

William Brewster: an English Separatist

"... many became enlightened by the Word of God and had their ignorance and sins discovered unto them, and began by His grace to reform their lives and make conscience of their ways ...

"... they shook off this yoke of antichristian bondage, and as the Lord's free people joined themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in the fellowship of the gospel, to walk in all His ways made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them. And that it cost them something this ensuing history will declare ...

"... besides other worthy men, was Mr. Richard Clyfton, a grave and reverend preacher, who by his pains and diligence had done much good, and under God had been a means of the conversion of many. And also that famous and worthy man Mr. John Robinson, who afterwards was their pastor for many years, till the Lord took him away by death. Also Mr. William Brewster a reverend man, who afterwards was chosen an elder of the church and lived with them till old age."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed.

Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 8-10.

William Brewster and the Separatists in Holland

"... by a joint consent they resolved to go into the Low Countries ...

"Now when Mr. Robinson, Mr. Brewster and other principal members were come over (for they were of the last and stayed to help the weakest over before them) such things were thought on as were necessary for their settling and best ordering of the church affairs...

"Being thus settled [in Leyden] (after many difficulties) they continued many years in a comfortable condition, enjoying much sweet and delightful society and spiritual comfort together in the ways of God, under the able ministry and prudent government of Mr. John Robinson and Mr. William Brewster who was an assistant unto him in the place of an Elder, unto which he was now called and chosen by the Church."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed.

Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 10-17.

William and Mary Brewster in the Records of Leiden, Holland

"Besset, Willem of Sandwich in England, widr. of Sisle Lecht (Cecily Light), acc. by Rogier Wilson and Willem Bruystaert (William Brewster) his acq. betr. 19 March 1611 to Maycken Botler (Mary Butler) of Norwich in England, acc. by Anna Foller and Roos Leyl her acq. The bride died before the publication of the third bann. ...

"Boeckrum, Willem (William Buckram) of Ipswich in England, widr. of Judick Boeckrums (Judith Buckram), Blockmaker acc. by Willem Bruyster (William Brewster) and Abraham Graey his acq. Betr. 30 Nov. 1611, mar. 17 Dec. 1611 to Lisbeth Neel of Scrooby in England, acc. by Briggita Robbensz (Bridget Robinson nee White) and Jannetgen Thickins her acq. ...

"Pantes, Willem (William Pontus) of England, Fustian-worker, living in the Marendorp near Douveren, acc. by Willem Bruyster (William Brewster), Rogier Wilson and Eduaert Sutwaert (Edward Southworth) his acq. betr. 13 Nov. 1610, mar. 4 Dec. 1610 to Wybre Hanson of England, acc. by Jjanneken Wit, Anna Foller and Mary Botlaer her acq. ...

"Reynouts, Jan (John Reynolds) of London in England, Printer, living in the house of Willem Pauwelsz in the Pieterkerkkorssteech, acc. by Jonathan Willems (Jonathan Brewster) his acq. betr. 28 July 1617, mar. 17 Aug. 1617 to Prudens Grindon of London in England, acc. by Marye Bruyster (Mary Brewster) and Marye Allerton. ...

"Thickins, Reynulph, (Randall or Ralph Thickins) of London in England, acc. by Jan Robberts (John Robinson), Minister of God's Word and Willem Bruyster (William Brewster) his acq. betr. 1 April 1611, mar 20 Apr 1611 to Jane White of Bebel (Beauvale) in England, acc. by Britsit Robbens (Bridget Robinson) her sister and Rosaman Gipson her acq. "

Johanna W. Tammel, comp. The Pilgrims and other people from the British Isles in Leiden, 1576-1640 (Isle of Man: Mansk-Svenska Publishing Co., c1989), p. 44, 51, 203, 223, 258.

William Brewster: Arranging for Emigration

"Those that stayed [in Leyden], being the greater number, required the pastor [John Robinson] to stay with them; and indeed for other reasons he could not then well go, and so it was the more easily yielded unto. The other [Pilgrims leaving Leyden] then desired the elder, Mr. Brewster, to go with them, which was also condescended unto. It was also agreed on by mutual consent and covenant that those that went should be an absolute church of themselves, as well as those that stayed, seeing in such a dangerous voyage, and a removal to such a distance, it might come to pass they should (for the body of them) never meet again in this world."

William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 36.

The Brewsters – William, Mary, Love and Wrestling: Mayflower Passengers

"The names of those which came over first, in the year 1620, and were by the blessing of God the first beginners and in a sort the foundation of all the Plantations and Colonies in New England; and their families...

"Mr. William Brewster, Mary, his wife, with two sons, whose names were Love and Wrestling. And a boy was put to him called Richard More, and another of his brothers. The rest of his children were left behind and came over afterwards."

William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 441-443.

William Brewster: Signer of the Mayflower Compact

"I shall ... begin with a combination made by them before they came ashore ; being the first foundation of their government in this place. Occasioned partly by the discontented and mutinous speeches that some of the strangers amongst them had let fall from them in the ship: That when they came ashore they would use their own liberty, for none had power to command them, the patent they had being for Virginia and not for New England... And partly that such an act by them done, this their condition considered, might be as firm as any patent, and in some respects more sure.

"The form was as followeth: 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 Britain, France and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, etc. 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 Offices, 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. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini 1620."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed.
Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 75-76.

William Brewster: the First Year of Plymouth Colony

"But that which was most sad and lamentable was, that in two or three months' time half of their company died, especially in January and February, being the depth of winter, and wanting houses and other comforts; being infected with the scurvy and other diseases which this long voyage and their inaccomodate condition had brought upon them. So as there died some times two or three of a day in the foresaid time, that of 100 and odd persons, scarce fifty remained. And of these, in the time of most distress, there was but six or seven sound persons who to their great commendation, be it spoken, spared no pains night nor day, but with abundance of toil and hazard of their own health, fetched them wood, made them fires, dressed them meat, made their beds, washed their loathsome clothes, clothed and unclothed them. In a word, did all the homely and necessary offices for them which dainty and queasy stomachs cannot endure to hear named; and all this willingly and cheerfully, without any grudging in the least, showing herein their true love unto their friends and brethren; a rare example and worthy to be remembered. Two of these seven were Mr. William Brewster, their reverend Elder, and Myles Standish, their Captain and military commander, unto whom myself and many others were much beholden in our low and sick condition. And yet the Lord so upheld these persons as in this general calamity they were not at all infected either with sickness or lameness."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed.
Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 77.

William Brewster and the 1623 Division of Land

The 1623 Division of Land marked the end of the Pilgrims' earliest system of land held in common by all. Governor Bradford explains it in this way:

"And so assigned to every family a parcel of land, according to the proportion of their number, for that end, only for present use (but made no division for inheritance) and ranged all boys and youth under some family. This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed.
Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 120.

Plymouth Colony Records, Deeds, &c is the oldest record book of the Plymouth settlement. It begins with the 1623 Division of Land, recorded in the handwriting of Governor William Bradford. William Brewster's lands are described as "their grounds which came first over in the May Floure, according as thier lotes were case .1623. these lye on the South side of the brooke to the

baywards ... Mr William Brewster 6 akers to [each]."

William Brewster and the 1627 Division of Cattle

Plymouth Colony Records, Deeds, &c also tells of the 1627 Division of Cattle:

"At a publique court held the 22th of May it was concluded by the whole Companie, that the cattell wch were the Companies, to wit, the Cowes & the Goates should be equally devided to all the psonts of the same company ... & so the lotts fell as followeth, thirteene psonts being portioned to one lot ..."

"The fift lot fell to Mr Willm Brewster & his companie Joyned to him (2) Loue Brewster (3) Wrestling Brewster (4) Richard More (5) Henri Samson (6) Johnathan Brewster (7) Lucrecia Brewster (8) Willm Brewster (9) Mary Brewster (10) Thomas Prince (11) Pacience Prince (12) Rebecka Prince (13) Humillyty Cooper

"To this lot ffell one of the fower Heyfers Came in the Jacob Caled the Blind Heyfer & 2 shee goats."

William Brewster: a 1626 "Undertaker"

In 1621, King James I authorized the Council for New England to plant and govern land in this area. This Council granted the Peirce Patent, confirming the Pilgrims' settlement and governance of Plymouth. Peirce and his associates, the merchant adventurers, were allotted 100 acres for each settler the Company transported. The Pilgrims had a contract with the Company stating all land and profits would accrue to the Company for 7 years at which time the assets would be divided among the shareholders. Most of the Pilgrims held some stock. The Pilgrims negotiated a more favorable contract with the Company in 1626. In 1627, 53 Plymouth freemen, known as 'The Purchasers,' agreed to buy out the Company over a period of years. In turn, 12 'Undertakers' (8 from Plymouth and 4 from London) agreed to pay off Plymouth's debts in return for trade benefits.

William Brewster was one of the 8 Plymouth "Undertakers," along with William Bradford, Myles Standish, Isaac Allerton, Edward Winslow, John Howland, John Alden and Thomas Prence.

Brewster had also been involved in the negotiations with the Merchant Adventurers that led to the more favorable contract. Governor William Bradford wrote in his letter book:

"This next year being Anno. 1626, we sent Mr. Allerton into England, partly to make some supply for us, and to see if he could make any reasonable composition with the adventurers and because we well knew that nothing can be done without money, we gave him an order to procure some, binding ourselves to make payment thereof as followeth:

"Know all men by thee presents, that whereas we William Bradford, Governour of Plymouth in New England, and William Brewster, Capt. Miles Standish, Isaac Allerton, Samuel Fuller, Edward Winslow, John Jeney, John Howland, and John Alden; being all inhabitants of Plymouth, aforesaid, are for ourselves, and divers others, our associates, &c. And whereas the said Isaac Allerton (by God's providence) for the necessary occasions of the colony abovesaid, is bound for England; and whereas divers of us above named, have acquainted divers of our worthy and approved friends (by our letters) with our raw and weak estate, and want of ability of ourselves to manage so great an action, as the upholding of the plantation aforesaid. If therefore God shall move the heart or hearts of any of our friends, in compassion of our wants and present straits, to lend us above named, the sum of one hundred pounds sterling, for the space of two years, upon any such terms as shall be agreed upon, between him or them and the said Isaac Allerton, our partner and agent, and deliver the same into his hands for our use; that we, the said William Bradford, William Brewster, &c together with the said Isaac Allerton, do bind ourselves, our heirs, &c. jointly and severally, for the faithful performance of such obligations, conditions, or covenants, as shall be agreed on,&c.

Mayflower Descendant, Vol. 5, p. 198-199.

This "Undertaking" appears again in the Plymouth Colony Records of 1645:

"Vpon the ending of all the differrences vpon a demaund of foure hundred pounds betwixt Mr John Beauchamp of London merchant on the one pt And Mr Willm Bradford Mr Edward Winslowe Mr Thomas Prence Mr Miles Standish Mr John Alden Mr John Howland & Mr Isaack Alerton and the heires of Mr Willm Brewster deceased of thother pte these lands ensuing were seually acknowledge the sxij'th day of March Anno Dni 1645 ..."

[The records contain several pages of rather complicated and legalistic exchanges of land, etc., among the various Undertakers and John Beauchamp.]

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 128-131.

The Role of William Brewster in Plymouth Colony

"... as the Governor had used, in all weighty affairs, to consult with their Elder, Mr. Brewster, together with his Assistants ..."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed.

Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 148.

"For our reverend Elder hath laboured diligently in dispensing the Word of God to us, before he came; and since, hath taken equal pains with himself, in preaching the same. And, be it spoken without ostentation, he is not inferior to Mr. Lyford (and some of his betters) either in gifts or learning, though he would never be persuaded to take higher office upon him."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed.

Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 162.

"Mr. Allerton had married the daughter of their Reverend Elder, Mr. Brewster, a man beloved and honoured amongst them and who took great pains in teaching and dispensing the Word of God unto them, whom they were loath to grieve or any way offend..."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed.

Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 218.

William Brewster in the Records of Plymouth Colony

30 December 1631: "Frances Eaton of New Plimoth, hath sould vnto mr William Brewster of the same towne, one share of land, containing twenty Acers, lying at the place comonly called Nothingelse, next ajoyning to the land of the said William Brewster lying to the north therof on the one side; And haueing the resedew of the land of the foresaid Frances Eaton lying to the southward therof; for & in Consideration that the said William Brewster, shall pay his purchas for four shars which comes to .21 li [pounds]. 12 s [shillings] sterling ; the which the said William Brewster doth likewise by these presents confeirme, for him, his heirs, & exsecutores for euer the said portion of land abouesaid, to the said William Brewster to him & his heires for euer. in witnes wherof they haue hearunto put their hands. the day & year aboue writen.

Frances Eaton

Willm Brewster

"Moreouer the year, & day aboue writen, the said Francis Eaton of Plimoth aforesaid, hath sould other twelfe Acers of land lying in the aforsaid place at Nothingells, next adjonying to the foresaid portion, aboue mentioned, & bounded as before ; for & in consideration of the sume of .10 li. pound sterling ; allredy paid by the said William Brewster, to the aforesaid Francies Eaton. And therefore the said William Brewster is to haue & to hould, the abousaid portion of .12. Acers of land, to him & his heires for euer, in witnes wherof the said Francis Eaton hath put to his hand.

Frances Eaton."

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 12, p. 16-17.

1633: "The Names of the Freemen of the Incorporacon of Plymoth in New England, An: 1633. ... William Brewster."
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 3.
"William Brewster, gen." is also named in the List of Freemen for 1636-7 (Plymouth Colony Records 1:52).

25 March 1633: "According to an order in Court held the 2d of January, in the seaventh yeare of the raigne of o'r soveraigne lord, Charles, by the grace of God King of Engl., Scotl., France, & Irel., defendor of the faith, &c, the psons heere under menconed were rated for publike use by the Gov'r, Mr Will Bradford ... to be brought in by each pson as they are heere under written, rated in corn at vi s[hillings] p bushell, at or before the last of November next ensuing ... Will Brewster, ... 01 [pounds]: 07 [shillings]: 00 [pence]."
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 9.
[As a point of comparison, the highest "rating" was 3 pounds, 11 shillings. Noone was rated under 9 shillings.]
In March of 1634, William Brewster was again "rated" 1 pound 7 shillings.
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 27.

28 October 1633: "A true Coppy of the last will & Testm of Samuell ffuller the elder as it was proved in publick Court the 28th of Oct ...
"I give to old mr William Brewster my best hat and band wch I h[ave] never wore."
Mayflower Descendant, Vol. 1, p. 24-27.

11 November 1633: "It was ordered, that whereas Peter Browne dyed w'thout will, having divers children by divers wives ... for the rest of the estate, the widow having two children by the said Peter, together w'th her owne 3d, it is allowed her for bringing up the said children, provided that shee discharge w'tsoever debts shall be proved to be owing by the said Peter, & the legacies given by the Court. For pformance whereof shee & Mr Will Brewster bownd in two hundred pownds."
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 18-19.

2 Jan 1633/34: "The last will & Testamt of Will Wright late of Plymoth deceased ...
"Also my will & pleasure is that Prisilla my wife do give unto my reverend & respected ffriend mr Will Brewster of Plymouth Elder that cloath sute of apprell wch were given me by my brother ffuller w'thin two moneths after my death."
Mayflower Descendant, Vol. 1, p. 200-203.

4, 5 October 1636: "The ordnances of the colony & corporacon being read, divers were fownd worthy the reforming, others the rejecting, & others fitt to be instituted & made. It was therefore ordered & agreed, that four for the towne of Plymouth, two for Scituate, and two for Duxburrow should, as comittees for the whole, be added to the Govr & Assistants, to rectefie & prepe such as should be thought most convenient, that, if approved, they may be put in force the next Generall Court.
"The pties menconed for the towne of Plymouth, Mr Will Brewster, Mr Raph Smith, John Done, & Joh. Jenny; for Duxburrow, mr Jonath. Brwster & Christopher Wadsworth; for Scituate, Anthony Annable & James Cudworth; all wch to repaire to the Govr & Assistants at Plym aforesd the 15th of Nov'br next ensuing, and there continue their apparence till such time as the premises be determined."
Records of Plymouth Colony, Vol. 1, p. 43-44.

6 March 1636-7: "Whereas John Bundy stands bound by indenture to serue Griffin Mountegue, carpenter, in New Engl., the full term of eight yeares from the 14th of March, 1635, - the said John Bundy acknowledged himselfe content to serue out the remainder of his terme wth Will Brewster, the Elder, of Plimouth, who hath compounded wth the said Montegue, his master."
Records of Plymouth Colony, Vol. 1, p. 51.

20 March 1636-7: "The pticular psons assigned this yeare as followeth for hey: ... To Francis Sprage and William Basset, the same hey ground they had last yeare ; and that Mr Brewster haue that wch was not cutt by them the last yeare."
Records of Plymouth Colony, Vol. 1, p. 55-56.

21 August 1637: "John Bundy was exaned and found guilty of lude behavior & vnciuill carriage towards Elizabeth Haybell, in the house of her mr, Mr Willm Brewster, and is therefore adjudged to be seuerely whiped, wch was executed vpon him accordingly."
Records of Plymouth Colony, Vol. 1, p. 65.

2 October 1637: "Whereas diuers were appoynted to take a view of the meadow grounds betwixt the Eele Riuer and south Riuer, that there might be an equall diuision of them to eich man, and fynding the same by estimacon to amount vnto fiue hundred acres, or thereabouts, the Court doth order, that Mr Willm Brewster, Mr Steephen Hopkins, Mr John Done, and John Winslowe, for the towne of Plymouth, Edward Banges for the Eele Riuer, Mr John Brown for Joanes Riuer, and Jonathan Brewster and Edmond Chaundler for Ducksborrow, shalbe added to the Gounor and Assistants, to agree vpon an equall course for the diuision of them, and to depute some certaine psons afterwards to make the said diuision."
Records of Plymouth Colony, Vol. 1, p. 67.

4 September 1638: "Whereas there was a heigh way layd forth through Captaine Standish & Mr Willm Brewsters grounds on Duxborrow side, wch is not of use for the cotntrey, and they doe therefore refuse to repaire the same, the said Captaine Standish & Mr Brewster doe vndertake to repaire the said way, and it to be onely for their owne vse."
Records of Plymouth Colony, Vol. 1, p. 98.

8 January 1638-9: "That Mr Willm Brewster hath assigned ouer to Johnnathan Brewster, his sonn, all his interest and title into the service of John Bundy for the residue of his terme, wch is fiue yeares from the fourteenth of March next."
Records of Plymouth Colony, Vol. 1, p. 107.

The Death of William Brewster

"And seeing it hath pleased Him to give me [William Bradford] to see thirty years completed since these beginnings, and that the great works of His providence are to be observed, I have thought it nor unworthy my pains to take a view of the decreasings and increasings of these persons and such changes as hath passed over them and theirs in this thirty years...

"Mr. Brewster lived to very old age; about 80 years he was when he died, having lived some 23 or 24 years here in the country. And though his wife died long before, yet she died aged. His son Wrestling died a young man unmarried. His son Love lived till this year 1650 and died and left four children, now living. His daughters which came over after him are dead but have left sundry children alive. His eldest son is still living and hath nine or ten children; one married who hath a child or two."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 443-447.

William Brewster died without writing a will.

William Bradford's Memoir on the Life and Death of Elder William Brewster

"I am to begin this year [1643] with that which was a matter of great sadness and mourning unto them all. About the 18th of April died their Reverend Elder and my dear and loving friend Mr. William Brewster, a man that had done and suffered much for the Lord Jesus and the gospel's sake, and had borne his part in weal and woe with this poor persecuted church above 36 years in England, Holland and in this wilderness, and done the Lord and them faithful service in his place and calling. And notwithstanding the many troubles and sorrows he passed through, the Lord upheld him to a great age. He was near fourscore years of age (if not all out) when he died. He had this blessing added by the Lord to all the rest; to die in his bed, in peace, amongst the midst of his friends, who mourned and wept over him and ministered what help and comfort they could unto him, and he again recomforted them whilst he could. His sickness was not long, and till the last day thereof he did not wholly keep his bed. His speech continued till somewhat more than half a day, and then failed him, and about nine or ten a clock that evening he died without any pangs at all. A few hours before, he drew his breath short, and some few minutes before his last, he drew his breath long as a man fallen into a sound sleep without any pangs or gaspings, and so sweetly departed this life unto a better ...

"I should say something of his life, if to say a little were not worse than to be silent. But I cannot wholly forbear, though happily more may be done hereafter. After he had attained some learning, viz. the knowledge of the Latin tongue and some insight in the Greek, and spent some small time at Cambridge, and then being first seasoned with the seeds of grace and virtue, he went to the Court and served that religious and godly gentleman Mr. Davison, divers years when he was Secretary of State. Who found him so discreet and faithful as he trusted him above all others that were about him, and only employed him in all matters of greatest trust and secrecy; he esteemed him rather as a son than a servant, and for his wisdom and godliness, in private he would converse with him more like a friend and familiar than a master. He attended his master when he was sent in ambassage by the Queen into the Low Countries, in the Earl of Leicester's time, as for other weighty affairs of state; so to receive possession of the cautionary towns, and in token and sign thereof the keys of Flushing being delivered to him in Her Majesty's name, he kept them some time and committed them to this his servant who kept them under his pillow, on which he slept the first night. And at his return the State honoured him with a gold chain and his master committed it to him and commanded him to wear it when they arrived in England, as they rid through the country, till they came to the court. He afterwards remained with him till his troubles, that he was put from his place about the death of the Queen of Scots; and some good time after doing him many faithful offices of service in the time of his troubles. Afterwards he went and lived in the country, in good esteem amongst his friends and the gentlemen of those parts, especially the godly and religious.

"He did much good in the country where he lived in promoting and furthering religion, not only by his practice and example, and provoking and encouraging of others, but by procuring of good preachers to the places thereabout and drawing on of others to assist and help forward in such a work. He himself most commonly deepest in the charge, and sometimes above his ability. And in this state he continued many years, doing the best good he could and walking according to the light he saw, till the Lord revealed further unto him. And in the end, by the tyranny of the bishops against godly preachers and people in silencing the one and persecuting the others, he and many more of those times began to look further into things and to see into the unlawfulness of their callings, and the burthen of many antichristian corruptions, which both he and they endeavoured to

cast off; as they also did as in the beginning of this treatise is to be seen.

"After they were joined together in communion, he was a special stay and help unto them. They ordinarily met at his house on the Lord's Day (which was a manor of the bishop's) and with great love he entertained them when they came, making provision for them to his great charge, and continued so to do whilst they could stay in England. And when they were to remove out of the country he was one of the first in all adventures, and forwardest in any charge. He was the chief of those that were taken at Boston [England], and suffered the greatest loss, and of the seven that were kept longest in prison and after bound over to the assizes. After he came into Holland he suffered much hardship after he had spent the most of his means, having a great charge and many children; and in regard of his former breeding and course of life, not so fit for many employments as others were, especially such as were toilsome and laborious. But yet he ever bore his condition with much cheerfulness and contentation.

"Towards the latter part of those twelve years spent in Holland, his outward condition was mended, and he lived well and plentifully; for he fell into a way (by reason he had the Latin tongue) to teach many students who had a desire to learn the English tongue, to teach them English; and by his method they quickly attained it with great facility, for he drew rules to learn it by after the Latin manner. And many gentlemen, both Danes and Germans, resorted to him as they had time from other studies, some of them being great men's sons. He also had means to set up printing by the help of some friends, and so had employment enough, and by reason of many books which would not be allowed to printed in England, they might have had more than they could do.

"But now removing into this country all these things were laid aside again, and a new course of living must be framed unto, in which he was in no way unwilling to take his part, and to bear his burthen with the rest, living many times without bread or corn many months together, having many times nothing but fish and often wanting that also; and drunk nothing but water for many years together, yea till within five or six years of his death. And yet he lived by the blessing of God in health till very old age. And beside that, he would labour with his hands in the fields as long as he was able. Yet when the church had no other minister, he taught twice every Sabbath, and that both powerfully and profitably, to the great contentment of the hearers and their comfortable edification; yea, many were brought to God by his ministry. He did more in this behalf in a year than many that have their hundreds a year do in all their lives.

"For his personal abilities, he was qualified above many. He was wise and discreet and well spoken, having a grave and deliberate utterance, of a very cheerful spirit, very sociable and pleasant amongst his friends, of an humble and modest mind, of a peaceable disposition, undervaluing himself and his own abilities and sometime overvaluing others. Inoffensive and innocent in his life and conversation, which gained him the love of those without as well as those within; yet he would tell them plainly of their faults and evils, both publicly and privately, but in such a manner as usually was well taken from him. He was tenderhearted and compassionate of such as were in misery, but especially of such as had been of good estate and rank and were fallen unto want and poverty either for goodness and religion's sake or by the injury and oppression of others; he would say of all men these deserved to be pitied most. And none did more offend and displease him than such as would haughtily and proudly carry and lift up themselves, being risen from nothing and having little else in them to commend them but a few fine clothes or a little riches more than others.

"In teaching, he was very moving and stirring of affections, also very plain and distinct in what he taught; by which means he became the more profitable to the hearers. He had a singular good gift in prayer, both public and private, in ripping up the heart and conscience before God in the humble

confession of sin, and begging the mercies of God in Christ for the pardon of the same. He always thought it were better for ministers to pray oftener and divide their prayers, than be long and tedious in the same, except upon solemn and special occasions as in days of humiliation and the like. His reason was that the heart and spirits of all, especially the weak, could hardly continue and stand bent as it were so long towards God as they ought to do in that duty, without flagging and falling off.

"For the government of the church, which was most proper to his office, he was careful to preserve good order in the same, and to preserve purity both in the doctrine and communion of the same, and to suppress any error or contention that might begin to rise up amongst them. And accordingly God gave good success to his endeavours herein all his days, and he saw the fruit of his labours in that behalf."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed.

Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 324-328.

William Brewster and Pilgrim Hall Museum

Pilgrim Hall Museum holds several significant possessions of William Brewster.

Among these are the Brewster chest. This plain 6-board chest was made in Holland in the early 17th century of Norway pine. It would have been brought from Holland on the *Speedwell* and then made the voyage to America on the *Mayflower*.

Another significant Brewster possession is the Brewster chair. This great chair was made in Plymouth between 1630 and 1640. It is a "turned" chair with spindles below the arms and seat.