

with no less than five printing-offices, a fact which reflects the more credit on the Puritans, because at the same period (1724) there were no less than thirty-four counties in the mother country, Lancashire being one of the number, in which there was no printer.*

When the Pilgrim Fathers were about to sail in the *Mayflower* from Leyden, a solemn fast was held before they embarked, and their pastor, Robinson, gave them a farewell address, in which these memorable words are recorded :—

“ I charge you, before God and his blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. For my part, I can not sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their first reformation. The Lutherans can not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw. Whatever part of His will our good God has imparted and revealed unto Calvin, they will die rather than embrace it. And the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented ; for, though they were burning and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God : but, were they now living, they would be as willing to embrace further light as that which they first received. I beseech you to remember it ; it is an article of your church-covenant, that you will be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known unto you from the written word of God. Remember that and every other article of your most sacred covenant.”

It may be said that the spirit of progress, the belief in the future discovery of new truths, and the expansion of Christianity, which breathes through every passage of this memorable discourse, did not characterize the New England Independents any more than the members of other sects. Like the rest, they had embodied their interpretations of Scripture in certain fixed and definite propositions, and were but little disposed to cherish the

* Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. i. p. 392, who cites Nichols.