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THE PILGRIM FATHERS



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By Jane Moxon

INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 marked the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Pilgrim Fathers on *The Mayflower*. Those pioneers were Puritans.

It fascinated me that the Puritans used the Jewish model for family life at a time when Jewish people were not allowed to live in England. This connection came from both the Hebrew scholars and from the Bible becoming accessible to the common man. As people began to see the sweep of Scripture and read the prophecies, they began to understand God's purposes for Israel, the people and the nation.

They saw prophecies yet to be fulfilled and began to realise that before Jesus returns the gospel must go out into every ethnic group and the Jewish people must return to their land.

This paper endeavours to show the connection between the Puritans and CMJ's Biblical understanding of God's purposes for His ancient people.

A CMJ tour of the UK to mark the anniversary was planned for 2020 but due to the pandemic restrictions, this was postponed to September 2021. During the tour we will see for ourselves many of the places mentioned in this booklet and also look at the beginnings of CMJ.

We follow the five leaders of the Pilgrim Fathers who all came from an area of just seven miles by four miles, known as the Pilgrim Quadrilateral, largely in North Nottinghamshire (see the map in the middle pages). This core group comprised the Revd Richard Clyfton of Babworth, William Bradford of Austerfield, William Brewster of Scrooby, the Revd John Robinson of Sturton-le-Steeple and John Smyth of Gainsborough.

For details of the CMJ Pilgrim Fathers Tour, 11–19 September 2021, please see our website: cmj.org.uk
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North East Nottinghamshire 1602

Which 12-year-old boy do you know who would walk ten miles to church every Sunday and ten miles home again? I can't think of one. This boy, who had been baptised and named William Bradford in St Helena's, Austerfield, North Nottinghamshire, was destined to become the future Governor of the Plymouth (or Plimoth) Plantation in America.

An unlikely leader of men, William (1590–1657) was a sickly boy who had been orphaned at seven, but he turned to reading and became a Christian through studying the Bible. Over his lifetime William educated himself in theology and taught himself five languages.

When you read that someone taught himself five extra languages, it is easy to pass over this as if he was telling you he had made five pots of strawberry jam from the fruit in his garden. William taught himself these languages without any formal education. He learnt Hebrew and Greek in order to read the Bible in its original languages.

We must not just gloss over the fact that William Bradford and the others achieved great things but pause to realise they were in fact great men. These great men, so gifted, loved God more than life itself and used all they had to bring the Church back to a biblical foundation.

At the age of twelve, William heard of a preacher in Babworth who was different from others and did not conform to normal Church practice. Intrigued, William walked the ten miles to All Saints', Babworth from Austerfield to hear the Revd Richard Clyfton.

This gracious man, Richard Clyfton, a Brownist, served in the Church, first for one year near Newark and then at All Saints',

Babworth for twenty years. In Babworth, Clyfton's preaching and teaching drew like-minded people from the surrounding area. During the years in Babworth the group became known as Separatists.

William Brewster (1567 - 1644) the third of the core group of Pilgrims.

It was in Babworth that the young William Bradford met another William, 22 years his senior and from Scrooby. William Brewster's father had worked for the Archbishop of York and when his father died, William took on his job as Scrooby's magistrate, bailiff-receiver (the collector of rents from the local area) and Postmaster, in which he oversaw the changing of horses of the Royal Post and gave accommodation to the drivers, since Scrooby was on the Great North Road from London to Scotland.

William Brewster was also an English tutor and had attended Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he became a Separatist. Brewster then had a short time working for William Davidson, a leading British diplomat in the Netherlands so he had seen for himself the freedom of religion and worship that existed there.

When William Bradford walked to Babworth he would go through Scrooby and join the Brewster family to walk the next seven miles to Babworth. William Brewster took young William under his wing, lending him many Puritan books to read and discuss - no doubt shortening the distance to Babworth. When William Bradford was scorned by his uncle and mocked by their neighbours for his Puritan leanings, William Brewster took him to live with his family in Scrooby Manor.

It was, however, the Revd Richard Clyfton (1553 - 1616) who was the founder and leader of this band of Separatists. Thus, William Bradford had two Fathers in the Faith who disciplined and encouraged him. Little could they have suspected where this would lead.

Two events changed for Richard Clyfton. In 1603, Queen Elizabeth I died. Whilst she had had a small amount of sympathy towards the Puritans and Separatists, James I who ascended to the throne did not. The Archbishop of York, Matthew Hutton, had been lenient towards the Puritans and for some time was suspected of Puritan sympathies. Since York covered North Nottinghamshire, when Archbishop Hutton died and an ardent loyalist of James I replaced him, Richard Clyfton's years of freedom to preach as he wanted in the Anglican Church came to an end.

It became difficult for Puritan ministers in the Church of England, but for Separatist ministers, unsurprisingly, it became impossible after 1604. The mood had been hopeful; the Millenary Petition, in which one thousand clergy petitioned the King, set out their demands for reform. This resulted in the Hampton Court Conference in which the King met with Puritan leaders and Bishops. James agreed to commission a new translation of the Bible - the King James Bible. Shortly afterwards a large number of these would-be reformers were dismissed. For Richard Clyfton, this ended his years in the Church of England. His post at All Saint's, Babworth was taken from him in 1605. Clyfton and his family were invited to live with the Brewsters in Scrooby.

It was providential that William Brewster was now working for the Archbishop of York and living in the Archbishop's manor house at Scrooby. I imagine the significance of this was not lost on the Separatists who met there.

Undaunted by his dismissal, Clyfton pastored the congregation in Scrooby Manor. The Revd John Robinson, a gifted Bible teacher, became his assistant in 1607 when Robinson joined the group in the home of his old friend William Brewster, bringing the group to around 100 people. William and Mary Brewster were noted for their greatness of heart and care for the people they were entrusted with.

The Revd John Robinson (1576 - 1625) the fourth person in the group had been born in Sturton-le-Steeple. He attended Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in 1592, where he came under the influence of Laurence Chadderton and William Perkins, two outstanding Puritan minds. By 1599 he had obtained a BA and an MA, had been made a Fellow of the College and become an Anglican priest. Robinson remained at Corpus Christi as a lecturer in Greek and with responsibilities for overseeing a group of students.

From Cambridge, Robinson took a post in 1603 at St Andrew's Church in Norwich as an Associate Pastor. Here too he met many Puritans. However, his church leadership was cut short in 1604 by James I requiring all ministers to conform to a new Book of Canons. Robinson had to 'jump ship before he was pushed' since to try to remain in the Church of England would have led to his excommunication. It is worth saying the Puritans as a whole chose to weather the storm within the Church but this was something the Separatists could not do.

'Struck down but not destroyed' - John Robinson married Bridget White from his home village of Sturton, in Greasley, Nottinghamshire. In order to marry he had to resign his Fellowship of Corpus Christi, Cambridge, since no Fellows could marry. Robinson preached in various places around Nottinghamshire and ended up back at home in Sturton-le-Steeple in 1605.

The Revd John Smyth (1554 - 1612) the fifth person also came from Sturton-le-Steeple. After Grammar School in Gainsborough, John Smyth went to Christ's College, Cambridge. He became a Fellow in 1594, was ordained as an Anglican priest that same year and was engaged as a preacher in Lincoln.

It was not long before Smyth found himself at odds with the Church and, after a short spell in prison for preaching what were deemed unorthodox views, he was dismissed by the Bishop of

Lincoln in 1602. John Smyth returned home and joined not the Scrooby congregation but one that met at Gainsborough Old Hall, ten miles away. This second Separatist congregation in the area had between 60 - 70 people. They met in the home of Sir William Hickman and family, all of Separatist persuasion, who risked imprisonment or at least a hefty fine for allowing the congregation to meet there. John Smyth led the congregation and quite a number of Separatists from Lincoln came with him. Another notable couple who joined him there were Thomas and Joan Helwys from Broxtowe Hall in Nottinghamshire (see p.24).

What was the common denominator in these five men's stories?

I think that to understand the source of this teaching and influence, we need to look at Cambridge:

- William Brewster attended Peterhouse, Cambridge.
- John Robinson went to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and became a Fellow.
- John Smyth went to Christ's College, Cambridge and became a Fellow.
- William Bradford received no formal schooling but, self-motivated and studious, he came under the tutorship of both Richard Clyfton and William Brewster.
- There are divided opinions as to whether Clyfton went to Cambridge. However, a comment by John Smyth referring to Clyfton as an uneducated man suggests that he did not. Whether this was a moment of pique or a reference to his actual education we may never know!

What was happening in Cambridge?

Cambridge was a centre for Puritanism and there were many influential teachers.

Henry VIII had set up a Regius Professorship of Hebrew at Cambridge in 1540.

Some of the great Reformers and theologians had studied in Cambridge. William Tyndale went first to Oxford and then to Cambridge for a five further years: Thomas Cranmer and Hugh Latimer also attended Cambridge. Martin Bucer, another great theologian and one of the co-founders of Calvinism, ended his days at Cambridge.

Important Puritan minds in Cambridge

Martin Bucer (1491 - 1551) was born on the German-French border near Strasbourg. He became a Dominican monk but left in 1518 after meeting Martin Luther. The following year he had his vows annulled and married an ex-nun, and he then worked tirelessly for the Reformation. He was a co-founder of Calvinism. (Just reading about his accomplishments makes one feel quite exhausted!) In Europe, Bucer met several Jewish people and formed a very different opinion from many in England who had not actually met a Jewish person. Bucer felt that each had much to learn from the other and they should be partners on the road of life and faith.

In 1548 Bucer 'crossed swords' with the Holy Roman Emperor's wishes and had to flee. He came to England to Cambridge and lectured at the university. Martin's amazing work on Church and State, *De Regno Christi*, drew the attention of King Edward VI, Henry VIII's son, and Cambridge University awarded Martin a Doctorate of Divinity. He was a man of great stature and of significance to us because he taught the conversion of the Jewish people. Conversion is not a word we use now: other terms are preferred since Jewish people who believe in the Messiah are still Jewish, and therefore they have not 'converted' into anything else!

Sadly, the British weather did not suit Martin Bucer and he died too soon in 1551.

Francis Kett (1547 - 89) of Corpus Christi, Cambridge was burnt to death in the ditch of Norwich Castle. After he was martyred, a tract appeared. It was written by Andrew Willet (1562-1621), in Latin: *The Last Call for the world and the Jews*. In the tract he blames Kett's death on his views about the Jewish people. Kett believed in the need for their conversion and the literal return of the Jewish people to Israel. He also believed Jesus had suffered for the world as a man and would be made God at the second resurrection. Willet agreed with Kett's views of Jewish conversion but rejected his views on the Restoration of Israel. He figured since they had not managed it in fifteen hundred years when things were easier, they would never manage it.

Thomas Cartwright (1535 - 1603) of Clare Hall and St John's College was a Professor of Divinity in the 1560s whose influence spread to many students who became notable Puritan preachers.

Laurence Chadderton (1536 - 1640) went to Christ's College, Cambridge and after a short time came into agreement with Reformed doctrines. This of course meant that his Roman Catholic father disinherited him. In 1567 Chadderton became a Fellow of Christ's College and later became minister at St Clement's Church, Cambridge. When Sir Walter Mildmay founded Emmanuel College, he asked Chadderton to be the first Master. Chadderton was also one of the translators of the King James Bible.

Hugh Broughton (1549 - 1612), influenced by Bucer, was a Cambridge scholar and theologian who proposed a mission to the Jews in the Near East and proposed translating the Bible into Hebrew. By 1600, Hugh Broughton was England's finest Hebrew scholar and interestingly he had prophesied the scattering of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Broughton had also influenced William Perkins, mentioned above.

Henry Finch (1558 - 1625) went to Christ's College, Cambridge. He was a lawyer and worked for people such as Francis Bacon.

He was a politician, entering Parliament for Canterbury in 1593 and was Recorder for Sandwich in 1613. He was one of the first advocates for the Jewish people to return and be restored to their Land. In 1621, Henry wrote *The World's Great Restauration, or Calling of the Jews, and with them of all the Kingdoms of the Earth to the Faith of Christ*. This book was published anonymously by his friend and disciple, William Gouge, and was of great significance.

The book was written to '*all the seed of Jacob farre and wide dispersed*'. He dedicates the book to *The Children of Israel* and says it was '*written for their sake in Hebrew*.'

The theme of the restoration of the Jewish people to the Land God had given them was to continue to grow and by the middle of the seventeenth century it had taken hold.

William Perkins (1558 - 1602) from Warwickshire, of Christ's College, Cambridge. William was a theologian and a foremost leader of the Puritan movement. He wrote *The Art of Propheying* [preaching].

Thomas Brightman (1562 - 1607) from Nottingham, of Queens' College, Cambridge. Brightman's major work was not published until after his death: *Revelation of Revelation*, first in Latin and then in English by 1616. He saw papal Rome as the anti-Christ, to be followed by the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the calling of the Jewish people to their Land, where they would turn to the Messiah. Brightman famously said, 'What? Shall they [the Jews] return to Jerusalem again? There is nothing more certain: the prophets do everywhere confirm it and beat upon it.'

Thomas Draxe (d 1618) went to Christ's College, Cambridge. Draxe was of the same mind as Brightman about the Jewish people and wrote a commentary on Romans 11 with a similar title, '*The World's Resurrection or the Calling of the Jews*'. Draxe marvels at the work of God that the Jews continued to be a '*distinct and*

unconfounded nation . . . and so constant keeping and observing of (as much as they possibly may) their ancient laws, rites and ceremonies . . . They have been in the time of greatest persecution, when the tyrants of the world sought to extinguish and root out Scriptures (and still are) the faithful keepers of the Old Testament: and all this may put us in some good hope of their future calling and conversion.'

Draxe, along with others of this era, fought against the exclusion that was still in place of Jewish people living in England since 1290. They argued that since God had said they would be dispersed throughout the world before they would be re-gathered and restored to their Land so that God could bring them to faith in their Messiah, it was necessary to allow them back into Britain for this to take place.

Henry Ainsworth (1571 - 1622) It seems likely that Hugh Broughton (see p.12) and William Perkins led both John Smyth of Gainsborough and John Robinson to come under the influence of a clergyman from Norfolk called Henry Ainsworth. Henry had studied at Cambridge, first St John's College and then Gonville & Caius College, and become a Brownist. In a weak moment he caved in to the Church of England after being arrested for his Separatist views but soon left for Amsterdam where, by 1597, he was leading a congregation.

Hebrew had a special appeal for the Puritans and therefore the Pilgrim Fathers. Ainsworth adopted the rabbi's method of textual analysis, extracting all possible meaning from any passage. His book, *Annotations Upon the First Five Books of Moses*, travelled to New England with the Pilgrims. William Bradford was greatly impressed by Judaism which is likely in part thanks to Ainsworth.

Richard Sibbes (1577 - 1635) attended St John's College, Cambridge and then became Master of St Catherine's College in 1626. Sibbes was a Puritan, but remained in the Church of England. In 1610 he was appointed a lecturer at Holy Trinity

Church, Cambridge and years later returned as its vicar. It was at Holy Trinity Church, where, a couple of centuries later, Charles Simeon received his living. Simeon was a founding member of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews (now CMJ) in 1809 and travelled the country speaking on behalf of the ministry.

Thomas Goodwin (1600 - 80) a Fellow of St Catherine's College and then a Puritan Vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, was most famous for his book, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven towards sinners on Earth* (1651).

Emmanuel College Cambridge was founded in 1584 by Puritan Sir Walter Mildmay, Elizabeth I's Chancellor of the Exchequer, as a Puritan College to train Anglican clergymen. By 1620, Emmanuel was one of the largest colleges. Of the one hundred Cambridge graduates who later went to New England, one third had attended Emmanuel College.

Christ's College Cambridge was also a Puritan college in Elizabethan England and in 1625 John Milton went to Christ's College. Milton's poetry was probably studied by us all at school, but we may not all have realised that he was a great Puritan advocate as well as a great poet.

The Brownists

Robert Browne from Rutland (born c.1550, died 1633) attended Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He was Influenced by the Puritan theologian, Thomas Cartwright, and by Richard Greenham, a Puritan Rector near Cambridge. Browne became a lecturer at St Mary's, Islington in London, where he drew attention for his preaching against the doctrines of the Church of England.

In London, an 'underground' Puritan church had existed. It was made up of those on the fringes of the Church of England. This

eventually left the Church of England forming congregations of Separatists who grew to between several hundred and a thousand people across London. By the time Robert Browne set up his congregation in Norwich in 1581, he believed the London church had entirely gone. Many clergy had been arrested or fined, fourteen of them were de-frocked and the people scattered; but the church had not gone, it was revived in the late 1580s.

Browne returned to Cambridge to complete his ordination but after a short time moved to Norwich. By this time Browne had moved further away from Puritan ideals. In 1581 he set up the first Separatist church in Norwich. The congregation and others who had come under his teaching were known as Brownists, after Browne himself. A short spell in prison caused Browne and some of his group to go to Holland, where Browne led a congregation but after a couple of years there was a split in the congregation. Browne returned to England and to the Church of England, becoming first a Headmaster and then a Church of England minister. You can imagine this did not go down very well with other Brownists, particularly as two men had been hanged in Bury St Edmunds for distributing some of Browne's writings in 1583.

By 1620 the use of the term Brownists had faded and all were called Separatists. So the answer to the question: Brownists or Separatists: what is the difference? None! Dissenters, Brownists or Separatists - it all meant the same.

The Reformation

Who Started the Reformation?

John Wycliffe (1330 - 84) said:

'Trust wholly in Christ; rely altogether on His sufferings; beware of seeking to be justified in any other way than by His righteousness.'
'Holy Scripture is the highest authority for every believer, the

standard of faith and the foundation for reform in religious, political and social life . . . in itself it is perfectly sufficient for salvation, without the addition of customs or traditions.'

(This may be one reason why the Pope in 1415 decided he was a heretic!)

It may have been John Wycliffe, a Yorkshireman, who started the Reformation in the fourteenth century when he spent a year in his rooms at Oxford seeing to the translation of the Bible so the ordinary man could read God's Laws (the Torah) for himself. However, since we all build on each other's thoughts and actions, and Wycliffe had similarly minded friends and influencers, it may be hard to pinpoint one person. When God starts a new thing, it seems to bubble up in many places.

It is commonly accepted that the Reformation started with Luther. In 1517 two significant things happened: the Ottoman Turks gained Israel and Luther dramatically nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg. One was taking physical ground and the other was taking spiritual ground. One was imprisoning the Jewish Homeland and the other was starting the process that would lead to the freedom and restoration of the Jewish people to the Land. Interestingly neither Luther nor Calvin believed the Jewish people would return to Israel, thinking it an impossible task after so long!

Four hundred years later, in 1917, another two things happened: the Ottoman Empire was defeated and secondly they were defeated by the British, who for four hundred years had prayed for the Jewish people to be restored to their homeland. General Edmund Allenby (from Nottinghamshire) stood outside David's Citadel and took the surrender of the Turks inside Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem - right opposite Christ Church, the CMJ base in Israel. Over those four hundred years, as the Ottoman Turks had set their minds to taking physical land, the mustard seed was growing

in the hearts of Christians who were coming to understand God's purposes for the Jewish People. Just as the Hebrew people cried out to God from Egypt over those four hundred years of captivity, it was now the turn of the Christians who first grasped the vision to pray and cry out for four hundred years for God's purposes to be fulfilled, for the Jewish people to return to their Land.

What or who caused change in Britain during the Reformation?

Henry VIII did, and for all the wrong reasons. He simply wanted to divorce his wife and marry another, but the Pope was not prepared to allow that change in the rules, and no self-respecting sixteenth century Monarch was going to let such a trifle get in his way. Henry passed a new law in 1534, *The Act of Supremacy*, which said that the Monarch (Henry VIII) was now the supreme head on earth of the Church of England, thereby severing ecclesiastical links with Rome. It was surprising that no one had done that earlier. So Rome said good-bye to Henry, Henry divorced his wife and married the next one, Anne Boleyn.

Henry also needed some money to sustain his wars against Scotland and France. He came up with an idea: he dissolved all the monasteries - after all they were Roman Catholic and, more to the point, they were extremely wealthy. War finance problem solved!

The worship in the new Church of England was not much different from before and it is said that Henry had only changed Roman Catholicism in name.

Anne Boleyn might well have wished that the Pope had put his foot down, since Henry, having moved heaven and earth to marry her, had her beheaded two years later, in 1536.

There was one significant change, however. Henry commissioned a translation of the Bible into English. It became known as the

Great Bible due to its size and was printed in 1539. Until 1536 it had been illegal to produce a Bible in English, (all the better to control the people!) but Henry wanted an English Bible placing in every parish. Whatever Henry's motives were, the Bible in English was now accessible to everyone.

Another law was passed a few years after Henry's death, ensuring that worship should follow the Book of Common Prayer, *The 1558 Act of Uniformity* (although 'Uniformity' is not a word that suits the British temperament).

Despite all, the Church had now lost her authority for the English people and been replaced by the Bible as their religious guide; by the end of the Tudor dynasty the Bible had become the 'Book of Books' for English people. It was our authority. We loved it, we read it, we memorised it and we lived by it. It was ours.

I must be fair to History. Reform had been in the air since Wycliffe translated the Bible for the common man. Hundreds and hundreds of copies were copied by hand. Ideas of Reform were coming in from Europe and, with the invention of the printing press, William Tyndale's Bible spread rapidly enabling enough people to understand the Truth that had previously been filtered through the minds of the Church hierarchy. Tutors and students, clergy and laymen were influencing congregations long before Henry got himself thrown out of the Roman Catholic Church. At first Henry's excommunication would have appeared the answer to the Reformers' prayers. It was not the answer, but it was a start.

After Henry

Change had come, but many felt it to be not enough: there were still traces of Catholic ritual, and certainly Bishops, and therefore the Church hierarchy were still in place. This did not square with the ways of the Early Church people could now read about in the

Bible. The vestments, bowing when Jesus' Name was mentioned, observance of saints' days, the sign of the cross on infants being baptised, infant baptism itself, the wearing of a wedding ring were seen as Catholic practices.

Elizabeth, however, had gone as far as she wanted with the Reformation and that Act of Uniformity in 1558 carried another surprise for the people. Anyone who did not attend church was issued with a fine or worse. Uniformity meant 'all in or else.' As I said, it is not a word the English like.

The term 'Puritan' was first used in 1565. Puritans were people who wanted to see the Church *purified* from within. However, the ideas of the Reformation had already been spreading in some of the universities. People were calling themselves Separatists and meeting together to study the Bible in similarly minded groups.

One English translation of the Bible had been done in Geneva in 1557-60. This Bible, translated by Protestant scholars, became the main Bible of the Puritans. It was printed and distributed far and wide and if Henry's Great Bible had a certain slant, the Geneva Bible had copious footnotes that upheld Protestant understanding. The nineteenth century theologian, Cleveland Boyd McAfee said, 'it drove the Great Bible off the field by the sheer power of excellence.'

It was the Geneva Bible that the Pilgrim Fathers took on the Mayflower.

Four types of church groups

In Jesus' time there were many religious groups and broadly speaking they can be simplified into four main streams. I see this pattern in the Church of today, the Church of the sixteenth century and all in between.

In the Second Temple period we speak about the Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots and Essenes. They all represented different responses to Roman rule.

There were the Sadducees.

'Maybe we fix the game with something shady' go the lyrics in 'Easy Street' from Annie the Musical.

The Temple leadership at that time had fallen into the hands of the Sadducees, a religious group who did not believe in the resurrection. They did believe, however, in bribery and living in harmony with one's invaders at any cost. They paid the Romans to let them have positions within the Temple; the High Priest bought his position. They may have justified this to themselves as the way to keep the peace - 'so that we don't get slaughtered by our ruthless invaders, we can mediate between our oppressors and the people.'

There were the Pharisees.

They would like the 'Carry On' cards - *'Sit Tight and Carry On!'*

The Pharisees really tried to keep the Torah and they believed in reform from within the established order, the Temple worship. We are guilty of making them into caricatures and they get a bad press. There were some duffers there but there were also great men of stature among them: they can be found in the Gospels.

There were the Zealots.

'Rid Rome to Save Your Home!'

Their attitude was: if you do not fight Rome, she will never leave. In our time I think they would carry placards saying: *'Rid Rome to Save Your Home!'* and every day from the Temple towers they

would surely shout that out. Certainly, they would have pasted posters across Jerusalem and put a flyer through the letterbox of every household. There would be violent protests in the public places. For certain, the statues of Emperor Tiberius, King Herod and Caiaphas the High Priest would be pulled down and thrown into the River Jordan.

Lastly there were the Essenes.

As the pop group, the Animals, once sang, *'We gotta get out of this place. If it's the last thing we ever do . . . Girl there's a better life for me and you . . . '*

These people believed things were too far gone and the only way to preserve the Faith, the Scrolls of the Bible and themselves was to shut up shop and separate. Ah - that is a familiar word!

I think the categories correspond to people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries something like this:

Sadducees: those in the Church of England who went with the flow for ease as they did not believe it led anywhere anyway. Their motto might have been 'Whatever' said in the teenager's special way when not the slightest bit interested in any suggestion for an afternoon out, preferring to stay online at home.

Pharisees: the Puritans, those in the Church of England who were genuine and earnest and wanted to reform the Church from within.

Zealots: these were the ones who clashed head-on with the established Church; they would be busy pulling down statues of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and a few Bishops to boot. They would be the ones who ran straight into the fire, so to speak. Francis Kett was a 'Zealot' and Thomas Helwys the lawyer was also among them.

Essenes: these are the Separatists, including the Pilgrim Fathers who believed the only way to keep themselves and their children pure in the Faith was to separate themselves from the Church of England altogether and find a place where they could worship in peace.

How would we categorise the Church of today I wonder?

What did the Puritans believe?

Calvinist theology had a huge influence on the Puritans. John Calvin (1509–64), known as one of the great Protestant Reformers, was born in Picardy, France but later had to flee to Switzerland; he finally died in Geneva. Although Calvin carries the name, theologians Martin Bucer, Huldrych Zwingli and Peter Martyr Vermigli were among the co-founders.

Calvinists have five points of faith and use the acronym TULIP to remember what they believe in: Total depravity of the soul, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace and Perseverance of the saints.

Puritans believed in predestination and election. They did not believe in a steadily worsening world but one in which revivals sent by God bring change for the better, such as the Reformation. Therefore, they believed that passages such as Mark 13, Luke 21 and Matthew 24 refer not to the future End of Days but to the more immediate events around AD 70.

The Puritans developed a love of Hebrew and the Hebrew people. They identified with the Israelites in captivity in Babylon, seeing themselves captive in a corrupt and worldly Church.

In the Bible they saw how God made the Israelites into a nation and how He made a covenant with His nation. Those who

travelled to the New World felt that if they kept the covenant as seen in the Bible, God would be with them, but if they broke it the new land would rid itself of them or consume them.

Family life was modelled on the Jewish style. The family was to be the foundation of civil, ecclesiastical, and social life. The Puritan family prayed together every night and morning, and joined together with other families every Sabbath, by which they meant Sunday. They set this day aside like the Jewish Shabbat. No work was to be done and they spent the day in Bible study and other spiritual pursuits. They embraced much of the Jewish way of life, regarding it as something to emulate.

Their interest in the Israelites naturally developed into interest in the Jewish people of their Day, even though Jewish people as a whole were not allowed back into Britain until the great Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell was involved in inviting them back in 1656.

From the Bible they read that fathers are instructed to educate their sons in the study of the Torah. The Puritans copied this example and within five years of establishing their colony in America had begun schools for their children so they too could read the Bible for themselves.

An amazing fact is that Harvard University was established by the Pilgrims six years after landing at Plymouth Rock to train clergy. The American universities founded soon after the arrival of the Puritans taught courses in Hebrew. Bible Study and Hebrew were course requirements and Hebrew was so popular that some students delivered their commencement speeches in Hebrew! Some college emblems included Hebrew words. An interesting fact, as Abraham Katsch notes in *The Biblical Heritage of American Democracy*, (P70): “At the time of the American Revolution, the interest in the knowledge of Hebrew was so widespread as to allow the circulation of the story that ‘certain members of Congress

proposed that the use of English be formally prohibited in the United States, and Hebrew substituted for it."

Remarkably there were at least a hundred Cambridge graduates among the settlers and those early colonists were considered by history to be the most educated society there has ever been.

How would we sum up the Puritans' attitude towards life? We should look in the Bible to find the answer: *to love God with every bit of you and to love your neighbour as yourself*. They believed all life is sacred i.e. there is no division between the sacred and the secular, between good and evil as you find in the Greek Gnostic tradition. This meant that work was something to be embraced, admired, and sanctified, which is just as well for a new community in hostile surroundings.

So, what about prosperity in terms of financial success? Whether inherited or from hard work, prosperity was viewed among the Puritans as a responsibility with communal obligations. Two quotes demonstrate their principles. 'Biblically covenanted communities combined public purpose with personal integrity and so could summon death defying strength'. That's quite a mouthful, but what a great sentiment. The other: 'Individual liberty and religious freedom reinforce and need each other.' How wise they were.

It has been said that no Christian community in history identified more with the Israelites of the Bible than the first generation of Puritans in America.

The price they paid for their beliefs

Some were sent to be executed, others imprisoned or fined. In the case of Martin Bucer who had died in Cambridge in 1551 and was buried in Great St Mary's Church it was something else. During the reign of Mary Queen of Scots who reversed the country

back to Catholicism, she decided it was pay back for the Catholic deserter and had his body and that of another 'heretic' dug up and re-housed in new coffins. Queen Mary then had them burnt at the stake in the main square in 1557 along with many of their books.

The same fate fell on John Wycliffe over a hundred years earlier. Wycliffe was declared a heretic in 1415, his body dug up in 1428 and burned. His ashes were scattered into the river Swift. This was 43 years after he died in 1384 – so much did the authorities hate him but it is written of this incident:

“Thus, the brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; and they into the main ocean. And thus, the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine which now is dispersed the world over.”

Can you imagine such hatred that could do such things? Yet, what a glorious and true tribute to Wycliffe – the very opposite of what had been intended.

Tertullian of Carthage (155–220 AD) the Early Church theologian said, 'the blood of the martyrs is seed.'

The 'seed' that had fallen into the blood-soaked ground had not only pushed up through the soil but was now bearing fruit.

The band of Pilgrims from around North Nottinghamshire continued their meetings in Scrooby and Gainsborough Old Hall and grew in numbers.

With the death of Elizabeth I, the accession of James I and a change of Archbishop in York, from Matthew Hutton to Tobias Matthew, things toughened up for the Separatists. Meeting in secret, yet having enjoyed some degree of uncertain freedom under Archbishop Hutton, Archbishop Matthew was not a sympathiser and the persecution now intensified. These

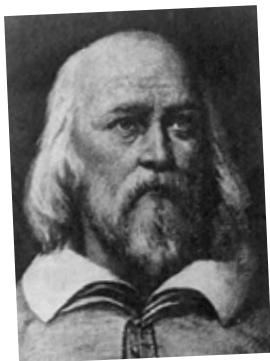
THE PILGRIMS TOUR



Travel Guide



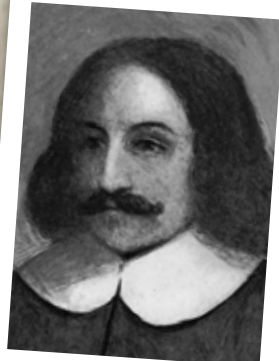
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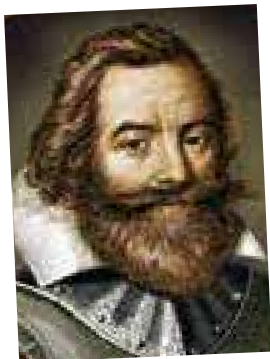
William Brewster



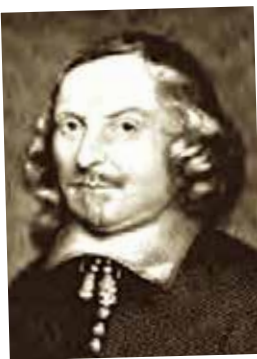
Richard Clyfton



William Bradford



Thomas Helwys



John Robinson



John Smyth

The Reformers



John Wycliffe
English



William Tyndale
English



Martin Luther
German



John Calvin
French



Martin Bucer
German



Separatist congregations and individuals were being targeted. They were watched, fined and imprisoned, and they feared worse. It had been made illegal for 'enemies of the state' to emigrate and so for those who were to become the Mayflower Pilgrims, their hopes of finding a safe place where they could worship freely became a challenge.

Thomas Helwys (1575–1616) had not gone to Cambridge but did study law at Gray's Inn, London. Helwys had married in 1595 and lived at Broxtowe Hall in Nottinghamshire and had seven children. Thomas and his wife, Joan, used their home to entertain radical Puritans and dissenters from within the Church of England. Helwys met John Smyth and they became firm friends. Thomas and Joan became Separatists and joined Smyth and the congregation in Gainsborough Old Hall.

To add to the increasing harassment of the Separatists the Bishop of Lincoln pursued John Smyth to Gainsborough and great pressure came on the Hickman family (see page 4) to stop holding meetings. Despite the difficulties of travel abroad for Separatists, this congregation managed to flee to the Netherlands in 1607. Thomas Helwys was one who went with John Smyth, leaving his family at home, believing them to be safer there for the time being.

However, Joan was arrested and put in prison. It is assumed she was eventually released and met her husband with their seven children on his return to England.

Smyth and Helwys led a congregation in Amsterdam, but a split occurred between the two men. Smyth died of TB in 1612 and Helwys returned to England with some of his followers, where he set up the first Baptist Church in Britain, in London.

Thomas Helwys is known for being the first to write clearly on religious toleration. He wrote a book called, *The Mystery of*

Iniquity, which he duly presented to James I on his return in 1612 from Holland. For this triumph he was thrown in prison where he died a couple of years later aged 41.

At the same time in Scrooby, the practicalities of meeting together were becoming more difficult. Archbishop Matthew called William Brewster to York, dismissed him from his job in Scrooby and fined him £40 (£4,000 today). Life then became very difficult for the Brewsters and there was no option but to leave. As with William Bradford earlier, the Brewsters neighbours taunted the Separatists, mocking their meetings.

There was a problem with their plans to leave: Mary Brewster was expecting a baby. The group had to wait until this new baby girl was born and aptly named, Fear.

In 1607, in the middle of the night, the group left Scrooby. Among them were:

- William and Mary Brewster and their children, Jonathan (13), Patience (7) and Fear, their new baby girl.
- John and Bridget Robinson with their young children, Ann and John
- Richard and Anne Clyfton with Zachariah (16), Timothy (10) and Eliezer (7)
- William Bradford aged 18

Interestingly, Bradford described Clyfton as a 'grave and fatherly old man when he left England, having a great white beard.'

They walked on foot, carrying whatever they could, the sixty miles to Boston. They had arranged with an English sea captain to take them to the Netherlands from Fishtoft, Boston.

The sea captain took them on board, but he had betrayed them. They were taken back to the town and their possessions taken

from them. The magistrates ordered the men to be imprisoned for a month and the women were left to fend for themselves after which the sorry group returned home to find family or friends who would accommodate them, since they had sold everything. Clyfton, Brewster and Robinson had been kept in prison in Boston until the assizes.

The second escape was in spring 1608. This time they arranged for a Dutch sea captain to take them from Killingholme (Immingham) by river near the Humber estuary. Whilst the men walked overland, not quite as far this time, the women, children and possessions went by boat on the river Idle to the Humber. Unfortunately they arrived early but their small boat was hidden in a creek on the Idle. The trouble began when the Dutch sea captain came to pick them up as arranged. The men boarded and they waited for the women and children to arrive. However, the Dutch captain saw some troops with guns riding in their direction so he upped anchor and left as quickly as possible which meant the women and children were literally 'left up the creek'!

The men found themselves sailing off not only without their wives and children but without any luggage. There was nothing for it but to go with the flow. It's worth remembering, if the authorities had reached that boat, the captain would have been in deep trouble along with the men he was carrying. Their story continued: it took two weeks to reach the Netherlands from Immingham via Norway, thanks to storms in the North Sea.

Meanwhile the women and children were a problem for the authorities, who did not know what to do with them. There may have been a spell in prison but they were not held responsible for what their 'errant' husbands had done. After being moved about, they ended up crossing the sea to join their husbands in the Netherlands. Maybe there is something to said for the husband being seen as the only voice of authority in the house! By the summer of 1608, the English group of Separatists in

Amsterdam numbered over 120. In 1609, the members from Scrooby moved south from Amsterdam to Leyden, where there were more job opportunities. The Revd John Robinson, helped by William Brewster, led the church which soon grew to four hundred.

Five years after leaving England, William Bradford met Dorothy May, the daughter of a rich English couple living in Amsterdam. They married in 1613, when William was 23 years old. Four years later William and Dorothy had a baby son, John.

Yet, as the years rolled by the Separatists saw the dangers of assimilation and began to realise that, not only were their children speaking Dutch, they risked losing them entirely to the Dutch culture.

It is interesting that the liberty that had attracted them to Holland to practise religious freedom was the same liberty that now threatened that religious freedom.

They now turned their faces to the New World. Their aim was to join an existing community in Jamestown, Virginia, but live far enough away from them so as to maintain their religious freedom.

In 1619, they consulted the Virginia Company in London. A financial backer, Thomas Weston, was found and King James gave official permission to leave. The plan was to leave most families and elderly people behind in Leyden, under the leadership and care of John Robinson and his wife, until such times as the wives and children could sail to join the men.

The *Speedwell* was commissioned to take pilgrims from Leyden to England to join the *Mayflower* and then the two ships would sail for America together.

The Departure from Leyden

William Bradford wrote an account of Robinson's sermon upon their agreement to go to New England. He strengthened them from 1 Samuel 23:3 - 4 against their fear.

'David's men said to him, "Look, we're already afraid here in Y'hudah. How much more, then, if we go to Ke'ilah to fight the armies of the P'lishtim!" 4 David consulted Adonai again; and Adonai answered him, "Set out, and go down to Ke'ilah, because I will hand the P'lishtim over to you.' (Complete Jewish Bible).

They worked out how many of the congregation should go. There were many who wanted to go but could not sort out their business in Holland in time. If they had all been ready they could not have fitted on to the ships anyway. Quite a group had to stay behind and so, as pastor, John Robinson stayed behind to look after them, fully intending to travel as soon as he could.

Not a few of the Pilgrims had enlarged their families whilst in Holland. Judging by their children's names, it is thought the Brewsters became Puritans mid 1590s. The Brewsters grew to six: Jonathan, Patience, Fear, Love and Wrestle and a baby lost in Leyden.

The farewell at Delfthaven was heart-breaking. They had all fasted. Robinson spoke from Ezra 8:21. *'At the Ahava river I had proclaimed a fast; so that we could humble ourselves before our God and ask a safe journey of Him for ourselves, our little ones and all our possession.'* (CJB).

These people were firm friends, now saying good-bye. They were hugging each other, kissing each other and crying. I have been moved to tears on more than one occasion at an airport or sea port while watching families say good-bye or be reunited, without having the faintest idea who the people are! In

Delfthaven that July day in 1620, it was one of those occasions. Dutch strangers standing along the quayside cried too on seeing this heart-wrenching parting.

John Robinson had written a farewell letter to the Saints (Pilgrims) from his congregation in Leyden. Robinson's brother-in-law, John Carver, who was appointed to be the first governor of the new colony, read it out to the group as they were about to set sail.

As their minister Robinson encourages them, reminding them of five things:

1. Repentance - peace with God.
2. Not to be easily offended with each other - peace with all.
3. Not to take offence at God Himself by moaning and complaining about what He has provided for you
4. Not to be lazy - work for the common good. Together you are God's House and like a new house you need to settle and become secure, not allowing any distractions.
5. Operate with equality as a body politic using civil government: no hierarchy, just governors; decide together what work will involve and honour them. Care more about Godly virtues in people than their material gains.

Farewell to *Speedwell*

The *Speedwell*, 47 years old, was to prove unseaworthy and sabotage was suspected by a crew under Captain Reynolds, unwilling to take the small old boat across the Atlantic in autumn.

However, in Delfthaven, the *Speedwell* loaded with the Saints and their possessions, sailed to Southampton in July 1620 to meet the *Mayflower*. It sprang a leak and had to be repaired in Southampton. In August the two ships set sail laden with goods, animals and travellers. The *Speedwell* sprang another leak and the two ships sailed along the coast into Dartmouth, where the

ship was repaired a second time. A week later the *Speedwell* was deemed seaworthy and the ships set out for the Atlantic Ocean. Three hundred miles into the great ocean, the *Speedwell* sprang another leak and this time they realised the old tub was not going to America. The ships turned back to England. You have to realise that when I said the *Speedwell* was a small ship, she was a third of the size of the *Mayflower*. The *Mayflower* was 100 feet long and 25 feet wide and weighed 180 tons. The *Speedwell* was 60 tons. Another ship that sprang a leak was the *Titanic*. The *Titanic* was 46,329 tons and 882 feet long and 92.5 feet wide. A modern day cruise ship can be more than 1,180 feet long and more than 200 feet wide, with an approximate weight of 200,000 tons. I think all this means that the *Mayflower* was short and stubby, and the *Speedwell* was hardly visible, at least in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Narrow escape there!

The *Mayflower* and *Speedwell* returned and landed in Plymouth. The Pilgrims had some more time in England buying a few last souvenirs, before all boarding the *Mayflower*.

A life on the ocean wave

The Saints along with The Strangers, as they called the other passengers, set sail on 6 September 1620 from Plymouth. One passenger the Pilgrims had hired to travel with them as a military advisor for the new colony was an English officer, Captain Myles Standish (1584–1656). The passengers comprised 51 men, 21 boys, 20 women and 10 girls. The average age was 32 and the oldest person was 64. When they arrived they still numbered 102, since one young man died just as they saw land and one baby was born during the voyage.

It was William Bradford who called the group of Saints ‘Pilgrims’ - a romantic name which stuck. They have been known as *The Pilgrim Fathers* ever since and, in recent times, *The Mayflower Pilgrims*.

William Brewster was their minister and along with Mary, his wife, continued to care for the Pilgrims. They had left three of their eldest children in England, now married and with children of their own and brought only their two youngest children, both boys, Love (9) and Wrestling (7). I love these Puritan names which, in the style of the Israelites, are fully descriptive of either their character or of the emotions of the parents at the time. It is easy to imagine how the Brewsters whilst in Leyden had wrestled with many thoughts and considered their future.

Conditions were cramped and the 102 passengers were encouraged to stay below deck for safety most of the time. There were also between fifteen and thirty crew members who had their own cramped quarters. The space they occupied on this deck was 80 feet long by 25 feet wide and 5' 5" high with two or three-bed units where possible. Little privacy was possible, depending on the ability of some to separate these sleeping units from others: certainly a way to get to know your future neighbours!

Sadly, the delayed start meant they hit the Autumn storms and at three knots the journey took almost ten weeks. Meals had to be rationed and water ran short. There was, amazingly, one birth to Elizabeth Hopkins. That brave soul called her baby Oceanus!

There was also a miraculous escape from certain death for John Holland. The top deck was treacherous and waves crashed over it repeatedly. Perhaps he was terribly sea-sick but he was swept overboard by a wave. Miraculously, he managed to grab a rope hanging from the sails long enough to be hauled back in with a boat hook from the deck.

Blown three hundred miles north of their intended destination in Northern Virginia, they found themselves at the tip of Cape Cod Bay, Massachusetts in the Provincetown harbour. It was 11 November 1620. It was cold and wet. They anchored off shore as

they surveyed the landscape and considered their options. The cramped conditions of the voyage continued as the Pilgrims lived on the *Mayflower*. In fact the Native Americans, who bathed often themselves, later tried to persuade the newcomers to bathe, since they smelt so bad!

When it became apparent that the *Mayflower* could not travel the three hundred miles south to their agreed destination, the Strangers felt - since the ship had not delivered them to the assigned place authorised by James I - they no longer came under English Law. Potential splits were brewing. The Pilgrims realised if they were to survive they needed to stay together and with great wisdom and whilst still on the ship they wrote *The Mayflower Compact*. This was a covenant and every man who signed it would be bound by that covenant, agreeing to the civil laws they made together for the sake of survival and peaceful living. They agreed, too, the offices needed for their government and stated this was to be a Christian, biblically based colony. The Strangers, whilst they may not have been Christians, agreed and signed what was the first ever document of democracy.

The day they dropped anchor some of the men went ashore to find fresh water, food and fuel.

At the end of November 1620, just off Cape Cod, a second baby was born on the ship. William White and his pregnant wife Susanna, had boarded the *Mayflower* in London with their five-year-old son, Resolved. The baby boy was named Peregrine, meaning Pilgrim from the Latin, Peregrinatur - the first little Pilgrim to be born in the New World.

Another day whilst the men were on shore, William Bradford's wife Dorothy, fell overboard and drowned. Bradford wrote only that she had died, but he was devastated.

From the ship they scoured the bay for a suitable place to make

a settlement. On 21 December the first group landed on the beach at Plymouth. The men found an old deserted Indian village. A buried cache of corn proved a life saver for the group. They intended to re-pay the Native Americans, who had buried it to use the following year.

On their map the area was named Plymouth - a name chosen by King James's son Charles. The following week others went ashore and they generally returned to sleep on the ship at night. The group started building their houses in the abandoned Indian village, they managed to build a couple of houses before the weather halted their work.

It was now winter and freezing.

After weeks of sea-sickness, lack of fresh water and fresh food during the voyage, the settlers' trials were ongoing. By the end of winter the settlers had lost half their number to malnutrition, pneumonia and probably Leptospirosis - the bacteria believed to have caused a plague that killed a huge number of Native Americans in the area between 1616 and 1619. It was a zoonotic disease meaning it has passed from animals to humans: in this case probably from the urine of a rat or from other wild animals. This unfriendly bacteria is invisible in water. Great news if you want a bath.

The spring of hope

Spring arrived and the weather improved; the work on building the new houses gathered momentum. The Pilgrims had stayed on the ship throughout the winter, but increasingly they migrated to their new village. Half the passengers and half the crew had died. There were 53 passengers left. The friendships they were about to make with local Indians proved life-saving.

On 16 March a Wampanoag Indian appeared on the edge of

their village. Boldly but without threat he walked straight into the village, having observed the settlers for some time, and said, 'Welcome!' This would have been 'one of those moments' for the settlers.

Samoset had learnt to speak English earlier from fishermen. A few days after this encounter, Samoset returned with the Chief of the Pokanokets and the leader of the Wampanoags, Massasoit and his interpreter, Tisquantum (Squanto). An exchange of gifts and the smoking of a peace pipe sealed the deal.

However, this developed into a real friendship between the Wampanoags (they are such great names too!) and the Pilgrims. Squanto showed them how to plant corn and many other things about the land. He ended up living in the village.

In April 1621, the *Mayflower* returned to England, taking half the time of the outward voyage. That must have been another 'moment', when their ship and home of seven months left. They would never see her again. They did, however see the *Fortune*, another ship that arrived later that year; among the passengers was Jonathan Brewster and his wife Lucretia and their eight children. Two years after that the ship, the *Anne*, brought the Brewsters' daughters, Fear and Patience. How William and Mary must have felt to know that, not only had they and their little boys survived the journey and their first winter, but the rest of their family would soon join them.

Before the *Fortune* arrived, the first governor of the new colony, John Carver, died in April 1621 and his wife died of a broken heart within a few days.

It was William Bradford of Austerfield who was elected governor in his place - that young orphan boy, one of the North Nottinghamshire core group of five, who had walked ten miles to church each Sunday to hear the faithful Puritan Separatist

minister, Richard Clyfton of Babworth, and who had such a missionary zeal. Bradford governed the Plymouth colony for the rest of his life.

By autumn 1621, the Colony had harvested enough food to last the winter and the coming year. Chief Massasoit and his men joined the settlers and brought five deer to the feast. They celebrated together for three days, reaffirming their friendship. Some say this first American Thanksgiving was based on Sukkot. The Pilgrims had been persecuted, had left their 'Egypt' and held a feast for many days in thankfulness to God for His provision - and it was held outside!

Peace reigned for a season, with just one or two small incidents. It lasted for a generation until an Indian chief Metacomet broke the peace in 1676.

The Mayflower Pilgrims' faith in God and His Word caused them to accept all people, leaving a legacy of freedom, equality and justice for all and paving the way for true democracy.

Conclusion

William Bradford, the second governor of Plymouth Plantation, wrote an *American classic Of Plymouth Plantation*. The book was William's own journal tracing their journey to the New World and the setting up of the first colony up to 1647, the year that he died. He wanted to show the next generation the struggles their parents endured and how God brought them through.

The great pastor William Brewster and his wife Mary were wonderful models of godly virtues and their signals were loud and clear: 'God is faithful' and 'He who began a good work in you will complete it unto the day of Christ Jesus.'

The Pilgrims have been dismissed by some as having been small

and insignificant, an extremist (to use a modern word) religious group. The embrace of these Pilgrims by the American nation has also sometimes led to them being dismissed as romantic folklore.

I think it is because some people are looking from the wrong angle. Just 53 brave men, women and children out of 102 were left standing after that first winter. I am reminded of Gideon. Gideon had 32,000 men. He ended up with 300 brave men. That must have seemed like some small deluded army to outsiders. God has always taken the small in number (Israel), the weak and the wayward, and transformed them. It prevented Gideon's army from boasting that they had defeated the enemy. Like the Children of Israel before them, they had to rely on the Lord and that is the way it is.

Revelation about the Jewish people and God's purposes returned to the Church through the Puritans. The Hebrew and Greek scholars wrote books, commentaries and tracts but after the translation of the Bible into English there was no holding back Divine Revelation through God's Word to the ordinary people as well. God's revelation of Himself through a nation that He describes as the apple of His eye and making an eternal covenant with them was not lost on these Puritans.

They simply loved the Bible. They now read the great story of the Bible. They read that God was still in covenant with His people, Israel. The Church had not replaced them and God who had scattered them among the nations of the world would also gather them again to their Land - a restoration of Israel before Jesus' second coming.

The Pilgrims had taken Henry Ainsworth's *Annotations Upon the First Five Books of Moses* to New England. William Bradford had been greatly impressed by Judaism since youth.

As I said earlier God's revelations when rediscovered are like the

bubbles in a pan of boiling water coming up not just in one place but all over the surface.

In downtown Plymouth Plantation they had taken the Jewish way of life as their way. They identified with the Hebrew exiles leaving Babylon and with their crying out to God against their earlier oppressor in Egypt, Pharaoh. They too had cried out to God and been set free to start a new life in a new country.

Judeo-Christian values were the foundation of the colony and continued to be as more Puritans came. Doing things God's way had meant peace with the local people and the Strangers they had travelled with. What seemed impossible became possible. The Bible, not the Church, was their authority.

At the beginning I said the five from the North Nottinghamshire area were great men who loved God more than life itself and used all they had to bring the Church back to a Biblical foundation.

If England had been like Egypt to these Pilgrims, then Holland was Sinai, the training ground and the Promised Land was the New World.

Richard Clyfton: Vicar of Babworth and then leader of Scrooby congregation - taught and encouraged Puritan ideas. He was the seed that enabled Scrooby to flower and like Aaron, he was the priest who died before they reached the Promised Land.

John Smyth: Pastor of the Gainsborough and then Amsterdam congregations.

John Robinson: The great teacher, the assistant to Clyfton in Scrooby and Leyden until after Clyfton's death and then leading the congregation with great love in Leyden until his own death in 1625. Like Moses, this leader of men was not allowed to enter the New World to which he had pointed his people.

William Bradford: When all seemed bleak, this boy had taught himself to read the Bible and had become a Christian. God was training a future leader by bringing the right people alongside to educate and encourage him and he became the second governor of Plymouth Plantation. Like Joshua, he entered the land with great faith in God and like Joshua he was unwavering and determined.

William Brewster: The loving and educated Pastor of the people in Scrooby, Leyden and Plymouth Plantation. He said: 'We follow the rules laid out in the Bible for running our church'. Brewster, like Caleb, also entered the land and like Caleb, he followed the Lord wholeheartedly.

The Christian foundation of America was secured. As George Washington, first President of America was later to say, 'Religion and morality are the essential pillars of civil society.'

There were the Saints and always the Strangers.

The Mayflower Pilgrims' community grew over the next few years and in 1630 they were joined in Plymouth Bay by thousands more Puritans who followed them across the Atlantic - and the rest is history!

Post Script

It was William Bradford who used the word 'Pilgrim' when he described the congregation he attended as 'Strangers and Pilgrims on the earth.' (Heb 11: 13–16).

To be a Pilgrim by John Bunyan was my favourite hymn at school; may these timeless words written in 1684 encourage us today.

1. Who would true valour see,
let him come hither;
one here will constant be,
come wind, come weather.
There's no discouragement
shall make him once relent
his first avowed intent
to be a pilgrim.

2. Whoso beset him round
with dismal stories,
do but themselves confound;
his strength the more is.
No lion can him fright,
he'll with a giant fight,
but he will have a right
to be a pilgrim.

3. Hobgoblin, nor foul fiend,
can daunt his spirit:
he knows, he at the end,
shall life inherit.
Then fancies fly away,
he'll fear not what men say,
he'll labour night and day

The Tudor and Stuart Monarchs

1485 – 1509	King Henry VII	(b.1457) Roman Catholic
1509 -1547	Henry VIII	(b.1491) Roman Catholic – Protestant
1547-1553	Edward VI	(b.1537) Protestant
1553 July	Jane Grey	Brief Encounter Protestant
1553 -1558	Mary I	(b.1542) Roman Catholic. John Knox says 800 leading clergy went to Geneva etc. Mary had nearly 300 men, women and children burnt at the stake
1558 – 1603	Elizabeth I	(b.1533) Protestant - More executions These 4 Tudor monarchs executed >2% of the population of England (>75,000 people)
1603–1626	James VI & I	(b.1566) Protestant
1625 – 1649	Charles I	(b.1600) Protestant - executed
1642-1651	Civil War	3 wars
1649–1653	Rump Parliament	
1653 – 1658	Oliver Cromwell	(b.25 April 1599) Separatist Puritan
1658 –1659	Richard Cromwell	(1626 -1712) Puritan
1659 -1660	English Council of State (Protectors Privy Council)	
1660 -1685	Charles II	(b.1630) Protestant / Catholic
1685 – 1688	James II	(b.1630) The Last Catholic Monarch

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Old Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts, USA



Boarding the Mayflower



Scrooby Manor



The Bradford Family Home



Plymouth Plantation

