

Religion controls us.

“If the child, on the other hand were really capable of moral and religious growth, and possessed the elements of ultimate salvation, then, surely, it would enjoy all the fairer prospect of these advantages by being transferred to wiser and better guardianship than Hester Prynne’s” (66).

The people knew not the power that moved them thus. They deemed the young clergyman a miracle of holiness. They fancied him the mouth-piece of Heaven’s messages of wisdom, and rebuke, and love. In their eyes the very ground on which he trod was sanctified. The virgins of his church grew pale around him, victims of a passion so imbued with religious sentiment, that they imagined it to be all religion, and brought it openly, in their white bosoms, as their most acceptable sacrifice before the altar (95).

“This woman brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there no law for it? Truly there is both in the scripture and the statute-book” (34).