

CHAPTER IV.

THE RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES OF THE EARLY SETTLERS.

"The Word of the Lord was Precious in those days."—1 Sam. 3, 1.

Who cared for the sheep scattered in this corner of the wilderness in the greater part of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries?

When Captain Gill was helping to defend the inhabitants of Bonavista in 1703, John Wesley had, but a few weeks previously, greeted the light in the quiet rectory of Epworth in Lincolnshire. When George Skeffington capitulated and paid the ransom to the French Admiral, the founder of Methodism was only two years old and the distinguished organization of the S.P.G. had only been in existence three years, having been founded near the close of the reign of King William, the illustrious prince of the House of Orange. The larger missionary societies of to-day had not been formed. The idea of sending men to care for the souls of those outside of the British Isles, had not yet properly gripped the hearts and consciences of the British people. The Rev. Charles Wesley, twenty-five years later, when requested to go to Georgia, to care for the souls out there without pastoral oversight, replied in the well known couplet:—

"To heathen lands apostles need not roam.
Heathens alas and darkness are at home."

The early settlers of Bonavista were for the most part adherents of the Church of England. In the old land they had been provided with a cheap religion. The Lord or the Esquire had paid the parson and kept up the Church, and they found it hard to learn how to pay for their religious privileges. No doubt some of the early settlers did the best they could under the circumstances. As the first quarter of the eighteenth century was passing out the Rev. Henry Jones, a very estimable clergyman of