

**COLLECTIONS CONCERNING THE CHURCH OR  
CONGREGATION OF PROTESTANT  
SEPARATISTS FORMED AT SCROOBY IN NORTH  
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE IN THE TIME OF KING  
JAMES I: THE FOUNDERS OF NEW-PLYMOUTH,  
THE PARENT-COLONY OF NEW-ENGLAND**

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Collections concerning the church or congregation of Protestant separatists formed at Scrooby in north Nottinghamshire in the time of King James I: the founders of New-Plymouth, the parent-colony of New-England by Joseph Hunter

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**JOSEPH HUNTER**

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# COLLECTIONS

CONCERNING

THE CHURCH OR CONGREGATION OF PROTESTANT  
SEPARATISTS FORMED AT *SCROOBY* IN  
NORTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, IN THE  
TIME OF KING JAMES I:

*THE FOUNDERS OF NEW-PLYMOUTH,*

THE PARENT-COLONY OF NEW-ENGLAND.

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH HUNTER,

FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF LONDON, ETC., AND OF  
THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY;  
AND AN ASSISTANT-KEEPER OF HER MAJESTY'S RECORDS.



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*PRELIMINARY NOTICE.*

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**T**HIS volume is in one sense a Second Edition of a Tract which was printed in 1849, entitled 'Collections concerning the early History of the Founders of New Plymouth, the first Colonists of New England.'

That Tract formed No. II of a Series of Critical and Historical Treatises, of which four numbers only have appeared.

The place was then for the first time identified, at which these Founders met as a Separatist Church before they took the resolution of removing to Holland, from whence in a few years they passed to the shores of North America.

This point being determined, the way was opened to the discovery of some other new facts respecting the leaders and chief agents in the movement, and to the establishment from evidence at home of statements in certain historical and biographical writings which have been published in the new country.

They related especially to Bradford and Brewster, the most eminent of the lay-members of this Church or community of English Separatists.

The new facts which were brought to light, it is hardly too much to say, have changed the face of the

whole history of the movement, as long as the actors in it remained in England, the period on which only I professed to write. The tract has contributed also to revive and deepen the interest which has been always more or less felt about these founders of the North American civilization. It has indeed done more than I could possibly have anticipated, both at home and in New England.

At home I have found the new facts eagerly accepted and reproduced: and in New England I have been requested by the Massachusetts Historical Society to prepare a kind of New Edition for insertion in their Transactions, prepared more especially for American readers. To those Transactions I had before contributed an account of the principal persons in the Suffolk and Essex emigration of 1630; and a biographical notice of Philip Vincent, the till then unknown author of the 'Relation of the Pequot war.'

Subsequent researches have brought to light a few other facts, which will enable us to understand more justly the position at home of the leaders in this movement. They relate especially to Brewster, the elder of the church or congregation, who, next to Robinson the pastor, is the most interesting now, as he was the most influential then, in this groupe of earnest professors of Religion, and bold assertors of the principle of freedom and personal conviction in respect of Christian faith and practice.

My first intention was to give the matter which is

wholly new, in the form of another number of the series of Critical and Historical Tracts : but finding the tract on this subject has been long, in the bookseller's phrase, out of print, and that it is often inquired for ; and that to make the New Revelations intelligible it would be necessary frequently to reproduce the matter of the former tract, I have thought it best to send forth the present volume as an entire work in which the matter of the Tract and the matter since acquired are blended together, and a large Appendix is added, containing many pieces highly interesting in themselves, and with one exception, bearing directly on the subject of this emigration.

Some readers may think that many things in this book are of small importance. They are right, when these things are looked at as unconnected parts of the design ; for neither Bradford nor Brewster, nor the divines who were concerned in the movement were of the eminent of the earth, about whom there is a curiosity widely extended through the country which gave them birth, and concerning whom nothing is thought unimportant. It may even be said that they were but inconsiderable persons at home, and their consequence has undoubtedly arisen out of the grand results, which, unforeseen by themselves, have ensued on their great resolve. So that there is scarcely anything to be told of their early history besides those very small facts, of which so many will here be found, which make the history of men who are of but



small account in the midst of a large and advanced population.

It is, indeed, the part and peculiar office of the Antiquary to deal with such small facts. It is this which makes the distinction between the Antiquary and the Historian.

I have proceeded in the spirit of the Antiquary in gathering up these small fragments of truth, and I have proceeded also in the same spirit, as in contradistinction to the controversial, the sectarian, or other party spirit. Though sprung from persons who maintained many of the principles and adopted many of the practices by which these people were distinguished, and who were, indeed, the chief supporters of them in the Hundred of Broxtowe which adjoins to Bassett-Lawe, I have long known that when people think at all on subjects such as these, changes must come, and that a distant generation is no more bound to support the principles and opinions of ancestors of the days of Charles the First, than they were to support the principles of their own great-grandfathers as against the reformation. This is the necessary result of even their own great principle of free inquiry. I know very well that there are two different aspects under which the conduct of the persons about whom I write may be contemplated. Some may see in it nothing but self-will directed on subjects of inquiry which are at once difficult, and of supreme importance both to the inquirer himself and to the great community of

which he is a member, which led to an uncalled-for schism, leading to social disunion, and having a tendency to produce much bitterness of spirit, and even the fiercest internal warfare, as, indeed, in but a few years it contributed to do. But there are many others who may look upon it but as a magnanimous and salutary assertion of the right of private judgment and public action according to the result of that judgment, and a submission to the teaching of Scripture as opposed to anything which claims to be an authoritative explanation of it. On both sides there is much to be said. But whatever view is taken of the principles on which these men acted, few will deny the praise of sincerity and earnestness, and a devout respect to what they deemed commands too sacred not to be obeyed, to those who were the leaders in this movement, and to those also who followed with them, though it may be of unrecorded name.

To those also who look with something of sorrow upon the divisions of the Christian world, and to the occasional manifestations of terrene thoughts entering into those which ought to have nothing in them but the celestial, arising out of these divisions; there is some satisfaction in the thought that nothing seems to deprive Christianity of its salutary influences: for that however it is professed it still fills the mind with peace, and hope, and joy, and arms its professors, in whatever form professed, against the temptations of the world. But if we conclude that these people had mis-

taken the path of duty, or had imposed upon themselves a severer burthen than God ever intended for them, there is still a heroism in their conduct which forbids us to regard them with indifference, nay rather, which will call forth the sympathy of every generous mind.

J. H.

*June 6th, 1854.*

