they do not hear them, then they verify the old verse, *Flectere si nequeas Superes, Acheronta movebo*, their Pow-wows betaking themselves to their exorcisms and unromantick charms. . . . by God's permission, through the Devil's help, their charms are of force to produce effects of wonderment." Morton would seem to have wished to depreciate Wood as an authority on New England: and so, playing upon his name and the title of his book, he implied that he had taken a much more elevated view of the religious development of the Indians than could be justified either by the actual facts or the judgment of the best informed. Being unintelligible, the passage, from the word "neither" to the end of the paragraph, is reproduced here in all respects, including punctuation, as it is in the text of the original edition. — C. F. Adams.