



John Robinson's Farewell Sermon

July 1620

“In the next place, for the wholesome counsel Mr. Robinson gave that part of the church whereof he was pastor at their departure from him to begin the great work of plantation in New England, - amongst other wholesome instructions and exhortations he used these expressions, or to the same purpose:

’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 further than he followed Christ; and if God should reveal any thing 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 go no further than the instruments of their Reformation. As, for example, the Lutherans, they could not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; for whatever part of God’s will he had further imparted and revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And so also, saith he, you see the Calvinists, they stick where he left them; a misery much to be lamented; for though they were precious shining lights in their times, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them; and were they now living, saith he, they would be as ready and willing to embrace further light, as that they had received. Here also he put us in mind of our church covenant, at least that part of it whereby we promise and covenant with God and one with another, to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to us from his written word; but withal exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth, and well to examine and compare it and weigh it with other Scriptures of truth before we received it. For, saith he, it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick antichristian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.

’Another thing he commended to us, was that we should use all means to avoid and shake off the name of Brownist, being a mere nickname and brand to make religion odious and the professors of it to the Christian world. And to that end, said he, I should be glad if some godly minister would go over with you before my coming; for, said he, there will be no difference between the uncomformable ministers and you, when they come to the practices of the ordinances out of the kingdom. And so advised us by all means to endeavour to closely with the godly party of the kingdom of England, and rather to study union than division, viz. how near we might possibly without sin close with them, than in the least measure to affect division or separation from them. And be not loath to take another pastor or teacher, saith he; for that flock that hath two shepherds is not endangered but secured by it.’

From: "Winslow's Brief Narration: the true grounds or cause of the first planting of New England" (also known as *Hypocrisy Unmasked*) as printed in Alexander Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*. Boston: Charles C. Little & James Brown, 1841.