

1620. The "May Flower" set sail July 11th, O.S., with 74 men and 28 women, under the leadership of their elder, William Brewster and John Carver, William Bradford, Miles Standish and Edward Winslow, landing at "Plymouth Rock" December 11th, O.S., now called "Forefather's Day."

Previous to the embarking of the Pilgrims a fast was observed, and John Robinson preached from the text Ezra viii. 21. Of this farewell charge Edward Winslow says:

"We are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether ever he should live to see our faces again. But whether the Lord had appointed it or not, he charged us before God and His blessed angels to follow him no farther than he followed Christ, and if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of His, to be as ready to receive it as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry; for he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy word. He took occasion, also, miserably to bewail the state and condition of the Reformed Churches, who were come to a period in religion, and would no farther go than the instruments of their reformation, etc."

On the day of the arrival of the May Flower in Cape Cod harbour, the following document was signed:

"In the name of God, amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britian, France and Ireland, king, defender of the faith, &c., having undertaken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honour of our king and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do, by these presents, solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid, and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and officers from time to time as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience."

1633. John Cotton, descended from a wealthy and aristocratic family, a graduate of Cambridge, and rector of the venerable church of St. Botolph's, Boston, England, from a study of the scriptures was convinced of the correctness of Congregational principles. He was summoned before the High Commission Court "for not kneeling at the sacrament," &c. The Earl of Dorchester, a strong churchman, in vain interceded for him, and wrote a friend, "tell him to fly for his safety; had he been guilty of drunkenness or uncleanness or any less matter, I could have obtained his pardon; but inasmuch as he has been guilty of Non-conformity and Puritanism, the crime is unpardonable." Mr. Cotton together with Hooker and 200 other Puritans escaped to America.

1636. Dr. Leighton, father of the celebrated archbishop, on publishing his "Plea against Prelacy," was fined £10,000, set in the pillory at Westminster, publicly whipped, had his ears cut off, his nostrils slit and his cheeks branded with the letters S. S. "Sower of Sedition." Prynne, a barrister of Lionns Inn for writing against stage plays, masques, dances and masquerades, had his ears cut off, and for a second offence had the stumps sawed off. In like manner were many treated for like offences.

1638. On the 1st of May eight ships, bound for New England and filled with Puritan families, were stopped in the Thames by an order-in-council, and among the passengers were Pym, Hampden, Cromwell and Sir Arthur Hagelrigge. Harvard College was founded by the Pilgrims in this year.

1643. Westminster Assembly of Divines, summoned by Act of Parliament "to confer and treat among themselves of such matters or things touching and concerning the liturgy, discipline and government of the church of England, or the vindication or clearing of the same, etc." By it 121 clergymen, 10 lords and 20 lay commoners were summoned by name to meet and constitute the assembly. The king afterwards forbidding the assembly, but few of the Episcopalians called attended, and at the opening 69 ministers were present, 10 being Congregationalists, and the greater part Presbyterians. The Congregationalists persistently opposed all efforts to establish Presbyterianism as the state religion unless full toleration for others was secured.