

The Pilgrims Church in Holland.

One difficulty that was always present in these Separatist churches was the fact that being based upon the conception of a Pure church, they were constantly stung unnecessarily by criticisms of the conduct of each other in the daily round of life. I cannot refrain from referring to one disturbance which is in the nature of gossip to be sure, but it throws a flood of light on the London Separatist church and incidentally gives some clue to the cause of departure from Amsterdam of the Puritan Pilgrims. While Francis Johnson was in Chirk Prison in London he was a suitor to a certain Mrs. Louisa Bopp, a widow, evidently somewhat attractive in worldly ways or misbehavior. Francis Johnson in Chirk Prison writes to his brother George in Fleet for advice. He read it - but did not follow it, and married the woman secretly. After release Mrs. Johnson apparently avowed for the purpose of overcoming the prejudices that existed called upon her brother-in-law. But it was in vain. Garish and gaudy apparel then before he

had seen her," Brother George "delt with her that
she would reform it," and she in return "gave
him good words". So the dispute continued.
The solicitor George wrote to his brother and sister
pointing out the defects of Mrs. Johnson. "Telling him
that Mrs. F. J. and the Bishop of London's wife 'for pride
and vanity of face were joined together', and what
scandal was abroad because F. J. being in prison
and the brother in great necessity beyond the
seas; she wore 3, 4, or 5 gold rings at once! 'Twas over
her bush and her whole brow were so manifest
that many of ye saints were grieved'. He
advised that she give of her 'extensive deal of
lace', discontinue whole bres; exchange the
'Schowish hat' for a sober lappety or felt," "quit
great steeled ~~up~~ ruffs, ye musk and rings,
and 'let ~~it~~ so brieety and modesty be used"

This proved some very near reflecting the
church. But finally, the foster's wife and
her zealous brother in law, wrote up, and as
a public recognition of the fault, held "a
meeting of wags, as a love-feast, at the foster's

house."

This gives us some hint of the kind of people that
made up the London Amsterdam Church, and the
kind of Separatists that the Devotly Separatists came
in contact with after the famous journey, and
final arrival at Amsterdam ^{in 1608} under the leadership
of John Robinson. In comparing the Devotly people
with other Separatist Churches, Dexter says, "In Am-
sterdam their story was brief. Although they could
fight, they were men of peace. I think I very
specially say also, not only that their leaders were
endowed with broader minds than those of the
'Ancient' Church, or of any other Separatist Company
known to us as at that time existent, but that
the general membership of the church had a
better spirit, a wider outlook, and a more
thorough culture. So I fancy they could never
have felt thoroughly at home with the great body
of the brethren with whom they were thrown
into contact in Amsterdam." Dexter, P. 380.

They remained in Amsterdam about one year.
But they were not of the same opinion as the
people whom they found there in regard to certain

question of polity, to wit, whether or not the elders⁴
~~was~~ ^{but} the first voice in question of improvement. Seeing
the possibility of trouble ahead, they applied to
Burgomasters of Leyden for permission to move
to Leyden and settle there. Permission was
granted them Feb. 12, 1609, and they took
advantage of it, and quietly returned to Leyden.

The Pilgrims had come to Holland just at the
close of the Five-and-twenty years war. Watley says
"It is the epoch to which the greatest expansion
of municipal architecture is traced. Warehouses,
colleges, splendid streets, and suburbs were con-
structed on every side, and still there was
not room for the constantly increasing population."
(John Burr, P. 113, cited, Watley's

United Netherlands, II 25)

Arrived in Leyden they began to earn their living
by various kinds of humble employment. W^m
Brewster, however, devoted himself to tutoring
and in time set up a printing press for publishing
literature, and sending it back to England.

John Robinson the first was the great personality⁵
of the church, and was recognized ^{by the people of Leyden} as a man
of great ability and learning. He

In January 1611, Robinson and three others jointly
fructored an estate on which was a large
house. Here he lived, and in this house they
held their meetings during the ~~years~~ remaining
years of the 11 years sojourn in Leyden.

In the summer of 1615 Robinson registered
in the University of Leyden. At this time there
was raging a theological controversy between
the new Arminians and the old Calvinists. Urged
by the lectures of the University, he entered a
public debate with Episcopius before the
University. Bradford says in his history.

The Lord did not help him to defend the truth,
and foyle this adverse arise, so he put him
to an offence on floor, in this great and
foollike archive, and ye like he did a 2.
or 3 time, upon such like occasions. The
which it has caused many to praise

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GOT yt (lbt) the truth had so favour
victory, so it focused him, much honor
and respect from these learned men and
others which loved ye truth."

History of Poly. Plm. P. 21 cited in Dexter P. 388,

The general impression that the Pilgrims were
in Leyden, and a testimony to their worth and
integrity, is seen in another quotation from
Bischoff's History. "Though many of them were
poor, yet there was none so poor, but if they
were known to be of that congregation, the
Dutch (either bakers or others) would trust them
in any reasonable matter when they wanted
money. Because they had found them by
experience how careful they were to keep
their word, and saw them so fair, full
and diligent in their dealings: yea,
they would strive to get their sustenance,
and to employ them above others, in their
work for their honesty and diligence."

Hist. of Poly. Plm. P. 19, cited in Dexter P. 389

But conditions in Holland were not entirely
 satisfactory, although the church reached in
 point of number a strength of 300 members.
 By incouraging Separatists, yet they felt that to
 remain in Holland would be simply to bury
 their little group gradually, surrounded and
 absorbed in the great city. Then, too, the
 troubles which resulted in the thirty years
 war were gathering, and they feared
 the effect that it might have on their little
 community, in which they saw a movement
 of world wide importance. They were working
~~for~~ not only for their sakes, but for others, that
 they might lay "some good foundation or
 at least wake some way thereunto, for ye
 propagating and advancing ye gospell of ye
 Kingdome of Christ in these remote parts of
 ye world: yea, though they ~~be~~ should
 be but stepping stones unto others for
 ye performing of so great a work."

'Hist. Phy. Plm. 24.

Accordingly a plan was set on foot for part
of the Leyden Society church to take up their fortunes
in the New World. When the final preparations
were made less than half had decided to go,
and under the leadership of W^m Brewster their
Elder, they departed, leaving behind, which
was then half of the church under the care
of their hired pastor John Robinson. Their
departure was so touching that "Sunday of the
Dutch stranger that stood on the ye / Key
as spectators, could not refrain from tears"
and the scene was remembered there for
a quarter of a century after. 

We are not to think that these people who sailed
in the tiny flumes, were liberal in their thought
or in their interpretation of historic Christianity.
On the contrary they were steeped in the
most rigid Calvinism, and their Separatism
in no small degree represented the
extreme defense of Calvinism, as offered

to the Catholic Church and the English Church.⁹
But the spirit of Free Inquiry and Universal
Priesthood had been the former that had broken
away from the Catholic Church and established
Colvinism, and even though Colvinism be
the shell, the real meat of the nut that
came to New England in the May flower
was that Spirit of Free Inquiry. To see the
forces by which this transplanted seed sprouted
broke its shell of Colvinism, and left it decaying
on the ground behind will take our interest
now.

The last thing of importance before me take
of the life in New England is, -

The May flower Comfort.

"In the name of God, Amen. We whose names
are underwritten, the loyal Subjects of our cheerful
sovereign Lord King James, by the grace of
God, of Great Brittain, France, and Ireland
King, Defender of the Faith, &c.

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"Having undertaken for the glory of God, and the
advancement of the Christian Faith, and the
honour of our King and Country, a voyage to
plant the first Colony in the Northern parts
of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly and
mutually in the presence of God and of
one another, covenant, and combine our-
selves into a civill body politicke, for our better
ordering and preservation, and furtherance of
the ends aforesaid; and by virtue thereof
to enact, constitute and frame such just
and equall Lawes, Ordinances, acts, constitutions
offices from time to time, as shall be thought
most meet and convenient for the general
good of the ~~company~~ Colony: unto which
we promise all due submision and
obedience. In witness, whereof
we have here under subscribed our
names, Cate Col. 11 of November in the

year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord "
1st King James of England, France, and Ireland 18,
and of Scotland 54. Anno Domini 1620.
