

A Dialogue,  
Or  
The Sum of a Conference

Between Some Young Men Born in New England,  
and Sundry Ancient Men That Came Out of  
Holland and Old England  
Anno Domini 1648.

*William Bradford*

#### YOUNG MEN.

Gentlemen, you were pleased to appoint us this time to confer with you, and to propound such questions as might give us satisfaction in some things wherein we are ignorant, or at least further light to some things that are more obscure unto us. Our first request, therefore, is, to know your minds concerning the true and simple meaning of those of *The Separation*, as they are termed, when they say the Church of England is no Church, or no true Church.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

For answer hereunto, first, you must know that they speak of it as it then was under the hierarchical prelacy, which since have been put down by the State, and not as it is now unsettled.

2. They nowhere say, that we remember, that they are no Church. At least, they are not so to be understood; for they often say the contrary.

3. When they say it is no true Church of Christ, they do not at all mean as they are the elect of God, or a part of the Catholic Church, or of the mystical body of Christ, or visible Christians professing faith and holiness, (as most men understand the church); for which purpose hear what Mr. Robinson in his *Apology*<sup>1</sup>, page 53. "If by the Church," saith he, "be understood the Catholic Church, dispersed upon the face of the whole earth, we do willingly acknowledge that a singular part thereof, and the same visible and conspicuous, is to be found in the land, and with it do profess and practice, what in us lies, communion in all things in themselves lawful, and done in right order."

4. Therefore they mean it is not a true church as it is a National Church, combined together of all in the land promiscuously under the hierarchical government of archbishops, their courts and canons, so far differing from the primitive pattern in the Gospel.

#### YOUNG MEN.

Wherein do they differ then from the judgment or practice of our churches here in New England?

#### ANCIENT MEN.

Truly, for matter of practice, nothing at all that is in anything material; these being rather more strict and rigid in some proceedings about admission of members, and things of such nature, than the other; and for matter of judgment, it is more, as we conceive, in words and terms than matter of any great substance; for the churches and chief of the ministers here hold that the National Church, so constituted and governed as before is said, is not allowable according to the primitive order of the Gospel; but that there are some parish assemblies that are true churches by virtue of an implicit covenant amongst themselves, in which regard the Church of England may be held and called a true church.

Where any such are evident, we suppose the other will not disagree about an implicit covenant, if they mean by an implicit covenant that which hath the substance of a covenant in it some way discernible, though it be not so formal or orderly as it should be. But such an implicit as is no way explicit, is no better than a Popish implicit faith, (as some of us conceive,) and a mere fiction, or as that which should be a marriage covenant which is no way explicit.

#### YOUNG MEN.

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<sup>1</sup> Robinson, John. *A Just and Necessary Apologie of Certain Christians: no lesse contumeliously then commonly called Brownists, or Barrowists.* (Leiden?: 1625, reprinted London?: 1644).

Wherein standeth the difference between the rigid Brownists and Separatists and others, as we observe our ministers in their writings and sermons to distinguish them?

#### ANCIENT MEN.

The name of Brownists is but a nickname, as Puritan and Huguenot, etc., and therefore they do not amiss to decline the odium of it in what they may. But by the rigidness of Separation they do not so much mean the difference, for our churches here in New England do the same thing under the name of *secession* from the corruptions found amongst them, as the other did under the name or term of *separation* from them. Only this declines the odium the better. See Reverend Mr. Cotton's Answer to Mr. Baylie<sup>2</sup>, page the 14th.

That some which were termed Separatists, out of some mistake and heat of zeal, forbore communion in lawful things with other godly persons, as prayer and hearing of the Word, may be seen in what that worthy man, Mr. Robinson, hath published in dislike thereof.

#### YOUNG MEN.

We are well satisfied in what you have said. But they differ also about synods.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

It is true we do not know that ever they had any solemn Synodical Assembly. And the reason may be, that those in England living dispersed and could not meet in their ordinary meetings without danger, much less in synods. Neither in Holland, where they might have more liberty, were they of any considerable number, being but those two churches, that of Amsterdam and that of Leiden. Yet some of us know that the church sent messengers to those of Amsterdam, at the request of some of the chief of them, both elders and brethren, when in their dissensions they had deposed Mr. Ainsworth and some other both of their elders and brethren, Mr. Robinson being the chief of the messengers sent; which had that good effect, as that they revoked the said deposition, and confessed their rashness and error, and lived together in peace some good time after. But when the churches want neither peace nor light to exercise the power which the Lord hath given them, Christ doth not direct them to gather into synods or classical meetings, for removing of known offences either in doctrine or manners; but only sendeth to the pastors or presbyters of each church to reform within themselves what is amongst them. "A plain pattern," saith Mr. Cotton in his *Answer to Mr. Baylie*, page 95, "in case of public offences tolerated in neighbor churches, not forthwith to gather into a synod or classical meeting, for redress thereof, but by letters and messengers to admonish one another of what is behooveful; unless upon such admonition they refuse to hearken to the wholesome counsel of their brethren." And of this matter Mr. Robinson thus writeth in his book, *Justification*<sup>3</sup> page 209, "The officers of one or many churches may meet together to discuss and consider of matters for the good of the church or churches, and so be called a Church Synod, or the like, so they infringe no order of Christ or liberty of the brethren;" not differing herein from Mr. Davenport and the principal of our ministers.

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<sup>2</sup> Cotton, John. *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared in Two Treatises: In the former, from the historical aspersions of Mr. Robert Baylie, in his book called, A disswasive from the errors of the time, ...* (London: Matthew Simmons for John Bellamie, 1648).

<sup>3</sup> Robinson, John. *A Justification of Separation from the Church of England: Against Mr. Richard Bernard his Invective, intituled The Separatists Schisme.* (Leiden?: 1610).

### YOUNG MEN.

But they seem to differ about the exercise of prophecy, that is, that men out of office, having gifts, may upon occasion edify the church publicly and openly, and applying the Scriptures; which seems to be a new practice.

### ANCIENT MEN.

It doth but seem so; as many things else do that have by usurpation grown out of use. But that it hath been an ancient practice of the people of God, besides the grounds of Scripture, we will give an instance or two. We find in the ancient *Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius*<sup>4</sup>, lib. vi. cap. 19, how Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, being pricked with envy against Origen, complaineth in his letters that there was never such a practice heard of, nor no precedent to be found that laymen in presence of bishops have taught in the church; but is thus answered by the bishop of Jerusalem and the bishop of Cesarea: “We know not,” say they, “why he reporteth a manifest untruth, when as there may be found such as in open assemblies have taught the people; yea, when as there were present learned men that could profit the people, and moreover holy bishops, who at that time exhorted them to preach. For example, at Laranda Euelpis was requested of Neon, at Iconium Paulinus was requested by Celsus, at Synada Theodorus was requested by Atticus, who were godly brethren, etc.”

The second instance is out of Speed’s *Cloud of Witnesses*<sup>5</sup>, page 71. Saith he, “Rambam or Maymon records, that in the synagogues, first, only a Levite must offer sacrifice; secondly, but any in Israel might expound the law; thirdly, the expounder must be an eminent man, and must have leave from the master of the synagogue; and so contends that Christ Luke 4:16, taught as any of Israel might have done as well as the Levites; and the like did Paul and Barnabas, Acts 13:15.”

If any out of weakness have abused at any time then liberty, it is their personal faulting, as sometimes weak ministers may their office, and yet the ordinance good and lawful.

And the chief of our ministers in New England agree therein. See Mr. Cotton’s *Answer to Baylie*, page the 27th, 2d part. “Though neither all,” saith he, “nor most of the brethren of a church have ordinarily received a gift of public prophesying, or preaching, yet in defect of public ministry, it is not an unheard of novelty that God should enlarge private men with public gifts, and to dispense them to edification; for we read that when the church at Jerusalem were all scattered abroad, except the Apostles, yet they that were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” Acts 8: 4; 11:19; 20:21.

Mr. Robinson also, in his *Apology*, page 55, chapter 8, to take off the aspersion charged on them, as if all the members of a church were to prophesy publicly, answers, “It comes within the compass but of a few of the multitude, haply two or three in a church, so to do; and touching prophecy,” saith he, “we think the very same that the Synod held at Emden, 1571, hath decreed in these words: ‘First, in all churches, whether but springing up, or grown to some ripeness, let the order of prophecy be observed, according to Paul’s institution. Secondly, into the fellowship of this work are to be admitted not only the ministers, but the teachers too, as also of the elders and deacons, yea, even of the multitude, which are willing to confer their gift received of God to the common utility of the church; but so as they first be allowed by the judgment of the ministers

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<sup>4</sup> [Vautrollier, Thomas]. *The Ecclesiastical Historie of Eusebius Pamphilus*. (London?: 1585, reprinted 1636 and 1649).

<sup>5</sup> Speed, John. *A Cloud of Witnesses: Confirming the Humanitie of Christ Jesus through the fathers, patriarkes, and prophets*. (London: Felix Kyngston, 1628).

and others.’ So we believe and practice with the Belgic churches, etc.” See more in the immediate following page.

#### YOUNG MEN.

We cannot but marvel that in so few years there should be so great a change, that they who were so hotly persecuted by the prelates, and also opposed by the better sort of ministers, not only Mr. Gifford, Mr. Bernard, and other such like, but many of the most eminent both for learning and godliness, and yet now not only these famous men and churches in New England so fully to close with them in practice, but all the godly party in the land to stand for the same way, under the new name of Independents, put upon them.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

It is the Lord’s doing, and it ought to be marvelous in our eyes; and the rather, because Mr. Bernard, in his book, made their small increase in a few years one and the chief argument against the way itself. To which Mr. Robinson answered, that “Religion is not always sown and reaped in one age; and that John Huss and Jerome of Prague finished their testimony a hundred years before Luther, and Wycliff well-nigh as long before them, and yet neither the one nor the other with the like success as Luther. And yet,” saith he, “many are already gathered into the kingdom of Christ; and the nearness of many more throughout the whole land, (for the regions are white unto the harvest,) doth promise within less than a hundred years, if our sins and theirs make not us and them unworthy of this mercy, a very plenteous harvest;” (*Justification*, folio 62); as if he had prophesied of these times. Yea, some of us have often heard him say that “even those ministers and other godly persons that did then most sharply oppose them, if they might come to be from under the bishops, and live in a place of rest and peace, where they might comfortably subsist, they would practice the same things which they now did.” And truly, many of us have seen this abundantly verified, not only in these latter times, but formerly.

Dr. Ames was estranged from and opposed Mr. Robinson; and yet afterwards there was loving compliance and near agreement between them; and, which is more strange, Mr. Johnson himself, who was afterwards pastor of the church of God at Amsterdam, was a preacher to the company of English of the Staple at Middleburg, in Zealand, and had great and certain maintenance allowed him by them, and was highly respected of them, and so zealous against this way as that Mr. Barrow’s and Mr. Greenwood’s *Refutation*<sup>6</sup> of Gifford was privately in printing in this city, he not only was a means to discover it, but was made the ambassador’s instrument to intercept them at the press, and see them burnt; the which charge he did so well perform, as he let them go on until they were wholly finished, and then surprised the whole impression, not suffering any to escape and then, by the magistrates’ authority, caused them all to be openly burnt, himself standing by until they were all consumed to ashes. Only he took up two of them, one to keep in his own study, that he might see their errors, and the other to bestow on a special friend for the like use. But mark the sequel. When he had done this work, he went home, and being set down in his study, he began to turn over some pages of this book, and superficially to read some things here and there as his fancy led him. At length he met with something that began to work upon his spirit, which so wrought with him as drew him to this resolution, seriously to read over the whole book; the which he did once and again. In the end he was so taken, and his conscience was troubled so, as he could have no rest in himself until he crossed

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<sup>6</sup> Henry Barrow and John Greenwood. *A plaine refutation of M. Giffards booke, intituled, A Short treatise gainst the Donatistes of England.* (London?: 1605).

the seas and came to London to confer with the authors, who were then in prison, and shortly after executed. After which conference he was so satisfied and confirmed in the truth, as he never returned to his place any more at Middleburg, but adjoined himself to their society at London, and was afterwards committed to prison, and then banished; and in conclusion coming to live at Amsterdam, he caused the same books, which he had been an instrument to burn, to be new printed and set out at his own charge. And some of us here present testify this to be a true relation, which we heard from his own mouth before many witnesses.

#### YOUNG MEN.

We have seen a book of Mr. Robert Baylie's, a Scotchman, wherein he seemeth to take notice of the spreading of the truth under the notion of error<sup>7</sup>, and casts all the disgraces he can on it, and ranks it with others the foulest errors of the time, and endeavors to show how like a small spark it revived out of the ashes, and was brought from Leiden over the seas into New England, and there nourished with much silence until it spread to other places in the country, and by eminent hands from thence into Old England.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

As we dare say Mr. Baylie intends no honor to the persons by what he says, either to those here or from whence they came, so are they far from seeking any to themselves, but rather are ashamed that their weak working hath brought no more glory to God; and if in anything God hath made any of them instruments for the good of his people in any measure, they desire he only may have the glory. And whereas Mr. Baylie affirmeth that, however it was, in a few years the most who settled in the land did agree to model themselves after Mr. Robinson's pattern, we agree with reverend Mr. Cotton, that, "there was no agreement by any solemn or common consultation; but that it is true they did, as if they had agreed, by the same spirit of truth and unity, set up, by the help of Christ, the same model of churches, one like to another; and if they of Plymouth have helped any of the first comers in their theory, by hearing and discerning their practices, therein the Scripture is fulfilled that the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until all was leavened." Matthew 13:33. *Answer to Mr. Baylie*, page 17.

#### YOUNG MEN.

We desire to know how many have been put to death for this cause, and what manner of persons they were, and what occasions were taken against them by bringing them to their end.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

We know certainly of six that were publicly executed, besides such as died in prisons: Mr. Henry Barrow, Mr. Greenwood, (these suffered at Tyburn); Mr. Penry at St. Thomas Waterings, by London; Mr. William Dennis at Thetford, in Norfolk; two others at St. Edmund's, in Suffolk, whose names were Copping and Elias. These two last mentioned were condemned by cruel Judge Popham, whose countenance and carriage was very rough and severe toward

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<sup>7</sup> Baylie, Robert. *A Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time: wherein the tenets of the principall sects, especially of the Independents, are drawn together in one map, for the most part in the words of their own authours, and their maine principles are examined by the touch-stone of the Holy Scriptures.* (London: Samuel Gellibrand, 1645).

them, with many sharp menaces. But God gave them courage to bear it, and to make this answer:

My Lord, your face we fear not,  
And for your threats we care not,  
And to come to your read service, we dare not.

These two last named were put to death for dispersing of books.

For Mr. Dennis, he was a godly man, and faithful in his place but what occasion was taken against him, we know not, more than the common cause. For Mr. Penry, how unjustly he was charged, himself hath made manifest to the world in his books, and that declaration which he made a little before his sufferings; all which are extant in print, with some of his godly letters.

As for Mr. Barrow and Mr. Greenwood, it also appears by their own writings how those statutes formerly made against the Papists were wrested against them, and they condemned thereupon; as may be seen by their examinations.

#### YOUNG MEN.

But these were rigid Brownists, and lie under much aspersion, and their names much blemished and beclouded, not only by enemies, but even by godly and very reverend men.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

They can no more justly be called Brownists, than the disciples might have been called Judasites; for they did as much abhor Brown's apostasy, and profane course, and his defection, as the disciples and other Christians did Judas' treachery. And for their rigid and roughness of spirit, as some of them, especially Mr. Barrow, is taxed, it may be considered they were very rigidly and roughly dealt with, not only by the Lord's enemies and their enemies, but by some godly persons of those times, differing in opinions from them; which makes some of us call to mind what one Dr. Taylor hath written in a late book in these stirring times. "Such an eminent man" saith he, "hath had the good hap to be reputed orthodox by posterity, and did condemn such a man of such an opinion, and yet himself erred in as considerable matters; but meeting with better neighbors in his lifetime, and a more charitable posterity after his death, hath his memory preserved in honor; and the other's name suffers without cause." Of which he gives instances in his book entitled *The Liberty of Prophesying*<sup>8</sup>, page 33 and following.

We refer you to Mr. Robinson's *Answer to Mr. Bernard*<sup>9</sup>, where he charges him with blasphemy, railing, scoffing etc. "For William Barrow," saith Mr. Robinson, "as I say with Mr. Ainsworth, that I will not justify all the words of another man, nor yet mine own, so say I also with Mr. Smith, that because I know not by what particular motion of the spirit he was guided to write in those phrases, I dare not censure him as you do; especially considering with what fiery zeal the Lord hath furnished such his servants at all times as he hath stirred up for special reformation. Let the example of Luther alone suffice, whom into what terms his zeal carried his writings testify; and yet both in him and in Mr. Barrow there might be with true spiritual zeal fleshly indignation mingled." *Answer to Mr. Bernard*, folio 84.

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<sup>8</sup> Taylor, Jeremy. *A Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying: shewing the unreasonableness of prescribing to other mens faith, and the iniquity of persecuting differing opinions.* (London: R. Royston, 1647).

<sup>9</sup> i.e. Robinson's *Justification of Separation.*

And further in page 86 he saith, that “such harsh terms wherewith he entertains such persons and things in the church as carry with them most appearance of holiness, they are to be interpreted according to his meaning, with this distinction that Mr. Barrow speaks not of these persons and things simply, but in a respect, and so and so considered; and so no one term given by Mr. Barrow but may, at the least, be tolerated.”

#### YOUNG MEN.

But divers reverend men have expressed concerning this matter that God is not wont to make choice of men infamous for gross sins and vices before their calling, to make them any instruments of reformation after their calling, and proceed to declare that Mr. Barrow was a great gamester and a dicer when he lived in court, and getting much by play, would boast of loose spending it with courtesans, etc.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

Truly, with due respect to such reverend men be it spoken those things might well have been spared from putting in print, especially so long after his death, when not only he, but all his friends are taken out of the world that might vindicate his name. That he was tainted with vices at the court before his conversion and calling, it is not very strange; and if he had lived and died in that condition, it is like he might have gone out of the world without any public brand on his name, and have passed for a tolerable Christian and member of the church. He had hurt enough done him, whilst he lived, by evil and cruel enemies; why should godly men be prejudicated to him after his death in his name? Was not the Apostle Paul a persecutor of God’s saints unto death? And doth not the same Apostle, speaking of scandalous and lascivious persons, say, “And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God.” 1 Cor. 6:11.

And if histories deceive us not, was not Cyprian a magician before his conversion, and Augustine a Manichæan? And when it was said unto him in the voice he heard, *Tolle et lege*, he was directed to that place of Scripture, “not in gluttony and drunkenness, nor in chambering and wantonness, nor in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and take no thought for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts of it.” By which it may seem that if God do not make choice of such men as have been infamous for gross vices before their calling, yet sometimes he is wont to do it, and is free to choose whom he pleaseth for notable instruments for his own work. As for other things that have been spoken of him and Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Penry, we leave them as they are. But some of us have reason to think there are some mistakes in the relations of those things. Only we shall add other public testimonies concerning them from witnesses of very worthy credit, which are also in print.

First, from Mr. Phillips. A famous and godly preacher having heard and seen Mr. Barrow’s holy speeches and preparations for death, said, “Barrow, Barrow, my soul be with thine!” The same author also reports, that Queen Elizabeth asked learned Dr. Reynolds what he thought of those two men, Mr. Barrow and Mr. Greenwood; and he answered her Majesty that it could not avail anything to show his judgment concerning them, seeing they were put to death; and being loath to speak his mind further, her Majesty charged him upon his allegiance to speak. Whereupon he answered that he was persuaded if they had lived, they would have been two as worthy instruments for the church of God as have been raised up in this age. Her Majesty sighed, and said no more. But after that, riding to a park by the place where they were executed,

and being willing to take further information concerning them, demanded of the right honorable the Earl of Cumberland, that was present when they suffered, what end they made. He answered, “a very godly end, and prayed for your Majesty, and the State,” etc. We may also add what some of us have heard by credible information, that the Queen demanded of the Archbishop what he thought of them in his conscience. He answered “he thought they were the servants of God, but dangerous to the State.” “Alas!” said she, “shall we put the servants of God to death?” And this was the true cause why no more of them were put to death in her days.

#### YOUNG MEN.

Did any of you know Mr. Barrow? If we may be so bold to ask, for we would willingly know what his life and conversation; because some, we perceive, have him in precious esteem, and others can scarce name him without some note of obloquy and dislike.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

We have not seen his person; but some of us have been well acquainted with those that knew him familiarly both before and after his conversion; and one of us hath had conference with one that was his domestic servant, and tended upon him both before and some while after the same.

He was a gentleman of good worth, and a flourishing courtier in his time, and, as appears in his own answers to the Archbishop and Dr. Cousens, he was some time a student at Cambridge and the Inns of Court, and accomplished with strong parts.

We have heard his conversion to be on this wise. Walking in London one Lord’s day with one of his companions, he heard a preacher at his sermon very loud, as they passed by the church. Upon which Mr. Barrow said unto his consort, “Let us go in and hear what this man saith that is thus earnest.” “Tush,” saith the other, “what! shall we go to hear a man talk?” etc. But in he went and sat down. And the minister was vehement in reprovng sin, and sharply applied the judgments of God against the same; and, it should seem, touched him to the quick in such things as he was guilty of, so as God set it home to his soul, and began to work his repentance and conversion thereby. For he was so stricken as he could not be quiet, until by conference with godly men and further hearing of the word, with diligent reading and meditation, God brought peace to his soul and conscience, after much humiliation of heart and reformation of life; so as he left the court, and retired himself to a private life, sometime in the country and sometime in the city, giving himself to study and reading of the Scriptures and other good works very diligently. And being missed at court by his consorts and acquaintance, it was quickly bruited abroad that Barrow was turned Puritan. What his course was afterwards, his writings show, as also his sufferings and conference with men of all sorts do declare, until his life was taken from him.

And thus much we can further affirm, from those that well knew him, that he was very comfortable to the poor and those in distress in their sufferings; and when he saw he must die, he gave a stock for the relief of the poor of the church, which was a good help to them in their banished condition afterwards. Yea, and that which some will hardly believe, he did much persuade them to peace, and composed many differences that were grown amongst them whilst he lived, and would have, it is like, prevented more that after fell out, if he had continued.

#### YOUNG MEN.

We thank you for your pains. We hope it will extend further than our satisfaction. We cannot but marvel that such a man should be by so many aspersed.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

It is not much to be marveled at; for he was most plain in discovering the cruelty, fraud, and hypocrisy of the enemies of the truth, and searching into the corruptions of the time, which made him abhorred of them; and peradventure something too harsh against the haltings of divers of the preachers and professors that he had to deal with in those times, who out of fear or weakness did not come so close up to the truth in their practice as their doctrines and grounds seemed to hold forth. Which makes us remember what was the answer of Erasmus to the Duke of Saxony, when he asked his opinion whether Luther had erred. He answered, "his opinions were good, but wished he would moderate his style, which stirred him up the more enemies, no doubt."

#### YOUNG MEN.

We find in the writings of some such who were very eminent in their times for piety and learning, that those of the Separation found more favor in our native country than those who were reproached by the name of Puritans; and after much discourse thereabouts, come to this conclusion that no comparison will hold from the Separatists to them in their sufferings but *a minori*; and then they go on and say what a compulsory banishment has been put upon those blessed and glorious lights, Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Parker, Dr. Ames, etc.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

Far be it from any of us to detract from or to extenuate the sufferings of any of the servants of God, much less from those worthies forenamed, or any others afterwards mentioned. Yet, under favor, we crave pardon if we cannot consent to the judgment of such eminent ones for piety and learning above hinted. We doubt not, but do easily grant, that the sufferings of those reproached by the name of Puritans were great, especially some of them, and were better known to those pious and learned first above intimated, than the sufferings of those that are reproached by the name of Brownists and Separatists. But we shall give you some instances, and leave it to you and some others to consider of.

1. Though no more were publicly executed, yet sundry more were condemned, and brought to the gallows, and ascended the ladder, not knowing but they should die, and have been relieved, and after banished; some of which we have known and often spoken with.

2. Others have not only been forced into voluntary banishment, by great numbers, to avoid further cruelty, but divers, after long and sore imprisonment, have been forced to abjure the land by oath, never to return without leave. In anno. 1604 four persons at once were forced to do so at a public Sessions in London, or else upon refusal they were to be hanged. This their abjuration was done on the statute of the 35 of Queen Elizabeth. Some of these we have also known.

3. We find mention in a printed book of seventeen or eighteen that have died in several prisons in London in six years' time before the year 1592, besides what have been in other parts of the land, and since that time, perishing by cold, hunger, or noisomeness of the prison.

4. In the same year we find a lamentable petition, now in print, of sixty persons committed unailable to several prisons in London, as Newgate, the Gatehouse, Clink, etc.,

being made close prisoners, allowing them neither meat, drink, nor lodging, nor suffering any whose hearts the Lord would stir up for their relief, to have any access unto them; so as they complain that no felons, traitors, nor murderers in the land were thus dealt with; and so after many other grievous complaints conclude with these words: "We crave for all of us but the liberty either to die openly, or to live openly in the land of our nativity. If we deserve death, it beseemeth the majesty of justice not to see us closely murdered yea starved to death with hunger and cold, and stifled in loathsome dungeons. If we be guiltless, we crave but the benefit of our innocence, viz. that we may have peace to serve our God and our Prince in the place of the sepulchers of our fathers."

And what number since those, who have been put unto compulsory banishment and other hard sufferings as loss of goods, friends, and long and hard imprisonments, under which many have died, it is so well known, that it would make up a volume to rehearse them, and would not only equalize but far exceed the number of those godly called Puritans that have suffered. Suppose they were but few of them ministers that suffered, as above expressed; yet their sorrows might be as great, and their wants more, and their souls as much afflicted, because more contemned and neglected of men.

But some have said they were excommunicated; and that was no great matter as excommunications went in those days. So were these, not only while they were living but some of them many times after they were dead; and as some of the other were imprisoned, so were more of these. But it is further said, all of them were deprived of their ministry; and so were these of their livelihood and maintenance although they had no offices to lose. But those remained still in the land, and were succored and sheltered by good people in a competent wise, the most of them, and sundry of them lived as well, as may easily be proved if not better than if they had enjoyed their benefices; whereas the other were, a great number of them, forced to fly into foreign lands for shelter, or else might have perished in prisons and these poor creatures endured, many of them, such hardships (as is well known to some of us) as makes our hearts still ache to remember.

We some of us knew Mr. Parker, Doctor Ames, and Mr. Jacob in Holland, when they sojourned for a time in Leiden; and all three boarded together and had their victuals dressed by some of our acquaintance, and then they lived comfortable, and then they were provided for as became their persons. And after Mr. Jacob returned, and Mr. Parker was at Amsterdam, where he printed some of his books, and Mr. Ames disposed of himself to other places, it was not worse with him; and some of us well know how it fared then with many precious Christians in divers times and places. To speak the truth, the professors in England, though many of them suffered much at the hands of the prelates, yet they had a great advantage of the Separatists; for the Separatists had not only the prelates and their faction to encounter with, (and what hard measure they met with at their hands, above the other, doth sufficiently appear by what is before declared,) but also they must endure the frowns, and many times the sharp invectives, of the forward ministers against them, both in public and private; and what influence they had upon the spirits of the people, is well enough known also; by reason hereof the ministers in foreign countries did look awry at them when they would give help and countenance to the other.

#### YOUNG MEN.

Indeed, it seems they have sometimes suffered much hardness in the Low Countries, if that be true that is reported of such a man as Mr. Ainsworth, that he should live for some time with nine pence a week. To which is replied by another, that if people suffered him to live on

nine pence a week, with roots boiled, either the people were grown extreme low in estate, or the growth of their godliness was come to a very low ebb.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

The truth is, their condition for the most part was for some time very low and hard. It was with them as if it should be related, would hardly be believed. And no marvel. For many of them had lain long in prisons, and then were banished into Newfoundland, where they were abused, and at last came into the Low Countries, and wanting money, trades, friends, or acquaintances, and languages to help themselves, how could it be otherwise? The report of Mr. Ainsworth was near those times, when he was newly come out of Ireland with others poor, and being a single young man and very studious, was content with a little. And yet, to take off the aspersion from the people in that particular, the chief and true reason thereof is mistaken; for he was a very modest and bashful man, and concealed his wants from others, until some suspected how it was with him, and pressed him to see how it was; and after it was known, such as were able mended his condition; and when he was married afterwards, he and his family were comfortably provided for. But we have said enough of these things. They had few friends to comfort them, nor any arm of flesh to support them; and if in some things they were too rigid, they are rather to be pitied, considering their times and sufferings, than to be blasted with reproach to posterity.

#### YOUNG MEN.

Was that Brown that fell away and made apostasy, the first inventor and beginner of this way?

#### ANCIENT MEN.

No, verily; for, as one answers this question very well in a printed book, almost forty years ago, that the prophets, apostles, and evangelists have in their authentic writing laid down the ground thereof; and upon that ground is their building reared up and surely settled. Moreover, many of the martyrs, both former and latter, have maintained it, as is to be seen in *The Acts and Monuments of the Church*<sup>10</sup>. Also, in the days of Queen Elizabeth there was a separated church, whereof Mr. Fitts was pastor, and another before that in the time of Queen Mary, of which Mr. Rough was pastor or teacher, and Cudbert Simpson a deacon, who exercised amongst themselves, as other ordinances, so church censures, as excommunication, etc., and professed and practiced that cause before Mr. Brown wrote for it. But he being one that afterwards wrote for it, they that first hatched the name of Puritans and bestowed it on the godly professors that desired reformation, they likewise out of the same storehouse would needs bestow this new livery upon others that never would own it, nor had reason so to do. Mr. Cotton, likewise, in his *Answer to Mr. Baylie*, page fourth, shows how in the year 1567 there were a hundred persons who refused the common liturgy, and the congregations attending thereunto, and used prayers and preaching and the sacraments amongst themselves, whereof fourteen or fifteen were sent to prison, of whom the chiefest were Mr. Smith, Mr. Nixon, James Ireland, Robert Hawkins, Thomas Rowland, and Richard Morecroft; and these pleaded their separation

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<sup>10</sup> Foxe, John. *Ecclesiasticall History, Conteyning the Acts and Monuments of things passed in every kinges time, in this realme, especially in the Churche of England principally to be noted, with a full discourse of such persecutions, horrible troubles, the suffring of martirs, ...* Three volumes. (London, 1570-1583, countless reprints).

before the Lord Mayor, Bishop Sands, and other commissioners on June 20, 1567, about eighty years ago, being many years before Brown. Divers other instances might be given.

#### YOUNG MEN.

But if we mistake not, Mr. Brown is accounted by some of good note to be the inventor of that way which is called Brownism, from whom the sect took its name. Moreover, it is said by such of note as aforesaid, that it is not God's usual manner of dealing to leave any of the first publishers or restorers of any truth of his to such fearful apostasy.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

Possibly this speech might arise from a common received opinion. But reverend Mr. Cotton, in his answer to Mr. Baylie, saith, "the backsliding of Brown from that way of Separation is a just reason why the Separatists may disclaim denomination from him, and refuse to be called Brownists, after his name; and to speak with reason," saith he, "if any be justly to be called Brownists, it is only such as revolt from Separation to formality, and from thence to profaneness." Page 5.

To which we may add, that it is very injurious to call those after his name, whose person they never knew, and whose writings few if any of them ever saw, and whose errors and backslidings they have constantly borne witness against; and what truths they have received have been from the light of God's sacred word, conveyed by other godly instruments unto them; though Brown may sometimes have professed some of the same things, and now fallen from the same, as many others have done.

#### YOUNG MEN.

Seeing we have presumed thus far to inquire into these ancients times of you, and of the sufferings of the aforesaid persons, we would likewise entreat you, though never so briefly, to tell us something of the persons and carriages of other eminent men about those times, or immediately after, as Mr. Francis Johnson, Mr. Henry Ainsworth, Mr. John Smith, Mr. John Robinson, Mr. Richard Clyfton.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

Here are some in the company that knew them all familiarly, whom we shall desire to satisfy your request. Those answered, we shall do it most willingly; for we cannot but honor the memory of the men for the good that not only many others but we ourselves have received by them and their ministry, for we have heard them all, and lived under the ministry of divers of them for some years. We shall therefore speak of them in order briefly.

#### MR. JOHNSON,

Of whom something was spoken before, was pastor of the church of God at Amsterdam. A very grave man he was, and an able teacher, and was the most solemn in all his administrations that we have seen any, and especially in dispensing the seals of the covenant, both baptism and the Lord's supper. And a good disputant he was. We heard Mr. Smith upon occasion say, that he was persuaded no men living were able to maintain a cause against those two men, meaning Mr. Johnson and Mr. Ainsworth, if they had not the truth on their side. He, by reason of many dissensions that fell out in the church, and the subtlety of one of the elders of the same, came after many years to alter his judgment about the government of the church, and

his practice thereupon, which caused a division among them. But he lived not many years after, and died at Amsterdam after his return from Emden.

#### YOUNG MEN.

But he is much spoken against for excommunicating his brother and his own father, and maintaining his wife's cause, who was by his brother and others reprov'd for her pride in apparel.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

Himself hath often made his own defense, and others for him. The church did, after long patience towards them and much pains taken with them, excommunicate them for their unreasonable and endless opposition, and such things as did accompany the same; and such was the justice thereof, as he could not but consent thereto. In our time his wife was a grave matron, and very modest both in her apparel and all her demeanor, ready to any good works in her place and helpful to many, especially the poor, and an ornament to his calling. She was a young widow when he married her, and had been a merchant's wife, by whom he had a good estate, and was a godly woman; and because she wore such apparel as she had been formerly used to, which were neither excessive nor immodest, for their chiefest exceptions were against her wearing of some whalebone in the bodice and sleeves of her gown, corked shoes, and other such like things as the citizens of her rank then used to wear. And although, for offence sake, she and he were willing to reform the fashions of them so far as might be without spoiling of their garments, yet it would not content them except they came full up to their size. Such was the strictness or rigidness (as now the term goes) of some in those times, as we can by experience and of our own knowledge show in other instances. We shall for brevity sake only show one. We were in the company of a godly man that had been a long time prisoner at Norwich for this cause, and was by Judge Cooke set at liberty. After going into the country he visited his friends, and returning that way again to go into the Low Countries by ship at Yarmouth, and so desired some of us to turn in with him to the house of an ancient woman in the city, who had been very kind and helpful to him in his sufferings. She knowing his voice made him very welcome, and those with him. But after some time of their entertainment being ready to depart, she came up to him and felt of his band (for her eyes were dim with age,) and perceiving it was something stiffened with starch, she was much displeas'd, and reprov'd him very sharply, fearing God would not prosper his journey. Yet the man was a plain countryman, clad in gray russet, without either welt or guard, (as the proverb is,) and the band he wore scarce worth threepence, made of their own homespinning; and he was godly and humble as he was plain. What would such professors, if they were now living, say to the excess of our times?

#### MR. HENRY AINSWORTH,

A man of a thousand, was teacher of this church at Amsterdam at the same time when Mr. Johnson was pastor. Two worthy men they were and of excellent parts. He continued constant in his judgment and practice unto his end in those things about the church government, from which Mr. Johnson swerved and fell. He ever maintained good correspondence with Mr. Robinson at Leiden, and would consult with him in all matters of weight, both in their differences and afterwards. A very learned man he was, and a close student, which much impaired his health. We have heard some, eminent in the knowledge of the tongues, of the university of Leiden, say that they thought he had not his better for the Hebrew tongue in the

University, nor scarce in Europe. He was a man very modest, amiable, and sociable in his ordinary course and carriage, of an innocent and unblamable life and conversation, of a meek spirit, and a calm temper, void of passion, and not easily provoked. And yet he would be something smart in his style to his opposers in his public writings; at which we that have seen his constant carriage, both in public disputes and the managing of all church affairs, and such like occurrences, have sometimes marveled. He had an excellent gift of teaching and opening the Scriptures; and things did flow from him with that facility, plainness, and sweetness, as did much affect the hearers. He was powerful and profound in doctrine, although his voice was not strong; and had this excellency above many, that he was most ready and pregnant in the Scriptures, as if the book of God had been written in his heart; being as ready in his quotations, without tossing and turning his book, as if they had lain open before his eyes, and seldom missing a word in the citing of any place, teaching not only the word and doctrine of God, but in the words of God, and for the most part in a continued phrase and words of Scripture. He used great dexterity, and was ready in comparing Scripture with Scripture, one with another. In a word, the times and place in which he lived were not worthy of such a man.

#### YOUNG MEN.

But we find that he is taxed, in a book writ by George Johnson, with apostasy and to be a man-pleaser, etc.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

Who can escape the scourge of tongues? Christ himself could not do it when he was here upon earth, although there was no guile found in his mouth; nor Moses although he was the meekest man in the earth. For man-pleasing they that tax him because he concurred against their violent and endless dissensions about the former matters. And for his apostasy, this was all the matter. When he was a young man, before he came out of England, he at the persuasion of some of his godly friends went once or twice to hear a godly minister preach; and this was the great matter of apostasy for which those violent men thought him worthy to be depose; from his place, and for which they thus charge him. And truly herein they may worthily bear the name of rigid, etc.

#### MR. JOHN SMITH

Was an eminent man in his time, and a good preacher and of other good parts; but his inconstancy, and unstable judgment, and being so suddenly carried away with things did soon overthrow him. Yet we have some of us heard him use this speech: "Truly," said he, "we being now come into a place of liberty, are in great danger, if we look not well to our ways; for we are like men set upon the ice, and therefore may easily slide and fall." But in this example it appears it is an easier matter to give good counsel than to follow it to foresee danger than to prevent it: which made the prophet to say, "O Lord, the way of man is not in himself neither is it in man to walk and to direct his steps." He was some time pastor to a company of honest and godly men which came with him out of England, and pitched at Amsterdam. He first fell into some errors about the Scriptures, and so into some opposition with Mr. Johnson, who had been his tutor, and the church there. But he was convinced of them by the pains and faithfulness of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Ainsworth, and revoked them; but afterwards was drawn away by some of the Dutch Anabaptists, who finding him to be a good scholar and unsettled, they easily misled the most of his people, and other of them scattered away. He lived not many years after, but died there of a

consumption, to which he was inclined before he came out of England. His and his people's condition may be an object of pity for after times.

#### MR. JOHN ROBINSON

Was pastor of that famous church of Leiden, in Holland; a man not easily to be paralleled for all things, whose singular virtues we shall not take upon us here to describe. Neither need we, for they so well are known both by friends and enemies. As he was a man learned and of solid judgment, and of a quick and sharp wit, so was he also of a tender conscience, and very sincere in all his ways, a hater of hypocrisy and dissimulation, and would be very plain with his best friends. He was very courteous, affable, and sociable in his conversation, and towards his own people especially. He was an acute and expert disputant, very quick and ready, and had much bickering with the Arminians, who stood more in fear of him than any of the University. He was never satisfied in himself until he had searched any cause or argument he had to deal in thoroughly and to the bottom; and we have heard him sometimes say to his familiars that many times, both in writing and disputation, he knew he had sufficiently answered others, but many times not himself; and was ever desirous of any light, and the more able, learned, and holy the persons were, the more he desired to confer and reason with them. He was very profitable in his ministry and comfortable to his people. He was much beloved of them, and as loving was he unto them, and entirely sought their good for soul and body. In a word, he was much esteemed and revered of all that knew him, and his abilities both of friends and strangers. But we resolved to be brief in this matter, leaving you to better and more large information herein from others.

#### MR. RICHARD CLYFTON

Was a grave and fatherly old man when he came first into Holland, having a great white beard; and pity it was that such a reverend old man should be forced to leave his country, and at those years to go into exile. But it was his lot; and he bore it patiently. Much good had he done in the country where he lived, and converted many to God by his faithful and painful ministry, both in preaching and catechizing. Sound and orthodox he always was, and so continued to his end. He belonged to the church at Leiden; but being settled at Amsterdam, and thus aged, he was loath to remove any more; and so when they removed, he was dismissed to them there, and there remained until he died. Thus have we briefly satisfied your desire.

#### YOUNG MEN.

We are very thankful to you for your pains. We perceive God raiseth up excellent instruments in all ages to carry on his own work; and the best of men have their failings sometimes, as we see in these our times, and that there is no new thing under the sun. But before we end this matter, we desire you would say something of those two churches that were so long in exile, of whose guides we have already heard.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

Truly there were in them many worthy men; and if you had seen them in their beauty and order, as we have done, you would have been much affected therewith, we dare say. At Amsterdam, before their division and breach, they were about three hundred communicants, and they had for their pastor and teacher those two eminent men before named, and in our time four

grave men for ruling elders, and three able and godly men for deacons, one ancient widow for a deaconess, who did them service many years, though she was sixty years of age when she was chosen. She honored her place and was an ornament to the congregation. She usually sat in a convenient place in the congregation, with a little birchen rod in her hand, and kept little children in great awe from disturbing the congregation. She did frequently visit the sick and weak, especially women, and, as there was need, called out maids and young women to watch and do them other helps as their necessity did require; and if they were poor, she would gather relief for them of those that were able, or acquaint the deacons; and she was obeyed as a mother in Israel and an officer of Christ. And for the church of Leiden, they were sometimes not much fewer in number, nor at all inferior in able men, though they had not so many officers as the other; for they had but one ruling elder with their pastor, a man well approved and of great integrity; also they had three able men for deacons. And that which was a crown unto them, they lived together in love and peace all their days, without any considerable differences or any disturbance that grew thereby, but such as was easily healed in love; and so they continued until with mutual consent they removed into New England. And what their condition hath been since, some of you that are of their children do see and can tell. Many worthy and able men there were in both places, who lived and died in obscurity in respect of the world, as private Christians, yet were they precious in the eyes of the Lord, and also in the eyes of such as knew them, whose virtues we with such of you as are their children do follow and imitate.

#### YOUNG MEN.

If we may not be tedious, we would request to know one thing more. It is commonly said that those of the Separation hold none to be true churches but their own, and condemn all the churches in the world besides; which lieth as a foul blot upon them, yea even on some here in New England, except they can remove it.

#### ANCIENT MEN.

It is a manifest slander, laid upon them; for they hold all the reformed churches to be true churches, and even the most rigid of them have ever done so, as appears by their Apologies and other writings; and we ourselves some of us know of much intercommunion that divers have held with them reciprocally, not only with the Dutch and French, but even with the Scotch, who are not of the best mold, yea and with the Lutherans also; and we believe they have gone as far herein, both in judgment and practice, as any of the churches in New England do or can do, to deal faithfully and bear witness against their corruptions. Having thus far satisfied all your demands, we shall here break off this conference for this time, desiring the Lord to make you to grow up in grace and wisdom and the true fear of God, that in all faithfulness and humility you may serve him in your generations.

#### YOUNG MEN.

Gentlemen, we humbly thank you for your pains with us and respect unto us, and do further crave that upon any fit occasions we may have access unto you for any further information, and herewith do humbly take our leave.