

characters. It was an age of rapid and great transition, fraught with vast danger to individual character and social habits. Moderation was then as now, a virtue most greatly needed, and yet most difficult of attainment.

It was in such circumstances that the Pilgrims and early Colonists of New England were cradled. Their strength, symmetry, and beauty of character can be properly appreciated only as seen against this dark back-ground. Amidst the greatest extremes, they were characterized, in most things, by marked and decided *moderation*. It is a virtue little noted and seldom mentioned, yet one of the most useful, and the rarest in this world of one-sidedness. As will appear throughout, moderation was truly a characteristic of the Pilgrims.

It is well known that piety—*reverence for Deity*—was one of the most marked characteristics of the early New England Colonists.—They were not negative men in anything, least of all in this respect. They were decidedly *religious* men. Every one of those who landed at Plymouth from the Mayflower, was a professing Christian. Their piety pervaded their entire lives, formed their characters, and influenced them in all their actions. It was this that led them first to Holland and then to New England. They can be appreciated and understood only as their religious character is apprehended. It has been well said, * “They were men whose minds had derived a peculiar tone and elevation from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. They were not content with acknowledging an over-ruling Providence in general terms, as the custom is, but they habitually ascribed every event to the will of that Great Being for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know, to serve, to enjoy *Him* was with them the one great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage, which others substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of being content with catching occasional glimpses of Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze

* Edinburgh Review, vol. xlii. p. 339.