

**THE PILGRIM FATHERS NEITHER  
PURITANS NOR PERSECUTORS: A  
LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE  
FRIENDS INSTITUTE, LONDON, ON THE  
18TH JANUARY, 1866 (REPRINTED IN  
1891, WITH PREFACE)**

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**BENJAMIN SCOTT**

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A Lecture

DELIVERED AT THE

FRIENDS' INSTITUTE, LONDON,

ON THE 18TH JANUARY, 1866

(REPRINTED IN 1891, WITH PREFACE),

BY

BENJAMIN SCOTT, F.R.A.S.,

CHAMBERLAIN OF THE CITY OF LONDON; HONORARY MEMBER OF THE NEW  
ENGLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND OF THE MASSACHUSETTS  
HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY.

"THE ignorance still existing on this subject is almost incredible. We find men of education who seem to have no exact information respecting the PILGRIM FATHERS. Quarterly Reviewers, Members of Parliament, Christian Divines, and Ecclesiastical Historians speak of them with the same complacent disregard of facts. This is discouraging, but nothing is gained by yielding to prejudice, learned or illiterate, and the only remedy is *more light*."—DR. WADDINGTON.

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## PREFACE

TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

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THE recent INTERNATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL, in LONDON,\* brought face to face men of like religious views and aspirations, from distant countries and from the English-speaking peoples, and resulted, without doubt, in mutual gratification and spiritual edification. It proved a stimulant and an encouragement to many, particularly when brethren from distant lands told of successful work done for God and humanity, the extent of which had not been fully appreciated—for instance, in Japan, in Scandinavia, in Madagascar, America, and Australia. It reminded the assembled brethren of the prediction of their Lord in relation to the advance of His kingdom, "Many shall come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God" (Luke xiii. 29).

As I perused, however, the reports of addresses and the comments thereon in the press—religious and secular—a feeling of disappointment amounting to sadness came over me, because I saw that a grand opportunity had been missed, which, in some respects, may never return, for making our distant Congregational workers aware of their heroic ancestry, for removing false, confused, and misleading views respecting the origin of their principles, and for the supply of a life-long stimulus for labour and self-sacrifice, which heroic example of the very highest type can best afford.† It was with deep regret that I read, again and again, in organs which should have been better informed, of "Governor Bradford and his sturdy band of *Puritans*," and of John Robinson being "the *Father* of Independency." I refrain from specific quotation, as I should have to mention journals which are esteemed amongst us, *all* of which, so far as I

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\* July 13-21, 1891.

† "To believe in the heroic makes heroes."—*Lord Beaconsfield*.

have read, fell into the same loose way of speaking of the *Genesis* of Independent or Congregational principles at the Reformation, and of the precursors and principles of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England. *Genesis* has, indeed, been confounded with *Exodus*, and our Congregational fathers and martyrs have been entirely ignored in the natural desire to do honour to our guests from across the Atlantic. It would be as reasonable and historical to treat Origen and Jerome as the founders of Christianity as to regard the Pilgrim Fathers as *Puritans*, or Brewster of Scrooby, or Robinson of Leyden, as the *founders* of Independency.

This is not a mere question of names and dates, or of English history: it is rather one of sacred principles, which have ever separated State Churches from the Free, ever since the Church established by law existed in this realm, and which separate them to this day.

The Pope of Rome was, by Act of Parliament, the head of the Church in England at the close of Mary's reign. On the accession of Elizabeth, in A.D. 1558, *she* was immediately declared head of the National Church. The very first Act of the Parliament was the "Act of Supremacy" (Act 1 Elizabeth, c. 1), the second was the "Act of Uniformity" (Act 1 Elizabeth, c. 2). It was sedition to question the Queen's spiritual supremacy; it was afterwards made felony. Non-conformity was absolutely *prohibited*, to Romanists and to Protestants alike. A cruel persecuting Romanism was superseded by an equally persecuting Protestantism; the only modification in that respect was that the State resorted to hanging, instead of burning at the stake the victims of Ecclesiasticism.

The "Articles of Religion" were adopted by Parliament in A.D. 1562, and the Church of England was then completely established by law, and continues so to this day.

The *Puritans* of that period, termed in history the *Early Puritans*, to distinguish them from those of a later date, who differed from them in many material respects, *remained within* the Church of England, recognizing the spiritual headship of the State, were content to attend the churches and to worship by the Book, although they desired some modifications in doctrine and ritual, which, however, they never obtained. They became from the first the bitter opponents of the *Separatists*,



who, at the same juncture, denied the headship of the Queen *in things spiritual*, declined to worship by Act of Parliament, to wear priestly vestments, and to take oaths. All this is made perfectly clear, by the discovery at the present day of *original* documents in the State-Paper Office and elsewhere, as is more fully set forth in the following Lecture.

The same sources have opened up to us the *early* history of Independency, Congregationalism, Free Churchism, or whatever we are pleased to term our Church principles to-day. They were termed *Separatism* at the period of the settlement of the Church of England in A.D. 1562, to emphasize the fundamental teaching, that the Kingdom of Christ was "not of this world," but *separate* from the control of the governing powers of the State. It is little less than criminal in those who regard that principle as of vital importance, to ignore the history of its earliest martyrs and confessors. That history has been disinterred during the last forty years, and we are deeply indebted to the late Dr. Waddington, Pastor of the ancient church worshipping in Southwark, and subsequently in the Pilgrim Fathers' Church in the Kent Road, for having devoted the closing years of his life to clearing up, both in England and America, the early history of our Congregationalism.

The confusion which has arisen between two very distinct religious parties, who took part in the early colonization of New England—the *Separatist* "Pilgrim Fathers" of New Plymouth, and the *Puritan* Fathers who subsequently colonized Massachusetts, has been occasioned by careless historians, many of whom had no access to the recently opened archives of "Harleian," "Lansdowne," and "State Paper Office MSS." This is particularly the case with MARSDEN in his "History of the Early Puritans," and SEWALL in his "History of the Friends." It is obvious that neither of these writers had access to original documents relating to the Pilgrim Fathers or their precursors. Miss METEYARD, in her "Hallowed Spots of Ancient London," and Mr. ANDERSON, in his "Memorable Women of Puritan Times," have adopted the statements of earlier writers. On the other hand, Mr. PALFREY, in his "History of New England" (Vol. I., p. 299), points out the mistakes of English writers on this subject. Mr. BARTLETT, in his work on the "Pilgrim Fathers," is tolerably

clear on the points in question. The late Dr. WADDINGTON, in his "Congregational Church History, from the Reformation to 1662" (p. 127), devotes a paragraph to the correction of mistakes on this head. Mr. BANCROFT, in his "American History," puts the facts into few and plain words (Vol. I., pp. 633-4), and the same may be said of Mr. KROWLES, the biographer of Roger Williams—founder of the Rhode Island Colony (p. 39).

At page 49 of the following lecture, I allude to the correction of a mistaken inscription by the historians, LORDS MACAULAY and STANHOPE, in the Peers' Corridor, bearing upon this subject. Mr. J. R. GREEN, the last historian of note, in his "Short History of the English People" (pp. 459, 460), writes, "The Separatists who were beginning to withdraw from attendance at public worship, on the ground that the very existence of a National Church was contrary to the Word of God, grew quickly from a few scattered zealots to 20,000 souls. Congregations of these Independents—or, as they were called at this time, Brownists—formed rapidly throughout England; and persecution on the part of the Bishops and the Presbyterians—to both of whom their opinions were equally hateful—drove flocks of refugees over the sea." He identifies some of these Separatists as the Pilgrim Fathers of the "Mayflower," but he is silent as to the martyrdom of the Separatist confessors during the preceding half century, 1567—1620.

The first martyrs for our principles were RICHARD FYTZ and THOMAS ROWLAND, the Pastor and Deacon, respectively, of the Church formed in the Bridewell,\* in New Bridge Street, in the City of London; they died of the prison plague. They, with twenty-four men and seven women, had been, at the instance of the Privy Council, committed to prison by the Lord Mayor, on the 20th June, 1567, for worshipping in Plummers' Hall, this was just five years after the completion of the Church Establishment in 1562.†

Here is our *Genesis*. We know from original extant MSS., signed by Fytz himself, that his principles were ours of to-day ;

\* So called from the well or spring of St. Bride or Bridget adjoining. From this name is derived the generic term of Bridewell, now applied to places of criminal detention all the world over.

† This was antecedent to the first Presbyterian Church, secretly formed at Wandsworth, London, A.D. 1571.

that he was no State Church *Puritan*, but that he was faithful unto death for free worship. We know even the names of the members of the Bridewell Church who, having lost their Pastor, Deacon, and others, were released after a two years' incarceration. They held firmly to their principles in the face of unrelenting persecution. A document, signed by twenty-seven members of this church, alludes to those who "by long imprisonment *pined and killed* the Lord's servants, as our Minister FYZ, THOMAS ROWLAND, Deacon, one PARTRIDGE, and GILES FOWLER, and besides them a great multitude, in the prisons in London, as the Gatehouse, Bridewell, the Counters, the King's Bench, the Marshalsea, and the White Lion." No public provision of food, fuel, or bedding was made for prisoners in those days; many, therefore, perished of cold, starvation, and disease.

The martyrs, FYZ and ROWLAND, with others, were followed by JOHN COPPING, ELIAS THACKER, and WILLIAM DENNIS, in 1576. They were executed at Bury St. Edmunds for merely putting into circulation *Separatist* books. This was held to be constructive treason, and they suffered death accordingly. The Chief-Justice Wray, in an extant letter, says, that "above forty persons—ministers and others—were presented at that assize for *not observing the Book of Common Prayer, and for making conventicles.*"

In 1593, HENRY BARROWE and JOHN GREENWOOD, educated at Cambridge, who had founded a church secretly in Southwark, suffered death. The Attorney-General, whose speech is extant, charges them with the crime of "*claiming the right of a church to manage its own affairs.*" Three others were condemned; Daniel Studely to banishment (see p. 29), Scipio Bellot and Robert Boyle died in Newgate.

JOHN PENNY, M.A., born in Breconshire in 1559, in a home called *the Old Grove*, standing in 1860, was the next man of note called to wear the crown of martyrdom for his Independency. At Oxford he became a famous university preacher. His great desire was to promote the evangelization of his native country, Wales, and he was the first to attempt a translation of the Scriptures into Welsh. He took refuge from persecution in Scotland, but Elizabeth wrote a letter with her own hand, still extant, demanding his extradition. He entered London in September, 1592, and devoted himself to the interests of the persecuted