

from *The True Declaration of the Estate of the Colony in Virginia* (1610) Council of Virginia

[*Providence*]

...God that heard Jonas crying out of the belly of hell, He pitied the distresses of his servants. For behold, in the last period of necessity Sir George Somers descried land, which was by so much the more joyful by how much their danger was despairful. The islands on which they fell were the *Bermudos*, a place hardly accessible through the environing rocks and dangers. Notwithstanding, they were forced to run their ship on shore, which through God's providence fell betwixt two rocks, that caused her to stand firm and not immediately to be broken....

Again, as in the great famine of Israel, God commanded Elias to fly to the brook Cedron, and there fed him by ravens; so God provided for our disconsolate people in the midst of the sea by fowls, but with an admirable difference. Unto Elias the ravens brought meat, unto our men the fowls brought themselves for meat. For when they whistled or made any strange noise, the fowls would come and sit on their shoulders; they would suffer themselves to be taken and weighed by our men, who would make choice of the fattest and fairest, and let fly the lean and lightest....

Consider all these things together. At the instant of need, they descried land; half an hour more, had buried their memorial in the sea. If they had fell by night, what expectation of light from an uninhabited desert? They fell betwixt a labyrinth of rocks, which they conceive are moldered into the sea by thunder and lightning. This was not Ariadne's thread, but the direct line of Gods providence. If it had not been so near land, their company or provision had perished by water; if they had not found hogs and fowls and fish, they had perished by famine; if there had not been fuel, they had perished by want of fire; if there had

not been timber, they could not have transported themselves to Virginia, but must have been forgotten forever. *Nimum timet qui Deo non credit*; he is too impiously fearful that will not trust in God so powerful.

What is there in all this tragical comedy that should discourage us with impossibility of the enterprise? When of all the fleet, one only ship by a secret leak was endangered, and yet in the gulf of despair was so graciously preserved.

[*Order and disorder*]

[Disorder in Virginia:] The ground of all these miseries was the permissive providence of God, who, in the forementioned violent storm, separated the head from the body, all the vital powers of regiment being exiled with Sir Thomas Gates in those infortunate (yet fortunate) islands. The broken remainder of those supplies made a greater shipwrack in the continent of Virginia, by the tempest of dissension: every man, overvaluing his own worth, would be a commander; every man, underprizing another's value, denied to be commanded.