

with due observance of the English laws, or such instructions as they furnished him with, till the Patent was brought over, 1630: the Patentees themselves, most of them, coming along at that time therewith.

The principal duty for those two years, incumbent on the agent aforesaid, or Deputy Governor, was to take care of the welfare of the company, to order the servants belonging to them, and to improve them in making preparation for the reception of the gentlemen, when they should come; the which were carefully minded by the said Mr. Endicot. And also some endeavors were used to promote the welfare of the Plantation, so far as he was capable in the beginning of things, by laying some foundation of religion, as well as civil government, as may appear by the ensuing letter sent by him in the beginning of the year, viz. May 11, 1629, to Mr. Bradford, Governor of New Plymouth, to obtain the help of one Mr. Fuller, a deacon of Mr. Robinson's church, skilled in the designs of the country, which those people that first came over in those two years were filled withal, and also well versed in the way of church discipline practised by Mr. Robinson's church; which letter was the foundation on which was raised all the future acquaintance, the Christian love and correspondency, that was ever after maintained betwixt their persons and respective Colonies, in which are these words: "I am satisfied by Mr. Fuller touching your judgment of the outward form of God's worship. It is, as far as I can gather, no other than is warranted by the evidence of truth, and the same which I have professed and maintained ever since the Lord [in mercy¹] revealed himself to me."²

CHAP. XXI.

The affairs of religion in the Massachusetts Colony in New England, during the first lustre of years after the first attempt for the planting thereof; from the year 1625 to the year 1630.

It doth evidently appear by the premises, that what purses soever were improved, or what charges they were

¹ Supplied from Morton, where may be found the letter entire.—H.

² This letter was not written to obtain aid, but it was a letter of thanks for favors already received.—H.

at that first appeared, in laying the foundation of the Massachusetts Colony, the chiefest intentions and aims of those that managed the business were to promote religion, and if it might be, to propagate the Gospel, in this dark corner of the world. Witness the industry and solicitousness of Mr. White of Dorchester, in *Old* England, that first contrived the carrying on a Plantation of sober and religious persons, together with a strange impression on the mind of Mr. Roger Conant, to pitch upon Naumkeag for that end, and his confidence and constancy, there to stay with intent to carry on the same, notwithstanding the many cross Providences, that seemed at the first view to thwart that design; so as, in the conclusion, it may truly be said in this, if in any other of like nature, the hand of the Lord hath done this, which therefore should be the more marvellous in the eyes of men.

In the beginning of that Plantation at Cape Anne, they had the ministry of Mr. Lyford, that had been dismissed from Plymouth; with whom came some others, out of dislike of the rigid principles of Separation that were maintained there. After he went to Virginia, they were without, till Mr. Higginson and Mr. Skelton came over, who, that they might foreslow no time in the matters of the house of God, they did like Abraham, (as soon as they were hither transported, and here safely arrived,) who applied himself to build an altar to God that had appeared to him, and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees; and so began in the first place to call upon the name of the Lord.

In like manner did those in the first place endeavor to set up some public form of worship, that so, coming thus far into a remote wilderness to enjoy the liberty of their consciences in matters of religion, and to plant and preach the Gospel amongst a barbarous people, that never had heard the joyful sound before, they made as much expedition in the said work as well they could. For having had sufficient experience and acquaintance one with another in the way, as they came over the sea, and a month or two after they were here planted, they resolved to enter into church fellowship together, setting a day

apart for that end; which was the 9th¹ day of August, next after their arrival here. They had beforehand, §and§ in order thereunto, acquainted the present Deputy Governor with their purpose; and consulted one with another about settling a Reformed congregation, according to the rules of the Gospel, as they apprehended, and the pattern of the best Reformed Churches that they were acquainted with, it being their professed intention in this great and solemn undertaking to go on therein as they should find direction from the word of God. Concerning the way and manner of their first covenanting together, and entering into church fellowship one with another, it doth not appear that these were, like those of New Plymouth, aforehand moulded into any order, -or form of church government; but were honest minded men, studious of reformation, that only had disliked some things in the discipline and ceremonies of the Church of England, but were not precisely fixed upon any particular order or form of government, but, like *rasa tabula*, fit to receive any impression that could be delineated out of the Word of God, or vouched to be according to the pattern in the Mount, as they judged. Nor are their successors willing to own that they received their platform of church order from those of New Plymouth; although there is no small appearance that in whole or part they did, (further than some wise men wish they had done,) by what is expressed in Mr. Endicot's letter, above inserted; or else good wits, as they use to say, did strangely jump very near together, into one and the same method and idea of church discipline. And it were well if Mr. Skelton, when he was left alone soon after by the death of Mr. Higginson, did not, in some things, not only imitate and equal, but strongly endeavor to go beyond, that pattern of Separation set up before them in Plymouth, in the pressing of some indifferent things, that savored as much, or more than they of Plymouth did, of the same spirit; as in that of enjoining all women to wear veils, under the penalty of non-communication, urging the same as a matter of duty and absolute necessity, as is by some reported, as well as in refusing communion with the Church of England.

¹ 6th, say Morton, page 145; and Bradford, in Prince, page 263.—B.

It is certainly known that the old Nonconformists, and good old Puritans of Queen Elizabeth and King James's time, did, in many things, not symbolize with the Separatists, whose way and form of discipline was always disowned and disclaimed, yea, publicly condemned, by the writings of the learned Nonconformists of that age, such as Mr. Robert Parker, Dr. Ames, Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Hildersham, that *malleus Brownistarum*, as he used to be called, especially as to their notions about Separation from the Church of England as antichristian; the one endeavoring only a reformation of some corruptions, retained, or crept into the church, as they thought, either before or after its reformed state; the other, not content therewith, stood as stiffly to maintain a necessity of abrogating and disannulling their former church state, and begin all anew, as if things had been so far collapsed in the days of our fathers, that, like a vessel once infected with the contagion of leprosy it must be broken in pieces, to be new cast and moulded, or else to be judged unclean, and unfit for the service of God. It is affirmed by some that had more reason to be best acquainted with the said Mr. Higginson, when he first went over thither, that Mr. Hildersham, upon their first removing, advised him and other ministers, looking this way, to agree upon their form of church government before they came away from England. The which counsel, if it had been attended, might have prevented some inconveniency that hath since fallen out, or at least have saved some of the succeeding ministers from the imputation of departing from their first principles, because they were not publicly professed and declared, when the foundation of their church order was here laid in the beginning of things.

But they had not, as yet, waded so far into the controversy of church discipline as to be very positive in any of those points wherein the main hinge of the controversy lay between them and others; yet aiming, as near as well they could, to come up to the rules of the Gospel, in the first settling of a church state;

and apprehending it necessary for those who intended to be of the church, solemnly to enter into a covenant engagement one with another in the presence of God, to walk together before him according to the Word of God, and then to ordain their ministers unto their several offices, to which they were by the election¹ of the people designed, sc. Mr. Skelton to be their pastor, and Mr. Higginson to be their teacher. In order to the carrying on of that work, or preparation thereunto, the said Mr. Higginson, according as he was desired, drew up a confession of faith, and form of a church covenant, according to the Scriptures; several copies whereof being written out, they publicly owned the same, on the day set apart for that work, a copy of which is retained at this day by some that succeed in the same church. Further also, notice was given of their intended proceedings to the church at New Plymouth, that so they might have their approbation and concurrence, if not their direction and assistance, in a matter of that nature, wherein themselves had been but little before exercised. There were at that time thirty persons joined together in that church covenant; for which end so many copies being prepared beforehand, it was publicly read in the assembly, and the persons concerned solemnly expressing their assent and consent thereunto, they immediately proceeded to ordain their ministers,² as was said before. Mr. Bradford and others, as messengers of Plymouth church, were hindered by cross winds from being present in the former part of the day, but came time enough to give them the right hand of fellowship, wishing all prosperity and success to those hopeful beginnings, as they then accounted them, although in some points of church discipline Mr. Higginson's principles were a little discrepant from theirs of Plymouth. Those that were afterward admitted unto church fellowship, were, with the confession of their faith, required to enter into a like covenant engagement with the church, to walk according to the rules of the Gospel, as to the substance, the same as at the first; but for the manner and cir-

¹ This election took place on the 26th of July. See Prince, p. 262.—H.

² "As also Mr. [Henry] Houghton a ruling elder." Ibid. p. 263.—H.

cumstances, it was left to the wisdom and faithfulness of the elders, to be so ordered as was judged most conducing to the end, respect being by them always had to the liberty and ability of the person. The day appointed for this work, and which was solemnly kept in a way of fasting and prayer, was the 9th¹ of August 1629, as was mentioned before, from which time to the 6th of August in the year following, that church and their officers lived peaceably together; but at that time Mr. Higginson, their teacher, being called off by an [un]expected stroke of death, Mr. Skelton was left alone, who, though he survived not long after, yet continued so long as to see his church involved in some troubles, by adhering too strictly to his own notions, and could not but foresee more of the like nature approaching, which he could not prevent.

CHAP. XXII.

Transactions of the Patentees at London after the Patent was obtained; debates about carrying it over; transportation of the Patentees and many others in the year 1630.

Who were the principal actors in laying the foundation of the Massachusetts Colony, hath been declared already. After they were framed into a body politic by mutual agreement amongst themselves, and confirmed, or rather so constituted, by the Royal Charter, the first Governor, chosen by the Company, was Mr. Matthew Cradock, a prudent and wealthy citizen of London, ready to promote any design of public utility, which if himself and all the rest engaged therein had not minded more than their own particular benefit, things of that nature would either never have been undertaken, or have been broken off in a manner as soon as they had been begun. The said Cradock was chosen and sworn in Chancery March 23, 1628, and so were the rest also, de fide et obedientiâ jurati, viz. Mr. Thomas Goffe, sworn Deputy Governor to the said Company; and Sir Richard Saltonstall, Captain Ven, Mr. John Humphry, Mr. Simon Whetcomb, Mr. Thomas

¹ See page 117.—H.