Puritanism: Plaine Style defined

The term "plaine style" refers to a mode of expression characterized by its clarity, accessibility, straightforward simplicity, and lack of ornamentation. In early America, the plaine style aesthetic had broad cultural relevance, shaping the language of prose and poetry, the design of furniture and buildings, and the style of painting and other visual arts. Rejecting ornamental flourishes and superfluous decoration as evidence of sinful vanity, plaine stylists worked to glorify God in their productions rather than show off their own artistry or claim any renown for themselves. As the Puritan minister John Cotton put it, "God's altar needs not our polishings." By shunning extraneous embellishment, practitioners of the plaine style hoped both to make their messages easily understandable and to avoid any distractions that might divert their audience's attention from God. The simplicity, humility, and directness of the plaine style aesthetic appealed to both Quakers and Puritans, for despite profound theological differences, both groups sought religious purity through the rejection of worldly interests.

1. In 2-3 sentences, summarize "plaine style" using your own words. Do not just repeat what you read in the definition above.

After you have read the excerpt from Bradford’s “Of Plymouth Plantation”, complete questions 2 and 3.

2. Copy a quote from Bradford’s excerpt that clearly demonstrates the use of “plaine style”.

3. Copy a quote from Bradford’s excerpt that clearly violates the use of “plaine style”.