

The sovereignty and goodness of god. assignment



Religion is the fuel for Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*. The experience that she writes does not come from her choices, but rather the choices of God. As critical readers, we tend to magnify certain situations and the effect religion has on those situations. At times, we are influenced to believe Rowlandson because of her persuasive religious allusions. Simultaneously doubt runs through the readers mind bringing in question whether Rowlandson effectively uses religion or rather if it was used in a tawdry kind of way.

We must examine different situations and how she uses strong contrasts to prove her points, but we must also look at the text as a whole to determine how effective religion is in this narrative. Because religion has determined that the Indians are evil, they are also savages. Rowlandson writes that she had six dogs that would stay quiet except when an Indian approach where "they were ready to fly upon him and tear him down." 1 She adds that because God is looking after her, the dogs will protect her against the Indians.

Rowlandson uses religion to demonstrate to the readers that the attack by the dogs is a natural situation. It is as if the dogs viciously attacking the Indians are a matter of fact. In fact, she calls the Indians "heathen," a word that has a negative association with Christianity. 2 The passage where Rowlandson witnesses the Indians tearing her town apart seems dramatic.

The savagery of the Indians is theatrical. Within the gruesome battle, Rowlandson writes about the strength of faith of her dying elder sister; "And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee." 3 The description is almost calming in such a tumultuous situation. It is the strong contrasts that make the religious description more persuasive of how evil these Indians really are.

We see the same use of religion in Rowlandson's experiences in the new environments.