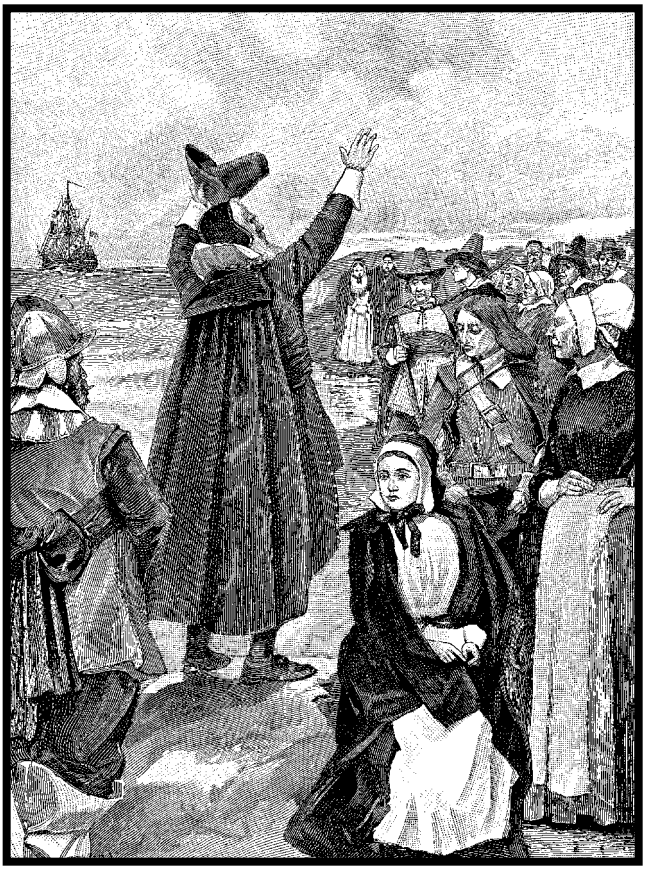
The Mayflower Pilgrims



Edmund Janes Carpenter
Revised by Michael J. McHugh

Revised and edited by Michael J. McHugh
Layout and graphics by **imagineering studios, inc.**
Copyediting by Diane Olson

A publication of
Christian Liberty Press
502 West Euclid Avenue
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
www.christianlibertypress.com

ISBN 1-930092-17-2

Printed in The United States of America

Preface

It was the famous statesman, Daniel Webster, who wrote the following concerning the Mayflower Pilgrims:

> *Finally, let us not forget the religious character of our origin. Our fathers were brought hither by their high veneration for the Christian religion. They journeyed by its light, and labored in its hope. They sought to incorporate its principles with the elements of their society, and to diffuse its influence through all their institutions, civil, political, or literary. Let us cherish these sentiments, and extend this influence still more widely; in the full conviction, that that is the happiest society which partakes in the highest degree of the mild and peaceful spirit of Christianity.*

Contrary to many of the modern views of the significance of the Pilgrims and Puritans of New England, this book presents these people as wholly committed to the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ in a principled manner. Few groups in human history have contributed more to the cause of virtuous liberty and civic equity than those Christians who first settled in New England during the 1620s and 1630s.

The story you are about to read will permit you to gain a true and comprehensive understanding of the contributions and legacy of our Pilgrim fathers. It is a story that is sure to stir your imagination and to fill your heart with wonder as you contemplate how Almighty God chose to use such a tiny settlement to give birth to a great Christian civilization.

God truly does use the weak things of this world to confound the wise and to build up His Kingdom in the hearts of men.

Michael J. McHugh
2004

Contents

Chapter One

Who Were the Pilgrims?

Who were the New England Pilgrims? From where did the Pilgrims travel? Why did they emigrate to the inhospitable shores of New England? What were their distinctive religious views? These often asked questions were at one time almost impossible to answer. The people of New England had long believed that Governor William Bradford, at his death, left a manuscript book of the history of the Colony of Plymouth. The book by Bradford was quoted by the early writers of our country. The Plymouth records contain references to or extracts from this manuscript. Thomas Prince, Cotton Mather, Hubbard, the early New England historian, and Governor Hutchinson all allude to it, or quote from it. It was in the possession of the last named writer as late as the year 1767, when the second volume of his history was written. But from that time onward, for nearly one hundred years, it disappeared from the knowledge of Americans.

In the year 1855, an historical writer and investigator, who was engaged in perusing a copy of Bishop Samuel Wilberforce's *A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America* (London 1844), found in it certain passages that seemed familiar to him. They were stated by the author to be quotations from an ancient manuscript history in the library of the Bishop of London at Fulham Palace. These extracts were marvelously similar to certain quotations from the long-lost Bradford manuscript, as contained in the works of the early New England writers. The clue was slight, but it sufficed. An English antiquary and scholar was asked to examine the manuscript said to be in the library at Fulham Palace. This he did with the most agreeable results. It was, indeed, the long-missing manuscript. It was copied at the request of the Massachusetts Historical Society and, soon after, published by them. In the year 1897, the original volume, by order of the English ecclesiastical authorities, was returned to Massachusetts and is now sacredly preserved in the State House at Boston and has been published at the expense of the state.

The late Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, alluded to this book as "the most precious manuscript on earth, unless we could recover one of the four Gospels as it came in the beginning from the pen of the evangelist." Certainly, its extraordinary discovery served to reveal to the nineteenth century world some of the hidden things of the earth. We learned that the Pilgrims were of the wing of English nonconformists, known variously in their day as Independents or Separatists. For the purposes of this study the term *Separatists* is preferred.

A broad distinction must at the outset be drawn between the two great nonconformist wings of the English Established Church of that period—the Puritans and the Separatists. The sixteenth century was an era of transition, a period in which the human mind, dimly looking into the mists of the future, was girding and preparing itself for a struggle which was to end, long years after, in the establishment of new thoughts, new principles, a broader life and a more thorough recognition of human rights and duties. The struggle for freedom in religion cannot be said to have had its source wholly in the movement which alike affected religious thought and human civilization, and which we know as the Protestant Reformation. It had its origin in the human heart and soul two centuries before Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Church of All Saints at Wittenberg. Even in the seventh century the claim of the bishop of Rome to the headship of the Christian world was but grudgingly acknowledged in England. In the year 702, when a great synod was held at Austerfield, King Alfred and the bishops of the realm defied the edict of the pope, deposed Wilfred, Bishop of York, and practically declared the independence of England from the control of the bishop of Rome.

Following the Reformation in Germany, "the church and people of England," says one historian, "broke away from the medieval papal ecclesiastical system in a manner so exceptional that the rupture had not very much in common with the contemporary movements in France and Germany. In spite of his many faults, Henry VIII was used by God to destroy the papal supremacy, spiritual and temporal, within the land which he governed; he cut the bands which united the Church of England with the great Western Church ruled over by the bishop of Rome. He built up what may be called a kingly papacy on the ruins of the jurisdiction of

the pope. His starting point was a quarrel with the pope, who refused to divorce him from Catharine of Aragon."

"It would be a mistake, however," continues this historian, "to think that Henry's eagerness to be divorced from Catharine accounts for the English Reformation. There was a good deal of heresy, so called, in England long before Luther's voice had been heard in Germany." Henry, to effect his purpose, merely took advantage of a condition which existed, and had existed for centuries, in his realm. And he having established himself as the head of the church in England, his successors saw, they believed, a necessity for maintaining the worship of that church, as a means of maintaining at the same time their own claims to the throne.

King Henry died, and after the brief reign of the boy king, Edward, Mary, the daughter of the Spanish princess Catharine, came to the throne. The horrors of the Inquisition, then raging furiously in Spain, had their reflex in the like tragedies of her short and inglorious reign.

The story of the reign of Mary Tudor, to whom a hard and well-deserved fate has given the title of "Bloody Mary," has so often been told that it is unnecessary to do more than to allude to it here. It was Mary's great desire to bring back the English Church and nation to obedience to Rome; but Queen Mary died and her persecutions for the cause of the Church of Rome ceased, while the church bells rang merrily out upon the English air. The fires of Smithfield died away and for a time it seemed to the people of England that religion and statecraft need not necessarily be bound together. The great Puritan movement arose, which had for its object the purification of the English Church from the abuses into which it had fallen, and from the last trace of Romanism. The severity of Elizabeth for a time extended no farther than to the putting of a bishop in jail because he preferred to dispense with the vestments which had been the church's heritage from Rome. But the Puritans, although following the teachings of the Reformer John Calvin, had no thought of separation from the English Church. They objected to kneeling to receive the holy communion, as being an act of adoration of the Real Presence; and for a while, in the English churches, some who thus objected were permitted to receive it standing or sitting. Hence has come down to Methodists the provision that they who object to receiving the communion kneeling may receive it standing or sitting.

But, broken loose from the bonds of Rome, the people of England found themselves embarked, as it were, on an unknown sea of religious thought and in a condition of unrest and transition. The separation from Rome, the establishment of the English Church apart from papal control, the rise even of Puritanism, failed to satisfy some who were looking, perhaps dimly, forward to a new life, in which all bonds of conventionalism should be broken away. Even in the days of Edward the Sixth and of Mary Tudor there were many secret gatherings by night for prayer and religious converse, among those who saw that true righteousness had not its dwelling place in mere forms and ceremonies. Mary found her martyrs among some of these. And Elizabeth, far more beneficent than Mary, saw many reasons why the English Establishment should be maintained; for she was the daughter of Anne Boleyn, and through its maintenance were upheld the validity of the divorce of Catharine, her own legitimacy, and the security of her throne. When, therefore, a congregation was discovered engaged in their secret and interdicted worship, apart from the ceremonies of the Establishment, she felt no hesitation in thrusting the participants into prison. For these were of the secret sect of Separatists, who dared to obey their own consciences in so far as they were informed by the Holy Scriptures. Five of these, who wrote and distributed tracts disseminating what Elizabeth regarded as the treasonable doctrines of the Separatists, found their way to the scaffold. These were John Copping and Elias Thacker, who were hanged in 1583, and John Greenwood, Henry Barrowe, and John Penry, who followed them to the scaffold ten years later. But eventually, Elizabeth's conscience pricked her and she exclaimed, "Shall we put the servants of God to death?"

But after Elizabeth came James, who declared, "I will make them conform or I will harry them out of the land." And this he continued to do, some fleeing to Germany, others to Holland, until he found that these exiles were flooding England with what he termed heretical tracts, from their new homes across the sea. He soon forbade their emigration.

An examination of the recovered manuscript of Governor Bradford revealed the fact that the Pilgrims were of the group called Separatists and that they had their origin in "sundrie townes and villages, some in Nottinghamshire, some of Lincolnshire, and some of Yorkshire, where they border nearest together." A map of England reveals this cluster of

little English villages, which were called Scrooby, Austerfield, and Gainsborough—charming little hamlets, of which more will be said later. Our concern is just now with these people themselves, who and what they were and by what means they came in conflict with the English authorities and were constrained to flee from their native country. It was during the later years of the reign of Elizabeth that a little band of Christians united themselves together in this little cluster of English villages. "So many of these professors," says Bradford, "as saw the evil of these things in these parts, and whose hearts the Lord had touched with heavenly zeal for His truth, they shook off this yoke of antichristian bondage and as the Lord's free people joined themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in the fellowship of the Gospel, to walk in all His ways, made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them." This was the origin and foundation of the Pilgrim Church of Plymouth, which was carried from Scrooby, England, over the seas to Amsterdam, then to Leyden, and ultimately to the bleak shores of New England.

They who study carefully the various contending conditions operating in English life at this time will perceive that the struggle for freedom in religious thought and practice was multifaceted. First stood the old Church of Rome, contending for absolutism for her pope and clergy. Next stood the Church of England, denying the authority of the pope, either in religious or in civil affairs—although, for a while, retaining many of the ceremonies and dogmas of the Church of Rome. Thirdly stood the great Puritan wing of the English Church, denying Roman dogmas, detesting the Roman vestments and ceremonies, and demanding a greater simplicity in faith and worship. Lastly arose the body of Separatists or Independents as they were variously termed, who, in common with the Puritans, accepted the tenets of Calvin, but, dissatisfied by the lack of a reformation in doctrine and mode of worship in the English Church, called upon the faithful to separate wholly from the Establishment and to form independent churches for worship in faith and simplicity. It was this last named sect, or faction, to which our Pilgrim Fathers belonged.

No one knows by what means an interest in Separatism reached the little cluster of English villages which have been named. We find, however, at the beginning of our story, these little villages imbued with these

doctrines, and the people cautiously and secretly gathering together, on each succeeding Lord's Day, for prayer and biblical fellowship. It is believed, although not positively established, that the place of meeting in Scrooby village was the hayloft of the stable connected with an ancient mansion, once occupied as the manor house of the bishop, but at that time a station on the great royal post road from London northward to Edinburgh. Every movement, social, political, or religious, has necessarily its leaders. This band of faithful ones found its leaders in William Brewster, who later became Elder Brewster of the Pilgrim Church, and a much younger man, William Bradford by name, in later years known as Governor Bradford of Plymouth Plantation, and the historian of the movement so humbly begun, but so broad in its results.

An English nonconformist clergyman, Dr. John Brown, who had been a profound student of Pilgrim life and history, tells us that but for the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, there would have been no Elder Brewster and no Pilgrim Church in Scrooby, in Leyden, or in Plymouth, with all the far-reaching results of its establishment. This remarkable statement is thus explained. William Brewster, the great leader of the movement, in his young manhood was a secretary to William Davison, who was an undersecretary of state to Queen Elizabeth. The queen's duplicity toward Davison is a matter of history well remembered. She greatly desired the death of her cousin Mary, the Scottish queen, then a prisoner at Fotheringay Castle, but yet she hesitated to take the extreme step of ordering her execution. She would doubtless willingly have laid the responsibility upon the shoulders of Cecil, Lord Burghley, but he was too wily to be caught in the meshes of the queen's net. Then she signed Mary's death warrant and gave it to Davison, to be forwarded to Fotheringay. When the news came of Mary's death, the queen affected great indignation, accused Davison of having exceeded his instructions, and removed him from office. With Davison's fall, of course, fell Brewster, and, banished from the royal court, he returned to his home in the little village of Scrooby, where his father was the keeper of the royal post station, to which place he succeeded at his father's death.

Where William Brewster came in touch with the Separatist movement, of which Browne was then the chief exponent, has never been

learned. But after his return to Scrooby he became interested in this religious reform, of which he later became the shining light.

The followers of Brewster were for the most part a humble folk. Brewster himself and his younger colleague, Bradford, were university-bred men; but the majority of their followers were husbandmen in the fields, or keepers of flocks in the villages and surrounding country in which they lived.

These, then, were the people whom history knows as the Pilgrims of New England, whose coming to our shores, almost four hundred years ago, was the true beginning of Christian civilization, as well as representative government in our country.

Chapter Two

The Pilgrim Region in England

As we have seen, the region from where the Pilgrims came was a cluster of small villages in the north of England, at the point where Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire join. This whole region, it is said, was once lowland, composed chiefly of marshes and swamps, at times overflowed by extraordinary tides from the North Sea. Perhaps the best known of the poems of Jean Ingelow, it is remembered, is descriptive of one of these high tides on the coast of Lincolnshire. Centuries ago, however, cunning engineers, mainly Dutchmen, by a system of ditching, diking, and draining converted this swampy country into a beautiful region, dry and fertile. Of the scores and perhaps hundreds of Americans who yearly make their pilgrimage to the Pilgrim shrine at Scrooby, the major portion tell us that the most pleasing approach to the ancient and historic hamlet is on foot from the nearby town of Bawtry, situated about a mile to the northward of the village. Indeed, Bawtry is about equally distant from the villages of Scrooby and Austerfield, both famed in Pilgrim annals. The region lies on a line of railway, distant about one hundred and fifty miles north of London.

The walk from Bawtry to Scrooby is through one of the most lovely as well as most interesting regions in all England. The walk is by no means long and wearisome, for, while the attention of the traveler is taken by the fields, the meadows, and the winding waters of the stream where unite the Idle and the Ryton, the graceful spire of the church at Scrooby breaks upon the sight, through the sweeping branches of the great elms which arch the road. Scrooby is a tiny hamlet of scarcely more than a few hundred souls. Austerfield, though a somewhat larger village, still has a population of less than two thousand. There is no reason to believe that these villages were larger in the Pilgrim time than today, and one of the mysteries which attach to Pilgrim history is by what means so important a movement of God could have had its origin in such a small community. The village of Scrooby, however, was situated on the Great

North Road, which in the sixteenth century was the main highway leading from London to Edinburgh. Despite its small size and population, Scrooby was in those days a place of considerable importance. Here was a manor of the Archbishop of York, surrounded by an ancient moat and supporting a great manor house or mansion. In Pilgrim days, this manor house, although still the property of the bishop of York, was used as a station of the great royal post road. Let it not be forgotten that in 1514, Wolsey, afterward the great cardinal, was the Archbishop of York. A few years later, Wolsey, who had been high in the favor of King Henry VIII, fell from his lofty estate, at the mandate of Anne Boleyn, and, banished from the royal presence, returned to his diocese, took up his residence at the manor house in Scrooby, and here he passed many of his later days.

This circumstance alone, had it no other claims, would readily place the little hamlet of Scrooby in the list of historic places. But there are other things which must serve to add to its fame. In June 1503, Margaret, daughter of King Henry VII—through whom, later, the Stuart sovereigns gained their right to the English throne—was married to King James IV of Scotland. On her wedding journey to her new home, her way led through Scrooby, and here at the manor house she passed a night. Just 100 years later, Robert Carey, cousin of Queen Elizabeth, who lay dead at Richmond, rode stormily through the night, over the Great North Road, and through Scrooby, to carry to the grandson of Margaret the intelligence of the death of the queen of England and of his own accession to the English throne. King Henry VIII passed a night at the manor house in 1541. As we have already learned, it was in the manor house at Scrooby where dwelt the father of William Brewster, then the keeper of the royal post at this station on the Great North Road. Here, after the fall of Davison, Queen Elizabeth's secretary, young Brewster returned and became an assistant to his father. After the death of the latter, young Brewster succeeded to his position as keeper of the post. Here he became the leader of the religious movement that later resulted in the Pilgrim migration and the final settlement at Plymouth.

The old manor house, as it was in Brewster's day, is no longer standing. It is easy, however, to trace the line of its foundations, through the meadow which now covers the place; and a much smaller, but still ancient, dwelling covers a portion of the site. An archway, long since

bricked up, shows the former entrance to some portion of the old mansion and a stable nearby was evidently built of some of the materials of the old manor house, for overhead are certain curiously carved oak beams, once portions of the roof of some lordly hall.

Austerfield, lying two miles north of Scrooby, with the village of Bawtry midway between the two hamlets, was the home of William Bradford, afterward governor of Plymouth. Here, in the little Church of Saint Helen, one can still see the baptismal record of the little child; and not far away stands the unpretentious stone cottage in which the future governor was born. Austerfield, as well as Scrooby, is entitled to its historic fame. Here, in the year 702, as we have before seen, was held the great ecclesiastical synod, which was in reality a struggle of the churches in England against the assumed supremacy of the bishop of Rome. The synod took the form of a hearing of a protest of Wilfrid, bishop of York, concerning the proper date for the celebration of Christ's Resurrection. The English churches had adopted one calendar for computation; the pope employed another. Wilfrid, a warm advocate of papal supremacy, laid the matter before the bishop of Rome, and, of course, was sustained. King Egfrid deposed Wilfrid from his bishopric and the synod sustained his action—the first struggle in England against the claims of papal Rome.

The third of the Pilgrim villages is Gainsborough, lying some ten miles east of Scrooby and Austerfield, and thus forming the apex of a triangle. It was at Gainsborough, indeed, that the Separatist movement in this region may perhaps be said to have had its inception; for there, in 1602, was formed, secretly of course, the formal church of the new faith, of which both Brewster and Bradford were original members. In this town, on the banks of the River Trent, King Alfred was married, and here Canute was proclaimed King of England. Here in the old hall King Henry VIII once held court when he came to Yorkshire in 1541 to receive the submission of a faction of revolting subjects. Hither came, every Sunday, on foot from Scrooby and Austerfield, Bradford and Brewster and others of the faithful brethren, to join in worship with those of Gainsborough and listen to the preaching of the pastor, John Smyth.

The region about this Pilgrim country is of unusual interest. Not far distant is Epworth, the shrine of Methodism throughout the world, the

birthplace of John and Charles Wesley. Within easy distance is Sherwood Forest, renowned for centuries past as the scene of the exploits of Robin Hood and his band of kindly outlaws, who waylaid and robbed the wealthy and distributed the spoils to the poor. Who does not remember the ancient tale of Robin Hood and Friar Tuck, Little John, Scarlet, and Maid Marian, so ancient that its author's name is lost in the mists of antiquity? If we turn again from literature to history, we find, not far from Scrooby and Austerfield, the walls of Fotheringay Castle, where for eighteen years Mary, Queen of Scots, was held a prisoner of state and where she met her death at the hands of the executioners.

Such was the region in which the great Pilgrim movement had its rise. It must not be understood that this region was necessarily the center of the entire Separatist movement of which the Scrooby congregation was but a part. Robert Browne, usually regarded as the originator of the movement for separation, probably never visited Scrooby. As already suggested, by what means the sentiment became rife in this far-away cluster of villages in the north of England is a mystery. But there was perhaps no portion of England at that day to which this movement did not penetrate. Until the authorities discovered, probably through an informer, that Brewster and a company at Scrooby were of the so-called pernicious sect of Separatists, the village of Bury Saint Edmunds, in West Suffolk, was believed to be the place chiefly infested with these rebels; and there were undoubtedly many secret meetings of Separatists held in London itself. Since Scrooby was on the main highway from London to Edinburgh, it is not improbable that some traveler, passing a night at the old manor house, brought this powerful gospel to the ears of Brewster, who spread the story to others. We know too that Brewster, while in the employ of Davison, on one occasion accompanied his master upon a special embassy to Holland, then the refuge of many whose religious convictions had led them to flee from England.

At all events, in Scrooby the movement for Separatism had taken such firm root that its leaders and adherents perhaps grew less wary in their movements. The weekly foot journey of ten miles to Gainsborough and return had become too wearisome for hardworking people to endure and a division had occurred, a separate church being formed in Scrooby, of which Brewster was the leader. Bradford, finding it far more convenient

to walk from Austerfield, through Bawtry, to Scrooby, every Sunday, than to undertake the twenty-mile journey to Gainsborough, joined his fortunes with those of Brewster. Frequent meetings for prayer and fellowship were held, probably in the hayloft of the stable of the manor house, until there came a day of discovery. Brewster, who had been absent, probably in London upon government concerns, returned home to find that a considerable company of the faithful, including his own wife, had been arrested and lodged in jail. Brewster escaped in God's kind providence and went into hiding. Bradford does not seem, at this time, to have been known openly as a Separatist, so he also escaped the clutches of the law.

But this crisis brought to the leaders the stern alternative of flight from the country or the abandonment of their faith. To their minds there was no alternative; apostasy was not for a moment to be considered. Nothing was left but flight. The "lockup" in this tiny village was probably inadequate for the permanent detention of the arrested ones, and they were soon set at liberty. The story of the Pilgrims' journey to Holland must be told in another chapter.

Chapter Three

The Flight to Holland

As we have already learned, the Separatist Church at Gainsborough was formed in 1602, while the church at Scrooby was formed in 1606. The formation was simple. The friends were gathered together, probably in the hayloft of the stable adjacent to the manor house. We are told that "there was first one stood up and made a covenant, and then another, and these two joined together, and so a third, and these became a church." Now comes into the story one Richard Clyfton, described by Bradford as "a grave and revered preacher, who by his pains and diligence had done much good and under God had been the means of the conversion of many." Mr. Clyfton at the beginning of our story was the rector of the English Church at Babworth, a village some eight miles south of Scrooby. The cause of the Separatists, by the execution of Greenwood and Barrowe, had received a severe setback; but it was just at this period of discouragement that the Scrooby church was formed.

Richard Clyfton had been educated at Cambridge, as had also Brewster. He was some years older than Brewster, for he was born in 1553, while Brewster's year of birth was 1566. He had been the rector of Babworth for sixteen years when he cast in his lot with the Scrooby brethren. There had been for some years serious scandals, involving many of the English Church clergy in this region. Lord Burghley, the premier of Elizabeth, is quoted as having openly accused the Bishop of Lichfield of having "made seventy ministers in one day for money, some tailors, some shoemakers, and other craftsmen." There are even records of English "gentlemen," who had church "livings" at their disposal, having procured the appointment of their stewards or coachmen to the vacancies, that the emoluments of the positions might be turned into their own treasuries. Such a man as Clyfton could not remain content with such conditions in the church, and he had long been recognized as a Puritan and reformer. The exact date at which he broke with the English Church is not fixed, but it was not far from the opening year of the seventeenth century. How he occupied himself from

this time until the formation of the church at Scrooby is uncertain, but the fact is established that he became its first pastor. Associated with him as his assistant was the Rev. John Robinson, who joined his fortunes to those of the Scrooby brethren in 1604. He too was a Cambridge graduate. He was for a time in charge of a parish near Norwich, but lost this position by reason of his reformist views. Then came his separation from the English Church and his union with the Scrooby movement.

William Bradford, who must be mentioned in this connection—for Brewster, Clyfton, Bradford, and Robinson were the four great leaders of this movement—was led to take an interest in the Separatist idea mainly through the teachings of Clyfton at Babworth, ten miles distant from his home in Austerfield. He was a member of a family of English gentry, from whom he was estranged by reason of his firm commitment to biblical faith, doubtless being regarded by his relatives as extreme. He was more than twenty years younger than Brewster, and indeed was only a youth of seventeen when he first began to meet with the brethren at Scrooby. It was not until some years later, therefore, that he became a force among them. Brewster, Clyfton, and Robinson, especially the first two named, were men of some prominence in this region, and it is not surprising that their activity in the tiny hamlet of Scrooby soon attracted the attention of the authorities. The meetings of the church were held with great secrecy. Bradford says of Brewster that "after they were joined together in communion he was a special stay and help to them. They ordinarily met at his house on the Lord's Day, which was a manor of the bishop's, and with great love he entertained them when they came, making provision for them to his great charge."

But little is known of the rank and file of the little congregation. It is certain that they were for the most part humble folk. Since this was an agricultural region, they were undoubtedly chiefly farmers, upon lands leased from the archbishop's holdings. None save the four leaders were probably educated, although all perhaps were able to write, for none of the signatures affixed to the Compact at Cape Cod were, so far as is known, signed with a cross. All were people sincere in their convictions and firm in their faith.

Scarcely a year had passed after the formation of the church at Scrooby when persecution fell upon them. Bradford says that they "could not long

continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted and persecuted on every side, so as their former afflictions were but as flea-bitings in comparison of those which now came upon them. For some were taken and thrown in prison, others had their houses watched night and day and barely escaped their hands; and the most were faine to flee and leave their houses and habitations and the means of their livelihood. Yet these and many other sharper things which afterward befell them were no other than they looked for and therefore were the better prepared to bear them, by the assistance of God's grace and spirit."

In the records of the ecclesiastical court at York is found ample corroboration of these statements of Bradford, concerning the persecution of the Scrooby people for cause of conscience. These records show that one "Gervase Neville of Scrowbie, holding and maintaining erroneous opinions and doctrines," was arrested upon a warrant issued to one William Blanchard, messenger, and confined in York Castle. On September 15, 1607, a warrant was issued for the apprehension of Richard Jackson and William Brewster for civil disobedience. The return upon the warrant certified that the officer had been unable to find the two culprits. There was good reason for this failure of the officers of the law to find and apprehend William Brewster, for at that very time he was doubtless in Boston, on the coast of Lincolnshire, endeavoring to obtain passage for himself and his neighbors to Holland. The wife of William Brewster had some weeks before this been arrested and confined in York Castle. The long arm of persecution was reaching out for him, and nothing seemed left but flight, if possible, to Holland, a country which, since the days of William the Silent, had been a refuge for the oppressed in the cause of religion. There was even then in Amsterdam a colony of English religious refugees, some from London, others from other parts of the kingdom. Indeed, it is probable, if not certain, that some of these refugees were from among their own neighbors at Gainsborough. With sorrow they therefore resolved to turn their faces from their native land.

A serious undertaking was this for these simple people, and to them it meant much. They must leave the places which they called home, where the greater number of them had been born. Wholly unaccustomed to travel, they must dispose of their household goods as best they might, abandon their means of livelihood, and with but little money, go forth across

the sea, into a foreign land, where all were strangers and where a strange tongue was spoken. Not only this, but having reached that unknown land, they must without delay seek a new means of gaining a livelihood.

But it was a stern necessity which confronted them and a necessity full of tribulations and dangers. To leave the country without a license was forbidden by law, and the party knew that to obtain a license to emigrate for the cause of religion, would be impossible. Too many Separatists already were taking advantage of the freedom of the press in Holland and were sending over into England their schismatic writings. If they were to emigrate to this land of promise, it must be in secret. From time to time attempts were made by small detached parties to obtain passage, but in every case they were detected and their persons and effects seized by officers of the law. The case had, however, become desperate, and Brewster, while the officer was seeking him to serve the warrant of arrest upon him, was bargaining with the captain of a vessel lying at the port of Boston to convey the entire Scrooby party across the sea. The captain affected to make a bargain for the passage of the party, but meanwhile was plotting for their betrayal.

It was in September 1607, that the attempt at flight was made. It is probable that the men of the company made the journey from Scrooby to Boston in small parties, on foot and by night. The women and children, with such of their household goods as they could take with them, were conveyed by boat down the Trent and Humber to tidewater and so to Boston. All seemed to be progressing well. The party arrived at the coast by night and was taken in open boats to the vessel which was anchored off shore. But the officers of the law were in waiting, the party was arrested, robbed and maltreated, and taken back to Boston as prisoners. There were cells beneath the Guild Hall, and here were these malefactors thrust, while they awaited the action of the law for their crimes. The old building and the cells in the basement are still to be seen.

Here, huddled together, these unhappy people—men, women, and children—were confined for a time. The magistrates, having strong Puritan sympathies, treated them as courteously as possible, but were unable to release them without an order from the Privy Council at London; and there were no railway trains, telegraphs, nor telephones in those days. But

it was impossible to keep these women and children long in confinement and they were presently released, a few of the leaders being detained in jail for a month or more. It is probable that among these unfortunates were Brewster, Clyfton, and Robinson, and perhaps Bradford. How or when these obtained their liberty is unknown; but this failure, although discouraging, did not cause them to desist from their purpose.

A second attempt was made in the spring of 1608, and although accompanied by great difficulties, at last proved successful. This time a bargain was made with a Dutch captain. The journey from Scrooby to the coast was accomplished as before, the vessel lay off shore, and all seemed to be going well. But a delay was caused by a low tide, and when at length one boatload of the refugees had been put on board, a posse of civil officers and soldiers was seen in pursuit of the party still on shore. Some were on horseback, some on foot, and all armed with guns, clubs, and other weapons. The party which had been taken on board was composed chiefly of the men of the company. The women and children, with their goods, were in their boat, stranded by the low tide. These, then, fell into the hands of the mob, which, under the cover of the law, descended upon them. The Dutch captain, alarmed for his own safety, hoisted sail and sailed away, leaving the most helpless portion of the company to the tender mercies of the mob.

The terror and distress of these poor women and children can scarcely be measured. Despite their tears and shrieks, they were seized, mistreated, and hustled from one magistrate to another. But the men whose arrest the officers had chiefly sought had escaped their clutches, and weeks later the women and children were released, after being stripped of their few possessions.

How the party eventually became reunited is not known. The vessel encountered a severe storm and narrowly escaped wreck; but the party at length reached Amsterdam, where, after a while, the women and children, in small detachments, joined them. "And in the end," says Bradford, "notwithstanding all these storms of opposition, they all gatt over at length, some at one time and some at another and some in one place and some in another, and mett together again according to their desires with no small rejoicing."