

A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

by Ivimey

Ivimey's history of the English Baptists tracing the early introduction of Christianity to Britain from A.D. 45, examining when and how the gospel was first preached in the British Isles and discussing the evidence for apostolic origins of British Christianity.

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01. Contents and Preface

A History of the English Baptists

Including an Investigation of the History of Baptism in England

from the earliest period to which it can be traced to the close of the seventeenth century By
Joseph Ivimey

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Preface

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PREFACE The Reformation was an important era in the history of this country. The fetters with which Popery had long shackled the minds of men were then knocked off, and the use of the bible led many to embrace those sentiments in doctrine and discipline, which accorded with the simplicity of Christ. The subsequent history is an attempt to prove that the English Baptists held the genuine principles of the Reformation, and pursued them to their legitimate consequences. Believing that the bible alone contains the religion of Protestants, they rejected every thing in the worship of God which was not found in the sacred oracles.

Without intending to offend those who differ from the English Baptists in their distinguishing tenet, we think it right to premise, that this work will also attempt to prove, that Infant baptism in England owes its origin to Popery;--that the ancient British Christians before the coming of Austin knew nothing of the practice;--and that many at least of the Wickliffites and Lollards, the first English reformers, rejected it as a popish innovation and maintained that "all traditions not found in the scriptures were superfluous and wicked."

It was these sentiments which led to the formation of societies dissenting from the Popish establishment before the Reformation, and dissenting from the Protestant establishment afterwards. The English Baptists were the first persons who understood the important doctrine of Christian liberty, and who zealously opposed all persecution for the sake of conscience. A large proportion of their churches were averse to all interference with political matters during the

convulsive period of the civil wars. It is, however, to be lamented that some of them during that period confounded the power of the magistrate with the government of that kingdom which is not of this world. The sufferings which have been endured by the English Baptists on account of their religious principles, give them a claim to the gratitude of every true lover of liberty and of his country. To them may be applied with peculiar propriety, what the historian Hume says of the Puritans in general: "By whom the precious spark of liberty was kindled and preserved."

It is not too much to say that their history has never been fairly given. Influenced by prejudice, many of our historians have either kept them out of sight, or have exhibited them to public ridicule and contempt. For many of his materials the writer is indebted to Crosby's History of the English Baptists, in 4 vols. octavo, published about seventy years ago. This work is now become very scarce; and it is so badly written, that an abridgement and arrangement of its contents have long been thought desirable.

He has also endeavoured to collect those works published by themselves, from which may most certainly be drawn a fair statement of their principles. Though he has succeeded in his researches beyond his expectations, he is desirous of procuring additional particulars concerning them, that the biographical part of the work, which he intends to publish in another volume, may be rendered as perfect as possible. He has prefixed the extract from Dr. Gill's work, entitled, "The Divine Right of Infant baptism examined and disproved," in order to show that there is no evidence that Infant baptism is of apostolical origin; and also, that the testimonies of ancient writers are in favour of adult baptism. The author takes this opportunity of acknowledging his obligations to many of his brethren for their readiness to assist him. He desires more particularly to return thanks for the use of the Manuscript of the late Rev. Joshua Thomas of Leominster; to the Rev. Mr. Frost of Dunmow in Essex, for the use of a valuable Manuscript of his progenitor, Mr. William Kiffin; and for the liberty of consulting the Manuscripts and other works deposited in Dr. Williams's library, Red-Cross Street, London. As to the use which he has made of his materials, it must be left to his readers to decide. He is, however, prepared to say, that he has faithfully related the facts which have come to his knowledge, without a wish to promote any object but the cause of God and truth.

If his labours should be useful to the denomination to which he considers it an honour to belong, by exciting them to a zealous imitation of the virtues of their ancestors, he will receive an abundant compensation; to which will be added the high gratification of having done all in his power, that the names of some of those great men may be had in everlasting remembrance. The Author London, Jan. 1, 1811 -----

02. A.D. 45-1180

CHAPTER 1

A.D. 45 - 1180

It is generally supposed, that the gospel was introduced at a very early period into this country, which, at the commencement of the Christian era, was, like other heathen nations, full of the habitations of cruelty. Our forefathers were, if their own historians may be credited, gross idolaters, and were accustomed to offer up their prisoners taken in war, as sacrifices to their gods. It is said, they made a statue, or image of a man of a prodigious size, whose limbs consisted of twigs woven together after the manner of basketwork; this they filled with living men, and setting it on fire, burned them to death!

There are different opinions respecting the time when the gospel was first preached in Britain, and also by whom the message of salvation was at first proclaimed. Bishop Newton says, "There is some probability that the gospel was preached here by Simon the apostle; there is much greater probability that it was preached here by St. Paul; and there is absolute certainty that Christianity was planted here in the times of the apostles, before the destruction of Jerusalem."

Tacitus says, that "Pomponia Graecina, wife of Pautius, and Claudia Ruffina, a British lady, are supposed to be of the saints that were in Caesar's household, mentioned by Paul, Phil. 3:22." Pautius was in Britain, A.D. 45: it is probable, Claudia may have returned with him; and it has been thought, from this statement of Tacitus, that this lady was the first British christian. Claudia is celebrated by Martial for her admirable beauty and learning, in the following epigram;

"From painted Britons how was Claudia [2 Tim. 4:21] born!

The fair barbarian! how do arts adorn!

When Roman charms a Grecian soul commend,

Athens and Rome may for the dame contend." [Rapin, vol. i, p. 14]

Speed, a very ancient British author, says, that 'Claudia sent Paul's writings, which he calls spiritual manna, unto her friends in Britain; to feed their souls with the bread of life: and also, the writings of Martial, to instruct their minds with those lessons best fitting to produce moral virtues:" which Speed thinks was the occasion of this line in Martial's works-- "And Britain now (they say) our verses learn to sing." [p. 73]

Gildas, the most ancient and authentic British historian, who wrote about A.D. 564, in his book called *De Vict. Aurelli Ambrossii*, affirms, that the Britons received the gospel under Tiberius, the emperor under whom Christ suffered; and that many evangelists were sent from the apostles into this nation, who were the first planters of the gospel, and which, he elsewhere says, continued with them until the cruel persecution of Dioclesian the emperor, about A.D. 290.

Fuller, in his Ecclesiastical History, says, "It is generally agreed, that about the year 167, many pagan temples in Britain had their property altered, and that they were converted into Christian churches; particularly that dedicated to Diana in London, and another near it formerly consecrated to Apollo, in the city now called Westminster." [Ecclesiastical History, Book 1. p. 13] This account is corroborated by Fox, the English martyrologist, who says, "Out of an ancient book of the antiquities of England, we find the epistle of Eleutherius, written to Lucius king of Britain, A.D. 169, who had written to Eleutherius for the Roman laws to govern by: in answer to which, Eleutherius says, 'You have received, through God's mercy, in the realm of Britany, the law and faith of Christ; you have with you both the parts of the scripture; out of them, by God's grace, with the council of your realm, take ye a law, and by that law, by God's sufferance, rule your kingdom of Britain.'" [Fuller, v. i. 117]

Hollingsworth mentions this epistle of Eleutherius, in such language as proves him to have understood the genuine principles of the gospel [Fuller, v. i. p. 25]; and speaks highly respecting king Lucius; of whom there is a curious piece of information on a brass plate in the church of St. Peter's, Cornhill. This plate is included in an antique frame of oak, and relates as follows:

"Bee it knowne to all men that in the yeare of our Lorde God 179, Lucius the first Christian king of this Land, then called Britaine, Founded the first church in London: that is to say, the church of St. Peter upon Cornehill: and hee founded there an Archbishop's See, and made that Church the Metropolitane and chiefe Church of this Kingdome, and so it endured the space of 400 yeares and more unto the coming of St. Austin the apostle of England. The which was sent into this land by St. Gregorie the Doctor of the Church in the time of King Ethelbert: And then was the Archbishop's See and Pall removed from the foresaid Church of St. Peter upon Cornehill unto Dorobernia, that now is called Canterburie, and there it remaineth to this day, and Millet a Monke which came into this land with St. Austin, Hee was made first Bishop of London, and his See was made in Paul's Church, and this Lucius King was the first founder of St. Peter's Church upon Cornehill, and hee reigned King in this Land after Brute 1245, Yeares. And in the yeare of our Lorde God 124, Lucius was crowned King, and the yeares of his reigne were 77 yeares and hee was buried (after some Chronicles) at London: and after some Chronicles hee was buried at Glocester, in that place where the Order of St. Francis standeth now." From the conversion of Lucius till the time of the persecution under Dioclesian, the ecclesiastical history of Britain is entirely unknown. That the Christian religion, however, made great progress during that interval of eight years, seems probable from Tertullian, Origen, Bede, and Gildas.

After Christianity was established by Constantine the great, it appears that Christians multiplied exceedingly, and that the island abounded with churches. This celebrated emperor being a native of Britain, as was also, according to Bishop Stillingfleet and some others, Helene, his mother, it is highly probable that he showed particular favour to his countrymen, by affording them his protection. Speed says, "Constantine the great was born and brought up here in Britain by queen Helene, a most virtuous and religious lady; unto whose days the succession of Christianity did here continue as by the martyrdom of many saints in the reign of Dioclesian, is apparent." [p. 77]

Some affirm there were British bishops at the council of Nice, A.D. 325. But though this cannot be fully proved, it is not at all unlikely, since twenty-two years after, there were certainly three British bishops at the council of Arles, who are supposed to have been those of London, York, and

Caer-leon in Wales. There were also some at the council of Arminum in 359; but so poor, that their charges were borne by their brethren. Du Pin says, "The bishops of France and Britain chose rather to bear their own expences than accept of the emperor's allowance, which they thought it beneath them to do." [Rapin's History of England, p. 29]

About the year 448, the Saxons began to settle in Britain; and for more than a century were perpetually harassing the natives, till they forced them to retire from their country, and settle in Wales. Their cruelties are described in a very affecting manner by Bede and Gildas, the latter of whom says, "From the east to the west nothing was to be seen but churches burnt and destroyed to their very foundations. The inhabitants were extirpated by the sword, and buried under the ruins of their own houses. The altars were daily profaned by the blood of those slain thereon." [Rapin, p. 44] It is very unaccountable, that after this statement, he should blame the Britons for suffering their neighbours to live so long in paganism. How was it possible that they could, with any prospect of success, attempt to convert them, by whom they were so cruelly treated, and who were endeavouring to exterminate them?

After they were driven into Wales, whither their invaders could not follow them, religion began again to flourish. Two large societies were formed; one at Bangor in the north, the other at Caer-leon in the south. From the following account, it should seem that these institutions resembled that now formed by the Baptist missionaries at Serampore, where one fund is established, from which the wants of all, however differently engaged, are supplied.

Danvers informs us, that "In Bangor was a college containing 2100 Christians, who dedicated themselves to the Lord to serve him in the ministry as they became capable, to whom was attributed the name of the monks of Bangor. Yet did they no ways accord with the popish monks of that or the following age? for they were not reduced to any ecclesiastical order, but were for the most part laymen, who laboured with their hands, married and followed their callings: only some of them, whose spirits the Lord fitted and inclined to his more immediate service, devoted themselves to the study of the scriptures, and other holy exercises, in order, to the work of the ministry, who sent out many useful instruments." [Danvers, History of Baptism, p. 336] In this state was religion in Wales, when Austin the monk was sent into England by Gregory the seventh, bishop of Rome, with the design of converting the Saxons, or English and bringing them into conformity to the church of Rome. To accomplish this, "Gregory ordered him not to pull down the idol temples, but convert them into Christian churches. The reason of this injunction was this; that the natives, by frequenting the same temples they had been always accustomed to, might be the less shocked at their entrance into Christianity: and therefore his Holiness directed that the idols should be destroyed, and those places of worship sprinkled with holy water." [Biog. Brit. Art. Augustin] This was in the year 596, when Ethelbert was king of Kent. At his court, Augustin opened his mission, which was attended with such success, that the king, and his queen Bertha, and a great number of his subjects, very soon made a public profession of Christianity. The king was so zealous a convert, that he bequeathed his own palace to the church, and retired to Reculver, that Austin might be more at his ease at Canterbury. Notwithstanding all these favours, and the princely style in which he lived, this pious apostle could enjoy no content while the British clergy lived independent of his authority, and were not in a state of subjection to the bishop of Rome.

Independently, therefore, of the desire which Austin had to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel in general, we find he was particularly zealous for his own authority, and extremely desirous to subject the British Christians in the remote parts of the island to his metropolitan jurisdiction, and to the doctrine and discipline of the church of Rome. This circumstance is the more remarkable, as the British bishops of that age had more enlarged views of things; accordingly they disclaimed all submission to the church of Rome, and nobly asserted their independence. The account of a conference which Austin held with some of the Christians of the college of Bangor, is thus related by Robert Fabian:

"By the helpe of Ethelberte he assembled and gathered the byshoppes, and doctours of Britayne that were before disparted. The place of Assemble was called long after, Austin's Oke; which is expounded to be Austeyn's strengthe, and is in the march of Wikeres and of the west Saxons. In this place he charged the sayd bishoppes, that they should with him preach the worde of God to the Anglis; and also that they should amonge themselves amend certain errorrs, tehn used in the churche: and specially for kepeing of their Easter tide, wher against the byshoppes of Britayne held opinion til Austanye shewed them a myracle by a blind Anglis or Saxon. After the which myracle shewed, the sayd byshoppes replied to the will of Austanye in that cause. But for all this, there was of them that said, that they might not leave the custome which they so longe had continued, without assente of all such as had used the same. Then he gathered a synode, to the which came seven byshoppes of Brytons with the wysest men of that famous abbey of Bangor. But first, they took counsel of an holy man, wher they should be obediente to Austanye or not. And he said, if ye find him humble, or meke, as to Christes disciple belongeth; that then they should asent to him, which mekenes they shoude perceave in him, if he at their coming into the synode, or councill, arose agayne them. When the sayde bishops entered the sayd synode, Austain sat styl in the chaire, and removed not: whereupon they were wroth and disdayned him and would not obey his requestes.

"He then sayd, Sins ye wol not asent to my hestes generally assent ye to me specially in iii things.

"The first is, that ye kepe Ester in due fourme and time as it is ordayned. The second, THAT YE GIVE CHRISTENDOME TO CHILDREN. And the thyrde is, that ye preache unto the Anglis the worde of God as aforetimes I have exhorted you. And all the other deale, I shall suffer you to amend and refourm within yourselves: but they would not thereof.

"Then Austayne sayd unto them, and warned them by manner of inspyration, That since they wold not receave peace of theyr brethren, they shoulde of other receave warre and wretche: the which was after put in experience by Ethelfridus King of Northumberland." [Fabian's Chron. part v. p. 115,116]

Nicholson, in his English Historical Library, after exposing some pious frauds, says, "Bede's account of the remonstrance of Dinot, abbot of Bangor, against the pretensions of this legate Augustine, challenging a supremacy for his master, is of better credit. The critique of Bishop Stillingfleet on it deserves attention. "There is (he says) all the appearance of ingenuity and faithfulness that can be expected; and he [Bede] was a person of too great judgment and sagacity to be easily imposed upon by a modern invention, or a new formed schedule." This account is confirmed by other ancient writers. Geoffrey of Monmouth tells us, that "in the country of the Britons Christianity flourished, which never decayed even from the apostles' time; amongst whom,

says he, was the preaching of the gospel, sincere doctrine, and living faith, and such form of worship as was delivered to the churches by the apostles themselves; and that they even to death withstood the Romish rites and ceremonies; and that as long as the British churches possessed the country, they kept themselves sound in the faith, and pure in the worship, order, and discipline of Christ, as it was delivered to them from the apostles and evangelists." [Danvers, p. 334]

Fuller, in his Ecclesiastical History [Book ii, p. 69], has translated some verses of the ancient bard, Taliessyn, recorded in the chronicle of Wales; which show how much they opposed Romish innovations.

"Wo be to the priest unborn,
That will not cleanly weed his corne
And preach his flock among;
Wo be to that shepherd, I say,
That will not watch his fold always,
As to his office doth belong.
Wo be to him that doth not keep,
From Romish wolves his sheep,
With staff and weapon strong."

Rapin is of opinion, that Austin died before the dreadful massacre of the Britons took place, but not till after he had baptized 10,000 Anglis in the river Swale, at the mouth of the Medway, on a Christmas day. Others think this was performed by Paulinas. The account Fabian gives of the destruction of the Britons and of the monastery of Bangor is confirmed by Humphrey Lloyd, the learned Welch antiquary in his Breviary of Britain. "In Denbighshire (says he) near the castle of Holt, is seen the rubbish and reliques of the monastery of Bangor, while the glory of the Britons flourished: in the same were 2,000 monks very well ordered and learned, divided into seven parts, daily serving God; amongst whom those that were simple and unlearned, by their handy labour, provided meat and drink and apparel for the learned and such as applied themselves to their studies; and if any thing was remaining, they divided it among the poor. That place sent forth many hundred of excellent well learned men; amongst whom it also vomited forth to the world Pelagius. And afterward by the envy and malice of Austin, that arrogant monk, and the most cruel execution of his minister Ethelfrid, those worthy men were destroyed, the whole house from the very foundation, together with the library more precious than gold, was razed down, and demolished by fire and sword: and hence it is manifest, that this bloody massacre of those glorious witnesses for Christ did arise from their Christian courage and zeal against those antichristian impositions of the Romish church." [Danvers, p. 336]

It is probable that after this the Romish pontiff obtained the sovereign dominion in ecclesiastical affairs, as we find that Ina, one of the kings of the West Saxons, in the seventh century passed a law--"That every family possessed of goods to the value of twenty pence, should pay one penny a year to blessed St. Peter, and the church of Rome. He also prescribed a penalty for deferring the

baptism of infants beyond thirty days, and a much greater when any died unbaptized." [Toulmin's History of Taunton, p. 6] This tax continued to be paid for several centuries, and was known by the name of Peter's pence. From these few, but valuable fragments of the ancient Britons, we discover much of the genuine simplicity of Christianity. Making the scriptures the only rule of their faith and practice, they easily discovered the antichristian spirit of Austin, and the folly of those ceremonies which he strove to introduce. It is not at all wonderful, therefore, that they should refuse to give christendom to children, as they could find nothing in the scriptures to countenance such an opinion.

It is proved by Dr. Gill, that infant baptism, for the purpose of taking away original sin, had been enforced by anathemas in the Milevitan council about two centuries before; and it is also known that Gregory the great, who sent Austin into England, had decreed as follows: "Let all young children be baptized as they ought to be, according to the tradition of the fathers." [Fox, vol. i. p. 130] From this decree being expressed in such general terms, infants not being particularly mentioned, we account for the difficulties which Austin himself had on the subject soon after he came to Britain. Among other interrogatories proposed to Gregory, is the following respecting children; "Lest they should be prevented by death, after how many days ought they to receive baptism?" To which Gregory replied, "If present necessity, arising from fear of death, doth so require, we do not forbid an infant to be baptized the same hour in which it is born." It is hardly conceivable that this question could have been proposed, had the practice of infant baptism been of apostolic origin, or if the English had not made some objections against it. This remark is further corroborated by a circumstance mentioned by Hogo Grotius in his Commentary on Matt. xix. 14. "It is no small evidence (says he) that Infant baptism was not usually practised in the Greek church during many centuries, because not only Constantine the great, the son of Helene, who was a zealous Christian, was not baptized till he was of an advanced age; but that also Gregory Nazianzen, who was the son of a Christian bishop, and brought up for a long time by him, was not baptized till he came to years." If it be admitted that Infant baptism was then unknown in Britain, Constantine's not being baptized in his infancy is easily accounted for: but upon no other principle can we account for this omission of his godly parents, which Fox says they were. In order to obtain as much light as possible on this very interesting subject, we subjoin the following statement of Dr. Calamy, the celebrated writer on Nonconformity, who in a work entitled, "God's concern for his glory in the British isles," has paid considerable attention to this subject. He relates, from Gildas, "That Christ shewing his bright light to all the world, afforded his rays, that is, his precepts, in the latter end of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when his religion was propagated without any hindrance." On this statement of Gildas, the Doctor remarks,

"If he meant this, of the publication of the gospel in Britain, which has been the most prevailing opinion, we must allow him to have had better advantages for knowing this with certainty than we have at this distance. According to this account, this island had Christianity preached in it within five years of our Saviour's crucifixion, which was very early, perhaps too early, all circumstances considered, for a place that lay so remote. All ancient writers, however, agree, that Christianity was planted in this land very soon, considering its distance from Judea.

"It is evident, that after Christianity obtained here, a great part of the inhabitants still continued pagans, and yet our holy religion made a progress. As it got ground, the temples of their ancient idols were some of them destroyed, and others of them dedicated to the true and living God. We

have no account of such severities here in the primitive times against the followers of a crucified Jesus, as in other countries. That which was the last of the ten persecutions under the Roman emperors, seems to have been the first that affected this island. But in the general calamity, in the reign of Dioclesian and Maximian, about 303, the Christians here were very great sufferers. It is said, that Maximian almost rooted out the Christian religion from Britain, and that they who suffered martyrdom were almost beyond number. Gildas tells us, that their churches were thrown down, and all the books of holy scriptures that could be found, were burnt in the streets; and the chosen priests of the flock of our Lord, together with the innocent sheep, murdered. St. Alban of Verulam, and Julius of Carlisle upon Usk in Monmouthshire, and many others, sealed the truth with their blood.

"But when the storm was over, which did not last much above a year, the Christians here, as well as in other parts, fled out of the woods and dens and caves, where they had hid themselves, and rebuilt their demolished churches, and flourished to a great degree, both in peace and unity. They were much favoured by Constantius, the father of Constantine, who continued for the latter part of his life here in Britain, and would suffer no man to die for his religion in his dominions. It was here also that Constantine himself, who was a native of this island, first declared himself a Christian, or inclined that way, which it is not likely he would have publicly done, had not a good part of his army been of that religion; and upon his advancement to the imperial throne, it is not to be wondered at, if more splendour attended Christianity as it was here professed, than had been known before. But I have not, upon the strictest inquiry I have been able to make, hitherto been able to discern sufficient ground to apprehend, that from the beginning, churches or places of worship were so nobly adorned, or church government so modelled in this island, as some time after; or that the prelatical form of government was any part of that glory that was at first declared in this island.

"Britain (adds the Doctor) was also sadly infested with the Picts and Scots, which after various struggles, when no more help could be had from the Romans, was the occasion of calling in the Saxons to their assistance. These Saxons, whom Gildas calls, 'A nation odious to God and man,' came hither to be a scourge to the Britons, about the year of Christ 450. They were at first received as guests, and treated as stipendiaries, in opposition to the barbarians; but at length found themselves strong enough to set up for masters, laid the whole country waste, drove the old British Christians into the barren mountains of Wales, and occasioned such confusion and desolation, as Gildas, who wrote a few years after, thought could never be enough lamented. That writer describes their cruelties, and the judgment of heaven upon a sinful people, which they were the instruments of inflicting, in such a manner, as must needs affect all that read his account. He says, 'that all the towns, with the beating of the rams, and all the townsmen, pastors, priests and people, with naked swords that glittered on all sides, and crackling flames, were together whirled to the ground.' And our historians say, that they scarcely left the face of Christianity where they prevailed. And yet pure religion was not even then extirpated from the island.

"Bede, who wrote his history about the year 731, gives us a great deal of light, though allowance must be made for his being himself a Saxon, and not very friendly to the British churches, and for his having a monastic tincture. Christianity, in a new edition of it, with great improvements as to outward pomp, was during this period received from Rome, through the hands of Austin the monk, about the year 598. But there was a purer Christianity in the island before, that was much freer from adulterations and corruptions than that which was now introduced under the same name.

There were great contests between those of the old stamp, and those of the new. The former lived in Wales and Scotland, and the latter in the heart of the country. So that there were considerable debates on foot of this island, between Conformists and Nonconformists, in ancient as well as in modern times; and the one sort were apt to carry it with a high hand, and the other forced to be satisfied with the consciousness of their own integrity then as well as now. The Conformists then were, in all things, for the methods of the church of Rome; and the Nonconformists were for the ways and methods of the ancient Christians, and disowned impositions. They were called too, the Schismatics of Britain and Ireland; because they would not receive the Romish alterations, nor submit to the authority by which they were imposed.

"In the year 601, Austin called a synod, to which the bishops or doctors of the next province of the Britons were summoned, in which the abbot of Bangor gave him a free answer to his demand of conformity to Rome. He told him 'that the ancient Christians of this island were obedient and subject to the church of God, and to the pope of Rome, and every godly Christian; to love every one in his degree, in perfect charity; and to help every one of them by word and deed, which were the children of God: And other obedience than this he knew not to be due to him whom he called the pope, etc.' Many of the poor monks, not long after, lost their lives in return for this freedom and resolution." [Dr. Calamy, "God's concern for his glory in the British isles"]

Having related the great contest respecting Easter, Dr. Calamy thus proceeds; "It ought not to be forgotten that the difference between these old Conformists and Nonconformists did not lie only in the time of keeping Easter: They differed also about baptism. For that was one of the three things which Austin insisted on in his conversation with the British doctors; that they should for the future administer baptism after the manner of the church of Rome, which is an argument they did use to do so before."

Fearing, as it should seem, that this candid statement would make an impression on the minds of his readers, that these ancient British Nonconformists were also Baptists, the doctor proceeds to make some comments upon it "Wherein the difference," says he, "between the old Britons and the Romans properly lay about baptism, is not so evident. Pits frankly owns he did not know what it was. Nor does Bede explain it, nor any of our ancient writers that I have conversed with. Some have thought they differed about the subjects of baptism; and that whereas the Romans baptized infants, the Britons were against infant baptism; and an argument has been drawn from thence by the Anti-pedobaptists. But an answer is returned to it by Dr. Wall, in his History of Infant Baptism, where he says that 'Pelagius being a native of Britain, his declaring he never heard of any Christian, catholic, or sectary, that denied infant baptism, is a good evidence that his countrymen did not do it.' It seems more likely that this difference should have been about the mode of baptism; and the very words of Austin, as Bede relates the matter, seem to look that way. For he would have them administer baptism, for the future, after the manner of the church of Rome. Now I know nothing so remarkable (continues Dr. Calamy,) in the manner of baptizing in the church of Rome at that time, as the trine immersion. That this was customary in that church is asserted by Walafridus Strabo; and though we have no positive evidence that I know of, that a single immersion, or aspersion, or pouring of water, was used among the ancient Britons in their baptism; yet till something else is mentioned, with a surer appearance of probability, I am inclined to believe this was the matter of that part of the difference." This interesting statement by Dr. Calamy, and his reflections upon it, require some animadversion.

He acknowledges, that there is no positive evidence that the Britons used single immersion, aspersion, or pouring, in their baptism; but takes it for granted that one of these must have been the mode, in order to justify the alteration proposed by Austin. But why does he speak of aspersion, and of pouring? We know from incontrovertible evidence, that they used immersion. Austin baptized in a river; "where," says Mr. Fox, "note by the way, gentle reader, at that time there could be no use of fonts." Immersion, therefore, being the mode then used, it should seem, according to the foregoing hypothesis, that the point at issue between Austin and the Britons was, whether baptism should be performed by a single or a trine immersion. This hypothesis, however, is inadmissible, being as improbable as it is unsupported. But let it be admitted that Austin's proposal was to baptize infants, after the manner of the church of Rome, instead of baptizing adults on a profession of faith; and then the proposition will, on the one hand, be suitable for the pope's legate to make, as an indispensable requisite to a union with the catholic church, which could not exist without it; and, on the other hand, it will appear to be an absurdity so great, that primitive Christians could not submit to it, without a sacrifice of principle and of conscience, to which even death itself was preferable.

[Note: It appears obvious from the very face of Austin's request to the British Christians that he was urging them to adopt infant baptism. He requested three things, the second of which was "that ye give Christendom to children." That request would have made no sense had the British Christians been in the custom of baptizing infants by any mode whatsoever. D.W. Cloud] The only objection which Dr. Calamy makes to this is, a partial quotation from Dr. Wall. But if the whole of what the latter says had been stated, it would have appeared that this objection had no weight. The words of Pelagius, as translated by Dr. Wall, are, "That men do slander him, as if he denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, and did promise the kingdom of heaven to any persons without the redemption of Christ, which he had never heard, no not even any impious heretic or sectary say." By these words, it is true, Dr. Wall understands Pelagius to mean, "that he had never heard of any Christian, catholic or sectary, that denied infant baptism." But does Pelagius mean this? I think not. His meaning seems to have been, that he had never heard, no, not even any impious heretic or sectary say, that the kingdom of heaven could be obtained without the redemption of Christ. The suspicion of his denying infant baptism seems to have arisen from his denying original sin; for the church of Rome had appointed infant baptism, to wash away original sin, and had decreed that without it none could be saved. This misapprehension of Pelagius by Dr. Wall is the only thing which has been made use of to disprove the opinion of the Baptists, that the ancient British christians were of similar sentiments with themselves.

If Austin's proposal to the British christians was, that they should give christendom to children after the manner of the church of Rome, I should understand it to mean that they should christen children, as the church of Rome did. But the words, "after the manner of the church of Rome," are not in the copy of Fabian at the London institution: the proposition of Austin is there said to have been, that they should give christendom to children. Dr. Wall indeed says that the proposition as he has related it is in a copy of Fabian at Oxford; and he also represents Mr. Wills as saying that Fabian professes in his preface to have copied it from Bede, though the doctor adds that he had not seen it. There is, however, an internal evidence, that the proposition respected the subjects of baptism, and that the words, "after the manner of the church of Rome," were added by the historian, or by some one of his copiers, and did not constitute a part of the original proposition.

For if the original proposition had only respected a mode of baptism, why should any thing have been said concerning the subjects of it? It had been sufficient to have proposed to give christendom after the manner of the church of Rome, without saying anything about giving it to children. Whereas if the difference between the church of Rome and the British churches respected the subjects of baptism, and the proposition was that christendom should be given to children, it was natural for the historian to add that this was after the manner of the church of Rome. To conclude; till something better be offered to disprove our inference from the above-mentioned premises, that these primitive Christians knew nothing of infant baptism, we shall continue to consider them, as being in sentiment and practice, what our opponents call us--Antipedobaptists.

03. A.D. 1180-1540

CHAPTER 2 A.D. 1180 - 1540 The darkness which succeeded the introduction of popery was so prevalent, that, excepting the valleys of Piedmont, which were the residence of the Waldensian churches, it soon spread over the whole of Europe, and rendered invisible every trace of the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. THE WALDENSIAN CHRISTIANS are celebrated in history for their opposition to the antichristian usurpations of the church of Rome. The learned archbishop Usher, in his book entitled *The succession and state of the Christian Churches* [p. 242], traces its succession through them, in distinction from and in opposition to the papacy. They underwent the most dreadful persecutions; and every means which malice and cruelty could invent was used to exterminate them and their principles from the earth. The crusade against them consisted of five hundred thousand men. More than three hundred gentlemen's seats were razed and many walled towns destroyed. The persecutions, however, which they suffered were far from accomplishing the design of their enemies. The archbishop says, that "as the persecution about Stephen by that dispersion proved much for the furtherance of the gospel in other parts of the world, so was it here: for those that were not so fit for the war went up and down with more freedom into most parts of Europe. Insomuch that Aeneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius II, confessed, that neither the decrees of popes, nor armies of Christians, could extirpate them." The archbishop farther informs us, on the authority of Matthew Paris of Westminster, that "the Berengarian or Waldensian heresy had, about the year 1180, generally infected all France, Italy, and England." Guitmond, a popish writer of that time, also says, that "not only the weaker sort in the country villages, but the nobility and gentry in the chief towns and cities, were infected therewith; and therefore Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, who held this see both in the reigns of William the conqueror and of his son William Rufus, wrote against them in the year 1087." The archbishop adds, from Poplinus's history of France, that "the Waldenses of Aquitain did, about the year 1100, during the reigns of Henry I and Stephen, kings of England, spread themselves and their doctrines all over Europe," and mentions England in particular. [Danvers on baptism, p. 175-178]

We learn from Fox, on the authority of Robert Gulsborne, that in the time of Henry II, about the year 1158, two eminent Waldensian preachers and barbs, Gerhardus and Dulcinus, came into England to propagate the gospel; and archbishop Usher, from Thomas Walden, says, that "several Waldenses that came out of France were apprehended, and by the king's command were marked in the forehead with a key or hot iron." "Which sect, (says William of Newbury, in his history of England,) were called the Publicani, whose original was from Gascoyne; and who, being as numerous as the sand of the sea, did sorely infest both France, Italy, Spain, and England."

Rapin, in relating the transactions of the councils of Henry II, gives the following account of these people, on the authority of the above-mentioned historian. "Henry ordered a council to meet at Oxford in 1166, to examine the tenets of certain heretics, called Publicani. Very probably they were disciples of the Waldenses, who began then to appear. When they were asked in the council, who they were; they answered, they were Christians, and followers of the apostles. After that, being questioned upon the creed, their replies were very orthodox as to the trinity and incarnation.

But, (adds Rapin,) if the historian is to be depended on, they rejected baptism, the eucharist, marriage, and the communion of saints. They shewed a great deal of modesty and meekness in their whole behaviour. When they were threatened with death, in order to oblige them to renounce their tenets, they only said, Blessed are they that suffer for righteousness sake." [History of England, vol. i. p. 350]

There is no difficulty in understanding what were their sentiments on these heretical points. When a monk says they rejected the eucharist, it is to be understood that they rejected the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation; when he says that they rejected marriage, he means that they denied it to be a sacrament, and maintained it to be a civil institution; when he says that they rejected the communion of saints, nothing more is to be understood than that they refused to hold communion with the corrupt church of Rome; and when he says that they rejected baptism, what are we to understand but that they rejected the baptism of infants? These were the errors for which they were branded with a hot iron in their foreheads, by those who had "the mark of the beast, both in their foreheads and in their hands."

Paul Stransky, de Republica Bohemorum, p. 272, (as quoted by David Crazz in his History of the United Brethren, translated by La Trobe, p. 16,) says, "the Waldenses, in 1176, arrived in Bohemia, and settled at Satz and Laun on the river Eger. These joined those Bohemians, who were still tenacious of the rites of the Greek church. They showed them the defects of their religious exercises; and introduced among them a purer knowledge of the doctrines of the Christian faith, according to the word of God. By this means the upright were confirmed in the faith, and such as were fallen asleep, again awakened."

"These ancient Christians," says Crazz, after having made the above quotation, "(who, besides the several names of reproach given them, were at length denominated Waldenses, from one of their most eminent teachers PETER WALDUS who is said to have emigrated with the rest from France into Bohemia, and there to have died) date their origin from the beginning of the fourth century; when one Leo, at the great revolution in religion under Constantine the Great, opposed the innovations of Sylvester, bishop of Rome. Nay, Rieger goes farther still, taking them for the remains of the people of the Vallies, who, when the apostle Paul, as is said, made a journey over the Alps into Spain, were converted to Christ."

"The testimony of their enemies themselves (continues Crazz) seems to corroborate this conjecture. Sancho Reinerus, an apostate, and persecutor of the Waldenses in the thirteenth century, writes, 'Amongst all sects, none is more pernicious than that of the Poor of Lyons (which is another denomination of the Waldenses) for three reasons: 1. Because it is the most ancient. Some aver their existence from the days of Sylvester; others, from the very time of the Apostles. 2. Because it is so universal; for there is hardly a country into which this sect has not crept. 3. Because all others render themselves detestable by their blasphemies; but this has a great appearance of godliness, they living a righteous life before men, believing right concerning God, confessing all the articles of the creed, only hating the pope of Rome, etc.'"

"This, (says Crazz) continued above two hundred years, till 1391, when, being discovered through the imprudence of two of their preachers, they were cruelly persecuted, and, for the most part, dispersed abroad in the adjacent countries. Yet many witnesses of the truth remained in Bohemia; who, not only in private, but in the churches and schools, and in the very court-chapel at Prague,

testified against the corruption in doctrine and practice, which now broke in more and more like a torrent; to which they were farther greatly encouraged by the writings of Wickliffe, brought from England by the young noblesse who studied there."

Roger de Hovedon, in his Annals, says, that in the year 1182, "Henry II was very favourable to the Waldensian sect in England; for whereas they burnt them in many places of Flanders, Italy, and France, in great numbers, he would not suffer any such thing here; and being in his own and his queen's right possessed of Aquitain, Poictou, Guien, Gascoyne, Normandy, etc. the principal places inhabited by the Waldenses and Albigenses, and they being his subjects, they had free egress into his territories here."

During the reigns of Richard I and king John, which were times of great trouble, we read of no opposition made against them. Richard was long absent in the holy war. John had great contests with the pope, who laid his kingdom under an interdict, and forbad all public worship for the space of six years, only admitting of private baptism to infants. This, with the opposition made to him by the barons, found him so much employment, that these Christians had no molestation, but had great opportunities for disseminating their principles; while the king by his arms defended the Waldenses and Albigenses in Aquitain and Gascoyne, who were so much oppressed by the crusading army of the pope. In the reign of Henry III, archbishop Usher says, from Matthew Paris, "the orders of the Friars Minorites came into England to suppress this Waldensian heresy." And in the reign of Edward III, about the year 1315, Fuller informs us, in his ecclesiastical history, that "WALTER LOLLARD, that German preacher, or, (as Perrin calls him in his history of the Waldenses,) one of their barbs, came into England, a man in great renown among them; and who was so eminent in England that, as in France they were called Berengarians from Berengarius, and Petrobrusians from Peter Bruis, and in Italy and Flanders, Arnoldists, from the famous Arnold of Brescia; so did the Waldensian Christians for many generations after bear the name of this worthy man, being called Lollards." As this is an historical fact of great importance for discovering the origin of those sentiments which at length produced a reformation in the kingdom, and an emancipation from the church of Rome, it is very desirable TO ASCERTAIN THE OPINION OF THESE ZEALOUS CHRISTIANS ON THE QUESTION OF INFANT BAPTISM, since it will furnish us with a clue by which to judge of the principles of those who were afterwards such eminent asserters of Christian liberty.

If the reader will turn to what is said by Dr. Gill on this subject, in the extracts prefixed to this work, he will find the opinion of William of Newbury (as recited by Rapin) confirmed, respecting their denial of baptism; that is, of infant baptism. In addition to these proofs may be mentioned what is said by Chessanion, in his History of the Albigenses, who (he says) were of the same sentiments. "Some writers, (says he,) affirm that the Albigenses approved not the baptism of infants; others that they entirely slighted this holy sacrament, as if it were of no use either to great or small. The same may be said of the Waldenses, though some affirm that they have always baptized their children. This difference of authors kept me some time in suspense before I could come to be resolved on which side the truth lay. At last considering what St. Bernard saith of this matter in his sixty-sixth homily on the second chapter of the Song of Songs, and the reasons he brings to refute this error, and also what he wrote ad Hildefonsum Comitem sancti Aegidii, I cannot deny but the Albigenses for the greatest part were of this opinion. And that which confirms me yet more in this belief is, that in the history of the city of Treves there were some who denied that the sacrament of

baptism was available to the salvation of infants: and one Catherine Saube, who was burnt at Montpelier, in the year 1417, for being of the mind of the Albigenses in not believing the traditions of the Romish church, was of the same mind respecting infant baptism; as it is recorded in the register of the town-house of the said city of Montpelier, of which we shall speak at the end of the fourth book. The truth is, (continues Chessanion) they did not reject the sacrament, and say it was useless, but only counted it unnecessary to infants, because they are not of age to believe, nor capable of giving evidence of their faith. That which induced them, as I suppose, to entertain this opinion is, what our Lord says, He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned." [Stennett's Answer to Russen, pp. 79,184] This statement is in part at least corroborated by Dr. Wall in his History of infant baptism; and, as he was desirous of establishing the contrary opinion, his concessions in our favour are certainly of weight. Speaking of the Petrobrussians, whom he calls a sect of the Waldenses, he says, "withdrawing themselves, about the year 1100, from the communion of the church of Rome, which was then very corrupt, they did reckon Infant Baptism as one of the corruptions, and accordingly renounced it, and practised only adult baptism.' [Part II, chap. 10, p. 527]

Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History, speaking of Peter de Bruis, who was a celebrated itinerant preacher, and who was burnt to death by an enraged populace at St. Giles's, in the year 1130, says, "It is certain that one of his tenets was, that no persons whatever were to be baptized before they were come to the full use of reason." [Vol. III, p. 116] The testimony of Mr. Brandt respecting the antiquity of these churches and of their sentiments respecting baptism is of importance to our argument. He says that "the errors and crafty inventions of popery, had never been able to find a passage to those people; since being shut up in their vallies, separate from the rest of the world, and conversing chiefly among themselves, they had retained a great deal of the simplicity and purity of the Apostolical doctrine. That this antiquity of the doctrine of the Waldenses, is acknowledged even by their greatest enemies.--Some of them likewise rejected infant baptism." [Brandt's Hist. Ref. vol. I. Book I. p. 12] To corroborate this last clause many things are produced by Dr. Allix in his remarks on the ancient churches of Piedmont. "The followers of Gundulphus in Italy were many of them examined by Gerhard bishop of Cambrai and Arras upon several heads in the year 1025. It seems as if these people were surfeited with the vicious and debauched lives of the Romish Clergy, and did rather chuse to go without any baptism, rather than have it administered by such lewd hands, or that they had agreed to have it performed privately in their own way. Let things have been as it would it is plain they were utterly against infant baptism." The citation, in part of their answer, as taken by Dr. Allix out of Gerhard's preface to Reginaldus, is this, "But if any shall say, that some sacrament lies hid in baptism, the force of that is taken off by these three causes; the first is, because the reprobate life of ministers can afford no saving remedy to the persons to be baptized. The second, because whatsoever sins are renounced at the font, are afterwards taken up again in life and practice. The third, because a strange faith, and a strange confession do not seem to belong to, or be of any advantage to a little child, who neither wills nor runs, who knows nothing of faith, and is altogether ignorant of his own good and salvation, in whom there can be no desire of regeneration, and from whom no confession of faith can be expected." The doctor adds the following quotation from an Inquisitor. "They contemn the sacraments of the church because of the undue and irreverent manner wherein they are celebrated by the priests, and because they set them to sale, as also, because of the wicked and scandalous lives of many ministers." In the next paragraph the same Inquisitor lets us know the

ground of this error (as he calls it) about infant baptism. "Some of them are in error concerning baptism, holding that infants cannot be saved by it, Mark xvi. 16, whosoever shall believe, and be baptized shall be saved. But an infant does not believe, therefore is not saved." In a little time after this lived the noted Arnoldus Brixiensis, a follower of Berengarius, who eminently opposed the Romish corruptions. And amongst some notions imputed to him, it is observed, "There was yet a more heinous thing laid to his charge, which was this; that he was unsound in his judgment about the sacrament of the altar and infant baptism." [Dr. Allix, p. 293,123,172] This excellent man was condemned, hanged, and his body burnt at Rome, and the ashes cast into the Tiber. But there is a letter of Everinus to St. Bernard a little before the year 1146, wherein he speaks clearly of a sect which approved of adult baptism upon believing, and strenuously opposed infant baptism. The words of the letter are, "They make void the priesthood of the church and condemn the sacraments besides baptism only, and this only in those who were come to age, who they say are baptized by Christ himself, whosoever be the ministers of the sacraments. They do not believe infant baptism, alleging that the place of the gospel, whosoever shall believe and be baptized, shall be saved." [Dr. Allix, p. 143,145,147] The same learned gentleman gives us an extract taken by Claudius Caissord in the year 1548, out of an old MS. of Rainerius a fryer, wrote by him 296 years before, against the Waldenses wherein he has these words, "They say, that when first a man is baptized then he is received into this sect. Some of them hold, that baptism is of no advantage to infants, because they cannot actually believe." [Ibid., p. 188,191]

There seems to me to be reason to believe that the Lollards in England were of similar sentiments on this subject. Walter Lollard from whom they sprung, was a Waldensian barb; and I have never seen any satisfactory proof that infant baptism was practised among these Christians at this early period of their history. These, it is likely, were the first public opposers of the corruptions of the church of Rome in England, after the fatal massacre of the ancient British Christians under the direction of the pope's legate, Austin, who has been flattered with the epithet of the English Apostle, and canonized as a Saint by the church of Rome. But to return to the Britons. It might be presumed that some of their descendants, either in Wales, or upon the borders of it, that is to say, in Herefordshire and the adjoining counties, would for some ages maintain the same principles with themselves. This presumption accords with fact; for the most early and most eminent Christians in England, after the conquest, are said to have been born in this part of the island. These were Bradwardine, Brute, Sir John Oldcastle, Tyndal, Penry, and others, whose histories we shall briefly relate in the course of our work. For this information we are indebted to A History of the Welsh Baptists, published by Mr. Joshua Thomas of Leominster, from which we shall extract interesting particulars on this subject. In this account of the Baptist church of Olchon, and Chapel-y-ffin, Mr. Thomas sayd, "Olchon is a deep narrow valley, under the black mountain, in the parish of Cludock, and properly in Herefordshire; yet on the borders of the three counties of Hereford, Monmouth, and Brecknock; and likewise on the borders of the three dioceses of Hereford, Llaudaff, and St. David's. The inhabitants of that and most of the adjoining parishes were Cambro-britons, or properly Cymry, vulgarly called Welsh or Welch, till of late years; and even now, many in those parts talk the British language, and most of the natives understand it. The ministry of the Baptists now there is in that language.

"I am inclined to believe (continues Mr. Thomas) that through all the darkness of popery, there were individuals here and there among the ancient Britons, who had saving knowledge of Christ;

though they had not sufficient courage to appear publicly against the growing corruptions of the Romish church. It is my opinion that the first open struggle of Protestant light against Popish darkness, among our countrymen, began at or near Olchon; and that long before the appellation of Protestant was known even in Germany. My conjectures spring from the following particulars,--

"Dr. Thomas Bradwardine was chosen Archbishop of Canterbury: he was a very learned and celebrated person in the former part of the fourteenth century. Dr. Fuller in his Church History, book iii. p. 98, says, that this worthy man was born at Bradwardine, and appears to have had his name from that place, as in former centuries it was very common for persons to take their names from the place of their birth, occupation, or habitation. Bradwardine is the name of a parish in Herefordshire, a few miles from Olchon. The word carries it in an internal evidence of its British original; but I will not pretend to guess to what particular circumstance it owed its origin. Bishop Godwin, contrary to Fuller, says that Dr. Bradwardine was born at Hartfield in Sussex. But before the latter had written his account of the worthies of England, he had received better information, for he there says that Camden, Bale, Pits, and Godwin, all differed respecting the place of Bradwardine's birth. These differences he endeavours to reconcile by saying that there was an ancient family at Bradwardine in Herefordshire, which removed thence, and had settled for three generations in Sussex, near Chichester; and that the above Thomas was born in or near that city. Hence he names him among his worthies of Herefordshire and of Sussex. He names a Thomas Bradwardine among the gentry of Herefordshire in 1433; so that it seems there were some of the family then at Bradwardine. Dr. Bradwardine was very famous for his profound and extensive erudition, and genuine piety. His common title was Doctor Profundus, the profound Doctor. Of all his writings, that which he wrote against the Pelagians is the most celebrated. Its title is, De Causa Dei, Of the cause of God. Dr. Gill, in his Cause of God and truth, refers to Bradwardine more than once, and calls him a second Austin. This commendation is great; but he did not make a formal opposition to popery as such. Though he was much abroad, yet possibly he might be of some service to his distant relations about Bradwardine and towards Olchon, by writing or otherwise. How far he was useful that way we know not. He died about 1348 or 9. Rapin, speaking of this eminent person, says, that 'what rendered him still more esteemed for his learning was his humility, and his zeal to instruct the people committed to his care.'

"Very probably (continues Mr. Thomas) the famous Wickliffe received much of his light in the gospel from Bradwardine. When the latter died, he was succeeded in the see of Canterbury by Dr. Simon Islip, in 1349. Islip had so great a regard for Wickliffe, that he made him rector of Canterbury College then at Oxford. The rector preached and kept his place with great reputation till 1306, when Archbishop Islip died. Then Wickliffe was turned out of his rectory. After that he openly opposed popery, and had powerful friends to defend him against all the rage of the pope and clergy."--Thus far Mr. Thomas.

It is very probable that Bradwardine, Islip, and Wickliffe, received their sentiments from the followers of Lollard; and that on this account the followers of Wickliffe are indiscriminately denominated Wickliffites and Lollards. Bishop Newton, having mentioned the Lollards, says, "There was a man more worthy to have given name to the sect, the deservedly famous John Wickliffe, the honour of his own and the admiration of all succeeding times." This extraordinary man, who has been justly called the morning star of the Reformation, began to be famous about the year 1361; and though he was greatly persecuted by several popes, and by the clergy in

England, yet the providence of God so protected him from their malice, that he died peaceably at his own house at Lutterworth, Dec. 31, 1384. By the command of the pope his bones were taken out of the grave and burnt, and his ashes cast into a brook adjoining, called the Swift, in 1428. The doctrines of Wickliffe spread very wonderfully through the land, if the testimony of Knyhton, a contemporary historian, who appears to have been his inveterate enemy may be believed. "Such (says he) was the success of his teaching, preaching, and writings, that more than half the people of England became his followers, and embraced his doctrines." Their character is thus given by Reinhar, a popish writer. "The disciples of Wickliffe are men of a serious modest deportment, avoiding all ostentation in dress, mixing little with the busy world, and complaining of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves wholly by their own labour, and despise wealth, being fully content with bare necessaries. They are chaste and temperate; are never seen in taverns, or amused with the trifling gaieties of life; yet you find them always employed, either in learning or teaching. They are concise and devout in their prayers, blaming an unanimated prolixity. They never swear; speak little; and in their public preaching lay the principal stress on charity."

It was not long after the death of Wickliffe, that his disciples began to form distinct societies. Rapin says, that "in the year 1389, the Wickliffites or Lollards began to separate from the church of Rome, and appoint priests from amongst themselves to perform divine service after their way. Though some were from time to time persecuted by the bishops, yet these persecutions were not rigorous. Their aim seemed to be only to hinder them from pleading prescription. Besides, a petition presented to the king by a former parliament to revoke the power granted the bishops to imprison hereticks restrained the most forward." [History of England, vol. i, p. 480]

It is probable that the liberty granted to these early dissenters from the church of England, as then established, depended in a great measure on the disposition of the monarch, and on his ability to check the cruel dispositions of the pope and the clergy. It appears evident from the history of the English church, that whenever the clergy have been left to follow their own inclinations, they have used their crosier, not in defending the flock, but in giving the followers of Christ cause to say, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." The sufferings of these people from this period till the Reformation were very great. The Lollards' tower still stands as a monument of their miseries, and of the cruelty of their implacable enemies. This tower is at Lambeth palace, and was fitted up for this purpose by Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, who came to this see in 1414. It is said that he expended two hundred and eighty pounds to make this prison for the Lollards. The vast staples and rings to which they were fastened, before they were brought out to the stake, are still to be seen in a large lumber-room at the top of the palace, and ought to make protestants look back with gratitude upon the hour which terminated so bloody a period. That the sentiments of Wycliffe and his followers were opposed to infant baptism, may be ascertained from several sources of information. It is well known that after the death of the pious queen Anne, wife of Richard II., and sister of Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, the books of Wickliffe were carried into Bohemia by her attendants, as they also were about the same time by Jerome of Prague, and other persons, in consequence whereof his sentiments spread in that country, where lived the celebrated John Huss, who, together with Jerome of Prague, fell a martyr to the fury of the papists at Constance, about a hundred years before the time of Luther. A letter describing the sentiments of the Hussites, written from Bohemia to Erasmus,

dated Oct. 10, 1519, states as follows. "They renounce all the rites and ceremonies of our church;--they ridicule our doctrine and practices in both sacraments;--they deny orders (the hierarchy) and elect officers from among the laity;--they receive no other rule than the bible;--they admit none into their communion till they be dipped in water, or baptized;--and they reckon one another without distinction of rank to be called brothers and sisters." [Colomesius's Collection of Letters to men of note]

If this was the case with respect to the followers of Wickliffe in Bohemia, what should hinder us from believing that the followers of Wickliffe in England held similar sentiments respecting the discipline of the church of Christ, and that they also maintained that none ought to be admitted into their communion until they were dipped in water, or baptized? That this was the case appears from the laws made against them in the reign of Henry IV.; for among the articles by which the inquisitors were to examine them, one was, "WHETHER AN INFANT DYING UNBAPTIZED CAN BE SAVED?" This the Lollards constantly asserted in opposition to the church of Rome, which decreed that no infant could be saved without it. Fox says, that one of the errors they were charged with was, "that they spoke against the opinion of such as think children are damned who depart before baptism, and that Christian people be sufficiently baptized in the blood of Christ, and need no water; and that infants be sufficiently baptized, if their parents are baptized before them." [Fox's Acts and Mon. vol. i. p. 752]

Fox thinks they were slandered in this matter because says he, "It is so contrary to the manifest word that it is not thought any to be so ignorant of the gospel that ever did or would affirm the same." But that these people opposed the baptism of infants, is corroborated by the Dutch Martyrology, or bloody Theatre, which says from Walsingham, "that one Sir Lewis Clifford, who had been a friend of Wickliffe, did discover to the Archbishop of Canterbury, that the Lollards would not baptize their new-born children." [Danver's Treatise of Baptism, p. 2, 303].

Respecting Wycliffe's sentiments on this subject, many writers have positively asserted that he opposed this practice. Dr. Hurd in his History of all Religions says, "It is pretty clear from the writings of many learned men, that Dr. John Wickliffe, the first English reformer, either considered infant baptism unlawful, or at best not necessary." The author of a History of Religion, published in London in 1764, in four volumes octavo, says, "It is clear from many authors that Wickliffe rejected infant baptism, and that on this doctrine his followers agreed with the modern Baptists." Thomas Walden and Joseph Vicecomes [Catholic authorities who persecuted Wycliffe's followers], who had access to his writings, have charged him with denying pedobaptism, and they brought their charge at a time when it might have been easily contradicted, if it had not been true. The first of these charges him with holding the following opinions about baptism. "That baptism doth not confer, but only signifies grace which was given before; that those are fools and presumptuous who affirm such infants not to be saved as die without baptism; also that he denied that all sins are abolished in baptism, and asserted that the baptism of water profited not without the baptism of the Spirit." [Walden, tom. ii. c. 98, 108]

Walsingham says, "It was in the year 1381, that that damnable heretic, John Wickliffe, reassumed the curses opinions of Berengarius;" of which it is certain that denying infant baptism was one. He also says "that his followers did deny baptism to infants, because they concluded them, as they were the children of believers, to be holy, and not to stand in need of baptism to take away original

sin." Thomas Walden, before mentioned, calls Wickliffe "one of the seven heads that came out of the bottomless pite, for denying infant baptism, that heresie of the Lollards, of whom he was so great a ringleader." [Danver's Treatise, p. 2, 287] A council was held at Blackfriars, June 11, 1382, to condemn Wickliffe and his sect; at which time, while his enemies were in convocation, that terrible earthquake happened which is mentioned in the chronicles of St. Alban's, and of which Wycliffe also takes notice in his writings. This greatly alarmed his persecutors, but did not prevent their framing many articles of accusation. The eleventh article was, that the children of believers might be saved without baptism. A denial that baptism had virtue in itself to procure the salvation of the infant, and that the want of it would insure damnation, was rudely shaking the foundation on which infant baptism was then built. He is accused, however, of going still farther, and of asserting, "that none were members of the church visible who did not app[ear to be members of the church invisible; and that none had a right to church membership who did not make a public profession, and profess obedience to Christ. It is unnecessary to add, that infants, being unable to make this public profession, would not be considered by him as members of the visible church, or as possessing a right to participate of any of its ordinances.

Having mentioned some of the followers of Wickliffe, it seems desirable that we should more particularly notice a few of them, as persons who by English protestants ought to be had in everlasting remembrance. In the history of Welsh Baptists already mentioned, there is an account of one of these named Walter Brute. Mr. Thomas says, "I suppose he lived in or near Olchon," and mentions several reasons which make this appear probable. "It is recorded (says he) that he was a gentleman of rank, learning, and parts, though reckoned a layman by the popish clergy. Trevnant or rather Trefnant, bishop of Hereford, charges Mr. Brute with seducing the people as much as he could from day to day, and with teaching openly and privately as well the nobles as the commons. Mr. William Swinderby, and Mr. Stephen Ball, were preachers of note, then, intimate friends of Brute, and all of Wickliffe's doctrine.

"By a copy of a commission of Richard II, about 1392, it appears that Mr. Swinderby and his friends had fled into Wales, out of the diocese of Hereford. It is very probable that they had retired among the mountains about Olchon and Chapel-y-ffin, and that they there instructed our countrymen as they had opportunity, where they could soon be out of the county and diocese of Hereford. So many counties and dioceses meeting on those hills, gave some help in the time of persecution. They could shift from one county and diocese to another, as they saw occasion; so finding shelter in those deep vallies, and on those lofty hills, and craggy rocks.

"Mr. Fox, in his martyrology, has given us a large account of Mr. Brute and his religious sentiments, taken from the register of the bishop of Hereford. Our countrymen did confute popish errors in many articles, and reformed much concerning baptism. He held that faith should precede baptism, and that baptism was not essential to salvation; yet still admitted that the faith of godly parents was sufficient for their infants. Mr. Thomas Davye, however, in his treatise on baptism, says, Mr. Fox indeed, speaking of the opinion of W. Brute, as to the sacrament of baptism and of infants dying without it, seems to extenuate the matter, because he himself was for infant baptism! Mr. Davye further says, that Swinderby was one of Brute's followers, and supposes that Mr. Brute was more a Baptist than was represented by Mr. Fox.

"Our worthy countrymen, Mr. C. Edwards (adds Mr. Thomas) entitles Mr. Brute Cymro godidog; that is, an excellent Cambro Briton, a learned layman of the diocese of Hereford; and says that he instructed his countrymen and admonished them, explaining the scriptures, and showing the difference between true religion and popish foppery exorcisms, and such things.

"Richard II directed a letter to the nobility and gentry of the county of Hereford, and to the mayor of the city. Among the gentlemen then named, Thomas Oldcastle is one. The letter charges all to persecute W. Brute, charged with preaching heresy in the diocese and places adjacent, and also with keeping conventicles. It seems from this, that Brute, Swinderby, and others, preached in different places on the borders of Wales; and Mr. Fox has recorded, out of the register, that they preached at Whitney and Leinwardine in Herefordshire.

"Mr. Brute was a reputable writer. Mr. Fox has mentioned his works on several subjects of divinity, in his Acts and Monuments. We are also told that Fox set forth the works of Tyndal, Frith, and Barnes, in 1573; and that it was wished the same diligence had been used in searching after and collecting the works of Wickliffe, Brute, and others. These wrote near a hundred years before printing began in England.

"There is no certain account that I can find (continues Mr. Thomas) where, how, nor when Mr. Brute died, whether he suffered martyrdom or not. But we may look upon him as the first public reformer among our countrymen. On his trial, as recorded by Fox, he declared that he was a Briton by father and mother, and rejoiced that he was a descendant from the ancient Britons, who had been so valiant for the truth and against popery, in former times. The last account Fox gives of him is in 1393. In the work of Mr. Davye, above referred to, it is said, that Mr. Swinderby, the friend of Brute, was burnt alive for his profession in Smithfield, in 1401."

Another reason assigned by Mr. Thomas, for concluding that Brute and his friends preached in and about Olchon is, that Sir John Oldcastle, who was so zealous for Wickliffe's doctrine, was a native, and resident of this part of the country. "His birth place and patrimony (says he) bear his name to this day. Oldcastle is a small parish adjoining to Cludock in Monmouthshire. The valiant king Henry V was also born at Monmouth; and having a great regard for his countrymen, introduced him into his household. Sir John Oldcastle married Lord Cobham's daughter, and at his father-in-law's death was created Lord Cobham. The noble Briton though in the king's court, was full of zeal against popery, and was reckoned the chief man through the kingdom in supporting, defending, and encouraging the Lollards, who were the Protestants and Dissenters of these times. For these things the popish clergy were full of bitterness and rage against him, as they knew very well that he was much in favour at court. However, after many consultations, they found means, like Daniel's enemies, to prevail with the king to have him apprehended and brought to trial as an enemy to Holy Church."

It is said of this excellent nobleman, that it was publicly known that he had been at great expense in collecting and transcribing the works of Wickliffe, which he dispersed among the common people without any reserve. It was publicly known also that he maintained a great number of the disciples of Wickliffe as itinerant preachers in many parts of the country, particularly in the dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester, and Hereford. When the archbishop, at the head of a large body of the dignified clergy, waited on the king, he had before him with as much acrimony as decency would admit, the offence of his servant Lord Cobham, and begged his majesty would

suffer them, for Christ's sake, to put him to death. The king told the archbishop that he had ever been averse to shedding of blood in the cause of religion: such violence he thought more destructive of truth than of error. He therefore enjoined the convocation to postpone the affair a few days; in which time he would himself reason with Lord Cobham, whose behaviour he by no means approved; and if this were ineffectual, he would then leave him to the censure of the church. With this answer the primate was satisfied; and the king sending for Lord Cobham, endeavoured by all the arguments in his power to set before him, the high offence of separating from the church, and pathetically exhorted him to retract his error. Lord Cobham's answer is upon record "I ever was (said he) a dutiful subject to your majesty, and I hope ever shall be. Next to God, I profess obedience to my king. But as for the spiritual dominion of the pope, I never could see on what foundation it is claimed, nor can I pay him any obedience. As sure as God's word is true, to me it appears fully evident that he is the great antichrist foretold in holy writ." This answer of Lord Cobham so exceedingly shocked the king, that, turning away in visible displeasure, he from that time withdrew from him every mark of his favour. Deserted by the king, the archbishop soon found means to get him committed to the tower; and on Sep. 23, 1413, he was cited to appear before the consistory; but not appearing, he was declared contumacious, and excommunicated without further ceremony. But though committed to the tower, and condemned to die, yet by some means he made his escape; and taking advantage of a dark night he eluded pursuit, and arrived safe in Wales, where he found an asylum, and was secured by some of the chiefs of that country from the rage of his enemies.

It is supposed that all this was under the connivance, and with the approbation of the King, who was not willing to put him to death. "We are told (says Mr. Thomas) by a Monmouthshire author, that Sir John lay concealed among his tenants and friends at or about Oldcastle, above four years; till at last, Lord Powys, a covetous and bigotted papist, for a considerable sum of money, apprehended him."

He was then taken to London; and the King being at that time out of the Kingdom, the Romish clergy made all speed to dispatch him by a most inhuman death. He was hanged up by an iron chain round the waist, and burnt, or rather roasted, to death, over a slow fire. The translator of Rapin says in a note, "As this was the first noble blood that was shed in England by popish cruelty, so perhaps none ever suffered a more cruel martyrdom." The historian says, "Thus died Sir John Oldcastle, baron of Cobham, with wonderful constancy, perfectly answerable to the firmness wherewith he had all along maintained the doctrine of Wickliffe which he professed." There is a painting of this wonderful man preserved in Dr. William's library, in Red Cross street, London.

"This nobleman (says Mr. Thomas) was another instructor of the good people in and about Olchon. In the four years which he spent amongst them, it may be concluded that he did all the service he could to promote the truth for which he suffered." His martyrdom was in 1417, two years after that of the celebrated John Huss, who likewise was a worthy disciple of Wickliffe, and a hundred years before Luther began the reformation in Germany. From some things contained in the confession of faith which Lord Cobham presented to the King, it is evident that he had fully imbibed the sentiment of Wickliffe, that all traditions not taught in the scripture are superfluous and wicked." This confession he thus concluded: "Finally, my faith is, that God will ask no more of a christian in his life than to obey the precepts of his blessed law. If any prelate of the church requires more of any other kind of obedience, he contemneth Christ, exalteth himself above God,

and is plainly antichrist.'

Thus did Lord Cobham and his friends appear on the side of Christ, when "all the world wondered after the beast;" and when England was immersed in error, they heroically defended the truth. These were Dissenters long before the church of England, in its present form, was by law established. These shone as morning stars in our hemisphere, before the day of the Reformation. These were they who followed the Redeemer whithersoever he went; who overcame all their enemies through the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and who loved not their lives unto the death!

It is to be lamented that we have not a particular account of the afflictions which the Lollards in general suffered at this time; yet it is not to be doubted that the hand of persecution fell with superior weight on the lower order of people, when even nobility was not a preservative from the rage of the clergy. There is a remark in Robinson's dissertation on public preaching, prefixed to Claude's Essay, which refers to a period forty years after this, and proves that the demon of persecution was at that time neither dead nor chained. "I have (says he) before me a manuscript register of Gray, bishop of Ely, which proves that in the year 1457, there was a congregation of this sort in this village, Chesterton, where I live, who privately assembled for divine worship, and had preachers of their own who taught them the very doctrines we now preach. Six of them were accused of heresy before the tyrant of the district, and condemned to adjure heresy, and to do penance half naked, in the public market-places of Ely, and Cambridge, and in the churchyard of Great Swaffham. It was pity the poor souls were forced to abjure the twelfth article of their accusation, in which they were said to have affirmed, All priests and people in orders are incarnate devils."

During the reign of Henry VIII, some alterations were made in the constitution of the church. In the year 1536, the articles were published, commonly called King Henry's Creed, and entitled, "Articles devised by the Kynges Highnes Majestie to stablyshe christen quietnes and unitie among us, and to avoyde contentious opinions, which articles he also approved by the consent and determination of the whole clergie of the realme." "In the translation whereof (says Fox) he altereth nothing from the old trade, heretofore received from Rome."

What is said about baptism is truly papistical, and evidently points at some who opposed infant baptism. "Item, That infants must needs be christened because they be born in original sin, which sin must needs be remitted, which cannot be done but by the sacrament of baptism, whereby they receive the Holy Ghost, which exerciseth his grace and efficacy in them, and cleanseth and purifieth them from sin by his most secret virtue and operation. Item, that children of men once baptized, can nor ought to be baptized again. Item, That they ought to repute and take all the Anabaptists and the Pelagians' opinions contrary to the premises, and every other man's opinions on this behalf, for detestable heresies, and to be utterly condemned." The second article runs after this manner. "That baptism was a sacrament instituted by Christ; that it was necessary to salvation; and that infants were to be baptized for the pardon of original sin." In the next year we find a proclamation issued against heresies and heretics, which recites, "That of late many strangers born out of this land are arrived and come into this realm, which albeit they were baptized in their infancy or childhood, according to the universal church of Christ; yet notwithstanding, in contempt of the holy sacrament of baptism so given and received, they have of

their own presumption lately rebaptized themselves." [Ibid.] From these articles and proclamations it is easy to discern, that there were many persons in the kingdom who, objecting to infant baptism, were baptized on a profession of faith. The methods taken to prevent their increase were ineffectual; "for in October 1538, there was a commission, (says Burnet,) sent to Cranmer, Stokesly, Sampson, and some others, to inquire after Anabaptists; to proceed against them; to restore the penitent; to burn their books; and to deliver the obstinate to the secular arm. But I have not, (says the bishop,) seen what proceedings there were upon this." [Burnet's Hist. Ref. vol. 3. p. 159] From a passage in Brandt's History of the Reformation it appears that the Baptists in England were obliged to leave the country. He says, "In the year 1539 there were put to death at Delpt [Holland], one and thirty Anabaptists, that fled from England, the men beheaded and the women drowned." In the next year Mr. Barnes was burnt in Smithfield, and in his speech to the people at the stake he declared he was not an Anabaptist as he had been charged with, by saying, "Which sect I detest and abhor; and in this place there hath been burned some of them, whom I never favoured nor maintained." [Fox's Martyr, vol. 1. p. 610] On Nov. 16, the King put forth a proclamation, in which he condemned all the books of the Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, and appointed those to be punished that vended them. And in December, he sent a letter to the justices in England, in which, after many other things, they are commanded to take care that all the injunctions, laws, and proclamations, against the Sacramentarians and Anabaptists, be duly executed. In this year also there was an act of grace passed, from the benefit of which, besides other particular exceptions, all Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, and all those that affirmed there was a fate upon men by which the day of their death was unalterably determined, were excluded. By this it appears, that the king asserted that supremacy which his creatures had assigned to him; and that he not only condemned those who thought his opponent Luther to be right, and the King wrong, on the subject of the Lord's supper, but also set his throne above the throne of God, "in whose hand our breath is," and who has "determined our days;" and who has declared "that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." That the Lollards had been cruelly treated in his reign previously to this period, is evident from the history of those times. In the year 1511 Joseph Brown was burned. In 1512, William and James Seely, and Joseph Brewster, shared the same fate. In 1514, Joseph Hunn was murdered in the Lollard's tower, and in 1519, Joseph Tawksby and many others ended their lives at the stake. In 1525 seven Baptists who came over from Holland, were apprehended and imprisoned. Some of whom were afterwards burned at Smithfield. In 1535, twenty-two Baptists were apprehended and put to death. In 1539, sixteen men and fifteen women were banished to Delpt in Holland, for opposing infant baptism. At this place they were taken by the papists and put to death. In the same year two Anabaptists were burned beyond Southwark, in the way to Newington, and a little before them, five Ditch Anabaptists were burned at Smithfield. From a speech delivered by the king at the parliament, Dec. 24, 1545, as recited by Lord Herbert, it should seem that the epithet Anabaptist was a term of reproach, applicable to all those who were struggling to promote a reformation in the church and state, just as the epithet Puritan afterwards, and that of Methodist at present, have been indiscriminately applied to all who are zealous for promoting evangelical principles. "What love and charity (says Henry) is there among you, when one calls another heretic and Anabaptist; and he calls him again Papist, Hypocrite, and Pharisee? He adds, Be these tokens of charity among you? I see and hear daily that you of the clergy preach one against another; teach one contrary to another; inveigh one against another, without charity or discretion. Some be too stiff in their old mumpsimus; other be

too busy in their new sumpsimus." [Crosby, vol. i. p. 42] The papists, however, being the stronger party, prevailed on the king to prosecute with unrelenting cruelty all who opposed their system. The next year, Claxton was imprisoned for denying the real presence in the sacrament, and would have been burnt, but for his recantation. But a pious and excellent lady, Anne Askew, who was frequently at court, and a great favourite of queen Catharine Parr, after suffering the most excruciating tortures on the rack, was burned at the stake about June 1546.

Bishop Latimer, in a sermon preached before king Edward VI, alluding to the events of the reign of Henry VIII, says, "The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers parts of England, as I heard of credible men, (I saw them not myself,) went to their death even intrepid as ye will say, without any fear in the world, cheerfully. Also I should have told you here of a certain sect of heretics that speak against this order and doctrine, [the king's supremacy:] they will have no magistrates, no judges on earth. Then I have to tell you what I heard of late, by the relation of a credible person and worshipful man, of a town of this realm of England that hath above five hundred heretics of this erroneous opinion in it, as he said." [Ibid. p. 62]

I cannot but think that these Anabaptists were Wickliffites; and when it is considered how zealous this good bishop was in supporting the supremacy of the king as the head of the church, is there not reason to suspect, that they were accused of objecting to magistrates and judges, merely because they asserted what all dissenters now assert? That the civil magistrate ought not to interfere in matters of conscience; and that while it is our duty to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," it is equally our duty to give "unto God the things that are God's?" This popish protestant king died, Jan. 28, 1547, leaving in a very unfinished state, the reformation, which had been begun without his intending it. But the fetters of popery were broken; the scriptures in the mother tongue were sanctioned by parliament; and in 1540, it was enjoined by royal proclamation, that every parish should place one of the copies of the bible, which was called Cranmer's bible, in their churches, under the penalty of forty shillings a month; and though this was suppressed by the king about two years afterwards, though the influence of the popish bishops, yet as the people used to crowd to the churches after their hours of labour to hear it read, there is no doubt but the information which by these means was diffused throughout the land, laid the foundation for that glorious superstructure of Christian liberty, which by the patient sufferings of the zealous Puritans in the succeeding reigns was brought nearly to perfection. The blessings resulting to all classes of people, and particularly to protestant dissenters, from their struggles with ecclesiastical and civil despotism, we now enjoy; and we sincerely pray that they may be transmitted to our descendants unimpaired and improved.

04. A.D. 1540-1602

CHAPTER 3 A.D. 1540 - 1602

King Edward VI came to the throne at the age of nine years and six months; "a prince (says Neal) for learning and piety, for acquaintance with the world, and application to business, the very wonder of his age." The majority of the bishops and inferior clergy were on the side of popery; but the government was in the hands of the chief reformers, who began immediately to relax the horrors of the late reign. Persecution ceased, the prison doors were set open, and several who had been forced to quit the kingdom for religion returned home. The reforming divines, being delivered from that awe with which the imperiousness of the late king had inspired them, began to preach openly against the abuses of popery; and the people in the many places, inflamed by their addresses, pulled down the images in the churches without authority. The famous Genevan reformer, Calvin, appears to have felt deeply interested in the reformation that was going forward in England, and set his heart (says Heylin) upon promoting one wherein "the scripture might be made the rule of faith and worship," and offered his assistance to archbishop Cranmer for that purpose. [History of Presbytery, p. 13] He also wrote to the Protector, Lord Seymour, Oct. 29, 1548, encouraging him to go on, notwithstanding the wars, as Hezekiah did, with his reformation. In this he laments the violence of some who professed the gospel, and complains that he heard there were but few gospel sermons preached in England, and that the preachers recited their discourse coldly. Many of the reformers wished to expunge everything from the church which was of popish origin. But Cranmer and Ridley, wishing to prevent discontents, consulted with flesh and blood, and resolved to retain the vests and ceremonies. From this period the papists concluded, and that with strong confidence, that the English church would return back again to Rome. Bishop Bonner said publicly, "Having tasted of our broth, they will ere long eat of our beef." [Advance of the church of England towards Rome, p. 18] In the year 1549, bishop Burnet says, "there were many Anabaptists in several parts of England. They were generally Germans, whom the revolutions had forced to change their seats. They held that infant baptism was no baptism, and so were rebaptized." [Hist. Ref. Abridg. p. 85] On Apr. 12, a complaint was brought to the council, that with the strangers who were come into England, some of that persuasion were come over, who were disseminating their principles, and making proselytes. "These people, (says Neal,) besides the principle of adult baptism, held several wild opinions about the trinity, and virgin Mary, and the person of Christ." We cannot, however, rely with implicit confidence on all that is said concerning any sect of Christians by their adversaries, since it is well known that many sects have been charged with holding sentiments which they never held, and that caricature representations have been given of their real sentiments. The account Burnet gives of these persons is as follows. "Upon Luther's first preaching in Germany, there arose many, who building on some of his principles, carried things much farther than he did. The chief foundation laid down by him was that the scripture was the only rule of Christians." [Hist. Ref. vol. ii. p. 110] If this was the principle they held, it is probable that it was not so much their theological sentiments, as their firmness in resisting all imposition in matters of religion, which exposed them to such violent resentments. In

the articles which were framed in 1547, by a committee of divines appointed to examine and reform the offices of the church, it was enacted, that "in the administration of baptism a cross was to be made on the child's forehead and breast, and the devil exorcised to go out and enter no more into him. Also that the child was to be dipped three times in the font, on the right and left sides, and on the breast, if not weak. A white garment was to be put on it in token of innocence, and it was to be anointed on the head, with a short prayer for the unction of the Holy Ghost." [Neal, vol. i. p. 64] Is it to be wondered at, if these absurd notions, so popish and antisciptural, should have a tendency to encrease the number of Baptists, who had both reason and scripture to plead for their sentiments? But such daring innovators, who presumed to rend the seamless coat of Christ, and refused to worship the idol of uniformity which the reformers had set up, were not to be tolerated in a Christian commonwealth.

We find therefore, that in the year 1549, a commission was given to the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishops of Ely, Worcester, Chichester, Lincoln, and Rochester, Sir William Petre, Sir Thomas Smith, Dr. May, and some others, any three being a quorum, to examine and search after all Anabaptists, heretics, and contemners of the common prayer. They were to endeavour to reclaim them, and after penance to give them absolution; but if they continued obstinate, they were to excommunicate, imprison, and deliver them over to the secular arm. This was little better than a protestant inquisition. People had generally thought that all the statues for burning heretics had been repealed; but it was now said, that heretics were to be burned by the common law of England, and that the statutes were only for directing the manner of conviction, so that the repealing them did not take away that which was grounded on a writ of common law." [Neal, vol. i. p. 60] Before the commissioners were brought several tradesmen, one of whom, a butcher of the name of Thombe, abjured his principles, of which one was, that the baptism of infants was not profitable, because it went before faith. He was commanded, notwithstanding his abjuration, to carry a faggot at St. Paul's, when there should be a sermon setting forth his heresy. [Strypes Life of Cranmer, p. 181] The most awful instance of persecution in this year was the burning of JOAN BOUCHER of Kent. Burnet says, "She denied that Christ was truly incarnate of the virgin, whose flesh being sinful, he could take none of it; but the Word, by consent of the inward man in the virgin, took flesh of her. These were her words. The commissioners took much pains about her, and had many conferences with her; but she was so extravagantly conceited of her own notions that she rejected with scorn all they said: whereupon she was adjudged an obstinate heretic, and so left to the secular power." To the other charges preferred against this good woman by her enemies, who would endeavour to blacken her as much as possible in order to justify their own conduct, it is to be added that she was a Baptist; and perhaps this was the sin which was not to be forgiven. "When the compassionate young king could not be prevailed upon to sign the warrant for her execution, Cranmer, with his superior learning, was employed to persuade him. He argued from the practice of the Jewish church in stoning blasphemers, which rather silenced his highness than satisfied him: for when at last he yielded to the importunity of the archbishop, he told him with tears in his eyes, that if he did wrong, since it was in submission to his authority, he should answer it before God. This struck the archbishop with surprise; but yet he at last suffered the sentence to be executed." [Burnet's Hist. of Ref. vol. ii. p. 112] The extraordinary efforts used to bring Joan Boucher to retract her sentiments, prove her to have been a person of note, whose opinions carried more weight and respect than it can be supposed the chimeras of a frantic woman, as she has been sometimes represented, would have done. The account which Mr. Strype gives of her is

truly honourable. "She was (he says) a great disperser of Tyndal's new testament, translated by him into English, and printed at Colen, and was a great reader of scripture herself. Which book also she dispersed in the court, and so became known to certain women of quality, and was particularly acquainted with Mrs. Anne Askew. She used for the greater secrecy to tie the books with strings under her apparel, and so pass with them into the court." [Strype's Eccles. Mem. vol. ii. p. 214] By this it appears that she hazarded her life in dangerous times to bring others to the knowledge of the word of God. To be employed in such a work, and to die in such a cause, is the highest character that could be given to any of the disciples of Christ.

There are some remarks upon this circumstance in Fox's Latin book of Martyrs, which are omitted in the English from a regard, as is supposed, to the reputation of the Martrys who suffered in the next reign. But Mr. Pierce has given us the following translation in his answer to Nichols, p. 33. "In king Edward's reign, some were put to death for heresy. One of these was Joan Boucher, or Joan of Kent. Now, says Mr. Fox, when the protestant bishops had resolved to put her to death, a friend of Mr. John Rogers, the divinity-reader in St. Paul's church, came to him, earnestly desiring him to use his interest with the Archbishop, that the poor woman's life might be spared, and other means used to prevent the spreading of her opinion, which might be done in time: saying too, that though while she lived, she infected few with her opinion, yet she might bring many to think well of it, by suffering death for it. He pleaded therefore that it was better she should be kept in some prison, without an opportunity of propagating her notion among weak people, and so she would do no harm to others, and might live to repent herself. Rogers on the other hand pleaded, she ought to be put to death. Well then saith his friend, if you are resolved to put an end to her life together with her opinion, chuse some other kind of death, more agreeable to the gentleness and mercy prescribed in the gospel; there being no need, that such tormenting deaths should be taken up, in imitation of the Papists. Rogers answered, that burning alive was no cruel death but easy enough. His friend then hearing these words, which expressed so little regard to poor creatures suffering, answered him with great vehemence, and striking Roger's hand, which before he held fast, said to him, Well, perhaps, it may so happen, that you yourselves shall have your hands full of this mild burning. And so it came to pass; Mr. Rogers was the first man who was burned in Queen Mary's reign. I am apt to think (adds Mr. Pierce) that Mr. Roger's friend was no other than Fox himself." [Crosby, vol. i. p. 61] The name of TYNDALE having been mentioned, it may not be improper to give a short account of his labours and sufferings in the cause of God. He went young to Oxford, and had part of his education there, and part at Cambridge. After leaving the university, he settled for a time in Gloucestershire; but was obliged to leave his native country on account of persecution. On the continent he translated the new testament into English, and printed it in 1526. This edition was bought up by Sir Thomas More and bishop Tostall. With the money procured from this source, it was republished in 1530: but as this also contained some reflections on the English bishops and clergy, they commanded that it should be purchased and burnt. In 1532, Tyndale and his associates translated and printed the whole bible; but while he was preparing a second edition, he was apprehended and burnt for heresy in Flanders. [Note: For a fuller and more precise report on William Tyndale and his translation efforts and the timing of the various editions of his Bibles, see Annals of the English Bible by Christopher Anderson. This can be located at the Way of Life web site under the Electronic Baptist History Library. Anderson, who meticulously researched his subject, published his book 34 years after Ivimey published his history of English Baptists. D.W. Cloud]

He was a great reformer. It is generally supposed he was born on the borders of Wales. Mr. Thomas thinks this to be very probable, as "Mr. Llewelyn Tyndal and his son Hezekiah were reputable members of the Baptist church at Llanwenarth near Abergavenny, about the year 1700, as appeared by the old church book, and there were some of the same family in those parts still remaining." It is probable, therefore, that Tyndale might derive his superior light from some of the Wickliffites about Hereford and the adjoining counties, where we have already proved that much scriptural truth was for ages deposited. To this great man we are under great obligations for our emancipation from the fetters of popery, as it is not likely these would ever have been broken off, but by the hammer of God's Word. The sentiments of this celebrated man on the subject of baptism may be collected from the following extract from his works. After reprobating severely the conduct of the Romish clergy for using a latin form of words, he says, "the washing without the word helpeth not; but threw the word it purifieth and cleanseth us, as thou readest Eph. 6. How Christ cleanseth the congregation in the fountain of water threw the word: the word is the promise which God hath made. Now as a preacher, in preaching the word of God saveth the hearers that believe so doeth the washing in that it preacheth and representeth to us the promise that God hath made unto us in Christ, the washing preacheth unto us that we are cleansed with Christ's blood shedding which was an offering and a satisfaction for the sin of all that repent and believe consenting and submitting themselves unto the will of God. The plunging into the water signifieth that we die and are buried with Christ as concerning the old life of sin which is Ada. And the pulling out again signifieth that we rise again with Christ in anew life full of the Holy Ghost which shall teach us, and guide us, and work the will of God in us; as thou seest Rom. 6." [The obedience of all degrees proved by God's worde imprinted by Wylyyam Copland at London 1561] [Note from the Publisher of this electronic edition of Ivimey: We have modernized the spelling of Tyndale's words to facilitate ease of understanding for current readers.]

Whether Tyndale baptized persons on a profession of faith or not, it is certain that his sentiments would naturally lead him to the practice; as what is said of the subject of this ordinance in this quotation, can in no sense apply to infants; who cannot be said to "repent and believe, consenting and submitting themselves unto the will of God." As it relates to the manner in which baptism was at that time administered, his statement is so plain that it requires no comment. To return to events which took place in England during the reign of Edward VI, we learn from Burnet, that about the end of December 1550, after many cavils in the parliament, an act passed for the king's general pardon, from the benefits of which the Anabaptists were excluded. "Last of all (says he came the king's general pardon; out of which those in the tower and other prisons on account of the state, as also all Anabaptists, were excepted." This is a plain intimation that the Baptists were so numerous as to claim the attention of government, and so obnoxious as to be placed on a level with those who were imprisoned as enemies to the state. In the same year a visitation of the diocese of London was made by Ridley, the new bishop. Among other questions put to the inferior clergy was the following: "Whether any Anabaptists, or others, used private conventicles, with different opinions and forms from those established." There were also questions about baptism and marriage. Burnet says, "these articles are in bishop Sparrow's collection." [Hist. of Refor. vol. ii. p. 143-158] An event which took place in the next year shows that the Baptists were still offensive to those in power. On April 6, 1551, GEORGE VAN-PARE, a Dutchman, was condemned, and on the twenty-fifth of the same month was burnt at Smithfield. Speaking of this person, Neal remarks, "He was a man of strict and virtuous life, and very devout: he suffered with great constancy of

mind, kissing the stake and faggots that were to burn him." Burnet says, that "the eminent character which he had for piety and devotion, and the fortitude and constancy that he manifested at the stake, tended more to expose Cranmer than any event which had happened. It was now said by the papists, that men of harmless lives might be put to death for heresy by the confession of the reformers themselves. In all the books published in queen Mary's days, these instances were always produced; and when Cranmer himself was brought to the stake, the people called it a just retaliation." [Neal, vol. i. p. 61]

Mr. Strype says that on Sept. 27, 1552, a letter was sent to the Archbishop, to examine a sect newly sprung up in Kent. He says it appears not what this sect was; he supposes they may be the family of love, or David George's sect; but these conjectures of his have no good foundation. "I am persuaded, says Mr. Pierce, this sect was no other than some good honest dissenters, who having been grieved to see so much of popery retained attempted a further reformation themselves, which would be a very displeasing thing to our bishops who expect all men to wait their leisure." [Answer to Nichol. p. 56] Mr. Strype in his life of Cranmer p. 208, says expressly that these persons were Anabaptists. In all probability many of these came to Joan Boucher's end, as no argument could convince the divines of this age of the absurdity and wickedness of putting men to death for conscience sake.

Burnet seems to think that the sufferings of these persons was on account of their erroneous opinions respecting the person of Christ; and says that "the other sort of Anabaptists, who only denied infant baptism, had no severities used against them; but that several books were written against them, to justify infant baptism; and the practice of the church so early begun, and so universally spread, was thought a good plea, especially being grounded on such arguments in scripture, as did demonstrate, at least the lawfulness of it." [Burnet Abridg. part ii. p. 87] However this might be, we are hereby furnished with an important piece of information, proving, that there were persons among them who were able to defend their principles, and who were not afraid to do so, though they thereby exposed themselves to imprisonment and death. The next year it was resolved in council to reform the doctrine of the church. Archbishop Cranmer and Bishop Ridley were appointed to this work, who framed forty-two articles upon the chief points of the Christian faith. These were entitled, "Articles agreed upon by the bishops and other learned men, in the convocation held in London, in the year 1552, for the avoiding diversity of opinions, and establishing consent touching true religion: Published by the king's authority." Neal does not notice the alteration in the twenty eighth article, which now stood as follows. "The custom of the church for baptizing young children, is both to be commended, and by all means to be retained in the church." [Crosby, vol. i. p. 54] It is worthy of observation, that infant baptism was not retained because it was commanded by Christ, or practised by the apostles and first Christians, but as the custom of the church. The excellent young king was a friend to toleration. John a Lasco, who was the pastor of a foreign church, published a work which was dedicated to Sigismund, king of Poland, 1555; in which it is said, that "King Edward desired that the rites and ceremonies used under popery, should be purged out by degrees; and that strangers should have churches to observe all things according to apostolical observation only; that by these means the English churches might be excited to embrace apostolical purity with the unanimous consent of the states of the kingdom." He adds, that "the king was at the head of this project, and that Cranmer promoted it; but that some great persons stood in the way." Martin Bucer, a German divine, and

professor of divinity in Cambridge, a person in high estimation with the young king, drew up a plan and presented it to his majesty, in which he wrote largely on ecclesiastical discipline. The king having read it, set himself to write a general discourse about reformation, but did not live to finish it. His death, which happened in 1553, in the sixteenth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign, put an end to all his noble designs for perfecting the reformation. Dr. Leighton says, when speaking of his premature death, "This king, a gracious plant whereof the soil was not worthy, like another Josiah, setting himself with all his might to promote the reformation, abhorred and forbid that any mass should be permitted to his sister. Further, he was desirous not to leave a hoof of the Romish beast in his Kingdom, as he was taught by some of the sincerer sort. But as he wanted instruments to effect this good, so he was mightily opposed in all his good designs by the prelatists, which caused him in his godly jealousy, in the very anguish of his soul, to pour out his soul in tears." [An appeal to the parliament, &c.] Neal says, "He was an incomparable prince, of most promising expectations; and in the judgment of most impartial persons, the very phoenix of his age. It was more than whispered that he was poisoned." [Neal, vol. i. p. 81]

During the reign of the sanguinary MARY, who succeeded him, it is not to be doubted that the Baptists came in for their full share of suffering, and that many of the martyrs were of that denomination, which was then numerous, although their sentiments have not been handed down to us upon that subject. In the first year of her reign, 1553, we have an account of the examination of Mr. Woodman before the bishop of Winchester, in the church of St. Mary Overy's, in which the bishop said, "Hold him a book: if he refuse to swear, he is an Anabaptist, and shall be excommunicated." Also in the examination of Mr. Philpot before the lords of the council, Nov. 5, 1555, Rich said to him, "All heretics boast of the Spirit of God, and every one would have a church by himself, as Joan of Kent and the Anabaptists."

Spanhemius, in his account of David George of Delpt in Holland, who was driven from his own country by persecution, and died in London, and was honourably interred in St. Lawrence's church, informs us, that three years afterwards, it was discovered that he was an Anabaptist; upon which his followers were sought after; a certain number of divines and lawyers were appointed to examine them; his opinions were condemned by an ordinance; his picture was carried about and burnt; and his corps taken up and burnt likewise. [Crosby vol. i. p. 63,64] It is probable that David George was a member of a church of foreign Baptists that was formed in London in the former reign.

Brandt assures us that "in the year 1553, the low country exiles, who in the time of Edward VI had gathered a congregation at London (which upon his death was scattered by Queen Mary) after a dreadful northern journey in which they suffered much from the Lutherans, found at Wismar two distinct communities of Anabaptists." [Hist. Refor. vol. i. book. iv]

These persecutions appear to have inspired the Baptists with additional fortitude in avowing their attachment to their despised tenets; for in 1557, we find that many were imprisoned, being charged with holding the following opinions.--(1.) That infant baptism is anti-scriptural--(2.) That it is commanded by the pope--(3.) That Christ commanded teaching to go before baptism. These are sentiments which the Baptists still profess, and which they conceive have never been disproved. There was also a complaint exhibited against such as favoured the gospel at Ipswich, to the Queen's Council held at Beccles in Suffolk May 18, 1556, and among the crimes

enumerated we find that four women were accused of refusing to have their children dipped in the Fonts at St. Peter's church. One of these is said to be a midwife, and it is particularly requested that "none might be suffered to be midwives but such as are catholic, because of evil council as such times require a number of women assembled." [Fox, vol. iii. p. 791] This cruel and bigotted princess died Nov. 17, 1558. Her death put a close to a succession of cruelties which none have fully described, many hundreds having suffered death for religion; and there being but one instance in which a reprieve was granted to a person condemned for heresy. "Her reign (says Neal) was in every respect calamitous to the nation, and ought to be transmitted down to posterity in letters of blood."

QUEEN ELIZABETH succeeded her sister. In her reign there was much persecution. She was, however, preferable to Mary, though she seems to have been more than half a papist, and exercised a despotic sway over the lives of her subjects. The same severities which Mary exercised towards dissenters from the establishment when it was popish, were used towards them by Elizabeth when it became protestant. Protestants were persecuted by both;--by Mary, for refusing to subscribe to the absurd notions of transubstantiation and purgatory; by Elizabeth, for remonstrating against archbishops, and lord bishops; against the maintenance of the priesthood by tithes; against the kingdom of Christ being a kingdom of this world; against an unpreaching ministry; against the square cap and surplice; and against rites and ceremonies and ecclesiastical canons of human invention and imposition. Some of the dissenters objected to all these; others to only a part. The zeal of the bishops during this period was principally directed towards the support of ceremonies. To refuse a compliance with the injunctions of the queen respecting these popish inventions, was considered reason sufficient to deprive the most eminent divines of their station in the church, of their liberty, and of their life; at a time too when there were but few ministers of the gospel in England, and the people were perishing for lack of knowledge. The spirit of the times may be judged of by the following circumstance. The plague being in London and several parts of the country in the summer of 1562, a little stop was thereby put to the zeal for uniformity, yet none were preferred in the church who scrupled the habits. In proof of this we may produce the examples of two of the worthiest and most learned divines of the age. The first of these was the venerable Miles Coverdale, formerly bishop of Exeter. This excellent man had been long employed in assisting Tyndale in the translation of the bible. He was born in Yorkshire, was educated at Cambridge, and proceeded doctor in the university of Tubingen. Returning to England in the time of king Edward, he was made bishop of Exeter, 1551. Upon the accession of Queen Mary, he was imprisoned, and would have been burnt; but by the intercession of the king of Denmark, he was sent over into that country. When Elizabeth came to the throne, he returned to England, and assisted at the consecration of her first archbishop of Canterbury: yet because he would not comply with the ceremonies and habits, he was neglected, and had no preferment. "This reverend man (says Mr. Strype) being now old and poor, Grindal, bishop of London, gave him the small living of St. Magnus at the Bridge-foot, where he preached quietly about two years. But not coming up to the uniformity required, he was persecuted thence, and obliged to relinquish his parish a little before his death, which took place May 20, 1567, at the age of eighty-one years. He was a celebrated preacher, admired and followed by all the puritans." [Life of Parker, p. 149] The other was that venerable man, Mr. John Fox the martyrologist, a grave, learned, and laborious divine, and an exile for religion. While banished from his native country, he employed his time in writing the "Acts and Monuments" of that church which would hardly receive him into her bosom,

and in collecting materials relative to the martyrdom of those who suffered for religion in the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary. This he published first in Latin for the benefit of foreigners, and then in English for the use of his own countrymen, in 1561. This book gave a most severe blow to popery. It was dedicated to the queen, and was in such high reputation that it was ordered to be placed in the churches, where it raised in the people an invincible horror and detestation of that religion which had shed so much innocent blood. The queen professed a particular regard for Mr. Fox, and used to call him father: but as he refused to subscribe to her articles and ceremonies, he had no promotion for a considerable time. At length, through the influence of a friend, he procured a prebend in the cathedral of Sarum. This good old man would not submit to such impositions. When he was called upon to subscribe, he took his Greek testament from his pocket, and said, "To this will I subscribe." When they offered him the canons, he refused, saying, "I have nothing in the church but a prebend at Salisbury; and, if you take it away from me, much good may it do you." In a letter to his friend Dr. Humphreys, he thus pleasantly reproached the ingratitude of the times in which he lived. "I still wear the same clothes, and remain in the same sordid condition, that England received me in when I first came home out of Germany; nor do I change my degree or order, which is that of the mendicants, or if you please of the friars preachers." [Wilson's Hist. of Dissenting Churches, vol. i. p. 10] That no favour would be shown to the Baptists in such times as these, is what might naturally be expected. The share they had in the cruelties inflicted on dissenters will appear in a few instances which the historians of those times have preserved. Mr. Fuller says, "Now began the Anabaptists wonderfully to encrease in the land; and as we are sorry that any countrymen should be seduced by that opinion, so we are glad that the English as yet were free from that infection: for on Easter day was disclosed a congregation of Dutch Anabaptists, without Aldgate in London; whereof seven-and-twenty were taken and imprisoned; and four, bearing faggots at Paul's cross, solemnly recanted their dangerous opinions. Next month, one Dutchman and ten women were condemned; of whom one woman was persuaded to renounce her error; eight were banished the land; and two more were so obstinate that command was issued out for their burning in Smithfield." [Church Hist. Cent. 16, p. 164]

What this writer says of the English being previously free from this infection, shows how little he was acquainted with the history of the church, as the numerous instances we have mentioned abundantly prove. The account, however, which is here given, is an evidence of the stedfastness of these people in holding their opinions, as but five were influenced by threats and promises to recant; and one of these, a woman, not till after she had been condemned to be executed. This sentence two of the men cheerfully suffered, rather than deny Him who has said, "Whosoever loveth his own life more than me is not worthy of me; and whosoever loseth his life for my sake, the same shall find it." The form of abjuration made by these Walloon Baptists is a curious document, as it proves to what lengths the prelatists wished persons professing these sentiments to go. It was taken before Dr. De Laune, in 1575, in the eighteenth year of Elizabeth, in the Dutch church, Austin frairs, London, of which the doctor was minister. It is as follows: "Whereas we being seduced by the devil, the spirit of error, and by false teachers, have fallen into the most damnable errors; that Christ took not flesh of the substance of the virgin Mary, that the infants of the faithful ought not to be baptized, that a christian may not be a magistrate, or bear the sword and office of authority, and that it is not lawful for a christian man to take an oath. Now by the grace of God, and the assistance of good and learned ministers of Christ's church, we understand the same to be most damnable and detestable heresies; and do ask God, before his church, mercy for the said

former errors; and do forsake, recant, and renounce them; and we abjure them from the bottom of our hearts, protesting we certainly believe the contrary. And further, we confess that the whole doctrine established and published in the church of England, and also that which is received by the Dutch church in London, is found true according to God's word. Whereunto in all things we submit ourselves, and will be most gladly members of the said Dutch church; from henceforth utterly abandoning and forsaking all and every Anabaptistical error." [Crosby, vol. i. p. 69] From this account we learn what were the errors they were charged with, and nothing but a formal recantation of which would preserve them from either banishment or death. To prevent those from being executed who were condemned, Fuller says, that a grave divine sent a melting letter to the queen, begging they might not be burnt. "This was written, (he adds) in elegant latin by Mr. John Fox, from whose hand I transcribed it. He was very loth that Smithfield, formerly consecrated with martyr's ashes, should now be profaned with heretics, and desirous that the papists might enjoy their own monopoly of cruelty in burning condemned persons." The following is the translation of this letter, which does credit to the heart of the writer.--"Most serene and happy princess, most illustrious queen, the honour of our country, and honour of our age. As nothing hath ever been farther from my thoughts and expectation than ever to trouble your most excellent majesty by my troublesome interruption; so it grieves me very much that I must break that silence which has hitherto been the result of my mind. But so it now happens, by I know not what infelicity, that the present time obliges me, contrary to my hope and opinion, to that which of all things in the world I least desired; and though hitherto I have been troublesome to nobody, I am now, contrary to my inclination, constrained to be importunate, even with my princess; not in any matter or cause of my own, but through the calamity brought upon others; and by how much the more sharp and lamentable that is, by so much the more I am spurred on to deprecate it.

"I understand there are some here in England, not English but come hither from Holland, I suppose both men and women, who having been tried according to law, and having publicly declared their repentance, are happily reclaimed. Many others are condemned to exile; a right sentence in my opinion. But I hear there are one or two of these who are appointed to the most severe of punishments, viz. burning, except your clemency prevent. Now in this one affair I conceive there are two things to be considered; the one is the wickedness of their errors, the other, the sharpness of their punishment. As to their errors, indeed, no man of sense can deny that they are most absurd, and I wonder that such monstrous opinions could come into the mind of any Christian; but such is the state of human weakness, if we are left never so little awhile destitute of the divine light, whither is it we do not fall? And we have great reason to give God thanks that I hear not of any Englishman that is inclined to this madness. As to these fanatical sects, therefore, it is certain they are by no means to be countenanced in a commonwealth, but in my opinion ought to be suppressed by proper correction. But to roast alive the bodies of poor wretches, that offend rather through blindness of judgment than perverseness of will, in fire and flames, raging with pitch and brimstone, is a hard-hearted thing, and more agreeable to the practice of the Romanists than the custom of the gospellers; yea, is evidently of the same kind, as if it had flowed from the Romish priests, from the first author of such cruelty, Innocent the third. Oh, that none had ever brought such a Phalarian bull into the meek church of Christ! I do not speak such things because I am pleased with their wickedness, or favour the errors of any man; but seeing that I myself am a man, I must therefore favour the life of man; not that he should err, but that he should repent. Nay, my pity extends not only to the life of man, but also to the beasts.

"For so it is perhaps a folly in my; but I speak the truth, that I can hardly pass by a slaughter-house where cattle are killing, but my mind shrinks back with a secret sense of their pains. And truly I greatly admire the clemency of God in this, who had such respect to the mean brute creatures formerly prepared for sacrifices, that they must not be committed to the flames before their blood had been poured out at the foot of the altar. Whence we may gather, that in inflicting of punishments, though just, we must not be over rigorous, but temper the sharpness of rigour with clemency. Wherefore, if I may be so bold with the majesty of so great a princess, I humbly beg of your royal highness, for the sake of Christ, who was consecrated to suffer for the lives of many, this favour at my request, which even the divine clemency would engage you to; that if it may be, (and what cannot your authority do in these cases?) these miserable wretches may be spared; at least that a stop may be put to the horror, by changing the punishment into some other kind. There are excommunications, and close imprisonments; there are bonds; there is perpetual banishment, burning of the hand and whipping, or even slavery itself. This one thing I most earnestly beg, that the flames of Smithfield, so long ago extinguished by your happy government, may not be again revived. But if I may not obtain this, I pray with the greatest earnestness that out of your great pity you would grant us a month or two in which we may try whether the Lord will give them grace to turn from their dangerous errors, lest with the destruction of their bodies their souls be in danger of eternal ruin." This melting pathetic letter had but little effect upon the high and bigotted spirit of Elizabeth. She answered, "That if after a month's reprieve, and conference with divines, they would not recant their errors, they should certainly suffer." This they refused to do, and hereupon the writ *De haeretico comburendo*, which for seventeen years had only hung up in terrorem, was now put in execution; and these two Baptists, John Wielmaker and Henry Tor Woort, were burnt in Smithfield, July 22. In the year 1589, Dr. Some, a man of great note, and a violent churchman, published a treatise against some of the puritans, Greenwood, Barrow, Penry, and others. In this he attempts to show what agreement there was between them and the English Anabaptists. The opinions he charges the Anabaptists with, when, as Crosby says, they are stripped of the dress which he had put upon them, are as follow--"That the ministers of the gospel ought to be maintained by the voluntary contributions of the people--that the civil power has no right to make and impose ecclesiastical laws--that the high commission court was an anti-christian usurpation--that those who are qualified to teach ought not to be hindered by the civil power--that though the Lord's prayer be a rule and foundation of prayer, yet it is not to be used as a form and that no forms of prayer ought to be imposed on the church--that the baptism administered by the church of Rome is invalid--that a true constitution and discipline are essential to a true church, and that the worship of God in the church of England is in many things defective."--The doctor touches but briefly, says Crosby, on their opinion of baptizing believers only, and brings up the rear of his accusations with saying, "they esteem it blasphemy for any man to arrogate to himself the title of Doctor of Divinity" that is, as he explains it, to be called Rabbi, or master of other men's faith. [Crosby, vol. i. p. 77] Who does not see in these articles the genuine principles of the new testament, and the true ground upon which as protestant dissenters we ought to take our stand? The right of the magistrate to interfere in religious matters being denied, religious establishments, which are founded upon the assumption of that principle, must be necessarily dissented from, and, if the principle can be proved to be false, must fall with it. The Baptists of the present day have no reason to be ashamed of these sentiments of their predecessors, who at a time when the principles of dissent were so imperfectly understood, had such clear ideas on the subject, and

sealed the truth with their blood. From Dr. Some we learn also that at the time when he wrote, 1589, "There were several Anabaptistical conventicles in London and other places." It seems then the Baptists had at this early period formed distinct churches of persons of their own sentiments, both in London, and in different parts of the country. He adds, "Some persons of these sentiments have been bred at our universities." That is to say, some of the zealous puritanical divines had pursued their principles to their legitimate consequences, and had rejected infant baptism, with the other ceremonies of the church. The doctor, to expose the Baptists, relates a story of one whom he calls T.L., "who at a conventicle in London took upon him to expound the scriptures, conceive long prayers on a sudden, and to excommunicate two persons who were formerly of that brotherhood, but had now left them." Who this T.L. was we know not; but it clearly appears that he was the pastor of the church, and that in their name, he declared that some persons who had left them were no longer of their communion. His explaining the scriptures and praying without the use of a form, will not now be considered as either unaccountable or heretical. We are much obliged to Dr. Some for enabling us to trace the history of our churches in England, since the Reformation, to a period almost as early as that of the presbyterian churches, the first of which in England was founded at Wandsworth in the year 1572. The persons against whom Dr. Some wrote were men of respectable talents, and their names shine with distinguished lustre in the annals of the puritans. They were eminent divines, and illustrious martyrs in the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. Barrow and Greenwood, after being kept in prison for many months, and there exposed to all the severities of cold, hunger, and nakedness, were, on the last day of March 1592, brought to Tyburn in a cart, and exposed under the gallows a long time, to see whether the terrors of death would affright them; but remaining constant, they were taken back to Newgate, and on April 6, they were carried a second time to Tyburn and executed. At the place of execution they gave such testimonies of their unfeigned piety towards God, and loyalty to the queen, and prayed so earnestly for her long and prosperous reign, that when Dr. Reynolds, who attended them, reported their behaviour to her majesty, she is said to have expressed her sorrow that she had yielded to their death. The persecution of those who separated from the church of England, was from this time to end of the queen's reign very severe.

Many of them on this account left the kingdom; and those who remained in it were perpetually harassed and tormented by fines and imprisonment. That the Baptists were deeply involved in the suffering of these times, may be gathered from the supplication of the justices of the peace for the county of Norfolk. A complaint had been made to them of the long and illegal imprisonment of a puritan, the Rev. Robert Wright, and hereupon their worships were pleased to address Aylmer, bishop of London, on his behalf. This so offended his lordship, that he drew up twelve articles of impeachment against the justices themselves, and caused them to be summoned before the queen and council to answer for their misdemeanors.

These high proceedings of the bishop disgusted both the clergy and the whole country; and the justices, notwithstanding his late citation of them before the council, wrote to their honours, praying them to interpose in behalf of divers godly ministers. The words of this supplication, says Neal, are worth remembering, because they discover the cruelty of the commissioners; who made no distinction between the vilest of criminals and conscientious ministers.--"The faithful ministers of the word (say they) are marshalled with the worst malefactors; presented, indicted, arraigned, and condemned, for matters, as we presume, of very slender moment, some for leaving the holidays

unbidden; some for singing the psalm Nune Dimittis in the morning; some for turning the questions in baptism concerning faith, from the infants to the godfathers, which is but you for thou; some for leaving out the cross in baptism; some for leaving out the ring in marriage. A most pitiful thing it is to see the back of the law turned to the adversary [the papists] and the edge with all its sharpness laid upon the sound and true-hearted subject.

"We regard order to be the rule of the Spirit of God, and desire uniformity in all the duties of the church, according to the proportion of faith: but if these weak ceremonies are so indifferent as to be left to the discretion of ministers, we think it (under correction) very hard to have them go under so hard handling, to the utter discredit of their whole ministry, and the profession of the truth.

"We serve her majesty and the country [as justices of the peace] according to law. We reverence the law, and lawmaker: when the law speaks, we keep silence: when it commandeth, we obey. By law we proceed against all offenders: we touch none that the law spareth, and spare none that the law toucheth. We allow not of papists; of the family of Love; of Anabaptists, or Brownists. No, we punish all these. Yet we are christened with the odious name of puritans; a term compounded of the heresies above mentioned, which we disclaim. The papists pretend to be immaculate: the family of Love cannot sin, they being deified, as they say, in God. But we groan under the burden of our sins, and confess them to God; and at the same time we labour to keep ourselves and our profession unblamable. This is our puritanism; a name given to such magistrates and ministers, and others, as have a strict eye upon their juggling.

"We think ourselves bound in duty to unfold these matters to your lordships; and if you shall please to call us to the proof of them, it is the thing we most desire." When such severities were practised against men who ventured to alter a pronoun in the baptismal service, for the relief of burdened consciences, it is certain that those called Anabaptists, who rejected the rite itself, would not escape chastisement. Even the justices of Norfolk say, "we punish these." It is remarkable, that while they mention some things that made other sects odious, they say nothing to the discredit of the Baptists. May we not infer that their only error was a denial of infant baptism? But for this crime they were considered as unfit to reside in a Christian country among Christian people, and therefore the queen published a royal proclamation commanding all Anabaptists and other heretics to leave the kingdom, whether they were natives or foreigners, under the penalties of imprisonment and loss of goods. Consequently all Baptists were obliged either to conceal their sentiments, or fly into those countries where they might without molestation worship God according to the dictates of conscience. Many of them went over to Holland; so that there were perhaps fewer dissenters in England of all denominations at this time than at any period since the reformation. The terrors of the Star chamber, and the High commission court, or as it has been more properly called, the English inquisition, operated so powerfully as almost to exterminate all those who had the simplicity and godly sincerity to oppose that church, which with bold effrontery had declared, "The church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in matters of faith;" to which might have been added,--and a disposition to punish those who will not implicitly receive her dogmas.

Things were in this state at that time of the queen's death, which took place March 24, 1602, in the seventieth year of her age, and the forty-fifth of her reign. Neal says, "As to her religion, she affected a middle way between popery and puritanism, though she was more inclined to the

former. She understood not the rights of conscience in matters of religion, and is therefore justly charged with persecuting principles. More sanguinary laws were made in her reign than in those of any of her predecessors. Her hands were stained with the blood of papists and puritans: the former were executed for denying her supremacy, and the latter for sedition and non-conformity."

05. A.D. 1602-1625

CHAPTER IV

A.D. 1602-1625 The persecuted puritans found in Holland an asylum which sheltered them from the rage of their enemies; and with the permission of the states, they founded churches at Amsterdam, Arnheim, Middleburg, Leyden, and other places. One of the churches at Amsterdam was founded by Mr. John Smyth, and was of the Baptist denomination. [Life of Ainsworth, p. 36] In order to preserve the connection of our history, it will be necessary to give some account of Mr. Smyth, who was the first pastor of this church. He was one of the disciples of Robert Brown, from whom the Brownists derived their name. At what time he embraced these sentiments, we are not informed; but he is spoken of as one of their leaders in 1592. He was previously a beneficed minister in the church of England, at Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire. Before his secession, he spent nine months in studying the controversy, and held a disputation with Mr. Hildersham, and some other divines, on conformity to the ceremonies, and on the use of prescribed forms of prayer. In the above-mentioned county, and on the borders of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, the principles of the separation had made an extensive impression. Mr. Smyth, the pastor of one of their churches, and Mr. Robinson and Mr. Clifton, the co-pastors of another church, being harassed by the High commission court, removed with their followers to Holland. Mr. Smyth and his followers settled at Amsterdam, 1606, and joined themselves to the English church of which Johnson was pastor, and Ainsworth teacher. It was not long, however, before a serious breach took place. The subjects of debate which gave rise to this division, are said to have been certain opinions very similar to those afterwards espoused by the Arminians. Mr. Smyth is said to have maintained the doctrines of free will and universal redemption; to have opposed the predestination of particular individuals to eternal life, and the doctrine of original sin; and to have maintained that believers might fall from that grace which would have saved them, if they had continued in it. In addition to this, Mr. Smyth differed from them on the subject of baptism. The steps which led him to the rejection of infant baptism, were the following. The Brownists denied that the church of England was a true church, and that her ministers acted under a divine commission, and consequently considered every ordinance administered by them null and void. They were guilty, however, of this inconsistency, that while they reordained their ministers, they did not renew their baptism. The impropriety of this conduct was discovered by Mr. Smyth, whose doubts concerning the validity of baptism in the established church, led him eventually to renounce infant baptism altogether. Upon a further consideration of the subject, he saw reason to conclude that immersion was the true and proper meaning of the word baptism, and that it should be administered to those only who were capable of professing faith in Christ. The other ministers of the separation appear to have treated Mr. Smyth with great asperity. They charged him with having proclaimed open war against God's everlasting covenant, and as being one who would murder the souls of babes and sucklings, by depriving them of the visible seals of salvation. They also said, that not being able to find any minister who had been baptized on a profession of faith, and objecting to the doctrinal sentiments of the German Baptists, he had profaned the covenant by first baptizing himself, and

afterwards his followers. In England, the learned and excellent Bishop Hall employed his pen against him and the ministers of the separation, in a work entitled, A common Apology of the Church of England, against the unjust challengers of the over just sect, commonly called Brownists, &c. The dedication prefixed to this work is as follows-"To our gracious and blessed mother, the church of England, the meanest of all her children dedicates this her apology, and wisheth all peace and happiness." The Bishop proceeds by saying, "no less than a year and a half is past since I wrote a loving monitory letter to two of thine unworthy sons, [Smyth and Robinson] which I heard were fled from thee in person, in affection, and somewhat in opinion. Supposing them yet thine in the main substance, though in some circumstances their own. Since which, one of them hath washed off thy font-water as unclean, and hath written desperately against three and his own fellows."

It is remarkable that the bishop says nothing of Mr. Smyth's having baptized himself, which from the particular way in which he speaks of him and of what he considered his errors, he doubtless would have done, if this had been the case. There is no doubt but this silly charge was fabricated by his enemies, and it is an astonishing instance of credulity that writers of eminent talents have contributed to perpetuate the slander. The character which Bishop Hall gives of him, renders this charge altogether improbable. Addressing Mr. Robinson, he says, "My knowledge of Master Smyth whom you followed, and yourself, would not let me think of you as you deserved. The truth is, my charity and your uncharitableness, have led us to mistake each other. I hoped you had been one of their guides; both because Lincolnshire was your country, and Master Smyth your oracle and general.-I wrote not to you alone. What is become of your partners, yea, your guide? Woe is me, he hath renounced Christendom with our church, and hath washed off his former waters with new, and now condemns you for separating so far. He tells you true: your station is unsafe: either you must go forward to him, or back to us. There is no remedy: either you must go forward to anabaptism, or come back to us. All your rabbins cannot answer that charge of your rebaptized brother. If we be a true church, you must return; if we be not, as a false church is no church of God, you must rebaptize. If our baptism be good, then is our constitution good.-As for the title of ring-leader, wherewith I stiled this pamphleteer; if I have given him too much honour in his sect, I am sorry. Perhaps I should have put him, (pardon a homely, but in this sense not unusual, word) in the tail of his train: perhaps I should have endorsed my letter to Master Smyth and his shadow." [p. 723-794] From all these expressions, which show the eminence of Mr. Smyth among the ministers of the separation, it is evident he was considered as a person of great consequence, and that his disciples were very numerous. This corroborates which is said by Ephraim Pagit; that "he was accounted one of the grandees of the separation, and that he and his followers did at once as it were swallow up all the rest of the separation." [Heresiography, p. 62,64] In the introduction prefixed to a work printed in Holland in the year 1609, and entitled, The character of the Beast, or the false constitution of the church discovered in certain passages betwixt Mr. R. Clifton and John Smyth, concerning the Christian baptism of new creatures or new born babes in Christ: and false baptism of infants born after the flesh. Referred to two propositions, 1. That infants are not to be baptized. 2. That Antichristians converted are to be admitted into the true church by baptism. Mr. Smyth thus speaks in vindication of the separation of himself and friends from the Brownists, because infant baptism was retained in their churches:--"Be it known therefore to all the separation, that we account them in respect of their constitution to be as very a harlot as either her mother England, or her grandmother Rome is, out of whose loins she came; And although once in

our ignorance we have acknowledged her a true church; yet now being better informed, we revoke this our erroneous judgment, and protest against her as well for her false constitution as for her false ministry, worship, and government. The true constitution of the church is of a new creature, baptized into the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: the false constitution is of infant's baptized, &c." The manner of his reasoning concerning the restoration of the ordinance of baptism, when lost, is as follows. "The Anabaptists, as you call them, do not set up a new covenant and gospel, though they set up a new or apostolic baptism, which antichrist had overthrown: and whereas you say they have no warrant to baptize themselves, I say, as much as you have to set up a new church, yea, fully as much. For if a true church may be erected, which is the most noble ordinance of the new testament, then much more baptism: and if a true church cannot be erected without baptism, for baptism is the visible sign of the church, as disciples are the matter; then seeing you confess that a true church may be erected, you cannot deny (though you do deny it in opposing the truth) that baptism may be also recovered. And seeing, when all Christ's visible ordinances are lost, either men must recover them again, or must let them alone: if they let them alone till extraordinary men come with miracles and tongues, as the apostles did, then men are Familists; (for that is their opinion) or if they must recover them, men must begin so to do; and then two men joining together can make a church, as you say. Why might they not then baptize, seeing they cannot conjoin into Christ without baptism? (Matt. 28:19; 28:10; Gal. 3:27.) But it is evident that all Christ's commandments must be obeyed: ergo, this commandment of having and using the communion of the church, ministry, worship, and government, those holy means of salvation which the Lord in his mercy has given us in his covenant, and commanded us to use. And if all the commandments of God must be obeyed, then this of baptism, and this warrant is sufficient for assuming baptism. Now for baptizing a man's self, there is as good warrant as for a man's churching himself: for two men singly are no church: jointly they are a church, and they both of them put a church upon themselves: for as both these persons unchurched, yet have power to assume the church, each of them for himself and others in communion; so each of them unbaptized, hath power to assume baptism for himself with others in communion." [Page 58]

Here are two principles laid down by Mr. Smyth, which contradict the account given of him. The first is, that upon the supposition of the true baptism being lost for some time through the disuse of it, it is necessary there should be two persons to unite in the administration. The second is, that the first administrator must be a member of some church, who shall call and empower him to administer it to the other members.

Now it is reasonable to suppose that his practice was conformable to the above principles; and as there is mention made of Mr. Helwisse and Mr. John Morton [Crosby, v. i. p. 99], two ministers who were of his opinion, and who joined with him in the rules which he laid down, their method must have been this:--the seceders must first have formed themselves into a church, and then the church must have appointed two of its ministers to restore the ordinance by baptizing each other, and after that to baptize the rest of the church.

Mr. Smyth must have died soon after his work was printed; for in 1611 there appeared A confession of faith, published by the remainder of Mr. Smyth's company, with an appendix giving some account of his last sickness and death. A few articles of this confession are preserved by Crosby, in his first volume, extracted from the works of Mr. Smyth, by Mr. Robinson, pastor of the Brownist church at Leyden. In the Appendix to Crosby's second volume this confession is given in

27 articles. From this it appears that their sentiments resembled those which are now denominated Arminian; but there is no evidence of their holding those silly and erroneous opinions which they have been charged with by their enemies.

James the first was now sitting on the throne of England, a prince who for vanity and bigotry has perhaps been seldom equaled. From such a king, and from such bishops as Whitgift and Bancroft, the puritans of whatever denomination could expect no favour. "The king (says Rapin) intimated at the first, that he would have regard to the tender consciences of such Catholics as could not comply with the received doctrine of the church of England; but in this there was not the least indulgence for the tender consciences of the puritans: these were all a set of obstinate people, who deserved to have no favour shewed them." [Hist. of England, vol. ii. p. 163] In the year 1608, one Enoch Clapham wrote a small piece entitled, Errors on the right hand, against the several sects of protestants in those times; in which he represented by way of dialogue, the opinions which each sect held, and somewhat of their state and condition. He notices their fleeing out of their own nation to plant a church among a people of another language; and that they alleged in their defence, Elijah's fleeing in time of persecution, and our Saviour's advice to his disciples, if they were persecuted in one city to flee into another. He also complains of those who remained in England, for leaving the public assemblies, and running into woods and meadows, and meeting in bye stables, barns and haylofts, for service.

He distinguishes the Anabaptists from the puritans and Brownists on the one hand, and from the Arians and Socinians on the other; and represents them all as being zealous opposers of each other. The Anabaptists, according to his account, held that repentance and faith must precede baptism; that the baptism of the church of England and of the puritans was invalid, and that the true baptism was amongst them. He says farther, that they complained of the term Anabaptist as a name of reproach cast upon them; and also takes notice that some of this opinion were Dutchmen, who, besides the denial of infant baptism, held that it was unlawful to bear arms, &c. That there were others who went under the denomination that were Englishmen, to whom he does not so directly charge the former opinions, but only the denial of their first baptism, and separating both from the established church and other dissenters; adding that they came out from the Brownists, and that there was a congregation of them in Holland. [Crosby, vol. i. p. 88] The congregation to which he refers is doubtless that which we have mentioned, under the care of Mr. Smyth, which existed at this time in Holland; and from what Mr. Johnson, pastor of one of the English churches, says in a work published in 1617, it is evident that his ministry was very successful, and that his principles were extensively embraced. "Of which point [infant baptism] and of sundry objections thereabout, I have treated (says he) the more largely, considering how great the error is in the denial thereof, and how greatly it spreadeth, both in these parts, and of late in our own country, that is England." [Crosby, vol. i. p. 91] In the work of Enoch Clapham, before mentioned, the Anabaptist is asked what religion he is of; and is made to answer, "Of the true religion, commonly termed Anabaptism, from our baptizing."--When he is asked concerning the church or congregation he was connected with in Holland; he answers, "There be certain English people of us that came out from the Brownists."--When the Arian says, I am of the mind that there is no true baptism upon earth; he replies, "I pray thee son, say not so: the congregation I am of, can and doth administer true baptism."--When an enquirer after truth offers, upon his proving what he has said, to leave his old religion; the Anabaptist answers, "You may say, if God will give you grace to

leave it; for it is a peculiar grace to leave Sodom and Egypt, spiritually so called." When the same person offers to join with them, and firmly betake himself to their faith; the Anabaptist replies, "The dew of heaven come upon you: to-morrow I will bring you into our sacred congregation, that so you may come to be informed in the faith, and after that be purely baptized." This account being given by one who wrote against the Baptists, may be safely relied on, especially as he assures his reader, that the characters which he gives of each sect was not without sundry years experience had of them all.

Mr. Smyth, the pastor of the church at Amsterdam, was succeeded by Mr. Thomas Helwisse, who had been baptized by him, and was one of the persons who was excommunicated with him, on account of their objecting to the validity of infant baptism. He had fled with the Brownists to Holland, to escape persecution. While he continued with them he was esteemed a man of eminent faith, charity, and spiritual gifts. Though he had not the advantage of a learned education, he appears by his writings to have been a man of good natural parts, which had been improved by studious application.

Soon after the death of Mr. Smyth, Mr. Helwisse began to reflect upon the impropriety of his own conduct and that of the other English dissenters, in leaving their country and friends, and flying into a strange land to escape persecution. Thinking this might have arisen from fear and cowardice, he concluded they ought rather to bear a testimony to the truth in their own land, where it was in danger of being wholly extinguished; and to encourage their brethren, who were then suffering persecution for Christ's sake, to "hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering." He and his friends accordingly left Holland, and settled in London, where they continued their church state, and assembled for worship, as often, and as publicly, as the spirit of the times would permit. In a treatise written by Mr. Helwisse, entitled, A short declaration, &c. he justified their conduct by endeavouring to show in what cases it was unlawful to fly in times of persecution. This gave great offence to the puritans who were in exile, who in a work written against him by Mr. Robinson, charged him with "vain glory, and with courting persecution by challenging the king and the state to their faces, &c." How long Mr. Helwisse continued the elder of this church, Crosby says, he could not find, but that the books wrote against them show that they went on with great courage and resolution; and notwithstanding the severities used against them by the civil power, increased greatly in their number. [Crosby, vol. i. 271,272] Their intrepidity and danger may be judged of by the following circumstance. In the year 1614 the king, in order to show his zeal against heresy, took an opportunity to exercise it, by burning alive two of his subjects. These were Bartholomew Legate, who was charged with Arianism, and burnt in Smithfield, March 18, 1611; and Edward Wightman, a Baptist, of the town of Burton upon Trent, who was convicted Dec. 14, 1611, of divers heresies, before the Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry; and being delivered up to the secular power, was burnt at Litchfield on the 11th of April following.

Amongst other charges brought against him are these:--That the baptizing of infants is an abominable custom; that the Lord's supper and baptism are not to be celebrated as they are now practiced in the church of England; and that Christianity is not wholly professed and preached in the church of England, but only in part." Who would have thought that a person would have been burnt by protestants for such opinions! Happily for our native country, this day of bigotry is past, and Edward Wightman was the last who suffered death in this way. It is rather a curious fact, that on the supposition of William Sautry, the Lollard, opposing infant baptism, which is highly

probable, the Baptists have had the honour of leading the van, and bring up the rear of that part of the noble army of English martyrs, who have laid down their lives at the stake. The persecution increased so much against the puritans, that in this year many of them left the country and fled to America. Amongst these were some Baptists, of whom honourable mention is made in Cotton Mather's History of America; but as the history of the Baptists in that part of the world does not come within our design, we must refer the reader to their history, published in 3 vols. octavo, by the Rev. Isaac Backus, of New England.

There were however many who remained, for in 1615, the Baptists in England published a small treatise, entitled, Persecution judged and condemned: in a discourse between an Antichristian and a Christian. Proving by the law of God and of the land, and by King James his many testimonies, that no man ought to be persecuted for his religion, so he testifie his allegiance by the oath appointed by law. Proving also, that the spiritual power in England, is the image of the spiritual cruel power of Rome, or that the beast mentioned Rev. 13. Manifesting the fearful estate of those who are subject to such powers, that tyrannize over the conscience; and shewing the unlawfulness of flying because of the trouble men see or fear is coming upon them. In this Piece they endeavoured to justify their separation from the church of England, and prove that every man has a right to judge for himself in matters of religion; and that to persecute on that account was illegal and anti-christian; contrary to the laws of God, as well as to several declarations of the king's majesty. They also assert their opinion respecting baptism, and show the invalidity of that baptism which was administered either in the established church or among the other dissenters, and clear themselves of several errors which had been unjustly imputed to them. It appears to have been approved by the whole body of Baptists who remained in England; for at the end of the preface they subscribe themselves "Christ's unworthy witnesses, his majesty's faithful subjects, commonly (but most falsely) called Anabaptists."

Though there is no name to this work, yet it is evidently the production of Mr. Helwisse and his friends. At the close of it they refer the reader to their confession published four years before, to form a judgment of their sentiments on the person of Christ; the lawfulness of magistrates, &c. &c. In the Epistle, "to all that truly wish Jerusalem's prosperity, and Babylon's destruction," they say, "It cannot but with high thankfulness to God, and to the King, he acknowledged of all, that the King's Majesty is no blood-thirsty man, for if he were, bodily destruction should be the portion of all that fear God, and endeavour to walk in his ways; as may be seen in the primitive times of this spiritual power, or beast of England, after that King Henry the Eighth had cast off the Romish beast and since (so far as leave has been granted them) by hanging, burning, banishing, imprisoning, and what not, as the particulars might be named. Yet our most humble desire of our Lord the King is, that he would not give his power to force his faithful subjects to dissemble, to believe as he believes, in the least measure of persecution; though it is no small persecution to lye many years in filthy prisons, in hunger, cold, idleness, divided from wife, family, calling, left in continual miseries and temptations, so as death would be to many less persecution; seeing his Majesty confesseth, that to change the mind must be the work of God. And of the Lord Bishops we desire, that they would a little leave off persecuting those that cannot believe as they, till they have proved that God is well pleased therewith, and the souls of such as submit are in safety from condemnation; let them prove this, and we protest we will for ever submit unto them, and so will thousands; and therefore if there be any spark of grace in them, let them set themselves to give

satisfaction either by word or writing, or both. But if they will not but continue their cruel courses as they have done, let them yet remember that they must come to judgment, and have their abominations set in order before them, and be torn in pieces when none shall deliver them." This work is a well written pamphlet of forty-eight quarto pages, in the form of a dialogue between a Christian, an Antichristian, and an Indifferent person. The principles of Dissenters and of the Baptists are clearly stated; and certainly proves that at this early period they were numerous and respectable; and had for many years been great sufferers, it should seem from the period of the reformation, from the manner in which they speak of the persecutions they had endured from the bishops of the church of England. It concludes by the Indifferent person saying, "Well, you will yet be called Anabaptists, because you deny baptism to infants." To which the Christian answers, "So were Christians before us called sects; and so they may call John Baptist, Jesus Christ himself, and his apostles Anabaptists; for we profess and practise no otherwise herein, than they, namely, The baptizing of such as confess with the mouth the belief of the heart. And if they be Anabaptists that deny baptism when God hath appointed it, they, and not we are Anabaptists. But the Lord give them repentance, that their sins may be put away, and never laid to their charge, even for his Christ's sake. Amen." [p. 48]

Another book was published in 1618, vindicating the principles of the Baptists. This was translated from the Dutch, and is said by Dr. Wall and others to have been the first printed in the English language against the baptism of infants. Had it been said, the first book that was published in England it might have been true, on account of the great difficulty there was in publishing works against the established religion, but it is certain there were many books in English written and printed in vindication of the principles of the Baptists, several years before this period. Crosby says that he had not heard of this book being answered till thirty years afterward, when Mr. Thomas Cobbett, of New England, published a vindication of the right of infants to church membership and baptism. In 1620, the Baptists presented a humble supplication to the king when the parliament was sitting. This was dedicated, To the high and mighty King, James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. To the Right Excellent and Noble Prince, Charles, Prince of Wales, &c. To all the Right Honourable Nobility, Grace and Honourable Judges, and to all other the Right Worshipful Gentry, of all estates and degrees, assembled in this present parliament. Right High and Mighty;--Right Excellent and Noble;--Right Honourable, and Right Worshipful. In this, they in the first place acknowledge their obligation to pray for Kings, and all that are in authority, and appeal to God that it was their constant practice so to do. They then set forth, that their miseries were not only the taking away of their goods, but also long and lingering imprisonments for many years in divers counties in England, in which many had died, leaving their widows and several small children behind them, and all because they durst not join in such worship as they thought contrary to the will of God. [p. 2] After stating their sentiments, and challenging their enemies to accuse them of any disloyalty to his majesty, or of doing any injury to their neighbours, they conclude by praying for the king's majesty, for his royal highness the prince, and the honourable houses of parliament; calling God the searcher of hearts to witness that they were loyal subjects to his majesty, not for fear only, but also for conscience sake, subscribing themselves those who are unjustly called Anabaptists. [p. 26] This petition is divided into ten parts, and appears to be written with considerable ability. We can only give the titles of the chapters, but from these the contents may be judged of. 1. "The Rule of Faith is the doctrine of the Holy Ghost contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and not any church, council, Prince, or Potentate, nor any

mortal man whatsoever. 2. The interpreter of this rule is the scriptures, and spirit of God in whomsoever. 3. That the Spirit of God, to understand and interpret the scriptures, is given to all and every particular person, that fear and obey God, of what degree soever they be; and not to the wicked. 4. Those that fear and obey God, and so have the spirit of God to search out and know the mind of God in the Scriptures, are commonly and for the most part, the simple, poor, despised, &c. 5. The learned in human learning, do commonly and for the most part err, and know not the truth, but persecute it and the professors of it; and therefore are no farther to be followed than we see them agree with truth. 6. Persecution for conscience, is against the doctrine of Jesus Christ, King of Kings. 7. Persecution for conscience, is against the profession and practice of famous princes. 8. Persecution for cause of conscience, is condemned by the ancient and later writers, yea, by Puritans and Papists. 9. It is no prejudice to the commonwealth if freedom of religion were suffered, but would make it flourish. 10. Kings are not deprived of any power given them of God, when they maintain freedom for cause of conscience. In the 7th chapter they thus remind the King of his own sentiments on this subject. "We beseech your Majesty we may relate your own worthy sayings, in your Majesty's speech to parliament, 1609. Your Highness saith, It is a sure rule in divinity, that God never loves to plant his church by violence and blood-shed, &c. And in your Highness's apology, p. 4, speaking of such papists as took the oath, thus: I gave a good proof that I intended no persecution against them for conscience cause, but only desired to be secured for civil obedience, which for conscience cause they were bound to perform. And page 60, speaking of Blackwel the Arch-Priest, your Majesty saith, It was never my intention to lay any thing to the said Arch-Priest's charge, as I have never done to any for cause of conscience, &c. And in your Highness's exposition on Rev. 20 printed 1588, and after 1603, your Majesty truly writeth thus: sixthly, The compassing of the saints, and besieging of the beloved city, declareth unto us a certain note of a false church to be persecution; For they come to seek the faithful, the faithful are those that are sought: the wicked are the besiegers, the faithful be besieged." [p. 20]

It is an awful consideration, that a Prince who so well understood the rights of conscience, and the distinction betwixt those duties which Christians owed to God, and those which they were bound to observe towards the civil power, should act so diametrically opposite to his sentiments. The uncommon intrepidity of the Baptists, is evinced by their making their solemn appeal to the King and his parliament, at a time when they were exposed to all their resentments; and when, by their own principles, they were prevented from attempting to escape from the storm which threatened them. This Petition was published in 1620, and the former pamphlet of 1615 reprinted with it. Both these were also reprinted in 1662, with the design, as stated in the title page, "for the establishing some and convincing others." From this also it appears that there were still Baptists in many parts of the kingdom; for this petition states that they had suffered imprisonment for "many years in divers counties in England." We learn also by what has been written against them, that, notwithstanding all opposition, they kept up their separate meetings, and had many disciples who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, endured cruel mockings, and probably scourgings also, yea, moreover bonds and imprisonments, rather than violate their consciences, or desert their principles.

We have further information respecting their numbers and principles, from a letter written by a person in London who had joined the Baptists, to his old friends, in which he defends his conduct and sentiments. This letter happening to fall into the hands of a member of the church of England,

it was published with an answer annexed to it. AS it discovers something of the principles, and the spirit of the Baptists at that time, we shall give it entire for the gratification of our readers, "Beloved friends,

"The ancient love that I have had towards you provoketh me to testify that I have not forgotten you, but an desirous still to shew my unfeigned love to you in any thing I may. I make no question but you have heard divers false reports of me, although among the same some truths; and that you may be truly informed of my state, I thought good to write a few words unto you, hoping that you will not speak evil of that which you know not, nor condemn a man unheard. The thing wherein I differ from the church of England is; they say at their washing or baptizing their infants, that they are members, of Christ's holy church, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. This I dare not believe; for the scriptures of God declare, that neither flesh nor the washing of flesh can save. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and we cannot enter into the kingdom of God except we be born again. They that have prerogative to be the sons of God, must be born of God, even believe in his name; and the washing of the filth of the flesh is not the baptism that saveth, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. The consequence of this is, that infants are not to be baptized, nor can they be Christians but such only who confess their faith as the scriptures teach. [Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:5; John 1:12; 3:5; Gal. 6:5; 1 Pet. 3:21] from whence the word church is taken, can witness that it signifieth a people called out; and so the church of Christ is a company called out of their former state wherein they were by nature, out of Babylon, wherein they have been in spiritual bondage to the spiritual antichrist, and from having fellowship in spiritual worship with unbelievers and ungodly men. From all, whosoever cometh, they are fit timber for this spiritual building, which is a habitation of God by the Spirit, and the household of faith. Those who thus come out of nature's Egyptian bondage, and the fellowship of the children of Belial, being new creatures, and so holy brethren, are made God's house or church, through being knit together by the Spirit of God, and baptized into his body, which is the church. This being undeniably the church of Christ, infants cannot be of it; for they cannot be called out as afore said. Known wicked men cannot be of it, because they are not called out; nor antichrist's spiritual bondage cannot be of it, because that is a habitation of devil's, and all God's people must go out of that. [Acts 2:38,41; 8:12,37; 9:18; 10:47; 16:31; 18:8; 19:3; 1 Cor. 13:13; 2 Cor. 6:4; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:22,23; 2:22; Heb. 3:6; 1 Pet. 1:5; Rev. 18:2,4]

"What can be objected against this? Are not all the sons of God by faith? If any be in Christ, or a Christian, must he not be a new creature? I pray you do not take up the usual objection which the antichristians have learned of the Jews; 'What tallest thou us of being made Christians only by faith in the Son, and so being made free? We are the children of Abraham, and of believers, and so are under the promise; I will be the God of thee and of thy seed. Thus are we and our children made free, whereas they neither do nor can believe in the Son.'

"This is the Jewish antichrist fable: for Abraham had two sons, which were types of the two seeds, to which two covenants were made. The one born after the flesh, typing out the fleshly Israelites, which were the inhabitants of material Jerusalem, where was the material temple, and the performance of those carnal rites which endured to the time of reformation. The other by faith typing out the children of the faith of Abraham, which are the inhabitants of the spiritual Jerusalem, the new testament state, in which is the spiritual temple, the church of the living God, and the

performance of all those spiritual ordinances which Christ as prophet and king thereof hath appointed, and which remains and cannot be shaken or altered. [Gen. 17; John 8:3; "Rom. 4:8,9; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26; 4:22; 6:15; Heb. 9:10; 12:23]

"Now if the old covenant be abolished, and all the appertainings thereof, as it is, being the similitude of heavenly things, even the covenant written in the book, the people, the tabernacle or temple, and all the ministering vessels, and a better covenant established upon better promises, and better temple and ministering vessels came instead thereof, procured and purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, who is the new and living way; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, sprinkling our hearts from an evil conscience, and baptized in our bodies with pure water; let us keep this profession of hope without wavering, and have no confidence in the flesh, to reap sanctification or justification thereby; but let us cast it away as dung and dross, for if any might plead privilege of being the child of the faithful, the apostle Paul might, as he saith. (See Phil. 3.) But it was nothing till he had the righteousness of God through faith: then was he baptized into Jesus Christ for the remission of his sins.

"This covenant, which we as the children of Abraham challenge, is the covenant of life and salvation by Jesus Christ, made to all the children of Abraham, as it was made to Abraham himself, to them that believe in him who raised up Jesus the Lord from the dead. As also the children of the flesh are not they: they must be put out, and must not be heirs with the faithful. If they that are of the flesh be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise of none effect. Therefore it is by faith, that it might come of grace, and that the promise might be sure to all the seed that are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of all the faithful. They are his children: the promise of salvation is not made with both Abraham's seeds, but with his own seed, they that are of the faith of Abraham. [Acts 8:26,32,39; Rom. 4:14; 9:8; Gal. 3:7,9,29; 4:30; Eph. 4:28; Hosea 8:18]

"These things may be strange to those who are strangers from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts. God hath written them as the great things of his law, but they are counted by many as a strange thing. Yet wisdom is justified of all her children; and they that set their hearts to seek for wisdom as for silver, and search for her as for treasure, they shall see the righteousness of these things as the light, and the evidence of them as the noon day. They that be wise will try these things by the true touchstone of the holy scriptures, and leave off rejoicing in men to hang their faith and profession on them; the which I fear not to supplicate God day and night on behalf of you all. To whose gracious direction I commit you, with a remembrance of my hearty love to every one; desiring but this favour, that for requital I may receive your loving answer.

"Yours to be commanded always in any children service.

"London, May 10, 1622. H.H." The person who published this letter, replied to it in a work entitled, "Anabaptist Mystery of Iniquity Unmasked, by J.P. 1623."

It will be recollected that this letter was not designed by the writer for publication. It was certainly ungenerous that a private letter on a controverted subject should be sent to the press by an opponent who intended to write against it to unmask the iniquity it contained. But if the author could discover any iniquity in this letter, he must be very quick-sighted as its declarations, however simply stated, are evidently founded on scripture testimony. In the reply there is some information

of consequence, for which we are obliged to the writer. He states, that the Baptists separated from the established church, wrote many books in defence of their principles, and had multitudes of disciples; that it was their custom to produce a great number of scriptures to prove their doctrines; that they were in appearance more holy than those of the established church; that they dissuaded their disciples from reading the churchmen's books, hearing in their assemblies, or conferring with their learned men. He adds, that they "denied the doctrine of predestination, reprobation, final perseverance, and other truths." [Crosby, vol. i. p. 133] And says, "I suppose their seeds are sown among you not only by their apostles, but by their books." Of their holding these sentiments there is no proof given; but should it be true, it is probable that the Baptists at that period were principally General Baptists, who, as far as we have been able to decide, maintained sentiments very similar to those which were afterwards published by the famous Thomas Grantham. In 1624 there appeared still greater champions of infant baptism. These were the famous Dod and Cleaver, who united their strength to oppose what they termed the erroneous positions of the Anabaptists. Their work was entitled, *The patrimony of christian children*. In the preface they apologize for their engaging in the controversy, by alleging that those of a contrary opinion were very industrious, and took great pains to propagate their doctrine; that divers persons of good note for piety had been prevailed upon by them; that several had intreated their help and assistance; and that they had been engaged already in private debates about this matter. From these observations it appears that the Baptists had greatly increased in England in the reign of this king, during which every corrupt art was employed to extend the prerogative, to oppress all those who had either wisdom or honesty to think for themselves. In the beginning of 1625, the king died, after having by his folly and hypocrisy laid the foundation of all the calamities of his son's reign. He had been flattered by ambitious courtiers, as the Solomon and Phoenix of the age; but in the opinion of Bishop Burnet, "he was the scorn of the age; a mere pedant, without true judgment, courage, or steadfastness; his reign being a continued course of mean practices." Rapin says, "he was neither a sound protestant, nor a good catholic; but had formed a plan of uniting both churches, which must have effectually ruined the protestant interest, for which indeed he never expressed any real concern." Neal says, "I am rather of opinion that all his religion was his pretended king-craft. He was certainly the meanest prince that ever sat upon the British throne. England never sunk so low in its reputation, nor was so much exposed to the scorn and ridicule of its neighbours as in his reign."

06. A.D. 1625-1640

CHAPTER V.

A.D. 1625 - 1640

Charles the first succeeded his father. Unhappily for this monarch, he had been educated in the principles of arbitrary power and religious bigotry. The conduct of James had been productive of general discontent, which his son did not take proper means to remove. Determined to be an absolute monarch, he drove his subjects into rebellion, and fell a victim to his own measures.

It was during this reign that an event took place among the Baptists, which has been commonly, but erroneously considered as the commencement of their history in this country. This was the formation of some churches in London, which many have supposed to be the first of this denomination in the kingdom. But could it even be proved that there were no distinct Baptist churches till this period, it would not follow that there were no Baptists, which however has been confidently stated. We have shown that persons professing similar sentiments with these of the present English Baptists, have been found in every period of the English church; and also that as early as the year 1509, from the testimony of Dr. Some, there were many churches of this description in London and in the country. During the reign of James, we have produced unexceptionable proof that there were great numbers of Baptists who suffered imprisonment in divers counties, and that a petition to the king was signed by many of their ministers. It is thought that the General Baptist church at Canterbury has existed for two hundred and fifty years, and that Joan Boucher, who was burnt in the reign of Edward the sixth, was a member of it. Though this is traditionary only, yet it is rendered probable from her being a Baptist, and being always called "Joan of Kent." It is also said that the church at Eyethorn in the same county has been founded more than two hundred and thirty years, and that pastors of the name of John Knott served it during two hundred years of that period.

It is rather singular that Crosby should pay so little attention to his materials as to overlook these circumstances, and to confirm the common error respecting the origin of the Baptist churches, by the following statement. "In the year 1633, (says he,) the Baptists, who had hitherto been intermixed with other protestant dissenters without distinction, and who consequently shared with the Puritans in the persecutions of those times, began to separate themselves, and form distinct societies of their own. Concerning the first of these, I find the following account collected from a manuscript of Mr. William Kiffin.

"There was a congregation of protestant dissenters of the Independent persuasion in London, gathered in the year 1616, of which Mr. Henry Jacob was the first pastor; and after him succeeded Mr. John Lathorp, who was their minister in 1633. In this society several persons, finding that the congregation kept not to its first principles of separation, and being also convinced that baptism was not to be administered to infants, but to such as professed faith in Christ, desired that they might be dismissed from the communion, and allowed to form a distinct congregation in such order

as was most agreeable to their own sentiments.

"The church, considering that they were now grown very numerous, and so more than could in those times of persecution conveniently meet together, and believing also that those persons acted from a principle of conscience, and not from obstinacy, agreed to allow them the liberty they desired, and that they should be constituted a distinct church; which was performed Sep. 12, 1633. And as they believed that baptism was not rightly administered to infants, so they looked upon the baptism they had received at that age as invalid, whereupon most or all of them received a new baptism. Their minister was a Mr. John Spilsbury. What number they were is uncertain, because in the mentioning of about twenty men and women, it is added with divers others.

"In the year 1638, Mr. William Kiffin, Mr. Thomas Wilson, and others, being of the same judgment, were upon their request dismissed to the said Mr. Spilsbury's congregation. In the year 1639, another congregation of Baptists was formed, whose place of meeting was in Crutched-friars; the chief promoters of which were Mr. Green, Mr. Paul Hobson, and Captain Spencer." The account of Mr. Spilsbury's church is said in the margin to have been written from the records of that church; but from any thing that appears there is nothing to justify the conclusion of Crosby, that this was the first Baptist church; as the account relates simply to the origin of that particular church, to state which it is probable was Mr. Kiffin's design, rather than to relate the origin of the Baptist churches in general, and which he must certainly have known were in existence previously to that period.

It must be admitted that there is some obscurity respecting the manner in which the ancient immersion of adults, which appears to have been discontinued, was restored, when, after the long night of antichristian apostacy, persons were at first baptized on a profession of faith. The very circumstance however of their being called Anabaptists as early as the period of the Reformation, proves that they did, in the opinion of the Pedobaptists, re-baptize, which it is not likely they would do, by pouring or sprinkling, immersion being incontrovertibly the universal practice in the church of England at that time.

It has not been uncommon for the enemies of the Baptists to reproach them with the manner in which this practice was restored. In a work published at the close of the seventeenth century by Mr. John Wall, entitled "Baptism anatomizæd," the writer says, "Their baptism is not from heaven, but will-worship, and so to be abhorred by all Christians; for they received their baptism from one Mr. Smyth who baptized himself; one who was cast out of a church, and endeavoured to deprive the church of Christ of the use of the bible." To this charge, made with so much asperity, Hercules Collins, a Baptist minister at Wapping, replies with great indignation in a work entitled, "Believers' baptism from heaven, and of divine institution: Infant baptism from earth, and of human invention:" Published in 1691. Mr. Collins denies that the English Baptists received their baptism from Mr. John Smyth, and says, "It is absolutely untrue, it being well known to some who are yet alive how false this assertion is; and if J.W. will but give a meeting to any of us, and bring whom he please with him, we shall sufficiently shew the falsity of what is asserted by him in this matter, and in many other things which he hath unchristianly asserted."

It is to be regretted that Mr. Collins did not give the account which is here referred to. This defect is however in some measure supplied in a work published by Mr. Edward Hutchinson in 1676, entitled, "A Treatise concerning the covenant and baptism." The dedication is addressed "to the spiritual seed of Abraham, especially those of the baptized congregation." He says, "Your

beginning in these nations (of late years) was but small; yet when it pleased the Lord to dispel those clouds that overshadowed us, and to scatter some beams of the gospel amongst us, he gave you so great an increase that Sion may say with admiration, Who hath begotten me these?

"Nor is it less observable, that whereas other reformations have been carried on by the secular arm, and the countenance and allowance of the magistrate, as in Luther's time by several German princes; the protestant reformation in England by King Edward, Queen Elizabeth, &c.; and the Presbyterian reformation by a parliament, committed of estates, and assembly of divines, besides the favour and assistance of great personages; you have had none of these to take you by the hand; but your progress was against the impetuous current of human opposition, and attended with such external discouragements as bespeak your embracing this despised truth to be an effect of heart-sincerity, void of all mercenary considerations. Yea, how active has the accuser of the brethren been to represent you in such frightful figures, exposing you by that mischievous artifice to popular odium and the lash of the magistracy; insomuch that the name of an Anabaptist was crime enough, which doubtless was a heavy obstacle in the way of many pious souls!

"What our dissenting brethren have to answer on that account, who instead of taking up, have laid stumbling-blocks in the way of reformation, will appear another day. Yet notwithstanding the strenuous oppositions of those great and learned ones, the mighty God of Jacob hath taken you by the hand, and said, Be strong.

"Besides, it has a considerable tendency to the advancement of divine grace, if we consider the way and manner of the reviving of this costly truth. When the professors of these nations had been a long time wearied with the yoke of superstitious ceremonies, traditions of men, and corrupt mixtures in the work and service of God; it pleased the Lord to break those yokes, and by a very strong impulse of his Spirit on the hearts of his people to convince them of the necessity of reformation. Divers pious and very gracious people, having often sought the Lord by fasting and prayer that he would show them the pattern of his house, and the goings out and comings in thereof, resolved by the grace of God not to receive or practise any piece of positive worship which had not precept nor example from the word of God. Infant baptism coming of course under consideration, after long search and many debates it was found to have no footing in the scriptures, (the only rule and standard to try doctrines by,) but on the contrary a mere innovation, yea, the profanation of an ordinance of God. And though it was purposed to be laid aside, yet what fears, tremblings, and temptations, did attend them, lest they should be mistaken, considering how many learned and godly men were of an opposite persuasion! How gladly would they have had the rest of their brethren gone along with them! But when there was no hope, they concluded that a christian's faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, and that every one must give an account of himself to God; and so resolved to practise according to their light. The great objection was the want of an Administrator, which as I have heard was removed by sending certain messengers to Holland, whence they were supplied. So that this little cloud of witnesses hath the Lord by his grace so greatly increased, that it is spread over our horizon, though opposed and contradicted by men of all sorts."

Crosby says that this agrees with an account given of the matter in an old manuscript said to be written by Mr. William Kiffin. This relates, that "several sober and pious persons belonging to the congregations of the dissenters about London were convinced that believers were the only proper

subjects of baptism, and that it ought to be administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body into the water, in resemblance of a burial and resurrection, according to Rom. 6:4, and Col. 2:12. That they often met together to pray and confer about this matter, and consult what methods they should take to enjoy this ordinance in its primitive purity. That they could not be satisfied about any administrator in England to begin this practice, because, though some in this nation rejected the baptism of infants, yet they had not, as they knew of, revived the ancient custom of immersion. But hearing that some in the Netherlands practised it, they agreed to send over one Mr. Richard Blount, who understood the Dutch language; that he went accordingly, carrying letters of recommendation with him, and was kindly received both by the church there, and by Mr. John Batte their teacher; that on his return he baptized Mr. Samuel Blacklock, a minister, and these two baptized the rest of their company, whose names are in the manuscript to the number of fifty three."

"But the greatest number of the English Baptists, (says Crosby,) and the more judicious, esteemed all this but needless trouble, and what proceeded from the old popish doctrine of right to administer sacraments by an uninterrupted succession, which neither the church of Rome nor the church of England, much less the modern dissenters, could prove to be with them. They affirmed therefore, and practised accordingly, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person might warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation."

These testimonies to a matter of fact by such men as Hutchinson, Collins, and Kiffin, may be safely relied on, as they were all eminent Baptist ministers at a time when they could easily procure information from their aged members concerning it. At the time when Hutchinson and Collins wrote, Mr. Kiffin was still living; and from his perfect knowledge of all things in the denomination almost from the very first, he was doubtless one of the persons from whom they had received their information, and to whom Mr. Collins probably referred, who would give Mr. Wall every necessary information on the subject. That Mr. Kiffin was well acquainted with this affair, there can be no doubt. He joined Mr. Lathorp's church very soon after the division had taken place in it, when he was about seventeen years of age; and five years afterwards was dismissed from it to Mr. Spilsbury's church, which was founded at Wapping.

It may perhaps be thought that this statement is incompatible with the history of the Baptists already given. What occasion, it may be objected, was there to send out of the kingdom a person to be baptized by immersion, if there were at the same time so many persons in it who had been baptized in the same manner? Might not one of them have been the administrator?

One answer to this objection is, that by violent persecutions almost all the Baptists had been driven out of the kingdom, so that in the beginning of thereign of Charles the first, it would have been a difficult matter to find a minister who had been baptized by immersion. The conjecture of Crosby however is very probable, that if such a one or many such could have been found, yet the old popish doctrine, not yet fully effaced from the mind even of nonconformists, that the right of administering the sacraments descended by uninterrupted succession, would prevent persons desiring baptism from applying to any but a regularly ordained minister, who had been baptized on a profession of faith by a person to be found in the Netherlands, whose baptism they thought, and perhaps with truth, had regularly descended from the Waldensian Christians, and therefore, it is not to be wondered at that they should apply to that quarter.

It is farther to be observed, that the account which Mr. Kiffin gives does not relate to the people who left Mr. Lathorp's church in 1633, and who settled at Wapping under the care of Mr. Spilsbury; but to "many sober and pious people belonging to the congregations of dissenters about London, who sent Mr. Blount to Holland, and were afterwards baptized by him and Mr. Samuel Blacklock, to the number of fifty-three." It is not known at what precise period this happened, but it is evident that these were not Mr. Spilsbury's people. Edwards, in his *Gangraena*, speaking of this church, associates with Mr. Blount the names of Emmes and Wrighters, as its ministers, and calls it "one of the first and prime churches of Anabaptists now in these latter times."

Still it may be asked, AS Mr. Helwisse had formed a church in London prior to the year 1615, and had been baptized by Mr. Smyth, how was it that they did not receive baptism from him, or from his successors? To this it is replied, that the church of which Mr. Helwisse was pastor, was of the General Baptist denomination, and was composed of Arminians, whereas the persons desiring baptism were probably Calvinists, between which denominations there never was much fellowship or religious intercourse, nor is there to the present day. Admitting then that there were ministers of this description, it is not probable that Calvinists would repair to them for an administrator of baptism. But as we are told that the greater number of Baptists, and the more judicious of them, considered all this to be needless trouble, it is highly probable that this account refers to a few people, rather than to the Baptists in general.

These observations are made for the purpose of explaining and reconciling matters of fact which have been generally misstated, and not as an apology for the conduct of our predecessors; since the Baptists of the present day unite with the greater part, and the more judicious of that time, in maintaining, that after a general corruption of baptism, an unbaptized person may warrantably baptize, and so begin a reformation.

During the period of which we have been treating, the church of England was under the government of Archbishop Laud. This prelate, who wanted nothing but the name to constitute him a pope, manifested the most implacable and bigoted spirit towards the dissenters, and all who ventured to expose the pride and oppression of the ruling clergy. The sufferings of Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick, in 1633, are proofs of this assertion. The Star-chamber and High commission exceeded not only all the bounds of law and equity, but even of humanity itself. Those gentlemen being suspected of employing their time in prison in writing against the hierarchy, were cited a second time before the Star-chamber. Though the charges against them then were not proved, and they were not permitted to speak in their defence, yet the following sentence was passed against them: "That Mr. Burton be deprived of his living, and degraded from his ministry (as Prynne and Bastwick had been from their professions of law and medicine;) that each of them be fined five thousand pounds; that they stand in the pillory at Westminster, and have their ears cut off;" and because Mr. Prynne had already lost his ears by sentence of the court, 1633, it was ordered that "the remainder of the stumps should be cut off, and that he should be stigmatized on both cheeks with the letters S.I.;" after which all three were to suffer confinement in the remotest prisons of the kingdom. This sentence was executed upon them June 30, 1637; the hangman father sawing off the remainder of Prynne's ears then cutting them off. After this they were sent to the islands of Scilly, Guernsey, and Jersey, without pen, ink, or paper, or the access of friends: here they continued till released by the Long Parliament.

Mr. Lilburne, an eminent brewer in London, afterwards a colonel in the army, and the person to whom Mr. Kiffin was apprenticed, for refusing to take an oath to answer all interrogatories concerning his importing and publishing seditious libels, was fined five hundred pounds, and to be whipped through the streets from the Fleet to the pillory before Westminster =hall gate, April 8, 1638. While he was in the pillory, he uttered many bold and passionate speeches against the tyranny of the bishops, on which the court of Star-chamber, then sitting, ordered him to be gagged, which was done accordingly; and when carried back to prison, it was ordered that he should be laid alone, with irons on his hands and legs, in the wards of the Fleet, where the basest of the prisoners were put, and that no person should be admitted to see him. Here he continued in a most forlorn and miserable condition till the meeting of the Long Parliament.

During this year many ministers were suspended and shut up in prison. Among these was a Mr. Brewer, a Baptist minister, who lay in prison fourteen years. [Neal, vol. ii. p. 329] The approaches of Laud towards popery may be discovered from his superstitious conduct in consecrating the church of St. Catherine Cree, which had been lately repaired. On a sabbath morning, the bishop, attended by several of the High commission and some civilians, approaching to the west door of the church, which was shut, and guarded by halberdeers, some who were appointed for that purpose cried with a loud voice, "Open, open, ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in!" Presently the doors being opened, the bishop with some doctors and principal men entered. As soon as they were come within the place, his lordship fell down on his knees, and with eyes lifted up and his arms spread abroad, said, "This place is holy: the ground is holy! In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I pronounce it holy!" Then walking up the middle aisle towards the chancel, he took up some of the dust and threw it in the air several times. When he approached near the vail of the communion table, he bowed towards it five or six times; and returning, went round the church with his attendants in procession, saying first the hundredth, and then the nineteenth psalm, as prescribed in the Roman pontifical. He then read several collects, in one of which he prayed God to accept of that beautiful building; and he concluded thus:--"We consecrate this church, and separate it unto thee as holy ground, not to be profaned any more to common use." In another he prayed, "that all who should hereafter be buried within the circuit of this holy and sacred place may rest in their sepulchers in peace, till Christ's coming to judgment, and may then rise to eternal life and happiness." After this the bishop, sitting under a cloth of state in the aisle of the church near the communion table, took a written book in his hand, and pronounced curses upon those who should hereafter profane that holy place by musters of soldiers, or keeping profane law-courts, by carrying burdens through it; and at the end of every curse, he bowed to the east, and said, "Let all the people say amen!" When the curses were ended, which were about twenty, he pronounced a like number of blessings upon all that had any hand in framing and building that beautiful church, and on those who had given or should hereafter give any chalices, plate, ornaments, or other utensils; and at the end of every blessing he bowed to the east, and said, "Let all the people say amen!" After this followed the sermon, and then the sacrament, which the bishop consecrated and administered after the following manner. As he approached the altar, he made five or six low bows; and coming to the side of it, where the bread and wine were covered, he bowed seven times. Then after reading many prayers, he came near the bread, and gently lifting up the corner of the napkin, beheld it; and immediately letting fall the napkin, he retreated hastily a step or two, and made three low obeisances. His lordship then advanced; and having uncovered the bread, bowed three times as before. Then he laid his hand

on the cup which was full of wine, with a cover upon it, which having let go, he stepped back, and bowed three times towards it: he then came near again, and lifting up the cover of the cup, looked into it; and seeing the wine, he let fall the cover again, retired back, and bowed as before. Then the elements were consecrated; and the bishop having first received, gave it to some principal men in their surplices, hoods, and tippets: after this, many prayers being said, the solemnity of the consecration ended. The pride of the clergy at this time grew to such a pitch, that in the year 1636, a member of the House of Commons said, that "the clergy were so exalted, that a gentleman might not come near the tail of their mules; and that one of them had declared openly, that he hoped to see the day when a clergyman should be as good a man as any upstart jack gentleman in the kingdom." The church had now reached the summit of its height and splendour, and was determined on crushing all who dissented from the establishment. In the convocation, which was held in 1640, with more pomp than the troublesome situation of the times justified, seventeen canons were published June 30, which treated upon by the archbishops of Canterbury and York, presidents of the convocation for their respective provinces, and the rest of the bishops and clergy of those provinces, and agreed upon by the King's majesty's licence, in their several synods begun at London and York, 1640."

Under the pretext of discouraging popery, but evidently with the design of crushing the dissenters, it was enacted, that "all ecclesiastical persons within their several parishes and jurisdictions shall confer privately with popish recusants; but if private conference prevail not, the church must and shall come to her censures; and to make way for them, such persons shall be presented at the next visitation who come not to church, and refuse to receive the holy eucharist, or who either hear or say mass; and if they remain obstinate after citation, they shall be excommunicated. But if neither conference nor censures prevail, the church shall then complain of them to the civil power, and this sacred synod does earnestly intreat the reverend justices of assize to be careful in executing the laws as they will answer it to God.

"The synod further declares, that the canon abovementioned against papists shall be in full force against all Anabaptists, Brownists, Separatists, and other sectaries, as far as they are applicable." [Neal, vol. ii. p. 348,349] From this sketch of the history of this period, we may form a tolerable idea of the difficulties which attended the meetings of the Dissenters. It certainly shows also the zeal of those excellent men who were willing to risk all the horrors of excommunication, rather than meet to worship God in a way which they considered agreeable to his holy word. There is no doubt but many of the Baptists suffered persecution at this time. We have an account of one who was a celebrated preacher amongst them, who was excommunicated for refusing to attend the parish churches, and who doubtless remained obstinate, as this canon denominates those who were honest enough to resist its decrees. This was Samuel Howe, otherwise called Cobbler Howe, who, dying while he was under the sentence of excommunication, was refused Christian burial. The history of this excellent man will be more fully related in the next chapter, which will record great alterations both in church and state. Nor will this appear surprising when the superstition, bigotry, cruelty, and tyranny of the ruling parties are considered. Oppression, which Solomon says makes a wise man mad, drove the people into rebellion, and produced all its natural and terrible consequences.

07. A.D. 1640-1653 Part 1

CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 1640 - 1653 At the period to which we have brought our history, very serious disturbances existed between the king and his parliament. These soon after broke out into a civil war, which continued many years, and ended in the death of the king, the overthrow of the constitution, the subversion of episcopacy, and the establishment of presbytery.

It may reasonably be supposed, that such a state of things would be favourable to the dissemination of those principles by which the different denominations of dissenters were distinguished. Delivered from the oppressive measures of arbitrary monarchs and persecuting bishops, they would hail the dawn of liberty; and not knowing which party would ultimately prevail, would exert themselves while it was in their power. In 1644, the oppressive and cruel measures of the High commission court and the Star-chamber were terminated by an act of parliament; and thus were destroyed the two chief engines of the late arbitrary proceedings both in church and state, which had been the occasion of ruining the liberties and estates of many religious families. The zeal and increase of the Baptists at that time, have excited the attention of ecclesiastical historians. Mr. Fuller says, "On Jan. 18, 1641, happened the first fruits of Anabaptistical insolence, when eighty of that sect meeting at a house in St. Saviour's, Southwark, preached that the statute in the 35th of Elizabeth, for the administration of common prayer, was no good law, because made by bishops; that the king cannot make a good law, because not perfectly regenerate, and that he was only to be obeyed in civil matters. Being brought before the lords, they confessed the articles; but no penalty was inflicted on them."

Crosby says, that this is a very imperfect account, and he relates the matter thus: "It was not an Anabaptist, but an Independent congregation, though it is probable there were some Baptists among them."

"They met in Deadman's place, and their pastor at that time was Mr. Stephen More. Being assembled on the Lord's day for religious worship, though not with their former secrecy, they were discovered and taken, and committed to the Clink prison, by Sir John Lenthal, marshal of the King's bench.

"The next morning, six or seven of the men were taken before the house of lords. Fuller says, they were charged with having preached against the King's supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, and against the statute of the 35th of Elizabeth, which establishes the common prayer, and forbids assembling for religious worship where it is not used.

"The Lords examined them strictly concerning their principles, when they freely acknowledged that they owned no other head of the church but Jesus Christ; that no prince had power to make laws that were binding on the conscience; and that laws made contrary to the laws of God were of no force.

"As things now stood, the lords could not discountenance these principles; and therefore, instead of inflicting any penalty, they treated them with a great deal of respect and civility, and some of the house enquired where the place of their meeting was, and intimated that they would come and hear them. Accordingly three or four of the peers did go to the meeting on the next Lord's day, to the great surprise and wonder of many.

"The people went on in their usual method, having two sermons; in both of which they treated of those principles for which they had been accused, founding their discourses on the words of our Saviour: All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. After this, they received the Lord's supper, and then made a collection for the poor, to which the lords contributed liberally with them. At their departure they signified their satisfaction in what they had heard and seen, and their inclination to come again. But this made so much noise, that they durst not venture a second time."

If this was not a Baptist church, there had been a Baptist minister before this time as its pastor. This was the celebrated Samuel Howe, who succeeded Mr. John Canne, the famous author of the marginal notes to the bible. While Mr. Howe was the pastor of the church, they were persecuted beyond measure by the clergy and bishops' courts. Dying while he lay under sentence of excommunication, Christian burial was denied him, and a constable's guard secured the parish church of Shoreditch to prevent his being buried there. At length he was buried in Agnes-la-chair. In a work published this year, 1641, entitled "The Brownists' Synagogue," it is said, "Of these opinions was Howe, that notorious predicant cobbler, whose body was buried in the highway, and his funeral sermon preached by one of his sect in a brewer's cart." From this it appears that his funeral was public, notwithstanding the violence of the times, and that his people took this method of pouring contempt upon the impotent rage of his persecutors, whose sentiments concerning Christian burial and consecrated ground they despised; and to prove that this was from principle, and not merely from necessity, many of the members of the church afterwards desired to be buried there also.

Mr. Neal says, That Mr. Howe was a man of learning, and published a small treatise, entitled, "The sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching." This however does not appear from the work, which is designed to show the insufficiency of human learning to the purposes of religion; and not only so, but that it is dangerous and hurtful. It is certainly written with great strength of genius, though the author was a "cobbler," which appears from the following extract from some recommendatory lines prefixed to the discourse--

"What How? how now? hath How such learning found,

To throw Art's curious image to the ground?

Cambridge, and Oxford, may their glory now

Veil to a Cobbler, if they know but How." The following honourable testimony is borne to the character of Mr. Howe by Mr. Roger Williams, of Providence, in New England, in a work entitled, "The Hireling Ministry none of Christ's," printed in London in the second month, 1552. "Amongst so many instances, (says he) dead and living, to the everlasting praise of Christ Jesus, and of his Holy Spirit, breathing and blessing where he lasteth, I cannot but with honourable testimony remember that eminent christian witness, and prophet of Christ, even that despised and yet

beloved Samuel Howe, who being by calling a cobbler, and without human learning, (which yet in its sphere and place he honoured) who yet I say, by searching the holy scriptures, grew so excellent a textuary, or scripture-learned man, that few of those high Rabbies that scorn to mend or make a shoe, could aptly or readily, from the holy scriptures, out-go him. And however (through the oppressions upon some men's consciences even in life and death, and after death, in respect of burying, as yet unthought and unremedied,) I say, however he was forced to seek a grave or bed in the highway, yet was his life, and death, and burial, (being attended with many hundreds of God's people) honourable and (how much more on his rising again!) glorious." [page 11,12] At this period the Baptists began to increase very rapidly. Taking advantage of the liberty which the confusion of the times, if not the disposition of the rulers, gave them, they were not backward in asserting and vindicating their sentiments both by preaching and writing, and also by public disputations. Their courage seems to have greatly provoked their adversaries, who wrote many pamphlets against them. From one of these, published in this year, we have derived some curious information, from which it appears that another Baptist church was formed in Fleet street, by the zeal of Mr. Praise-God Barebone, a person who was afterwards of such celebrity, that he gave the name to one of Oliver Cromwell's parliaments, which was called by way of contempt, Barebone's Parliament.

It appears from a manuscript which Crosby possessed, that the church of which Mr. Howe was pastor, after his death chose Mr. More, a layman and citizen of London, and a person of considerable property, in whose time the affair mentioned by Fuller took place. For some cause this church divided by mutual consent, and that just half was with Mr. P. Barebone, and the other half with Mr. Henry Jessey." [Crosby, vol. iii. p. 42] From this circumstance it is probable that this was a Baptist church which admitted of mixed communion; for as Mr. Jessey had not yet been baptized, it is likely the Pedobaptists joined with him, and the Baptists with Mr. P. Barebone. Crosby says, he knew not whether Mr. John Canne was a Baptist or not, though he found his name in a manuscript list among the gentlemen who left the established church to join the Baptists. [Ibid. vol. iii. p. 38] The probability is that he was a Baptist, and that on his leaving England to go to Holland, Mr. Howe succeeded him as the pastor of this church, which Fuller calls a congregation of Anabaptists.

It is a matter of regret that we have not a more particular account of this excellent man. It is likely he never returned from Holland whither he was driven by the severity of the times. Neal says, that "he became pastor of the Brownist congregation at Amsterdam." [Neal, vol. ii. p. 392] In this he was doubtless correct, though mistaken in other matters concerning him. We learn from another writer, that he was much followed at Amsterdam by those puritans who visited Holland at that time for the purposes of trade. "You never," says he, "go to Master Herring's, (a good old nonconformist) but have gone to Master Canne's (the separatist) and to his church." He adds, that he had received a letter from a person in Holland, who said, "For their going to the Brownists, and conversing with Master Canne more than us; that is undeniable. What you may of this read, in an Epistle to the Rejoinder in defence of Master Bradshaw against Master Canne, is most true and certain." [Edwards Answer to Apologet, Narration, p. 13] The pamphlet we have referred to is entitled, New preachers, New---" Greene the felt-maker, Spencer the horse-rubber, Quartermine the brewer's clerk, and some few others, who are mighty sticklers in this new kind of talking trade, which many ignorant coxcombs call preaching. Whereunto is added the last tumult in Fleet-street,

raised by the disorderly preachment, pratings, and pratlings of Mr. Barebones the leather-seller, and Mr. Greene the felt-maker, on Sunday last the 19th of December." The tumult alluded to is thus described: "A brief touch in memory of the fiery zeal of Mr. Barebones, a reverend, unlearned leather-seller, who with Mr. Greene the felt-maker, were both taken preaching or prating in a conventicle, amongst a hundred persons; on Sunday, the 19th of December last, 1641."

"After my commendations, Mr. Rawbones (Barebones I should have said), in acknowledgement of your too much troubling yourself, and molesting of others, I have made bold to relate briefly your last Sunday's afternoon work, lest in time your meritorious pains-taking should be forgotten, (for the which you and your associate Mr. Greene, do well deserve to have your heads in the custody of young Gregory, to make buttons for hempen loops,) you two having the Spirit so full, that you must either vent, or burst, did on the sabbath aforesaid, at your house near Fetter lane end, in Fleet street, at the sign of the Lock and Key, there and then did you and your consort (by turns) unlock most delicate strange doctrine, where were about thousands of people, of which number the most applauded your preaching, and those that understood any thing derided your ignorant prating. But after four hours long and tedious tatling, the house where you were was beleaguered with multitudes that thought it fit to rouse you out of your blind devotion, so that your walls were battered, your windows all fractions, torn into rattling shivers, and worse the hurly-burly might have been, but that sundry constables came in with strong guards of men to keep the peace, in which conflict your sign was beaten down and unhangd, to make room for the owner to supply the place; all which shows had never been, had Mr. Greene and Mr. Barebones been content (as they should have done) to have gone to their own parish churches. Also on the same day a mad rustic fellow (who is called the Prophet Hunt) did his best to raise the like strife and trouble in St. Sepulchre's church. Consider and avoid these disorders, good reader." This is certainly a proof that these new preachers excited great attention, and were so very popular as to draw thousands after them. The tumult was occasioned by the opposition that was raised by "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort." It is not said whether the preachers and a hundred of the people were taken by the constables to preserve them from the fury of the mob, or to bring them to justice. Had the latter been the case, and they had suffered any thing for their conduct, it is highly probable this writer would have mentioned it. It is likely that this affair ended in the same manner as that which Fuller relates, and that as things now stood, the lords could not discountenance such principles. In the epistle to Mr. Greene, the writer says, "Do not these things come from proud spirits, that he [Mr. Spencer] a horse-keeper, and you a hat-maker, will take upon you to be ambassadors of God, to teach your teachers, and take upon you to be ministers of the gospel in these days of light. Consider, I pray you, that our Lord would not have had the ass (Matt. 21:3.) if he had not stood in need of him. Now the truth is, the church hath no need of such as you, an unlearned self-conceited hat-maker. It is true that in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign the popish priests and friars being dismissed, there was a scarcity for the present of learned men, and so some tradesmen were permitted to leave their trades, and betake themselves to the ministry; but it was necessity that did then constrain them so to do; but thanks be to God, we have now so much necessity, and therefore this practice of you and your comrades casts an ill aspersion upon our good God, that doth furnish our church plentifully with learned men; and it doth also scandalize our church, as if we stood in need of such as you to preach the gospel.--This you call preaching, or prophesying; and thus as one of them told the lords of the parliament--that they were all preachers, for so they practise and exercise themselves as young players do in private, till they be by their brethren

judged fit for the pulpit, and then up they go, and like mountebanks play their part.--Mr. Greene, Mr. Greene, leave off these ways; bring home such as you have caused to stray. It is such as you that vent their venom against our godly preachers, and the divine forms of prayers, yea, against all set forms of prayers, all is from Antichrist, but that which you preach is most divine, that comes fresh from the Spirit, the other is an old dead sacrifice, composed (I should have said killed) so long ago that now it stinks. It is so that in the year 1549, it was compiled by Doctor Cranmer, Doctor Goodricke, Doctor Skip, Doctor Thrilby, Doctor Day, Doctor Holbecke, Doctor Ridley, Doctor Cox, Doctor Tailor, Doctor Haines, Doctor Redman, and Mr. Robinson, Archdeane of Leiester; but what are all these? they are not to be compared to Jolin Greene, a hat-maker, for he thinketh what he blustereth forth upon the sudden is far better than that which these did maturely and deliberately compose."

We have been the more particular in giving extracts from this work, as it gives a tolerably correct idea of the doctrines which the Baptists preached, and the manner in which they conducted their public services. It is not at all wonderful that, when the church had lost its power to persecute, those who still possessed the spirit of persecution should indulge in defamation and ridicule.

There was another quarto pamphlet of six pages, published in 1641, relating chiefly, if not entirely, to the Baptists, which has the following title: "The Brownists' Synagogue; or a late discovery of their conventicles, assemblies, and places of meeting; where they preach; and the manner of their praying and preaching; with a relation of the names, places, and doctrines of those which do commonly preach. The chief of which are these:--Greene, the Feltmaker; Marler, the Buttonmaker; Spencer, the Coachman; Rogers, the Glover. Which sect is much increased of late within this city. A kingdom divided cannot stand."--In this work, Greene and Spencer (whom we have mentioned as ministers of a congregation in Crutched Friars) are called the two arch-separatists, and are said to be "accounted as demi-gods, who were here and every where." This silly piece concludes by showing the manner of their assembling, which we extract because it gives some idea of the spirit of the times, and also to prove that the voice of slander, could not attribute any improper conduct to them in their public meetings. "In the house where they meet there is one appointed to keep the door, for the intent to give notice, if there should be any insurrection, warning may be given them. They do not flock together, but come two or three in a company; and all being gathered together, the man appointed to teach, stands in the midst of the room, and his audience gather about him. The man prayeth about the space of half an hour; and part of his prayer is, that those which come thither to scoff and laugh, God would be pleased to turn their hearts, by which means they think to escape undiscovered. His sermon is about the space of an hour, and then doth another stand up to make the text more plain; and at the latter end he entreats them all to go home severally, lest the next meeting they should be interrupted by those which are of the opinion of the wicked. They seem very steadfast in their opinions, and say, rather than turn, they will burn." In this year was published a small piece in favour of immersion, entitled, "A treatise of Baptism, or dipping; wherein is clearly showed that our Lord Christ ordained dipping, and that sprinkling of children is not according to Christ's institution; and also the invalidity of those arguments which are commonly brought to justify that practice." The author of this was Mr. Edward Barber, who was the minister of a congregation of Baptists in London, meeting in the Spittle, Bishopsgate street, where, it is said, "he gathered a numerous congregation, and was the means of convincing many that infant baptism had no foundation in scripture." Edwards, in his Gangraena, speaks of a minister named

Bacon, who had been forced to leave Gloucestershire, "but here in London had been entertained in the house of a great man, one Barber, an Anabaptist, about Threadneedle street." [Part i. p. 38]

Though the parliament had decreed, at the abolition of the before-mentioned ecclesiastical courts, "that no courts should be erected with the like powers in future," yet the spirit of persecution was not eradicated from the minds of those in authority. Mr. Barber had no sooner published his piece than he was made to feel the weight of their high displeasure, and was committed to prison for eleven months. The church over which he was pastor, was the first that practised the laying on of hands on baptized believers. He was a learned man, had been a clergyman in the established church, and died before the Restoration.

There was another work printed in London, 1642, entitled, "The vanity of childish baptism; wherein is proved that baptism is dipping, and dipping baptism." The writer signs himself A.R. Who he was we are not informed; but his work is frequently quoted by Dr. Featly, who charges him with saying, "They that have the administration of baptism without dipping, have not the baptism of the new testament." And farther, "The word baptize is derived from bapto signifying to dip or dye; and therefore washing or sprinkling is not baptism, but plunging the body, or at least the head in water." Also, "The administration of baptism which hath no express command in scripture, and which overthrows or prevents the administration of baptism which is expressly commanded in scripture, is a mere device of man's brain, and no baptism of Christ. But the administration of baptism to infants hath no express command in scripture, and it overthrows or prevents the administration of baptism upon disciples or believers, which is expressly commanded: therefore the baptism of infants is a mere device of man's brain, and no baptism of Christ." Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; John 4:1,2; Acts 2:38; 8:39. On October 17, a famous dispute took place between Dr. Featley and four Baptists somewhere in Southwark, at which were present Sir John Lenthal, and many others. The Doctor published his disputation in 1644, and tells us in his preface that he could hardly dip his pen in any other liquor than that of the juice of gall: it is therefore no wonder that it is so full of bitterness. He calls the Baptists--(1.) An illiterate and sottish sect--(2.) a lying and blasphemous sect--(3.) An impure and carnal sect--(4.) A bloody and cruel sect--(5.) A profane and sacrilegious sect--(6.) Describes the fearful judgements of God inflicted upon the ringleaders of that sect.--This work is entitled, "The Dippers dipt, or the Anabaptists ducked and plunged over head and ears at a disputation in Southwark;" and is dedicated "To the most noble lords, with the honourable knights, citizens and burgesses, now assembled in parliament." It is peculiarly gratifying that the doctor, with all his malignancy, is not able to exhibit any charges against them, except what have been commonly but erroneously alledged against the Baptists in Germany: the disturbances at Munster being no more the effect of the principles of the Baptists, than the riots of London were that of Protestants, or those in Birmingham of Episcopalians. The doctor speaks very contemptuously of his opponents.--He calls one of them a brewer's clerk: no doubt this was Mr. Kiffin, who had been an apprentice to the famous republican John Lilburn, of turbulent memory. He it was to, it is probable, who is called Quartermine the brewer's clerk, in the pamphlet entitled, New Preachers, New. The dispute commenced, he tells us, by one of the Baptists, saying, "Master doctor, we come to dispute with you at this time, not for contention sake, but to receive satisfaction. We hold that the baptism of infants, cannot be proved lawful by the testimony of scripture, or by apostolical tradition. If therefore you can prove the same either way, we shall be willing to submit to you."

Instead of attempting the proof of what they required the doctor insults them as "Anabaptists, heretics, mechanics, and illiterate men; by whose habit he could judge they were not fit to dispute: besides, they could not dispute from authority, as they knew not the original, nor understood how to argue syllogistically in mood and figure." The persecuting spirit of Dr. Featley may be discovered from the following paragraph in the epistle to the reader: "This fire (says he), which in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James, and our gracious sovereign [Charles i.] till now was covered in England under the ashes; or if it brake out at any time, by the care of the ecclesiastical and civil magistrates it was soon put out. But of late, since the unhappy distractions which our sins have brought upon us, the temporal sword being otherways employed, and the spiritual locked up fast in the scabbard, this sect among others hath so far presumed upon the patience of the state, that it hath held weekly conventicles, re-baptized hundreds of men and women together in the twilight, in rivulets, and some arms of the Thames, and elsewhere, dipping them over head and ears. It hath printed divers pamphlets in defence of their heresy, yes, and challenged some of our preachers to disputation. Now although my bent hath been always hitherto against the most dangerous enemy of our church and state, the Jesuit, to extinguish such balls of wildfire as they have cast into the bosom of our church; yet seeing this strange fire kindled in the neighbouring parishes, and many Nadabs and Abihus offering it on God's altar, I thought it my duty to cast the water of Siloam upon it to extinguish it."

We had intended to have given some considerable extracts from this work for the information of the readers; but the ridiculous pedantry and scurrilous abuse with which it abounds is so disgusting, that we have chosen rather to refer them to the work itself, which is not yet very scarce, as there were six editions of it printed in six years;--a shocking proof of the vulgarity and illiberality of the age!

It is worthy of remark, that this sect had, he says, thrust out its sting near the place of his residence for "upwards of twenty years." From his residing at Lambeth, it is likely he refers to the church in Southwark mentioned by Fuller, which Crosby says, was constituted about the year 1621; of which Mr. Hubbard, or Herbert, a learned man of episcopal ordination, was the pastor. He was succeeded by Mr. John Canne who, it appears from the records of the church in Broadmead, Bristol, was a Baptist, and the first person who preached the doctrine of believers' baptism in that city.

Perhaps some little allowance may be made for the doctor's ill temper, from the circumstance of his being a prisoner when he wrote it. Being a member of the assembly of Divines, and having held a correspondence with the king at Oxford, he was sent to Lord Petre's house in Aldersgate street as a spy. It so happened that Mr. Henry Denne, a Baptist, was imprisoned there at the same time for preaching against infant baptism, and presuming to re-baptize some persons in Cambridgeshire. No sooner was Mr. Denne in his apartment, but the doctor's book was laid before him, which after he had read, considering himself called upon to defend the principles therein opposed, and for which he was then suffering, he sent for the doctor, and offered to dispute the subject with him, which he accepted; but after debating the first argument, he declined the contest, alledging that it was not lawful to dispute without licence from the government; but wished Mr. Denne to write on the subject, engaging himself to defend infant baptism.

Mr. Denne wrote an answer which he published under the title of Antichrist unmasked, and dated it from prison, Feb. 22, 1644. He was also answered by Mr. Samuel Richardson, in a work entitled Brief considerations on Mr. Featley's book, to neither of which he replied.

One of the pamphlets, which the doctor says had been printed in defence of this heresy, was written by Mr. Francis Cornwell, M.A. This was published in 1643, and was entitled The vindication of the royal commission of King Jesus. It was dedicated to the House of Commons, and given away at the doors of the house to several of its members. The doctor calls this "a bold libel, which was offered to hundreds, and in which the brazen-faced author blusheth not to brand all the reformed churches, and the whole Christian world at this day which christen their children, and sign them with the seal of the covenant, with the odious name of the antichristian faction." In 1645, an ordinance of parliament was passed, enacting, "That no person should be permitted to preach, who is not ordained a minister in this [the Presbyterian] or some other reformed church, and it is earnestly desired that Sir Thomas Fairfax take care that this ordinance be put in execution in the army." Probably the Baptist ministers were much interrupted by this law, as it might be doubted whether (according to the opinion of the Presbyterians) they had been legally ordained. There is no doubt however but this act was passed in consequence of the violent declamations of many of the Presbyterian ministers against tolerating the sectaries, as they called the Baptists and Independents, against whom it appears to have been principally directed. In order to expose the principles of these misguided men, we shall insert a few extracts from their printed works. In a sermon preached before the House of Commons by Dr. Calamy, Oct. 22, 1644, it is said, "If you do not labour according to your duty and power to suppress the errors and heresies that are spread in the kingdom, all these errors are your errors, and these heresies are your heresies: they are your sins, and God calls for a parliamentary repentance from you for them this day. You are the Anabaptists, you are the Antinomians, and it is you that hold all religions should be tolerated." In a sermon by Dr. Burgess, addressed to the parliament, April 30, 1645, after admonishing them to beware of all compliances with, and indulgences of, all sorts of sects and schisms then pleaded for, he adds, "And is it persecution and antichristianism to engage all to unity and uniformity? Doth Paul bid the Philippians beware of the concision? Doth he beseech the Romans to mark those that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrines they have received, and avoid them? Doth he in writing to the Galatians wise, "I would they were even cut off that trouble you"? And is it such an heinous offence now for the faithful servants of Christ to advise you to the same course?"

Even Mr. Richard Baxter, though more moderate than many, yet, when speaking against the Baptists in his work entitled, Plain scripture proof of infant church membership and baptism, says, "The divisions and havock of the church is our calamity: we intended not to dig down the banks or pull up the hedge, and lay all waste and common, when we desired the prelates' tyranny might cease. My judgment in that much disputed point of liberty or religion, I have always freely made known. I abhor unlimited liberty and toleration of all, and think myself easily able to prove the wickedness of it."

Mr. Prynne, in his Answer to John Goodwin, says, "If the parliament and synod shall by public consent establish a presbyterial church-government as most consonant to God's word, Independents and all others are bound in conscience to submit unto it, under the pain of obstinacy, singularity, &c."

Mr. Edwards, lecturer of Christ Church, and the famous author of *Gangraena*, tells the magistrates that "they should execute some exemplary punishment upon some of the most notorious sectaries and seducers, and upon the willful abettors of these abominable errors, namely, the printers, dispersers, and licencers, and set themselves withal their hearts to find out ways, to take some course to suppress, hinder, and no longer suffer these things: to put out some declaration against the errors and ways of the sectaries; as their sending emissaries into all parts of the kingdom, to poison the countries; as their sipping of persons in the cold water in winter, whereby persons fall sick, &c.; declaring that they shall be proceeded against as vagrants and rogues that go from country to country; and if any shall fall sick upon their dipping, and die, they shall be indicted upon the statute of killing the king's subjects, and proceeded against accordingly. It is related of the senate of Zurich, that they made a decree against the Anabaptists, after they had been dealt withal by ten several disputations, and continued still obstinate, that whosoever re-baptized any that had been formerly baptized, he should be cast into the water and drowned. I could wish with all my heart there were a public disputation, even in the point of pedo-baptism and dipping, between some of the Anabaptists and our ministers. But if upon disputation and debate the Anabaptists should be found in an error, (as I am confident they would) that then the parliament should forbid all dipping, and take some severe course with all dippers, as the senate of Zurich did." [Gangraena, p. 92-177] In consequence of the ordinance referred to being published, the Lord Mayor sent his officers to the Baptist meeting in Coleman street on a Lord's day, being informed that certain laymen preached there. When they came they found two ministers, Mr. Lamb, the elder or pastor of the church, and a young man whose name is not mentioned, who was a preacher amongst them. The congregation were greatly disturbed; and some of them used rough language to the officers. But Mr. Lamb treated them very civilly, and asked permission to finish the service, giving his word that they would both appear before the Lord Mayor at six o'clock, to answer for what they did. When they appeared before the Mayor, he demanded by what authority they took upon them to preach, and told them they had transgressed an ordinance of parliament. To which Mr. Lamb replied, he did not think they had violated the law, as they were both called and appointed to the office by as "reformed a church" as any in the world, alluding to the words of the act; but acknowledged they were such as rejected the validity of infant baptism. His lordship, not being satisfied, bound them over to answer to the charge before a committee of parliament. They were accordingly examined; and not giving satisfactory answers, they were committed to prison, where they were confined for a considerable time; but at length, by the intercession of their friends, they were set at liberty. This was not the first time Mr. Lamb had been imprisoned. At the instigation of Archbishop Laud he had been brought in chains from Colchester to London, for not conforming to the established church, and for preaching to a separate congregation in that town, which was the place of his nativity. Being brought before the court of Star-chamber, he was charged with having administered the Lord's supper, and requested to confess it, which if he had done, it is expected he would have been banished the kingdom. He, however, neither owned nor denied it, but pleaded that a subject of England was under no obligation to bear witness against himself. He was, however, committed to prison, where he remained a considerable time, during which his wife went often to the Star-chamber court, and in behalf of herself and eight children, earnestly solicited the archbishop to grant her husband his liberty, which it was in his power to procure. But this unjust judge, instead of listening to her importunate solicitations, called to the people about him to take away that troublesome woman. Mr. Lamb was in almost all the gaols in

and about London, as he always used to return to his work of preaching as soon as he got free from confinement. He was a zealous and popular preacher, and a man of great courage: he used to say, that a man was not fit to preach, who would not preach for Christ's sake, though he was sure to die for it as soon as he had done.

It was very common for the Baptists at this time to use Old Ford river, near Bromley, in Middlesex, as a baptistery. This place was much frequented for that purpose. Mr. Lamb being employed in baptizing a woman here, her husband, a bitter enemy to the Baptists, brought a great stone under his coat, with an intention, as he afterwards confessed, to have thrown it at Mr. Lamb while he stood in the river. But he was so affected with the prayer before the administration of the ordinance, that he dropped the stone, fell into tears, and was himself the next person baptized. This was probably one of the places to which Dr. Featley alludes, when he says, "they flock in great multitudes to their Jordans, and both sexes enter into the river, and are dipped after their manner, with a kind of spell, containing the heads of their enormous tenets, and their engaging themselves in their schismatical covenants." The same year, Mr. Paul Hobson was taken into custody by the governor of Newport Pagnel, for preaching against infant baptism, and reflecting upon the order against laymen's preaching. After being some time in confinement, Sir Samuel Luke, the governor, sent him to London. Soon after, his case was brought before the committee of examination; but as he had many friends among persons in authority, after being heard, he was immediately discharged, and preached publicly at a meeting-house in Moorfields, to the great confusion of his persecutors.

Among the sufferers for Antipedobaptism at this time, was the pious and learned Hansard Knollys. He had received episcopal ordination from the bishop of Peterborough, but was now pastor of a church in Great St. Helen's. The circumstances of his imprisonment are related by himself as follow:--

"The committee for plundered ministers sent their warrant to the keeper of Ely-house to apprehend me, and bring me in safe custody before them. They took me out of my house, carried me to Ely-house, and there kept me prisoner several days, without any bail; and at last carried me before the committee, who asked me several questions, to which I gave them sober and direct answers. Among others, the chairman, Mr. White, asked me who gave me authority to preach. I told him the Lord Jesus Christ. He then asked me whether I were a minister. I answered that I was made a priest by the prelate of Peterborough; but I had renounced that ordination, and did here again renounce the same. They asked me by what authority I preached in Bow church. I told them, after I had refused the desire of the churchwardens three times one day after another, their want of supply and earnestness prevailed with me, and I went up and preached from Isaiah 53; and gave them such an account of that sermon (thirty ministers of the Assembly of Divines so called being present) that they could not gainsay, but bade me withdraw, and said nothing to me, nor could my jailor take any charge of me; for the committee had called for him, and threatened to turn him out of his place for keeping me prisoner so many days. So I went away without any blame, or paying my fees."

Though Mr. Knollys was dismissed by this committee, yet he tells us that he was soon after brought before the committee of examination, "being accused to them (says he) that I had caused great disturbance to ministers and people in Suffolk; which I gave so good and satisfactory an

account of to them, that upon their report thereof to the House of Commons, they ordered that I might preach in any part of Suffolk when the minister of the place did not preach; which was all I got for sixty pounds, which that trouble cost me to clear my innocence and the honour of the gospel." This circumstance is mentioned by Whitelocke; and it seems as if Mr. Kiffin was included in this prosecution, the following order appearing on the records of the house in 1648:--"Ordered that Mr. Kiffin and Mr. Knollys be permitted to preach in any part of Suffolk, at the petition of the Ipswich men." [Whitelocke's Memorials, p. 363.] As this excellent man's history illustrates the spirit of those times, we shall present the reader with another extract.--"The sixty pounds expense (he says) I put upon Christ's score, for whose gospel, and preaching Jesus Christ upon that text, (Col. 3:11.) But Christ is all and in all, I was stoned out of the pulpit, and prosecuted at a privy sessions, and fetched out of the country sixty miles to London, and was constrained to bring up four or five witnesses of good report and credit, to prove and vindicate myself from false accusations." [Life of Hansard Knollys.]

These instances show what difficulties the Baptist ministers laboured under at this period, and also what are the consequences of government's interfering with the church of Christ, and making laws for its direction. But all this opposition and persecution did not prevent the increase of the Baptists, nor the spread of their principles. In a work published by Robert Baille of Glasgow, 1646, entitled, *Anabaptism the true fountain of error*, it is said, "Their number till of late in England was not great, and the most of them were not English, but Dutch strangers; for besides the hand of the state, which ever lay heavy upon them, the labours of their children the Separatists were always great for their reclaiming. But under the shadow of Independency, the Anabaptists have lift up their heads, and increased their number above all the sects in the land.--As for the number of these seven churches which have published their confession of faith, and for their other thirty-nine congregations (for before the penning of that confession this sect was grown into forty-six churches, and that as I take it in and about London) they are a people very fond of religious liberty, and very unwilling to be brought under the bondage of the judgment of any other." The confession of faith here alluded to was published about two years before by the Particular Baptists. It had been common with their enemies to load them with opprobrious epithets, both from the pulpit and the press: they therefore put forth this confession to clear themselves from the unjust aspersions cast upon them as persons who held many dangerous errors. Several editions of it were printed in 1643, 1644, and 1646, one of which was licenced by authority. The address prefixed to it was--"To the right honourable the lords, knights, citizens, and burgesses, in parliament assembled." It was signed in the name of seven congregations, or churches of Christ, in London; as also by a French congregation of the same judgment. The ministers' names are:--

Thomas Gunne, John Mabbitt, Benjamin Cockes, Thomas Kilicop, John Spilsbury, Samuel Richardson, Thomas Munden, George Tipping, Paul Hobson, Thomas Goare, William Kiffin, Thomas Patient, Hansard Knollys, Thomas Holmes, Christopher Duret, Denis Le Barbier. This confession, being put into the hands of many of the members of parliament, produced such an effect, that some of their greatest adversaries, (and even the bitter and inveterate Doctor Featley,) were obliged to acknowledge, that excepting the articles against infant baptism, it was an orthodox confession. The following account of it is extracted from Neal: "This confession consisted of fifty-two articles, and is strictly Calvinistical in the doctrinal part, and according to the Independent discipline. It confines the subject of baptism to grown christians, and the mode to dipping. It admits

of gifted lay preachers, and acknowledges a due subjection to the civil magistrate in all things lawful, and concludes thus:--'We desire to live as becometh saints, endeavouring in all things to keep a good conscience, and to do to every man, of what judgment soever, as we would they should do unto us; that as our practice is, so it may prove us to be a conscionable, quiet, harmless, people, no way dangerous or troublesome to human society, and to labour with our own hands that we may not be chargeable to any, but have to give to him that needeth, both friend and enemy, accounting it more excellent to give than to receive. Also we confess that we know but in part, and that we are ignorant of many things that we desire and seek to know; and if any shall do us that friendly part to show us from the word of God that which we see not, we shall have cause to be thankful unto God and them. But if any man shall impose upon us any thing that we see not to be commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, we should in his strength rather embrace all reproaches and tortures of men, to be stripped of all our outward comforts, and if it were possible to die a thousand deaths, rather than do any thing against the truths of God, or against the light of our consciences. And if any shall call any thing we have said heresy, then do we with the apostle acknowledge that "after the way they call heresy so worship we the God of our fathers,' disclaiming all heresies rightly so called, because they are against Christ; and desiring to be stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in obedience to Christ, knowing our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." The country at this time was in great confusion, and great difference of sentiment necessarily existed on the subject of government. It is with pleasure therefore we subjoin an extract from this confession, which gives a clear statement of their political sentiments. The forty-eighth article relates to magistracy, of which they say, "A civil magistracy is an ordinance of God, set up by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well; and that in all lawful things commanded by them subjection ought to be given by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake; and that we are to make supplications for kings, and all that are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." To this declaration of their sentiments the following note is appended: "The supreme magistracy of this kingdom we acknowledge to be the king and parliament (now established), freely chosen by the kingdom, and that we are to maintain and defend all civil laws and civil officers made by them, which are for the good of the commonwealth. And we acknowledge with thankfulness that God has made the present king and parliament honourable in throwing down the prelatical hierarchy, because of their tyranny and oppression over us, under which this kingdom long groaned, for which we are ever engaged to bless God, and honour them for the same. And concerning the worship of God, there is but one law-giver, who is able to kill and destroy (James 4:12.) which is Jesus Christ, who hath given laws and rules sufficient in his word for his worship; and for any to make more, were to charge Christ with want of wisdom or faithfulness, or both, in not making laws enough, or not good enough, for his house; surely it is our wisdom, duty, and privilege to observe Christ's laws only, Psalm 2:6,9,10,12; so it is the magistrate's duty to render the liberty of men's consciences, Eccles. 8:8, (which is the tenderest thing unto all conscientious men, and most dear unto them, and without which all other liberties will not be worth naming, much less enjoying;) and to protect all under them from all wrong, injury, oppression, and molestation; so it is our duty not to be wanting in any thing which is for their honour and comfort, and whatsoever is for the good of the commonwealth wherein we live, it is our duty to do, and we believe it to be our express duty, especially in matters of religion, to be fully persuaded in our minds of the lawfulness of what we do, as knowing that whatsoever is not of faith is sin: and as we

cannot do any thing contrary to our understanding and consciences, so neither can we forbear the doing of that which our understanding and consciences bind us to do; and if the magistrate should require us to do otherwise, we are to yield our persons in a passive way to their power, as the saints of old have done, (James 5:4). And thrice happy shall he be that shall lose his life for witnessing (though but for the least tittle,) of the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 5; Galatians 5." The development of their sentiments, which till now they had no opportunity of making known, was the cause of wiping away the reproach which had been cast upon them, and proved to the government that such persons did not deserve the treatment they had generally received: and from this period they were considered by them as worthy of being tolerated in a Christian commonwealth!

It was about this time that Mr. Henry Jessey, who was pastor of an Independent church, embraced the opinions of the Baptists. His eminent piety and learning had recommended him to the notice of some persons in the church of which Mr. Henry Jacob was pastor, founded in 1616, and the first Independent church in London. He was ordained in 1637, and continued a faithful labourer in this part of the Lord's vineyard till his death. The circumstances which led to the alteration of his sentiments are thus stated. "It happened every now and then that several of his congregation embraced the opinions of the Baptists, and left the church on that account. In 1638, the year after he settled with them, six persons of note espoused those sentiments. In 1641, a much greater number; and in 1643, the controversy was revived again amongst them, and a still greater number left them. Many of these were persons whom Mr. Jessey very much respected both for their piety and solidity of judgment, and the alteration of their sentiments occasioned frequent debates in the congregation about it; so that he was necessarily put upon the study of this controversy. Upon a diligent and impartial examination of the holy scriptures and the writers of antiquity, he saw reason to alter his sentiments; but he did not do it without great deliberation, much prayer, and divers conferences with pious and learned men of a different persuasion.

"His first conviction was about the manner of baptizing; for he soon discovered that sprinkling was a modern corruption, brought into use without any just reason either from scripture or antiquity; and therefore in the year 1642, the church being assembled, he freely declared to them that immersion, or dipping the whole body under water, appeared to him to be the right manner of administering baptism; that this mode was the import of the original word baptizo; that it agreed with the examples of baptism recorded in scripture; and that it best represented the spiritual mysteries signified by it, the death and resurrection of Christ, and our dying to sin and rising again to newness of life. And therefore he proposed that in future, baptism should be administered after this manner. Mr. Jessey accordingly, for two or three years after this, baptized children by dipping them in the water."

About the year 1644, the controversy on the subjects of baptism was revived, and several debates were held in the congregation about it. Before Mr. Jessey avowed his sentiments on the side of adult baptism, he had a meeting with Dr. Goodwin, Mr. Philip Nye, Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs, Mr. Walter Cradock, and several others: but obtaining no satisfaction, he was baptized in June 1645, by Mr. Hansard Knollys. We have been the more particular in stating this event on account of Mr. Neal's having said, when speaking of Mr. Jessey, "Thus a foundation was laid for the first Baptist Church I have met with in England." As he had the manuscripts from which Crosby wrote, it is certainly a proof how little he regarded them, that he could not find any one prior to this. The

assembly of Divines were now sitting in Henry the seventh's chapel in Westminster, and it was natural to conclude that as a reformation in the church was proposed, the subject of baptism would be discussed. "Mr. John Tombes (says Mr. Palmer) was among the first of the clergy of these times who endeavoured a reformation in the church by purging the worship of God of human inventions. He preached a sermon on the subject, which was afterwards printed by an order of the House of Commons." This exposed him to the rage of the church party; and at the beginning of the civil war in 1641, some of the King's forces coming into Herfordshire, he was obliged to leave his habitation and the church at Leominster, and remove to Bristol. He soon afterwards fled from Bristol, and with great difficulty arrived in London, Sep. 22, 1643.

Though Mr. Tombes was informed by one of that assembly, that they had appointed a committee to consider the point of infant baptism; yet after waiting many months, he could get no answer, nor even that the subject was debated whether infants should be baptized or not, though great alterations took place among them on the manner in which it should be administered. His application to the assembly exposed him to their resentment. Being now minister of Frenchurch, attempts were made to prejudice his parishioners against him under the stigma of his being an Anabaptist; and though he never introduced this controversy into the pulpit, yet because he would not baptize infants, his stipend was withheld.

It happened just after this, that the honourable society at the Temple wanted a minister; and some of them who knew Mr. Tombes to be a man of great learning, and an excellent preacher, solicited the assembly that he might be appointed to that situation. When he applied to the assembly for their approbation of him as a minister, he was told by the examiner, "that there were many of the assembly that had scruples of conscience respecting it, because of his opinion. Also that in New England there was a law made and some proceedings thereupon, against those who denied the baptism of infants; and that here in England, the directory which enjoins the baptizing of infants was published, with the ordinance of parliament to make the not using of it penal; and that many godly, learned, and prudent persons, both of those who differed from him as well as those who agreed with him on this point, earnestly requested the publishing of his papers." The situation at the Temple was after much difficulty obtained for him, on condition that he would not meddle with the controversy about infant baptism in the pulpit. To this he agreed upon two conditions;--that no one did preach for the baptizing of infants in his pulpit, and that no laws were likely to be enacted to make the denial of infant baptism penal.

He continued in this place about four years, and was then dismissed for publishing his first treatise against infant baptism, which contained his objections against that practice. This had been previously presented to the assembly, as also his Examen of Mr. Marshall's Sermon on infant baptism. For publishing this work he was censured as a man of restless spirit, and as one who intended to increase the divisions and confusions of the times, while others re-presented it as a breach of his promise to be silent on this subject. To clear himself from these aspersions, he published his Apology in the year 1646; wherein he stated, that he had received such provocations, that the publishing of his thoughts on infant baptism was necessary, both "from faithfulness to God and charity to men." Of his "Apology, Mr. John Bachiler, who licenced it says, "Having perused this mild apology, I conceive that the ingenuity, learning, and piety therein contained, deserve the press."

We have dwelt the longer on the history of Mr. Tombes in this place, in order to show the spirit of the Assembly of Divines respecting Baptism. It should seem that these presbyterian reformers adopted the practice and sentiments of the Episcopalians in the time of Edward vi., and resolved, "The custom of the church for baptizing young children is both to be commended, and by all means to be retained in the church."

They were however, not so scrupulous respecting the manner of baptism, which they proposed to alter from immersion to either pouring or sprinkling; for it is a curious fact, that when it was put to the vote whether the directory should run thus, "The minister shall take water and sprinkle it, or pour it with his hand on the face or forehead of the child," the opposition to sprinkling was so great that it was carried only by a majority of one, there being twenty four against it, and but twenty five for it. It is said that this was carried entirely by the influence of Dr. Lightfoot, who was very strenuous that sprinkling should be accounted sufficient. [Robinson's History of Baptism, p. 150] The Assembly of Divines have been very differently represented. Lord Clarendon, who was their sworn enemy, says: "About twenty of them were reverend and worthy persons, and episcopal in their judgment; but as to the remainder, they were but pretenders to divinity. Some were infamous in their lives and conversations, and most of them of very mean parts and learning, if not of scandalous ignorance, and of no other reputation than of malice to the Church of England." Mr. Baxter, on the contrary, who knew them better than his lordship, and whose word may be more safely relied on, says, that "they were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity." Those who will read over a list of their names, preserved by Mr. Neal, will be able to judge whose opinion was most correct. The far greater part of them were Presbyterians, and some of them Independents; "but," says Neal, "there was not one professed Anabaptist in the assembly." The worst trait in their character is the bigotry and illiberality which they manifested towards their dissenting brethren, as the Independents were called, and towards all others who were politely named in the cant of the day, "heretics, schismatics, and Anabaptists." They formed "a committee of accommodation;" but when the Independents offered so far to accommodate themselves to the prejudices of the Presbyterians as to communicate occasionally in their churches, &c. they gave them a flat denial, and were as much resolved to sacrifice conscientious scruples at the shrine of the idol Uniformity, as the papists and episcopalians had been before them. It was no wonder then that the Baptists, who could not bow down to the golden image which they had set up, should be cast into their burning fiery furnace; and we have no doubt but this would have been "heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated," had not a power superior to them, doubtless under the direction of the great Head of the church, prevailed: "for," says Neal, "the spirit which these men manifested, proves what a terrible use they would have made of the sword, had they been entrusted with it."

These discussions in the assembly were likely to lead to an examination of the scriptures on the subject of baptism, as these eminent divines professed to make the word of God alone the standard of their decisions. We are therefore not at all surprised to be informed by Neal, that the opinion of the Baptists "began to spread wonderfully out of doors."--For, though Mr. Baxter published a piece which he entitled, Plain scripture proof for church membership and infant baptism, yet many eminent Pedobaptist ministers have acknowledged that neither scriptural precept nor example was to be found to support the practice.

Another cause for the increase of the Baptists was probably the favourable manner in which some eminent writers represented their principles, and the arguments they used to show the propriety of granting them liberty of conscience. The right honorable Lord Robert Brook published about this time a treatise on episcopacy, in which he says: "I must confess that I began to think there may be perhaps something more of God in these sects, which they call new schisms, than appears at the first glimpse. I will not, I cannot take upon me, to defend that which men generally call Anabaptism; yet I conceive that sect is two-fold: some of them hold free will, community of all things, deny magistracy, and refuse to baptize their children: these truly are such heretics or atheists, that I question whether any divine should honour them so much as to dispute with them. There is another sort of them who only deny baptism to their children till they come to years of discretion, and then they baptize them; but in other things they truly agree with the church of England. Truly these men are much to be pitied; and I could heartily wish that before they are stigmatized with the opprobrious brand of schismatics, the truth might be cleared to them; for I conceive, to those that hold we may go no farther than scripture for doctrine or discipline, it may be very easy to err in this point now in hand, as the scripture seems not to have determined this matter.

"The analogy it hath with circumcision in the old law, (says his lordship,) is a fine rational argument to illustrate a point well proved before; but I somewhat doubt whether it be proof enough for that which some would prove by it; since besides the vast difference in the ordinance, the persons to be circumcised are stated by a positive law, so express that it leaves no place for scruple: but it is far otherwise in baptism, when all the designation of persons fit to be partakers, for aught I know, is only such as believe; for this is the qualification which, with exactest search, I find the scripture requires in persons to be baptized, and this it seems to require in all persons. Now how infants can properly be said to believe, I am not yet fully resolved." [Episcopacy, p. 96.]

While religious matters were in a very unsettled state in the nation, Doctor Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down and Connor, published a work entitled, *The liberty of prophesying*. In this he shows the unreasonableness of prescribing to others in matters of faith, and the iniquity of persecuting men for difference of sentiment; and says, among other things, "Many things condemned as erroneous have a great probability of truth on their side; at least so much might be said for them as to sway the conscience of many an honest enquirer after truth, and abate the edge of their fury who suppose they are deceived."

To prove his observations, he particularly considers the opinion of the Antipedobaptists, and by stating what might be said for that error as he called it, drew up a very elaborate system of arguments against infant baptism. Doctor Hammond said of this work, that it was the most diligent collection, and the most exact scheme of the arguments against infant baptism which he had seen; and that he had so represented the arguments for and against it, that many thought the Baptists were victorious. [Crosby, v. i. p. 168.] The great increase of the Baptists seems to have provoked the Presbyterians, who were now the ruling party, to a very high degree; and the same spirit of intolerance which the episcopalians had manifested towards the puritans, was now exhibited by them against all dissenters from what they, who could now prove the divine right of presbytery, were pleased to decree. The whole of their conduct in respect of those who differed from them, shows what Milton said to be true; that "New Presbyter is but Old Priest WRIT LARGE." Their spirit of intolerance may be learned from the history of those times, and especially from some acts of the

government. On May 26, 1645, the lord mayor, court of aldermen, and common-council, presented a petition to parliament, commonly called the City Remonstrance, in which they desired, "that some strict and speedy course might be taken for the suppressing all private and separate congregations; that all Anabaptists, Brownists, heretics, schismatics, blasphemers, and all other sectaries, who conformed not to the public discipline established or to be established by parliament, might be fully declared against, and some effectual course settled for proceeding against such persons; and that no person disaffected to presbyterial government, set forth or to be forth by parliament, might be employed in any place of public trust." [Crosby, v. i. p. 181.] This remonstrance was supported by the whole Scotch nation, who acted in concert with their English brethren, as appears by a letter of thanks to the lord-mayor, aldermen, and common-council, from the general assembly, dated June 10, 1646, within a month after the delivery of the remonstrance. The letter commends their courageous appearance against sects and sectaries; their firm adherence to the covenant, and their maintaining the Presbyterian government to be the government of Jesus Christ! It beseeches them to go on boldly in the work they had begun, till the three kingdoms were united in one faith and worship. At the same time they directed letters to the parliament, beseeching them also in the bowels of Jesus Christ to give to him the glory due to his name, by an immediate establishment of all his ordinances in their full integrity and power, according to the covenant. Nor did they forget to encourage the assembly at Westminster to proceed in their zeal against sectaries, and to stand boldly for the sceptre of Jesus Christ against the encroachments of earthly powers.

"The wise parliament (says Neal) received the lord-mayor and his brethren with marks of great respect and civility; for neither the Scotch nor English Presbyterians were to be disgusted while the prize [the king], for which they had been fighting, was in their hands; but the majority of the commons were displeased both with the remonstrance, and the high manner of enforcing it, as aiming by a united force to establish a sovereign reign and arbitrary power in the church, to which themselves and many of their friends were unwilling to submit: however, they dismissed the petitioners with a promise to take the particulars into consideration." [Neal, v. 3. p. 327.]

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The sectaries in the army, as they were called, being alarmed at the approaching storm, procured a counter-petition from the city, with a great number of signatures, "applauding the labours and successes of the parliament in the cause of liberty, and praying them to go on with managing the affairs of the kingdom according to their wisdom, and not to suffer the free-born people of England to be enslaved on any pretence whatever, nor to suffer any set of people to prescribe to them in matters of government or conscience; adding, that the petitioners would stand by them with their lives and fortunes." [Ibid. p. 328] Thus the parliament were embarrassed between the contenders for liberty and those for uniformity. An instance out of many may be produced of the opposition at this time manifested against the Baptists. Mr. Hansard Knollys having written a letter to Mr. John Dutton of Norwich, in which he had reflected on the intolerance of the Presbyterians, it happened to fall into the hands of some of the committee of Suffolk, who sent it to London, for the inspection of those in power, and it was afterwards published by Edwards, the author of *Gangraena*. As it seems to exhibit the views and feelings of the Baptists in reference to these measures, we shall here insert it.

"Beloved Brother,

"I salute you in the Lord. Your letter I received the last day of the week;; and upon the first day I did salute the brethren in your name, who re-salute you, and pray for you.--The city presbyterians have sent a letter to the synod, dated from Sion College, against any toleration, and they are fasting and praying at Sion College this day about farther contrivings against God's poor innocent ones; but God will doubtless answer them according to the idol of their own hearts. To-morrow there is a fast kept by both houses, and the synod at Westminster. They say it is to seek God about the establishing of worship according to their covenant.--They have first vowed, now they make inquiry. God will certainly take the crafty in their own snare, and make the wisdom of the wise foolishness; for he chooseth the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty. Salute the brethren that are with you. Farewell.

"Your brother in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, Hansard Knollys.

"London, the 13th day of the 11th month, called January, 1645." This year also Andrew Wyke was apprehended in the county of Suffolk for preaching and dipping. When he was brought before the committee of the county to be examined about his authority to preach, and the doctrines he held, he refused to give them any account of either, alleging that a freeman of England was not bound to answer any interrogatories, either to accuse himself or others; but if they had ought against him, they should lay their charge, and produce their proofs. This was considered as great obstinacy, and as a high contempt of authority, and therefore he was immediately sent to jail.

We have no account how long Mr. Wyke was imprisoned; but during his confinement a pamphlet was written either by himself or his friends, entitled, *The innocent in prison complaining*; or a true relation of the proceedings of the committee of Ipswich and the committee of Bury St. Edmunds in

the county of Suffolk, against one Andrew Wyke, a witness of Jesus in the same county, who was committed to prison June 3, 1646. This work gives a particular account of the proceedings against him, and exclaims bitterly against the committees for their persecuting principles and illegal conduct. The arguments which this grave assembly used to withhold from others the blessing of Christian liberty, came with a bad grace from men who had as earnestly pleaded for the privilege, while they were smarting under the lash of the prelates. "To comply with this request (say they) would open a gap for all sects to challenge such a liberty as their due: this liberty is denied by the churches in New England, and we have as great right to deny it as they. This desired forbearance will make a perpetual division in the church, and be a perpetual drawing away from the churches under the rule. Upon the same pretence, those who scruple infant baptism may withdraw from their churches, and so separate into another congregation; and so in that some practice may be scrupled, and they separate again. Are these divisions and sub-divisions as lawful as they are infinite? Or must we give that respect to the errors of men's consciences so as to satisfy their scruples by allowance of this liberty to them? Scruple of conscience is no cause of separation, nor doth it take off causeless separation from being schism, which may arise from errors of conscience as well as carnal and corrupt reason: therefore we conceive the causes of separation must be shewn to be such, *ex natura rei*, as will bear it out; and therefore we say that granting the liberty desired will give a countenance to schism."

Many instances of this spirit might be adduced; but we shall only notice the following. A work was published by the assembled in 1650, entitled, *A vindication of the Presbyterial government and ministry: with an exhortation to all ministers, elders, and people within the province of London, &c.* Published by the ministers and elders met together in a provincial assembly. George Walker, moderator; Arthur Jackson and Edmund Calamy, assessors; Roger Drake and Elidad Blackwell, scribes. This work contains the following expressions:--"Whatsoever doctrine is contrary to godliness, and opens a door to libertinism and profaneness, you must reject it as soul poison: such is the doctrine of a universal toleration in religion." The ministers in the different parts of the country seem to have been of the same mind. Those in Lancashire published a paper in 1748, called *The harmonious consent of the Lancashire ministers with their brethren in London*; in which they say, "A toleration would be putting a sword into a madman's hand; a cup of poison into the hand of a child; a letting loose of madmen with firebrands in their hands, and appointing a city of refuge in men's consciences for the devil to fly to; a laying a stumbling-block before the blind; a proclaiming liberty to the wolves to come into Christ's fold to prey upon the lambs: neither would it be to provide for tender consciences, but to take away all conscience." [Crosby, v. i. p. 190.]

We turn away with disgust from these intolerant sentiments, and rejoice that the attempt has been made, and that none of the predicted effects have ensued.

It was very common at this time for the enemies of the Baptists to represent the practice of immersion as indecent and dangerous, and to argue that it could not be according to divine authority, because a breach of the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill;" and the divine declaration, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Who would have thought that Mr. Richard Baxter could have expressed himself in language like the following: "My sixth argument shall be against the usual manner of their baptizing, as it is by dipping over head in a river, or other cold water. That which is a plain breach of the sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill, is no ordinance of God, but a most heinous sin. But the ordinary practice of baptizing over head and in cold water, as

necessary, is a plain breach of the sixth commandment, therefore it is no ordinance of God, but a heinous sin. And as Mr. Cradock shows in his book of gospel liberty, the magistrate ought to restrain it, to save the lives of his subjects--That this is flat murder, and no better, being ordinarily and generally used, is undeniable to any understanding man--And I know not what trick a covetous landlord can find out to get his tenants to die apace, that he may have new fines and heriots, likelier than to encourage such preachers, that he may get them all to turn Anabaptists. I wish that this device be not it which countenanceth these men: and covetous physicians, methinks, should not be much against them. Catarrhs and obstructions, which are the too great fountains of most mortal diseases in man's body, could scarce have a more notable means to produce them where they are not, or to increase them where they are. Apoplexies, lethargies, palsies, and all other comatous diseases would be promoted by it. So would cephalalgies, hemicranies, phthises, debility of the stomach, crudities, and almost all fevers, dysenteries, diarrhaeas, colics, iliac passions, convulsions, spasms, tremors, and so on. All hepatic, splenetic, and pulmonic persons, and hypochondriacs, would soon have enough of it. In a word, it is good for nothing but to dispatch men out of the world that are burdensome, and to ranken church yards--I conclude, if murder be a sin, then dipping ordinarily over head in England is a sin: and if those who would make it men's religion to murder themselves, and urge it upon their consciences as their duty, are not to be suffered in a commonwealth, any more than highway murderers; then judge how these Anabaptists, that teach the necessity of such dipping, are to be suffered--My seventh argument is also against another wickedness in their manner of baptizing, which is their dipping persons naked, which is very usual with many of them, or next to naked, as is usual with the modestest that I have heard of--If the minister must go into the water with the party--it will certainly tend to his death, though they may scape that go in but once. Would not vain young men come to a baptizing to see the nakedness of maids, and make a mere jest and sport of it?" [Baxter's Plain Scripture Proof, p. 434, 437.]

It is with pleasure we give a place to the reflections of the late venerable Abraham Booth on these remarks, which certainly merited severe animadversion, especially as they were published at a time when, as the sequel will show, they were calculated to produce some serious consequences towards those who were in the practice of baptizing by immersion.

"Were this representation just (says Mr. Booth,) we should have no reason to wonder if his following words expressed a fact: 'I am still more confirmed that a visible judgment of God doth still follow Anabaptizing wherever it comes.' It was not without reason, I presume, that Mr. Baxter made the following acknowledgement: 'I confess my style is naturally keen.' I am a little suspicious also that Dr. Owen had some cause to speak of his writings as follows:--'I verily believe that if a man had nothing else to do, should gather into a heap all the expressions which in his late books, confessions, and apologies, have a lovely aspect towards himself, as to ability, diligence, sincerity, on the one hand; with all those which are full of reproach and contempt towards others, on the other; the view of them could not but a little startle a man of so great modesty, and of such eminency in the mortification of pride, as Mr. Baxter is." Hence we learn that the Baptists are not the only persons who have felt the weight of Mr. Baxter's hands; so that if a recollection of others having suffered under his keen resentment can afford relief, the poor Baptists may take some comfort, and it is an old saying, Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.

"Besides, there is a precept of Horace which occurs to remembrance, and is of use in the present exigence. *Amara lento temperet risu*, is the advice to which I refer; and under the influence of this direction, we are led to say, Poor man! He seems to be afflicted with a violent hydrophobia! For he cannot think of any person being immersed in cold water, but he starts, he is convulsed, he is ready to die with fear.--Immersion, you must know, is like Pandora's box, and pregnant with a great part of those diseases which Milton's angel presented to the view of our first father. A compassionate regard therefore to the lives of his fellow-creatures compels Mr. Baxter to solicit the aid of magistrates against this destructive plunging, and to cry out in the spirit of an exclamation once heard in the Jewish temple, Ye men of Israel, help! or Baptist ministers will depopulate your country.--Know you not that these plunging teachers are shrewdly suspected of being pensioned by avaricious landlords, to destroy the lives of your liege subjects? Exert your power: apprehend the delinquents: appoint an *Auto da Fe*: let the venal dippers be baptized in blood, and thus put a salutary stop to this pestiferous practice.--What a pity it is that the celebrated *History of Cold Bathing*, by Sir John Floyer, was not published half a century sooner! It might, perhaps, have preserved this good man from a multitude of painful paroxysms occasioned by the thought of immersion in cold water.--Were I seriously (adds Mr. Booth) to put a query to these assertions of Mr. Baxter, it should be with a little variation in the words of David, What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou FALSE pen? Were the temper which dictated the preceding caricature to receive its just reproof, it might be in the language of Michael, The Lord rebuke thee.

"Before I dismiss this extraordinary language of Mr. Baxter (adds Mr. Booth) it is proper to be observed, that the change of shocking indecency, which he lays with so much confidence against the Baptists of those times, was not suffered by them to pass without animadversion. No, he was challenged to make it good: it was denied, it was confuted by them. With a view to which Dr. Wall says, 'The English Antipedobaptists need not have made so great an outcry against Mr. Baxter for his saying that they baptized naked; for if they had, it had been no more than the primitive Christians did.' But surely they had reason to complain of misrepresentations; such misrepresentation as tended to bring the greatest odium upon their sentiment and practice. Besides, however ancient the practice charged upon them was, its antiquity could not have justified their conduct except it had been derived from divine command, or apostolic example; neither of which appears." [Pedobap. Exam. vol. i. p. 263-265.] When a circumstance is related which took place in the year 1646, it will not be thought that Mr. Booth has treated the misrepresentations of Mr. Baxter with too great severity. That to which we refer is the following. Mr. Samuel Oates, a very popular preacher and great disputant, taking a journey into Essex, preached in several parts of that, and one of the adjoining counties, and baptized great numbers of people, especially about Bocking, Braintree, and Farling. This made the Presbyterians in those parts very uneasy, especially the ministers, who endeavoured to set the magistrates against him, in which they at length succeeded. The bitter Edwards has printed a letter, sent him, as he says, by a learned and godly minister in Essex, which says, "No magistrate in the country dare meddle with him; for they say they have hunted these out of the country into their dens in London, and imprisoned some, and they are released and sent like decoy-ducks into the country, to fetch in more; so that they go into divers parts of Essex with the greatest confidence and insolency that can be imagined." [Gangraena, p. 2,3.]

It happened that among the hundreds whom Mr. Oates had baptized, a young woman, named Anne Martin, died a few weeks after; and this they attributed to her being dipped in cold water. They accordingly prevailed on the magistrates to send him to prison, and put him in irons as a murderer, in order to his trial at the next assizes. He was tried at Chelmsford, and great endeavours were used to bring him in guilty. But many credible witnesses were produced, and among others the mother of the young woman, who all testified that the said Anne Martin was in better health for several days after her baptism than she had been for several years before. The jury, from the evidence produced, pronounced a verdict of not guilty, which it is thought greatly mortified his enemies who were concerned in the prosecution. [Crosby, vol. i. p. 238.] So great was the enmity against Mr. Oates, that on his going to Dunmow in Essex not long after this, some of the town's-people dragged him out of the house where he was, and threw him into a river, boasting that they had thoroughly dipped him.

Mr. Henry Denne was apprehended again in June this year, and committed to prison at Spalding in Lincolnshire, for preaching and baptizing by immersion. His chief prosecutors were two justices of the peace. They sent the constable to apprehend him on the Lord's day morning, with orders that he should keep him in custody to prevent his preaching; for the people resorting so much to him was no small occasion of their taking offence. Upon the hearing his case, there was but one witness of the crime with which he was charged, viz. dipping; as he refused to confess himself guilty.

It will give the reader a better view of the proceedings in those times, to see the two examinations that were taken on this occasion.

"The examination of Anne Jarrat, of Spalding, spinster, June 22, 1646, before Master Thomas Irbie and Master John Harrington, commissioners of the peace.

"This examine saith, on Wednesday last, in the night about eleven or twelve of the clock, Anne Stennet and Anne Smith, the servants of John Mackernesse, did call out this examine to go with them to the little croft, with whom this examine did go; and coming thither, Master Denne and John Mackernesse, and a stranger or two, followed after: and being come to the river side, Master Denne went into the water, and there did baptize Anne Stennet, Anne Smith, Godfrey Roote, and John Sowter in this examine's presence. Anne Jarrat, (w) her mark."

"June 21, 1646. Lincolne Holland, Henry Denne, of Caxton in the county of Cambridge, examined before John Harrington and Thomas Irby, esquires, two of his majesty's justices of the peace.

"This examine saith, that he liveth at Caxton aftersaid, but doth exercise at Elsly within a mile of his own house; and saith that he took orders about sixteen years since from the bishop of St. Davis's; and that on Monday last he came to Spalding, being invited thither by John Mackernesse to come to his house. And that he hath exercised his gifts about four times in several places in Spalding; viz. at the house of John Mackernesse and Mr. Enston.--As for baptizing any, he doth not confess. John Harrington."

Though this zealous magistrate spoke of committing Mr. Denne to Lincoln gaol, yet it does not appear that he carried his threat into execution. Had this been the case, it is likely Edwards, who relates this affair of his examination, would have commended him for his zeal in punishing such an evil doer; who in his opinion, and in Mr. Baxter's, was a breaker of the sixth commandment.

Some very severe ordinances were passed by this parliament, which were aimed at all dissenters, especially ministers: and had the spirit of the times permitted them to be carried into effect, there is no doubt but great numbers would have severely suffered from their operation.

It is a little extraordinary that in the next year, 1647, considerable favour was manifested towards the Baptists.--Perhaps it arose from the policy of Cromwell, wishing to check the overgrown power of the Presbyterians, or from some of his officers and other persons of considerable influence embracing their sentiments, and using their interest in their behalf. In a declaration of the Lords and Commons, published March 4, 1647, it is said, "The name of Anabaptism hath indeed contracted much odium by reason of the extravagant opinions of some of that name in Germany, tending to the disturbance of the government, and the peace of all states, which opinions and practices we abhor and detest. But for their opinion against the baptism of infants, it is only a difference about a circumstance of time in the administration of an ordinance, wherein in former ages, as well as in this, learned men have differed both in opinion and practice.--And though we could wish that all men would satisfy themselves, and join with us in our judgment and practice in this point; yet herein we hold it fit that men should be convinced by the word of God, with great gentleness and reason, and not beaten out of it by force and violence." [Crosby, vol. i. p. 196.] This declaration discovered much of a true Christian spirit; and happy would it have been if all government had always acted on such principles. But it is lamentable to observe, that the very next year, a more severe law was passed than any that had been made in England since the Reformation. It bore date May 2, 1648, and was entitled, An ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, for the punishment of blasphemies and heresies. One article was, "Whosoever shall say that the baptism of infants is unlawful, or that such baptism is void, and that such persons ought to be baptized again, and in pursuance thereof shall baptize any person formerly baptized; or shall say the church government by presbytery is antichristian or unlawful, shall upon conviction by the oath of two witnesses, or by his own confession, be ordered to renounce his said error in the public congregation of the parish where the offence was committed, and in case of refusal, he shall be committed to prison till he find sureties that he shall not publish or maintain the said error any more." [Crosby, vol. i. p. 203.]

It is likely that the death of the king in this year, and the confusion which resulted from it, might prevent this cruel and shameful ordinance from being carried into effect, as we do not hear that any were prosecuted upon it. From Whitlocke we learn, that the parliament after this event were so intent on religion, that they devoted Friday in every week to devise ways and means for promoting it.--Their attention appears to have been particularly directed to Wales, where the people were so destitute of the means of religious knowledge that they had neither bibles nor catechisms. Their clergymen were ignorant and idle, so that they had scarcely a sermon from one quarter of a year to another, nor was there a sufficient maintenance for such as were capable of instructing them. The parliament taking their case into consideration, passed an act, February 22, 1649, "for the better propagation and preaching of the gospel in Wales, for the ejecting of scandalous ministers and schoolmasters, and redress of some grievances, to continue in force three years." [Neal, vol. iv. p. 15.] The principal amongst the commissioners appointed was Mr. Vavasor Powell, a very zealous and laborious minister of the Baptist denomination. The good effects of their regulations were soon discovered; "for," says Mr. Whitlocke, speaking of the year 1652, "by this time there were a hundred and fifty good preachers in the thirteen Welsh counties, most of whom preached

three or four times a week; they were placed in every market town; and in most great towns two schoolmasters, able, learned, and university men; the tythes were all employed to the uses directed by act of parliament; that is, to the maintenance of godly ministers, to the payment of taxes and officers, to schoolmasters, and the fifths to the wives and children of the ejected clergy." [Whitlocke's Memorial, p. 518.] This account of Whitlocke's is valuable, as it serves to contradict what is asserted by Mr. Baxter respecting this transaction. Speaking of the Little Parliament, or what was called Barebone's Parliament, he says, "This conventicle made an act that magistrates should marry people instead of ministers, and then they came to the business of tythes and ministers. Before this, Harrison, being authorized thereto, had at once put down all the parish ministers in Wales, because that most of them were ignorant and scandalous, and had set up a few itinerant preachers in their stead, who were for number incompetent to so great a change, there being but one to many of those wide parishes. So that the people having a sermon but once in so many weeks, and nothing else in the mean time, were ready to turn Papists or any thing else. And this is the plight which the Anabaptists and other sectaries would have brought the whole land to. And all was with this design, that the people might not be tempted to think the parish churches to be true churches, or infant baptism true baptism, or themselves true Christians; but might be convinced that they must be made Christians and churches in the way of the Baptists and separatists. Hereupon, Harrison became the head of the Anabaptists and sectaries, and Cromwell now began to design the heading of a soberer party that were for learning and ministry, while yet he was the equal Protector of all. At length it was put to the vote in this parliament, whether all the parish ministers in England should at once be put down or not.--And it was but accidentally carried in the negative by two voices. And it was taken for granted that tythes and universities would next be voted down; and now Cromwell must be their saviour, or they must perish." [Baxter's Life and Times, p. 67,68.]

Mr. Baxter supposed that Cromwell hurried on these measures to accomplish the design he had formed of obtaining the supreme power. This event certainly succeeded them; but whether it was occasioned by them, it is difficult to say. Respecting the conduct of this parliament, Mr. Neal observes, that nothing which Mr. Baxter charges them with appears in their acts. "When (says he) the city of London petitioned that more learned and approved ministers might be sent into the country to preach the gospel; that their settled maintenance by law might be confirmed, and their just properties preserved, and that the universities might be zealously countenanced and encouraged; the petitioners had the thanks of that house; and the committee gave it as their opinion, that commissioners should be sent into the several counties, who should have power to eject scandalous and insufficient ministers, and to settle others in their room.--They were to appoint preaching in all vacant places, that none might have above three miles from a place of public worship. That such as were approved for public ministers should have the maintenance provided by the laws; and that if any scrupled the payment of tythes, the neighbouring justices of peace should settle the value, which the owner of the land should be obliged to pay; but as for the tythes themselves, they were of opinion that the incumbents and impropiators had a right in them, and therefore they could not be taken away till they were satisfied." [Neal, vol. iv. p. 69.] The act respecting marriages was confirmed by the Protector's parliament in 1656; so that it is pretty evident this measure was not so despicable as Mr. Baxter represents it.--But it should seem upon the whole that Mr. Neal is right when he says, "They were most of them men of piety, but no great politicians. The acts of this convention (he adds) were of little significance; for when they found the

affairs of the nation too intricate, and the several parties too stubborn to yield to their ordinances, they wisely resigned, and surrendered back their sovereignty into the same hands that gave it them, after they had sat five months and twelve days." The members of this parliament seem to have thought that the period predicted by Daniel was come, when "the saints of the Most High should take and possess the kingdom for ever and ever." But many events afterwards took place which convinced them that they were sadly mistaken. From the character and talents of some of those ministers whose names have been mentioned in this chapter as the pastors of the Baptist churches, it will not be necessary to use much argument in order to remove the impression which the gross misrepresentations of Mr. Neal concerning them are likely to make on those who depend upon the accuracy of his statement.

He says, "The advocates of this doctrine [baptism] were for the most part of the meanest of the people; their preachers were generally illiterate, and went about the counties making proselytes of all that would submit to their immersion, without a due regard to the principles of religion on their moral characters." The only reason he assigns for this foul slander is, that Mr. Baxter says, "There are but few of them that had not been the opposers and troublers of faithful ministers; that in this they strengthened the hands of the profane, and that in general, reproach of ministers, faction, pride, and scandalous practices, were fomented in their way."

Let the reader judge, when he has made due allowance for the bitterness of Mr. Baxter towards them, whether even this will justify the conclusion, "that they paid not a due regard to the principles and characters of those whom they baptized?" It should seem that Mr. Neal's conscience reproached him for writing this libel upon the majority of the advocates of this doctrine; for he immediately adds, "But still there were amongst them some learned, and a great many sober and devout Christians, who disallowed of the imprudence of their country friends. The two most learned divines that espoused their cause were Mr. Francis Cornwell, M.A. of Emmanuel College, and Mr. John Tombes, B.A. educated in the university of Oxford, a person of incomparable parts, well versed in the Greek and Hebrew languages, and a most excellent disputant. He wrote several letters to Mr. Selden, against infant baptism, and published a Latin Exercitation upon the same subject, containing several arguments, which he presented to the committee appointed by the assembly to put a stop to the progress of this opinion." [Neal, vol. iii. p. 162, 163.] This eulogium on Mr. Cornwell and Mr. Tombes appears to be designed as a balsam for the wound which he had inflicted. But why did he not tell all the truth respecting Mr. Baxter's opinion?--"And for the Anabaptists themselves, (says he,) though I have written and said so much against them; as I found that most of them were persons of zeal in religion, so many of them were sober and godly people, and differed from others but in the point of infant baptism, or at most in the point of predestination and free-will, and perseverance." [Crosby, vol. iii. Pref. p. 55.] Had Mr. Neal a knowledge of this testimony of Mr. Baxter to the character of many of them being sober and godly people, and most of them persons of zeal in religion? Surely if he had, he would either have been prevented from dealing in such illiberal censures; or if he had made use of such provoking language, he would have taken an opportunity to have retracted his declarations, like as Mr. Baxter had done in his piece on confirmation. "Upon a review of my arguments (says he) with Mr. Tombes upon the controversy about infant baptism, I find I have used too many provoking words, for which I am heartily sorry, and desire pardon both of God and him." [Ibid.] The ingenuousness of this acknowledgment is so creditable to Mr. Baxter's piety, that it compels us to forgive him the

injury he has done us in furnishing Mr. Neal with matter for his slander. However, if he had made no such acknowledgement, we have no doubt that all impartial persons who know any thing of the character of Kiffin, Knollys, Jessey, and many others who united with them on a conviction of the truth of their sentiments at a very early period, and were the principal persons by whom their numbers were increased, would have been satisfied that he had defamed them; especially when they recollected that they were greatly opposed by the government and the assembly, and were "THE SECT EVERY WHERE SPOKEN AGAINST."

Before we close this chapter we shall notice some events which transpired at this period, which will give the reader a view of the sentiments of the Baptists on the important subject of liberty of conscience. We shall introduce the subject by referring to a letter that was published in England in 1652, giving an account of the sufferings of the Baptists in America, particularly of a Mr. Obadiah Holmes, an Englishman, who, for presuming to baptize a person in the Massachusetts colony, was apprehended, imprisoned, and fined; and on refusing to pay the fine was severely flogged. This letter was addressed, "Unto the well beloved John Spilsbury, William Kiffin, and to the rest that in London stand fast in the faith, and continue to walk stedfastly in that order of the gospel which was once delivered unto the saints by Jesus Christ, Obadiah Holmes, an unworthy witness that Jesus is the Lord, and of late a prisoner for Jesus' sake at Boston."

Before we give the letter it may be proper to glance at the circumstances of this disgraceful affair.

Mr. John Clarke, and Mr. Obadiah Holmes, who is said to have been descended from a good family in England, and another brother, went from Rhode Island to visit a brother at Lynn beyond Boston, July 15, 1651, and held worship with him the next day being Lord's day. But Mr. Clarke could not get through his first sermon before he and his friends were seized by an officer, and carried to a tavern, and to the parish worship in the afternoon. At the close of the service Mr. Clarke spoke a few words, and then a magistrate sent them into confinement, and the next day to Boston prison. On July 31, they were tried before the court of assistants, by whom Clarke was fined twenty pounds, Holmes thirty, and John Crandal five. When Judge Endicot gave this sentence against them, he said--"You go up and down, and secretly insinuate things into those that are weak, but you cannot maintain it before our ministers; you may try and dispute with them." Upon this Mr. Clarke sent a letter from the prison to the court, offering to dispute upon his principles with any of their ministers; but his offer was not accepted. He was however, with Crandal released from prison, and desired to depart out of the colony as soon as possible. But the magistrates determined to make an example of Mr. Holmes, and after keeping him in prison till September, he was brought out to be punished in Boston.--Two magistrates, named Norvel and Flint, were present to see the sentence properly executed. This affair will be best related by an extract from the above mentioned printed letter.

Mr. Holmes says--"I desired to speak a few words, but Mr. Norvel answered, It is not time now to speak: whereupon I took leave, and said, Men, brethren, fathers, and countrymen, I beseech you to give me leave to speak a few words, and the rather because here are many spectators to see me punished, and I am to seal with my blood, if God give me strength, that which I hold and practice in reference to the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus. That which I have to say in brief is this, although I am no disputant, yet seeing I am to seal with my blood what I hold, I am ready to defend by the word, and to dispute that point with any that shall come forth to withstand it.

Mr. Norvel answered, now was no time to dispute: then said I, I desire to give an account of the faith and order which I hold; and this I desired three times; but in comes Mr. Flint, and saith to the executioner, Fellow, do thine office; for this fellow would but make a long speech to delude the people: so I being resolved to speak, told the people, That which I am to suffer for is the word of God, and testimony of Jesus Christ.--No, saith Mr. Norvel, it is for your errors and going about to deceive the people. To which I replied, Not for errors, for in all the time of my imprisonment, wherein I was left alone, my brethren being gone, which of all your ministers came to convince me of error? And when upon the governor's words a motion was made for a public dispute, and often renewed upon fair terms, and desired by hundreds, what was the reason it was not granted? Mr. Nowel told me, it was his fault that went away and would not dispute, but that the writings will clear at large. Still Mr. Flint calls the man to do his office; so before and in the time of his pulling off my clothes I continued speaking; telling them that I had so learned, that for all Boston I would not give my body into their hands thus to be bruised upon another account, yet upon this I would not give the hundredth part of a wampum peague (the sixth part of a penny] to free it out of their hands; and that I made as much conscience of unbuttoning one button, as I did of paying thirty pounds in reference thereunto. I told them moreover, that the Lord having manifested his love towards me, in giving me repentance towards God and faith in Christ, and so to be baptized in water by a messenger of Jesus, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, wherein I have fellowship with him in his death, burial, and resurrection, I am now come to be baptized in afflictions by your hands, that so I may have furtehr fellowship with my Lord, and am not ashamed of his sufferings, for by his stripes am I healed. And as the man began to lay the strokes on my back, I said to the people, though my flesh should fail, and my spirit should fail, yet God would not fail; so it pleased the Lord to come in and to fill my heart and tongue as a vessel full, and with an audible voice I broke forth, praying the Lord not to lay this sin to their charge, and telling the people that now I found he did not fail me, and therefore now I should trust him for ever who failed me not; for in truth as the strokes fell upon me, I had such a spiritual manifestation of God's presence as I never had before, and the outward pain was so removed from me that I could well bear it, yea, and in a manner felt it not, although it was grievous, as the spectators said, the man striking with all his strength, spitting in his hand three times, with a three-corded whip, giving me therewith thirty strokes. When he had loosed me from the post, having joyfulness in my heart and cheerfulness in my countenance, as the spectators observed, I told the magistrates, You have struck me with roses; and said moreover, although the Lord had made it easy to me, yet I pray God it may not be laid to your charge.

"After this many came to me, rejoicing to see the power of God manifested in weak flesh; but sinful flesh takes occasion hereby to bring others into trouble, informs the magistrates hereof, and so two more are apprehended as for contempt of authority; their names are John Nazel and John Spur, who came indeed and did shake me by the hand, but did use no words of reproach or contempt unto any. No man can prove that the first spoke any thing; and for the second, he only said, Blessed be the Lord; yet these two for taking me by the hand, and thus saying, after I had received my punishment, were sentenced to pay forty shillings or to be whipt; but were resolved against paying the fine. Nevertheless, after one or two days imprisonment, one paid John Spur's fine, and he was released; and after six or seven days imprisonment of brother Hazel, even the day when he should have suffered, another paid his, and so he escaped, and the next day went to visit a friend about six miles from Boston, where he fell sick the same day, and without ten days he

ended his life. When I was come to the prison, it pleased God to stir up the heart of an old acquaintance of mine, who with much tenderness, like the good Samaritan, poured oil into my wounds, and plastered my sores; but there was presently information given of what was done, and enquiry made who was the surgeon, and it was commonly reported he should be sent for; but what was done I yet know not. Now thus it hath pleased the Father of mercies to dispose of the matter, that my bonds and imprisonment have been no hindrance to the gospel; for before my return, some submitted to the Lord, and were baptized, and divers were put upon the way of enquiry: and now being advised to make my escape by night, because it was reported that there were warrants for me, I departed; and the next day after, while I was on my journey, the constable came to search at the house where I lodged; so I escaped their hands, and by the good hand of my heavenly Father brought home again to my near relations, my wife and eight children, the people of our town and Providence, having taken pains to meet me four miles in the woods, where we rejoiced together in the Lord. Thus I have given you, as briefly as I can, a true relation of things; wherefore, my brethren, rejoice with me in the Lord, and give all glory to him, for he is worthy; to whom be praise for evermore; to whom I commit you, and put up my earnest prayers for you, that by my late experience, who trusted in God and have not been deceived, you may trust in him perfectly: wherefore, my dearly beloved brethren, trust in the Lord, and you shall not be ashamed nor confounded. So I rest, your's in the bonds of charity, Obadiah Holmes. " The publishing of this letter in England appears to have produced a powerful sensation on the public mind, and to have excited great disapprobation of this persecuting spirit and conduct manifested by these American Independents. Sir Richard Saltonstall who was an early magistrate in the Massachuset's colony when Boston was first planted, but was now in London, wrote to the ministers of Boston, Mr. Cotton, and Mr. Wilson, and said:-- "Reverend and dear friends, whom I unfeignedly love and respect,

"It doth not a little grieve my spirit to hear what sad things are reported of your tyranny and persecution in New England; that you fine, whip, and imprison men for their consciences. First, you compel those to come into your assemblies as you know will not join with you in worship, and when they shew their dislike thereof, or witness against it, then you stir up you or magistrates to punish them for such (as you conceive) public affronts. Truly, friends, this practice of compelling any in matters of worship to do that whereof they are not fully persuaded, is to make them sin, for so the apostle tells us, Rom. 14:23. and many are made hypocrites thereby, conforming in their outward man for fear of punishment. We pray for you, and wish you prosperity every way; hoping the Lord would have given you so much light and love there, that you might have been eyes to God's people here, and not to practise those courses in a wilderness which you went so far to prevent. These rigid ways have laid you very low in the hearts of the saints. I do assure you I have heard them pray in public assemblies, that the Lord would give you meek and humble spirits, not to strive so much for uniformity, as to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. When I was in Holland about the beginning of our wars, I remember some Christians there that then had serious thoughts of planting in New England, desired me to write to the governor thereof, to know if those who differ from you in opinion, yet holding the same foundations in religion, as Anabaptists, Seekers, Antinomians, and the like, may be permitted to live among you; to which I received this short answer from your then governor, Mr. Dudley--"God forbid (said he) that our love for the truth should be grown so cold that we should tolerate errors." The good sense and Christian spirit manifested in this expostulation, one would have thought should have convinced Christians

of the impropriety of casting stumblingblocks in their brethren's way, and that they would have acknowledged their faults, and mourned on account of their folly and wickedness; instead of which we find the Reverend. Mr. Cotton, an eminent minister at Boston, justifying their conduct in the following letter, sent as an answer to Sir Richard Saltonstall.

"Honoured and dear Sir,

"My brother Wilson and self do both of us acknowledge your love, as otherwise formerly, so now in the late lines we received from you, that you grieve in spirit to hear daily complaints against us; it springeth from your compassion for our afflictions therein, wherein we see just cause to desire you may never suffer like injury in yourself, but may find others to compassionate and to condole with you. For when the complaints you hear of are against our tyranny and persecution in finding, whipping, and imprisoning men for their consciences, be pleased to understand we look at such complaints as altogether injurious in respect of ourselves, who had no hand or tongue at all to promote either the coming of the persons you aim at into our assemblies, or their punishment for their carriage there. Righteous judgments will not take up reports, much less reports against the innocent. The cry of the sins of Sodom was great and loud, and reached unto heaven, yet the righteous God (giving us an example what to do in the like cases) he would first go down to see whether their crimes were altogether according to their cry, before he would proceed to judgment. Gen. 17:20,21. And when he did find the truth of the cry, he did not wrap up all alike promiscuously in the judgment, but spared such as he found innocent. We are amongst those (if you knew us better) you would account of (as the matron of Israel spoke of herself,) peaceable in Israel, 2 Sam. 20:19. Yet neither are we so vast in our indulgence of toleration as to think the men you spake of suffered an unjust censure. For one of them, Obadiah Holmes, being an excommunicate person himself out of a church in Plymouth Patent, came into his jurisdiction, and took upon him to baptize, which I think himself will not say he was compelled here to perform. And he was not ignorant that the re-baptizing of an elder person, and that by a private person out of office and under excommunication, are all of them manifest contentious against the order and government of our churches, established we know by God's law, and he knoweth by the laws of the country. And we conceive we may safely appeal to the ingenuity of your own judgment, whether it would be tolerated in any civil state, for a stranger to come and practise contrary to the known principles of the church estate? As for his whipping, it was more voluntarily chosen by him than inflicted on him. His censure by the court was to have paid, as I know, thirty pounds, or else to be whipt; his fine was offered to be paid by friends for him freely; but he chose rather to be whipt; in which case, if his sufferings of stripes was any worship of God at all, surely it could be accounted no better than will-worship. The other, Mr. Clarke, was wiser in that point, and his offence was less, so was his fine less, and himself, as I hear, was contented to have it paid for him, whereupon he was released. The imprisonment of either of them was no detriment. I believe they fared neither of them better at home; and I am sure Holmes had not been so well clad for many years before.

"But be pleased to consider this point a little father.--You think to compel men in matter of worship is to make them sin, according to Rom. 14:23. If the worship be lawful in itself, the magistrate compelling him to come to it, compelleth him not to sin, but the sin is in his will that needs to be compelled to a Christian duty. Josiah compelled all Israel, or which is all one, made to serve the Lord their God, 2 Chron. 34:33. Yet his act herein was not blamed, but recorded amongst his virtuous actions. For a governor to suffer any within his gates to profane the sabbath, is a sin

against the fourth commandment, both in the private householder, and in the magistrate; and if he requires them to present themselves before the Lord, the magistrate sinneth not, nor doth the subject sin so great a sin as if he did refrain to come. But you say it doth but make men hypocrites, to compel men to conform the outward man for fear of punishment. If he did so, yet better be hypocrites than profane persons. Hypocrites give God part of his due, the outward man, but the profane person giveth God neither outward or inward man. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, we have tolerated in our church some Anabaptists, some Antinomians, and some Seekers, and do so still at this day."

We have happily arrived at the period when arguments are not necessary to prove the absurdity of this reasoning.--It is surprising that Mr. Cotton did not recollect the address of the Apostle John when he said, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him because he followeth not with us." To which the King of Zion replied, "Forbid him not: for he who is not against us is for us." [Luke 9:49,50.] This severity was not so much the result of their disposition, as of their principles; which, as Sir Richard Saltonstall told them, led them to strive more for UNIFORMITY than to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. UNIFORMITY was the IDOL which they had set up; and while the magistrate was willing to use his sword to compel all to fall down and worship it, they felt no compunction in sacrificing the liberty, the property, the case, or even the lives of their fellow Christians, rather than it should seem they were so cold in defence of truth as to tolerate error.

It is an awful historical fact, a fact written in indelible characters with the blood of thousands, that all denominations of Christians who have enforced the necessity of uniformity in religion by the sword of the magistrate, have been all guilty of the dreadful crime of persecuting the followers of Jesus. Regardless of the divine precept, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart," they have imitated the worst spirit ever manifested by the apostles of Christ, when they said, "Lord, shall we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, as Elias did?" [Luke ix. 51.] And they have done this as Christians, thinking to do God service; and professedly out of regard to divine authority. When the magistrate has been on the side of any who held this principle, they have found no difficulty in proving the divine right of their form of church government. Thus the Papists pleaded the divine right of Popery, and the universality of the church of Rome.--The English Reformers, who objected to this, soon pleaded for the divine right of Episcopacy, and the universality of the church of England.--Many of the Puritans, who dissented on account of these sentiments, no sooner overthrew Episcopacy, but they pleaded for the divine right of the Presbytery, and the universality of their provincial assemblies. And the Independents, who had fled to the wilds of America because they would form churches not subject to external control and influence, were found in their turn pleading the divine right of Independency, and the universality of their authority in the province where their churches existed. The principles we have condemned have long since been laid aside in the government of America. Perhaps this government was the first which did that for religion, which the religion of Jesus Christ claimed from the governments of the world, namely to listen to the sage advice of Gamaliel to the Jews--TO LET IT ALONE. For this it appears they are indebted to a Baptist, Mr. Roger Williams, who left England to settle in America in 1631. He had been a minister in the church of England, but left it because he could not conform to the ceremonies and oaths imposed in the establishment. When he came to Boston, he objected also to the force in religious affairs which they exercised there. For speaking against this conduct

he was banished from the Massachusetts colony, and after great difficulties and hardships founded the town of Providence, and obtained a charter for Rhode Island.

While Mr. Williams was in London to procure this charter in 1644, he published a book called "The bloody tenet of persecution for the cause of conscience." This work appeared to Mr. Cotton of Boston of such dangerous tendency that he published an answer to it in 1647, which he called "The bloody tenet washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." Mr. Williams replied to this in 1652, and entitled it, "The bloody tenet yet more bloody by Mr. Cotton's endeavour to wash it white." The great principle which Mr. Williams contended for was, "Persons may with less sin be forced to marry whom they cannot love, than to worship where they cannot believe;" and he denied that "Christ had appointed the civil sword as a remedy against false teachers." To which Mr. Cotton replied, "It is evident that the civil sword was appointed for a remedy in this case, Deut. 13. And appointed it was by that angel of God's presence, whom God promised to send with his people, as being unwilling to go with them himself, Ex. 33:2,3.--And that angel was Christ, whom they tempted in the wilderness." 1 Cor. 10:9. And therefore it cannot truly be said, that the Lord Jesus never appointed the civil sword for a remedy in such a case; for he did expressly appoint it in the old testament; nor did he ever abrogate it in the new. The reason for the law, which is the life of the law, is of eternal force and equity in all ages, Thou shalt surely kill him, because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God. Deut. 13:9,10. The reason is of moral, that is, of perpetual equity, to put to death any apostate seducing idolator, or heretic, who seeketh to thrust away the souls of God's people from the Lord their God." [Backus's Hist. of America Abridged.]

Mr. Williams clearly saw the result of these principles, and in his work he addressed a letter to Governor Endicott, in which he said, "By your principles and conscience, such as you count heretics, blasphemers, and seducers, must be put to death. You cannot be faithful to your principles and conscience without it." About eight years after this Governor Endicott did put to death four persons, and pleaded conscience for the propriety of his conduct. [Backus's Hist. of America Abridged.]

Those who would wish to see more on this subject, may find it in Backus's History of the American Baptists; and if we are not deceived the account which is there given of the principles and spirit manifested by Mr. Williams, will prove this important remark of the author, that "he established the first government on earth since the rise of Antichrist, which gave equal liberty, civil and religious, to all men therein." [Ibid.]

We have dwelt the longer on this subject because these principles were so imperfectly understood at this time. The publishing of Mr. Williams's book in England gave great offence to the Presbyterians, who exclaimed against it as full of heresy and blasphemy. But his principles having been tried, and found to be the soundest policy; both England and America should unite in erecting a monument to perpetuate the name of Roger Williams, as the first governor who ever pleaded that liberty of conscience was the birthright of every person, and granted it to those who differed in opinion from himself when he had the power to withhold it. When it is recollected that so early as the year 1615, the Baptists in England pleaded for liberty of conscience as the right of all Christians, in their work entitled, "Persecution judged and condemned:"--that this appears to have been the uniform sentiment of the denomination at large, and that Mr. Williams was very intimate with them at a very early period, which is evident from the manner in which he speaks of Mr.

Samuel Howe of London:--It is highly probable that these principles which rendered him such a blessing in America and the world were first maintained and taught by the English Baptists.

09. A.D. 1653-1660 Part 1

CHAPTER VII.

A.D. 1653 - 1660 The government was now altered, and, instead of being in the parliament, was vested in a single person. This was the general, Oliver Cromwell, whose title was to be His Highness, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of the dominions thereunto belonging. The Baptists in the army seem to have been apprehensive that he entertained designs against them, as appears from the following letter, which we insert, not because we approve of its spirit, but because it may cast some light upon the history of the times. It was probably written by some of his officers, who were envious at his exaltation, and offended that he had deserted his republican sentiments. It is entitled, A short discovery of his Highness the Lord Protector's intentions touching the Anabaptists in the army, and all such as are against his reforming things in the church; which was first communicated by a Scotch lord who is called Twidle; but is now come to the ear of the Anabaptists: upon which there are propounded thirty five queries for his highness to answer to his conscience. By a well wisher to the Anabaptists' prosperity, and all the rest of the separatists in England.

"TO HIS HIGHNESS THE LORD PROTECTOR,

"My Lord,

"There is some intelligence abroad, which I desire to communicate in a private way, lest I become a prey to the malice or envy of the roaring lion. But to the matter intended, and that is this:--It seems your highness being discoursing with a Scotch lord, who is called the lord Twidle, you were pleased to say that there was something amiss in the church and state, which you would reform as soon as may be. Of those that were amiss in the state, some were done and the rest were doing; and as for those things that were amiss in the church, you hoped to rectify them by degrees, as convenient opportunity presented itself; but before you could do this work, the Anabaptists must be taken out of the army; and this you could not do with sharp corrosive medicines, but it must be done by degrees. From which there are two things observable, 1. The work. 2. The way you intend to do this work.

"First, to the work; and that is church-work. It seems you intend to follow the steps of them that are gone before, which could not be content to meddle with state affairs, and to make laws and statutes, and impose them upon the people as rules of divine worship. And this is the work you intend to be at, under pretence of correcting error, and so to destroy truth.

"But who could have thought, when you made your last speech to Parliament, when your tongue was so sweetly tipped for the liberty of conscience, reproving the parliament for having a finger on their brother's conscience; who could have imagined that then heard you that you would have been so soon at the same trade, unless he had supposed a fountain could have sent forth sweet water and bitter? But,

"Secondly, the way you intend to take to bring about this design, is two-fold. 1. To purge the army of the Anabaptists. 2. To do it by degrees. But, Oliver, is this thy design? And is this the way to be rid of the Anabaptists? And is this the reason, because they hinder the things amiss in the church? I confess they have been enemies to the Presbyterian church government; and so were you at Dunbar in Scotland; or at least you seemed to be so by your words and actions; for you spake as pure independency as any of us all then; and made this an argument why we should fight stoutly; because we had the prayers of the Independents and baptized churches. So highly did you seem to love the Anabaptists then, that you did not only invite them into the army, but entertain them in your family; but it seems the case is altered. But, I pray do not deceive yourself, nor let the priests deceive you; for the Anabaptists are men that will not be shuffled out of their birth-rights, as free born people of England. And have they not filled your towns, your cities, your provinces, your islands, your castles, your navies, your tents, your armies, (except that which went to the West Indies, which prospers so well) your court?--your very council is not free; only we have left your temples for yourself to worship in. So that I believe it will be an hard thing to root them out; although you tell the Scottish lord you will do it by degrees, as he reports.

"May it please you highness seriously to consider what hath been said, and answer these ensuing queries to your own conscience:

"1. Whether you highness had come to the height of honour and greatness you are now come to, if the Anabaptists, so called, had been so much your enemies as they were your friends?

"2. Whether the Anabaptists were ever unfaithful, either to the commonwealth in general, or to your highness in particular? And if not, then what is the reason of your intended dismissal?

"3. Whether the Anabaptists be not as honest now as in the year 1650 and 51, and 52, &c.? And if so, why not as useful now as then?

"4. Whether the Anabaptists are not to be commended for their integrity, which had rather keep faith and a good conscience, although it may lose them their employments, than to keep their employments with the loss of both?

"5. Whether the Anabaptists may not as justly endeavour to eat out the bowels of your government, as your highness may endeavour to eat them out of their employments?

"6. Whether the Anabaptists did not come more justly into their employments in the army, than your highness came into the seat of government?

"7. Whether, if the Anabaptists had the power in their hands, and were as able to cast you out, as you were them, and they did intend it to you as you do to them; whether, I say, your highness would not call them all knaves?

"8. Whether this be fair dealing in the sight of God and men, to pretend a great deal of love to the Anabaptists, as to Major Pack and Mr. Kiffin, and a hundred more that I could name, when at the same time you intend evil against them?

"9. Whether the Anabaptist will not be in a better condition in the day of Christ that keeps his covenant with God and men, than your highness will be if you break with both?

"10. Whether an hundred of the old Anabaptists, such as marched under your command in 48, 49, 50, &c. be not as good as two hundred of your new courtiers, if you were in such a condition as you were at Dunbar in Scotland?

"11. Whether the cause of the army's defeat in Hispaniola was because there were so many Anabaptists in it? And if so, if that be the only reason why they are so much out of date?

"12. Whether your highness hath not changed your former intention, to have an equal respect to the godly, though different in judgment? And if so, whether it be not from the better to the worse?

"13. Whether your highness's conscience was not more at peace, and your mind more set upon things above, when you loved the Anabaptists, than it is now, when you hate their principles, or their service, or both?

"14. Whether your highness's court is not a greater charge to this nation than the Anabaptists in the army? And if so, whether this be the ease which you promised the people?

"15. Whether there be any disproportion betwixt the state of things now, and the state of things in the days of old? And if there be, shew us where it lieth, how, and when?

"16. Whether the monies laid out in the making of the new rivers and ponds at Hampton court, might not have been better bestowed in paying the public faith, or the Anabaptists' arrears before their dismissal?

"17. Whether it is not convenient for the Anabaptists to provide for their own safety, seeing from you they can expect none?

"18. Whether it will be any more treason to fight for our liberties and civil properties in these days, if they be denied us, than it was to fight for them in the days of the king?

"19. Whether the instrument of government be as the laws of the Medes and Persians that alter not? If so, how is it that Mr. John Biddle is now a prisoner?

"20. Whether your highness may not as well violate the while instrument of government as the 37th and 38th articles? If so, what security have the people for their liberty?

"21. Whether our liberty doth not wholly depend upon your will, and the will of a future protector, seeing the instrument of government is so little useful. If so, whether our condition be not as bad as ever?

"22. Whether you may not as justly suffer all to be put in prison that differ from the church of England, as to suffer Mr. Biddle to be imprisoned?

"23. Whether it will not be more abominable to the Anabaptists, or Independents, or Mr. Biddle, or any other professing faith in God by Jesus Christ, and are not disturbers of the civil peace, nor turn their liberty into licentiousness, to suffer for their consciences under your government, that promised liberty to such, than it was to have suffered under the king, that promised them none?

"24. Whether your highness will not appear to be a dreadful apostate and fearful dissembler, if you suffer persecution to fall upon the Anabaptists, or Independents, or them of Mr. Biddle's judgment, seeing you promised equal liberty to all?

"25. Whether this will not prove your highness's ruin, if you join with such a wicked principle to persecute for conscience, or to turn men out of the army for being Anabaptists, or for any such thing as differs from the church of England, seeing God hath confounded all such as have done so?

"26. Whether the old parliament was not turned out for leaving undone that which they ought to have done? And if so, whether those things have been done since?

"27. Whether the little parliament was not turned out for doing that which the other left undone; or taking away of tithes and other grievances? And if so, then

"28. Whether you did not intend your own ends more than you did the nation's good, in breaking the first parliament, and calling the second, and dissolving them again?

"29. Whether the instrument of government was not preparing eight or nine days before the breaking up of the little parliament? And if so, whether you did not intend their dissolving?

"30. Whether you did not tell a shameful untruth to the last parliament, saying, that you did not know of their dissolving, that is to say the little parliament, till they came to deliver up their power to you?

"31. Whether your highness did not put a slur upon the Lord Lambert, when he should have gone lord-deputy to Ireland, in telling the parliament it savoured too much of a monarchy; and so sent Fleetwood with a lower title?

"32. Whether your highness do not intend to put another slur upon the Lord Lambert, in sending for the lord-deputy to come into England, to make him generalissimo of the armies in England, Scotland, and Ireland?

"33. Whether it is not convenient for the Lord Lambert to consider of those actions, and to have an eye to your proceedings, lest by degrees you eat him out of all, as you intend to do the Anabaptists?

"34. Whether the excessive pride of your family do not call for a speedy judgment from heaven, seeing pride never goeth without a fall?

"35. Whether the six coach-horses did not give your highness a fair warning of some worse thing to follow, if you repent not, seeing God often forewarns before he strikes home?-- THE CONCLUSION.

"My Lord,

"My humble request is, that you will seriously consider of these few lines, although you may dislike the way by which they are communicated, yet let the matter sink deep into your heart; for these things should have met you in another manner, had not your highness cast off all such friendly communication by word of mouth, and the persons too, if they did but tell you plainly their minds. And take heed of casting away old friends for new acquaintance, as Rehoboam did, who forsook the counsel of his good old friends, and consulted with his young courtiers; which caused the ten tribes to revolt from him. [1 Kings 12:8] And it is a deadly sign of a speedy ruin, when a prince or a state casts off the interests of the people of God; as you may see how Joash forsook the people

and the house of God, and then his house fell before a few of the Assyrians, and at last his own servants conspired against him, and slew him.

"And therefore, O Cromwell! leave off thy wicked design of casting off the interest of the people of God; and 'let my counsel be acceptable to thee; and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thy iniquity by shewing mercy to the poor, and it may be a lengthening out of thy tranquility.' For 'it is not strength united with policy, but righteousness accompanied with strength, that must keep alive you interest with God and the people. And when both these die, that is to say righteousness and sincerity, then adieu to thy greatness here, and thy eternal happiness hereafter.

"From him who wishes your happiness so long as you do well.

"Printed for the information of all such as prize the liberty of their consciences, for which so blood has been spilt." [Crosby, vol. iii. p. 231-242.] The change of government, however, appears to have been, generally speaking, favourable to religious liberty. In the instrument of government we find the following liberal sentiments.

"That the Christian religion contained in the scriptures be held forth and recommended as the public profession of these nations, and that, as soon as may be, a provision less subject to contention, and more certain than the present, be made for the maintenance of ministers, and that till such provision be made, the present maintenance continue.

"That none be compelled to conform to the public religion by penalties or otherwise; but that endeavours be used to win them by sound doctrine, and the example of a good conversation.

"That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ, though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, and discipline, publicly held forth, shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in the profession of their faith and exercise of their religion, so as they abuse not this liberty to the civil injury of others, and to the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts; provided this liberty be not extended to popery or prelacy, or to such as, under a profession of Christ, hold forth and practise licentiousness.

"That all laws, statutes, ordinances, and clauses in any law, statute, or ordinance, to the contrary of the aforesaid liberty, shall be esteemed null and void." [Neal, vol. iv. p. 74.]

It is evident from these principles, which may be considered as the basis of the protector's government, so far as respects ecclesiastical affairs, that it was his wish to make all the religious parties easy. "He indulged the army (says Neal) in their enthusiastic raptures, and sometimes joined in their prayers and sermons. He countenanced the Presbyterians, by assuring them that he would maintain the public ministry, and given them all due encouragement. He supported the Independents, by making them his chaplains, by preferring them to considerable livings in the church and universities, and by joining them in one commission with the Presbyterians, as Triers of all who desired to be admitted to benefices.--But he absolutely forbid the clergy of every denomination to deal in politics, as not belonging to their profession; and when he perceived that the managing Presbyterians took too much upon them, he always found means to mortify them, and would sometimes glory that he had curbed that insolent sect which would suffer none but itself."

Amongst the names of the "Triers" we find three of the Baptist denomination. These were Mr. John Tombes, B.D. Mr. Henry Jessey, and Mr. Daniel Dyke. [Ibid. vol. iv. p. 103.] This nomination was doubtless designed to bring all parties into the parish churches. In a letter to the States General, preserved in Thurloe's state papers, it is said, "It is also firmly agreed that the bishops and the Anabaptists shall be admitted into it, as well as the Independents and Presbyterians; yet with this proviso, that they shall not dispute one another's principia, but labour to agree in union; and it is believed that the effects thereof will be seen in a short time." [Neal, vol. ii. p. 67.] These principles were acted on respecting the Baptists, as the commissioners agreed to receive them as brethren, and resolved that if any of them applied to them for probation, and appeared in other respects duly qualified, they should not be rejected for holding this opinion.

Though it is probable that some of the Baptist ministers were brought into the proposed establishment, yet many of them disliked these proceedings, and protested against them in a work published in 1654, entitled, A declaration of several of the churches of Christ, and godly people in and about the city of London, concerning the kingly interest of Christ, and the present sufferings of his cause and saints in England. They say--"And the Lord General Cromwell in his letter to the Kirk Assembly from Dunbar saith, 'It is worth considering how those ministers take into their hands the instruments of a foolish shepherd, that meddle with worldly politics, or earthly powers, to set up what they call the kingdom of Christ; which indeed is neither it, nor, if it were, would such means be found effectual to that end; and neglect, and not trust to the word of God, and the sword of the Spirit.'" [Declar. p. 6.] This declaration was agreed on by a large assembly, and signed by a great many names, both in London and the country. Of these last they say, that the hundreds out of Kent, and all in the country, were omitted, and that only a hundred and fifty were selected out of the original copy, and published in the name of the rest. Ten of these are said to be "of the church that walks with Mr. Feak, now close prisoner for this cause of Christ at Windsor Castle; seven in the name of the church that walks with Doctor Chamberlain; twenty-five in the name of the whole body that walks with Mr. Rogers, now prisoner for this cause at Lambeth; thirteen, of the church that walks with Mr. Raworth; fourteen, with Mr. Knollys; nine, of the church that walks with Mr. Simpson; twelve of the church that walks with Mr. Jessey; twenty-two, of the church that walks with Mr. Barebone; eighteen, of the church that walks with Lieu. Col. Fenson; and thirteen, of the church that walks with Justice Highland. [Ibid. p. 21]--Ordered by the Assembly the 30th day of the sixth month, (August) 1654."

These churches were composed of those persons who were generally called fifth-monarchy men. They are represented by Neal as "high enthusiasts, who were in expectation of King Jesus, and of a glorious thousand years reign with Christ upon earth." [Thurloe's state papers, vol. i. p. 621.] Bishop Burnet says, "They were for pulling down churches, for discharging tithes, and leaving religion free (as they called it), without either encouragement or restraint. Most of them were for destroying the clergy, and for breaking every thing that looked like a national establishment."

We ought not fully to rely upon this representation, but should consider that it is made by a bishop of the church of England. By leaving religion free, we ought perhaps to understand nothing more than what all consistent dissenters plead for, namely, that there should be no imposition in religion, that every one should be left to liberty of conscience and the right of private judgment; and that Jesus Christ is the only head of his church. And by destroying the clergy, and breaking up every thing that looked like a national establishment, it is not necessary that external violence to be

employed against them should be understood; but only that if these sentiments universally prevailed, the clergy of the church of England would have no hearers, and national establishments would fall for want of support.

It is certain, however, that they objected very much to the governments being settled in a single person: they were of the commonwealth party, and were some of the protector's determined enemies, when they found that, after all the opposition which had been made to monarchy, they were again called upon to acknowledge it, though under a different name. The chief of these amongst the Baptist ministers were Feak, Simpson, Rogers, and Vavasor Powell. By some intercepted letters in Thurloe's state papers, it appears that they were very violent in their opposition. "The Anabaptists (it is said in one of them) are highly enraged against the protector, insomuch that Vavasor Powell and Feak on Sunday last in Christ-church publicly called him the dissemblingest perjured villain in the world; and desired that if any of his friends were there, they would go and tell him what they said; and withal, that his reign was but short, and that he should be served worse than that great tyrant, the last lord protector was, he being altogether as bad, if not worse, than he." In another it is said--"I know not whether you have formerly heard of the Monday's lecture at Blackfriar's, where three or four of the Anabaptistical men preach constantly with very great bitterness against the present government, but especially against his excellency, calling him the man of sin, the old dragon, and many other scripture ill-names. The chief of them is one Feak, a bold and crafty orator, and of high reputation among them." The Protector thought it necessary, in order to support his authority, to order these malcontents to be taken into custody. Mr. Powell and Mr. Feak were apprehended December 21, 1653. The writer adds, "I am just now assured, and from one that you may believe, that Harrison, Vavasor Powell, and Mr. Feak have been all this day before his Highness and the council, and that Powell and Feak are this evening sent to prison, and Harrison hath his commission taken from him." [State Papers, vol. i. p. 641.] This was Major General Harrison, who appears to have been at the head of those Baptists who were for a commonwealth, and who disapproved of the parish churches. Mr. Baxter says, "Cromwell connived at his old friend Harrison while he made himself the head of the Anabaptists and fanatics here, till he saw that it would be an acceptable thing to suppress him; and then he doth it easily in a trice, and maketh him contemptible, who but yesterday thought himself not much below him." [Baxter's Life, p. 74.] This discontent spread itself to Ireland. In Thurloe's State Papers it is said--"Upon the first hearing of this, many of the Anabaptists here were much troubled, principally because of the title Lord Protector, as they think this applicable to God alone." In a letter from Henry Cromwell to Secretary Thurloe, dated March 8, 1653, it is said--"All are quiet here, except a few inconsiderable persons of the Anabaptist's judgment, who also are quiet, though not very well contented; but I believe they will receive much satisfaction from a letter very lately come to their hands from Mr. Kiffin and Mr. Spilsbury, in which they have dealt very homely and plainly with those of that judgment here." [State Papers, vol. ii. p. 149.]

It is likely that those who were dissatisfied with this change in the government were persons in the army.--But of the Baptists in general at that period in Ireland a very honourable character is given in the following letter, dated April 5, 1654, addressed to Secretary Thurloe, which says, "As to the grand affairs in Ireland, especially as it relates to the Anabaptist party, I am confident they are much misconceived in England. Truly I am apt to believe that upon the change of affairs, here was discontent, but very little animosity. Upon the sabbath a congregation may be discovered of which

Mr. Patient is pastor." In another, speaking of Mr. Blackwood, it is said--"This man is now fixed with the congregation at Dublin, and Mr. Patient appointed an evangelist, to preach up and down the country." [vol. iii. p. 90.]

Having mentioned the Baptists in Ireland, whose ministers in general had gone from England, we are happy that we are able to introduce some letters which were sent from them in this year, and but a few months after the Protector was proclaimed, which fully develop their characters and principles. In these Mr. Blackwood and Mr. Patient, the excellency of whose characters are well known, appear to be principal persons. With the time of their leaving England for Ireland we are unacquainted; but it is probable by the number of churches at this period in that land of superstition, that they had been settled there for several years. In order to introduce this, so as to preserve the chain of our history, we must make a digression, and glance at the origin of those churches in Wales with whom they held correspondence. In 1649, about four years before this time, two persons, Mr. John Miles and Mr. Thomas Proud, who had been brought to the knowledge of the truth in the principality, came to London, that they might obtain clearer views of the doctrines and discipline of the church of Christ. When arrived at London, they attended with a Baptist church meeting at Glazier's-hall, in Broadstreet, and from thence called the church at the Glass-house. The elders were Mr. William Consett, and Mr. William Draper. It is very remarkable, and deserves particular notice, that this church immediately before their coming had observed a day of fasting and prayer, to implore "the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest;" especially into the dark parts of the land. When these strangers made known their design, they were well received, and continued with them a fortnight, during which it is supposed they were baptized. Returning into their own country, they were made instrumental in gathering a church about Ilston, which it is probable was the first church that admitted none but baptized believers to fellowship; the churches founded prior to this by Messrs. Cradock, Jones, and Powell, being on the plan of mixed communion.

Though we have no intention to give the history of the Welsh Baptists, yet it is necessary to introduce some letters which were sent from the church at the glass-house to the churches at and about Ilston, to throw light on our English history. For these letters we are indebted to the valuable manuscripts of Mr. Joshua Thomas, and published by him in the Welsh language. The first of these was written in 1650, and is as follows:-- "Beloved in the Lord in Christ our Head,

"We salute you, praying daily for you, that God would be pleased to make known his grace to you, so that you may be made able to walk before him in holiness, and without blame all your days. We assure you it is no small joy to us to hear of the goodness of God to you-ward, that now the scriptures again are made good, namely, to those who sit in darkness God hath wonderfully appeared; even to you whose habitations were in dark corners of the earth. The Lord grant that we may acknowledge his goodness in answering prayers, for we dare boldly affirm it to be so, for we have poured out our souls to God, that he would enlighten the dark corners of the land, and that to those who sit in darkness God would arise, and God hath arisen indeed.--We cannot but say that God sent over brother Miles to us; we having prayed that God would give to us some who might give themselves to the work of the Lord in those places where he had work to do; and we cannot but acknowledge it before the Lord, and pray that it may be more than ordinary provocation to us to call upon our own hearts, and upon each other's hearts, to call upon that God who hath stiled himself a God hearing prayer. And now, brethren, we pray and exhort you to walk worthy of the

mercies of God, who hath appeared to you; and that you exhort one another daily to walk with God with an upright heart, keeping close to him in all your ways, and to go forward, pressing hard after the mark for the prize of the high calling which is in Christ Jesus. The Lord grant that you may be strengthened against the wiles of that evil and subtle enemy of our salvation, knowing that he and his servants turn themselves into glorious shapes, and make great pretences, speaking swelling words of vanity, endeavouring to beguile souls: but blessed be God, we hope you are not ignorant of his devices.--Time would fail us to tell you how many ways many have been ensnared and fallen; yet praised be his name, many have escaped his snares, even as a bird from the hand of the cunning fowler. So committing you to God and the word of his grace, we take leave, subscribing ourselves, "Your brethren in the faith and fellowship of Christ, according to the Gospel, William Consett, Edward Cressett, Joseph Stafford, Edward Roberts, John Harman, Robert Bowes."

There is mention made of another letter from the church at the glass-house to the church at Llanharan, dated the 12th of the eleventh month, 1650. This was signed by William Consett, Sam. Larke, Peter Scutts, Robert Bowes, Robert Doyley, Edward Roberts, T. Harrison, Richard Bartlett, Henry Grigg, Edward Grenn, John Bradg, and Edward Bruit.

Another letter was addressed to the church at the Hay, and signed by several of the above, and by Richard Graves, William Comby, Thomas Carter, Robert Stayner, Peter Row, R. Cherry, Ralph Manwaring, William Haines, and Nathan Allen.

They also sent a letter to the church at Carmarthan, and another about this time to that at Ilston. In this last they made many enquiries after their order and discipline, saying, "We would know of any whether those who have not been by water baptized into Christ have put on Christ in the account of the scripture. 1. Whether baptism by water be not an ordinance of Christ, expressly commanded by him to be practised by saints in the day of the gospel?--2. Whether it be not the duty of every believer to be obedient to every command of Christ in his word?--3. Whether it be not sinful and disorderly for any who profess themselves disciples of Christ to live in the neglect of a plain and positive command?--4. Whether the scripture commands not a withdrawing from every brother that walketh disorderly?--5. Whether Christ be not as faithful in his house as Moses was? and whether Christ's commands under the gospel be not to be observed with as much care?" In 1651 the Baptist churches in Wales sent letters by their messenger Mr. John Miles, to the Baptist church in London meeting at Glazier's-hall. In those letters the churches gave a good account of their comfortable state, being in peace, harmony, many added, &c. The church in London in reply sent them an affectionate letter, advising and confirming them in the truth.

"In this letter I find (says Mr. Thomas) the following paragraph:

"Regarding the distance of your habitations, we advise--If you experience that God hath endowed you with gifts whereby ye may edify one another, and keep up proper order and ministry in the church of Christ; then we judge you may separate into more distinct congregations, provided it be done with mutual consent; and if there be among you those who may, in some measure, take the oversight of you in the Lord. But if not, we believe it will be more for the honour of Christ for you to continue together, and meet every first day, as many as conveniently can, and once in the week to pray and prophecy, (prophesying, says Mr. T. they then called an exhortation or expounding) and when they can for all to meet together to break bread, though that may not be every first day, for

undoubtedly God will have mercy and not sacrifice." This letter was signed by William Consett, William Combey, William Chassey, Samuel Tull, Edward Green, Joseph Stafford, Robert Cherry, Thomas Carter, John Mildmay, &c. [History of the Baptist Association by Joshua Thomas, p. 8.]

It appears that on some occasion both Mr. Draper and Mr. Consett, the pastors of the church at Glazier's-hall, went to Ireland, and also two other persons mentioned in these letters, Mr. Peter Row and Mr. Edward Roberts.--From this circumstance we account for the intimacy that subsisted between the several churches of England, Ireland, and Wales, mentioned in the correspondence to which we have alluded, and which we now present to our readers. In 1653, an epistle was sent from Dublin by a member of that church named VERNON, to the churches of London under the care of Messrs. Kiffin, Spilsbury, and others.--The following is a copy: The Churches of Christ in Ireland, united together, reside in the several places following:--

1. DUBLIN--With whom are the brethren, Patient, Law, Vernon, Roberts, Smith, and several others, who walk comfortably together, through grace.
2. WATERFORD--With whom are the brethren, Wade, Row, Boulton, Cawdron, Longdon, with several others: most of them being resident there, we trust, are in a thriving condition in their spiritual state.
3. CLONMELL--With whom are the brethren Charles and Draper, and sometimes Hutchinson and Bullock to assist them. Some other brethren are scattered in several other places in those parts, who are recommended to the care of our friends at Clonmell, who are nearest to them.
4. KILKENNY-- They have the brethren, Blackwood, Caxe, Axtell, Gough, with several others, who we hope also are in a growing condition, and walk orderly.
5. CORK--With whom are the brethren Lamb, Coleman, and several others, who walk orderly together, though in a place of much opposition by such as slight the ways of the Lord; with whom also are in communion some friends at Brand Kingsale, and other parts of the country.
6. LIMERICK--With whom are brethren, Knight, Uzell, Skinner, and some others, who we fear are in a decaying condition, for want of able brethren to strengthen them; brother Knight having been weak, so not able to be much with them.
7. GALLOWAY--Have the brethren, Clarke, Davis, &c. who, we understand, do walk orderly, but have few able among them to edify the body.
8. WEXFORD--And a people lately gathered by brother Blackwood, with whom are the brethren Tomlins, Hussey, Neale, Biggs, &c. who have not much help among them selves, but are sometimes visited by Waterford friends.
9. In the North, near CARRICK FERGUS, are several lately received by brother Reade, who were baptized here by brother Patient, who, we understand, are valuable, but want some able brethren to establish them.
10. KERRY--Where are some friends received lately by brother Dix, Velson, and Browne: and brother Chawbers speaks to them. Of these we have not much experience; but have lately heard by brother Chawbers, that they walk orderly.--We know not of any particular friends scattered

abroad in the country, but who are committed to the place of some friends near them, who, we hope, as they are able, will discharge their duty towards them.

N.B. Friends deceased, &c. at the several places and churches before mentioned follow:--At Waterford, sister Watson, sister Mary Row; at Kilkenny, sister Deare; at Clonmell, brother Brooks; at or near Limerick, brother Brooks, brother Cooper, and brother Rush; several cast out for sin. At Clonmell, brother Dix, Clayton, Price, Thornhill, and Francis; at Kilkenny, brother Fogg, one at Galloway; and some at Liberick, a particular account of whom we have not at present. Sister Sarah Barret, at Dublin, some time servant to brother Patient, is now coming for England. Brother Vernon can particularly inform you of her.

COPY OF A LETTER SENT FROM THE CHURCHES IN IRELAND TO THE BRETHREN IN ENGLAND.

Dear Friends!

We cannot, without much shame, speak of our long silence to you; nor without much grief think of yours to us, which we earnestly desire may be mutually laid to heart by us all, to prevent the like occasion of complaint for the future. Surely it is a needful wholesome word, to exhort one another daily. Heb. 3:13. Had it been more in our hearts, it would have been more in our mouths, in the several opportunities we have had of corresponding together upon more common, but less profitable affairs. Oh! how many packets have passed filled with worldly matters, since we have heard one word from you, or you from us, of the condition, increase, growth or decrease of God's Israel, who were some years since brought low through oppressions, afflictions, and sorrow! His hand has been still stretched forth to set his poor despised ones on high: Yea, God hath done great things for us, for which we ought greatly to rejoice; but how little have we wisely considered of his doings! for which we have meet cause to mourn, but have not observed nor feelingly laid them to heart. How many have been broken, who have been gathered together against Zion, and fallen for her sake! Surely, were we not hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, our hearts would be more awakened, and all that is within us, to bless his holy name, who hath so blasted the wisdom and power of men, when it hath been opposite to the work which our God is carrying on in the earth; which, as we have clearly seen, we have soon forgotten, through the carnality which we have suffered too much to prevail in our mortal bodies.

Precious friends! let us, in this our day, search and examine our hearts, by the light of the word and spirit of our God; and surely we shall find, that the posture of those poor virgins in Matt. 25 hath been too much ours: For while our bridegroom tarrieth, do we not all slumber and sleep? so that little difference is discerned between the foolish and the wise. Alas! Alas! what means the dull, cold, estranged frame of heart we bear each to the other, as before mentioned? And is it not the like to our God? Doth it not appear by our little zeal for him, and less delight in his ways, with constant complainings, and little sense of our victory? Our leanness, our dryness, our barrenness are now instead of the songs of Sion. Doth not the Lord call aloud to professors, Prepare! Be awake to meet your God, O Israel! Yea, doth he not pronounce woes against them that are at ease in Sion? Doubtless, expecting, that while these turnings, overturnings and changes are in the earth, we should stand upon our watch-tower, enter into our chambers, and be a holy, praying, humble, and praising people: For, surely, now, if ever, we are especially called upon to put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in this evil day, and having done all to stand.

We therefore desire to revive your memory and our own with those known and approved scriptures, Eph. 6:10-17. Beloved brethren and sisters! we, even with tears, beg for you and for ourselves, that all and each of us may in truth of heart be retiredly exercised in recounting and calling to mind what the Lord hath done for our souls and for our bodies, for his people in general, and what he is doing, and what great and precious things he tells us are in his heart, and which he is resolved speedily to accomplish; wherein, and in expectation of which, he calls upon us thus, Isaiah 65:18. Bye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.--We recommend unto you the preceding and following verses.

Dearly beloved brethren! The Lord engaged our hearts with the rest of the churches of Christ in the faith and order of the gospel in this kingdom, jointly, as one person, to wait upon him by fasting, humiliation, prayer, and supplication, with a sense of our great shortness of, and unsuitableness to what is in the inclosed particulars expressed; which we also tenderly offer, and, as our resolutions, direct and recommend unto you, our fellow-members and followers of the Lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ; being hopefully assured this will be a means of our recovery from a slippery and slothful condition, which hath brought us too much to realize the character in Proverbs 24:30, &c.

Precious friends! The Lord hath given us comfortable hope, that in the prosecution hereof, he will, through his mighty working by his blessed Spirit, prepare us for every condition; yea, if he should bring upon us such a trial as hath not yet been seen in our days; or should this be the dawning of his blessed day, so much promised, yet too little hoped for: however he will hasten it in his time, Isaiah 60:22--We, for our conveniency, have agreed to keep the first Wednesday in every month, from six to six, which, with other breathing of our hearts, we have committed to the care and trust of our beloved and faithful brother John Vernon, the bearer hereof, who, through the Lord's blessing, will be suddenly with you, and will also acquaint you with our state and condition. He is in full communion with us. His conversation hath been in zeal and faithfulness; the Lord having put it into the hearts of all his congregations in Ireland to have a more revived correspondence with each other by letters and loving epistles, in which practice we found great advantage, not only by weakening Satan's suggestions and jealousies, but it hath brought a closer union and knitting of heart; and, which is not an inferior consideration, we have hereby been enabled feelingly and knowingly to present each others wants and conditions before Our God. In the same manner, we shall better enabled to answer our duty towards you, and you towards us, and so bear each others burdens, and fulfil the law of Christ in our very near relation.

We hereby earnestly request the same brotherly correspondence with you and from you; and by your means, with all the rest of the churches of Christ, in ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, and WALES; whom we trust you will provoke to the same things, which we hope may be mutually obtained once in three months. You may remember our earnest request to you some time since, which request was made once and again, to have a perfect account of the churches of Christ owned in communion with you, in the places before mentioned. Had that desire been answered, it might have prevented our long sad silence, and the danger of receiving or refusing such as ought, or ought not to enjoy communion. WE offer one request more unto you, if it hath not been lately practised; which is, that you would send two or more faithful brethren, well acquainted with the discipline and order of the Lord's house; and that may be able to speak seasonable words, suiting the necessities of his people; to visit, comfort, and confirm all the flock of Our Lord Jesus, that are,

or have given up their names to be, under his rule and government, in ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, and WALES. And for the small handful in this nation owned by the Lord, we trust it shall be our care more naturally to look after and watch over them than heretofore; and the rather, because we have observed Satan our subtle enemy, (whose time we believe is short) by his depths and wiles, taking opportunity, by the peace and rest lent us by our God, ready to slay us, by casting us into carnal security, ever lulling our hearts to sleep, even in this hour, wherein, as before noted, we are especially called upon to be a praying watchful people, for surely the Lord is now at hand; therefore let us leave the beggarly pursuit of the things of this world, and let our moderation be known unto all men. Let our requests be made to our God for Sion, for each soul therein, for all the particulars herein mentioned, for the peace and tranquility of the nation wherein we live, Jeremiah 29:7, and for the rulers and magistrates the Lord hath set over us, particularly for those with you. We should pray earnestly that judgments may be averted, privileges prized, as well as continued; and that we may understand and attend to the voice of God in his providence, particularly in his sore snatching and removing from us, not only useful members in Sion, but even our eyes, our hands, and our hearts; the never-to-be-forgotten young Draper, dear Consett, precious Pocke, useful Saffery, and that in the midst of their days, and the beginning of wondrous works. Oh, dear friends, were they too holy, too heavenly for our society! or did we abuse the mercy; some doting upon them, while others slighted, yea hardly took notice that there were prophets among them; or may we not all conclude that our indifferency, worldly-mindedness, and heart-hypocrisy, are so great, and have so highly provoked our God, that he is coming forth against us in displeasure with visitations and scourges, and therefore hath called home his chosen ones, that they may not see the evil that is coming upon us, nor stand in the gap? And now, dear brethren, beloved of the Lord, let there never be any more occasion so much as to name this sad subject of silence amongst us; but rather let us be constant provokers of each other to every good word and work, by epistles, by our holy, humble, persevering, Christian conversation; following that precious and ever to be remembered example, our Lord Jesus Christ, and seeing that nothing can separate, neither height nor depth, between us and the everlasting love of our heavenly Father, in his dear Son, and those inestimable mansions prepared for us, where we for ever shall behold the glorious face of our God, and jointly sing the everlasting song of Moses and the Lamb: Oh, then let neither sea nor land, things present nor things to come, separate us from a Christian correspondence, whereby we may knowingly mourn with those that mourn, and rejoice with those that rejoice--that we may sympathizingly, in faith, offer supplications and praises, answerable to the dealings of our God with any of his members.--Finally, brethren, farewell! be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, &c. and the God of peace shall be with you. Your poor brethren, yet fellow-heirs of the consolation ready to be revealed at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. The names of the brethren who subscribed this Letter:-- At Waterford.

Robert Ringston, Thomas Shelson, Thomas Cawdron, Edward Marshall, Peter Row, Robert Merry, Thomas Boulton, Thomas Sparkling, John Thomas, John Row, William Leigh, Richard Leigh. At Kilkenny.

Anthony Harrison, John Pratt, Humphrey Prichard, Thomas Alsop, Christ Blackwood, Richard Wood, John Court, Arnold Thomas At Dubn.

James Hardish, Henry Jones, James Marely, William Sands, William Sault, Edward Roberts, Phil. Carcherol, Thomas Patient, Nico. Scott, Adrian Strong. From the Church of Christ at Waterford,

being now assembled upon the ground within mentioned, 1st day of the 4th month, [June] 1653. The churches of Christ in Ireland, walking in the faith and order of the gospel, do agree together, through divine assistance, to set apart the first fourth day, called Wednesday, in every month, solemnly to seek the face of our God; and by fasting and prayer humbly to mourn before him for the things following; which is also recommended to our dear friends in England, and scattered brethren in several places, who have obtained like precious faith with us.

1. Our little knowledge of, and less trusting in the name of our God in Christ, so as to set him for ever before our eyes, that we may glorify him both in our bodies and souls, which are his, 1 Cor. 6:20; Heb. 5:12.

2. Our little sincere love to the Lord and his people, and our little knowledge of the office and proper place of each member, as God hath set him in the body of Christ; to the end that every particular member may be now effectually improved, for the mutual edification of the whole, 1 Cor. 12:19,20,21, &c. Eph. 4:16.

3. Our little serious searching into the word of God, and not substantially acquainting ourselves with the foundation truths revealed therein, 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:2; Rom. 1:16,17.

4. Our little faith in the great and precious promises of the Lord, which are to be fulfilled in the last days, Luke 18:8; 2 Pet. 1:4.

5. Our little pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: and our inordinate affections after earthly things, Luke 10:40,41; Phil. 3:14; Col. 3:1,2.

6. Our little praying and praising frame of heart; in particular, for faithful labourers in the Lord's vineyard: and for all whom he hath put in authority over us, under whom we have had much opportunity to practise the truth we profess, Mat. 9:37,38; John 15:4; Psalm 22:3; 1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Tim. 2:2; 1 Pet. 2:14; Isaiah 9:7.

7. Our little concern for the sufferings of the people of God, Luke 18:7; Rev. 17:6.

8. Our great aptness to forget the things God hath done for us, and to abuse the many precious mercies God hath multiplied upon us.

9. Our little laying to heart the great breaches the Lord hath made among us, by removing many righteous ones from us.

10. Our want of spiritual wisdom to reprove sin plainly in all without respect of persons, and to exhort faithfully, so as to stop the mouths of gainsayers, and give no just offence to any.

11. Our little mourning for sin, both in ourselves and in others, Ezek. 9:4; Hos. 4:12.

12. Our great ignorance of the deceitfulness of our own hearts, Jeremiah 17:9,10.

These things, among many others, ought to be sufficient grounds of our lying low before the Lord, that he may lift us up in due time, and supply all our wants according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus, James 4:3,9,10; Phil. 4:19. [Thomas's Hist. of Welch Association.] This letter produced such an effect on some of the churches in London, that they immediately took it into consideration: and from a conviction of its importance, after keeping a day of fasting and prayer, agreed to adopt

its suggestions, and to enclose it with a letter to the churches in Wales, which was as follows:--
"Dearly beloved Brethren!

"While we were slumbering and sleeping, like these wise virgins mentioned by our Saviour in Matt. 25, regardless of the obligations and engagements to the Lord, which, by so many eminent and signal discoveries of love and works of wonder, wrought for us in these last days, he hath laid upon us; it hath pleased the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, to raise up a quickening spirit in the hearts of our brethren of Ireland, provoking them to call upon us to awake to righteousness, to remember our first love, to rend our hearts and not our garments, and to turn to the Lord with out whole hearts; that doing our first work, we may receive an answer of peace from the God of Peace; and healing of all our wounds from him, whose property is to heal backslidings, and to love freely; and that the weak among us may be strong as David, and David as an angel of God. We have sent you enclosed a copy of what we received from them, which we pray the Lord to sanctify unto you, as in some measure he hath done to us; that it may serve through the operation of the Spirit, as Nathan's parable to David, and as the cock-crowing to Peter, to bring to your remembrance all that deadness, unfruitfulness, want of love, and unsuitableness of spirit, which have too much prevailed in you and upon you, to the grieving of the Spirit of God, to the hardening of such as know not the Lord, and the wounding of each others hearts in these times of gospel peace and liberty. We desire you to communicate the same to all our brethren near you; and with all convenient speed, not only to certify us what effect the subject therein contained hath wrought upon your hearts, but also to send us a particular account of their and your state and condition, relating to your communion with each other, as grounded upon your fellowship with the Father and the Son, in the faith of the gospel of Christ. In order thereto, we entreat your care and pains in visiting the several weak and scattered brethren in your parts, that from a thorough knowledge of, and acquaintance with their present standing, we may receive information from you; and our brethren in Ireland, according to their desire, from us; what churches and societies we may groundedly communicate with, according to the rule of Christ. We shall not offer arguments to persuade you to compliance with our brethren's desire and ours; their arguments carry so much evidence and demonstration of truth, necessity and suitableness to the Gospel rule, in the very first view of them. We have already kept a day of holy fasting and prayer, upon the grounds therein expressed; and trust we shall never lay down our spiritual weapons, till satan, the world, and the lusts of our flesh, be made our footstool; which the Lord hasten, for Christ's sake! to whose fatherly care and tuition we commend you, and subscribe ourselves, "Your affectionate brethren in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,

William Kiffin, Edward Harrison, Thomas White, Joseph Sansom, Thomas Cooper, Henry Hills, John Perry, Richard Tredwell, Robert Bowes."

"Our great design in this letter is to obtain a full account of all the churches in England, Scotland, and Wales; therefore we desire you will inform us not only concerning your own state, but the state of any churches that are in your country, or near adjacent; that if it be possible we may have the full knowledge of all those that are one with us in the sound principles of truth: and to yourselves, or any other church of Christ, we shall be ready to give the like account, if desired, of ourselves, or the churches near us.

"From the several Churches of Christ in London, the 24th day of the 5th Month, 1653. Peter Scutt, or Scott." [Hist. of Welch Association.]

Mr. Scott, the writer of this letter, it will be seen by turning to page 237, as well as Robert Bowes were members of the church at the Glass House. It is probable they succeeded Messrs. Consett and Draper who appear to have laboured and died in Ireland. The manner in which they speak of these persons proves that they had been eminently useful, and that they were taken away in early life: and subsequent events fully justified their conclusion that the Lord had taken away these righteous men from the evil to come.

We know nothing further of the state of the churches in Ireland, till the year 1656, when a letter was sent by them to the churches at Ilston and Llantrisant in Glamorgaushire; which we insert to preserve the thread of our history.

Dublin 12th, 4th Month, 1656.

"Dear Brethren,

"We wish you a more deep rooting and establishing in the faith, that no storms of persecution on the one hand, nor error nor heresy on the other hand, may shake your faith. We thankfully acknowledge the good hand of God towards you in the multiplication of your number: the Lord multiply also your graces, that your faith may grow exceedingly; and the charity of every one of you all towards one another may abound. Ye are now in prosperous times; it will be your wisdom to prepare for a storm; for brethren, whenever did you know the people of God long without persecution? Yea, and that from the powers of the world. Mariners in a calm strengthen their tacklings against a storm comes. Besides ministerial teaching, we would commend unto you the use of good books; and take advice of some godly preacher, what are fit to buy: especially read the scriptures and study them: if ye also study your own hearts ye shall do well. Be careful to preserve entire unity, not only in keeping your communion together, but also in keeping your hearts together; sweetened in affection one to another without grudgings and murmurings. Let those who are rich among you strive to be large hearted to the poor among you; and so much the more because of the present distress, and because of the great hatred of the world, which saints of our judgment endure. Be very wary against scandals; because where the gospel comes in power, the devil is wont to rage, by scandals to swallow up, if it were possible, the church of God. We shall desire you to follow after enlargement of heart, both in contributions towards the poor and other church uses, and in the maintenance of them who dispense the word unto you, that such dispensers may give themselves wholly to the work, remembering that he who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; in which duty some of us have observed, on your side the water, sundry persons, yea, we fear churches have come short. We desire you to press on for an established ministry and eldership in your churches; and therefore herein be careful to buy the truth and sell it not. Take heed of the sin of earthly-mindedness, which sometimes lies hid under a large profession. Be careful of you or weak members, lest wolves in sheep's clothing, through pretended sanctity and seeming mortification get in among them. Labour to keep up in one another's heart an honourable esteem of the holy word of God, in opposition to the present delusions of the times. Engage not yourselves in heartless and speculative disputes; but rather be much in practical and edifying truths; knowing that the principles which naturally conduce to salvation are but few. Be careful that upon pretence of church-meetings you neglect not closet prayer, in which be careful to

mourn under straits and rejoice in enlargements. Labour after a just, blameless, and shining life, that the world by your harmless and holy lives, may be instructed. Treasure up a large assurance against an evil day to come. Take heed of hardness of heart, and declining affections towards the Lord. Let your consciences witness your blameless conversation, for time past since your effectual calling; and your holy purpose for God in future.

"We remain your affectionate brethren in the gospel of Christ,

Thomas Patient, Christ. Blackwood, Edmund Roberts, Richard Lawem, Thomas Seward, Henry Jones, P. Cudmore, William Hopkins, Arnold Thomas."

We have no account of the churches in Ireland after this period, excepting that in the year 1659. Mr. Blackwood was still with the church at Dublin, at which time he published his Expositions and Sermons on the ten first chapters of Matthew. It is probable that the Restoration of Charles II. the next year caused such a revolution in the Kingdom of Ireland, that he and his brethren were obliged to return home; as we find several of their names signed to the declaration of the Baptists against Venner's rebellion. We think it proper not to pass this part of our history without making the following remarks.

Dissenters were at this time very much divided in sentiment about the government of the church and of the state.

All of them disapproved of Episcopacy; but the greater part, namely the Presbyterians, who were now the established sect, were not only advocates for the necessity of a religious establishment, but, although they had themselves been persecuted by the Episcopalians, were unfriendly to the toleration of the Independents and the Baptists. The two last mentioned sects were advocates for congregational, congregated, or gathered churches, in contradistinction to parochial churches. Their churches were distinct from, and independent of, one another, and admitted of no other external interference than that of friendly advice. The pastors of a few of these, however, did not stand so far aloof from the national establishment as could have been wished. There were some of both denominations who were amongst the Triers, or licensers of preachers in the establishment; and there were more, who, although they had distinct congregations of their own, not only preached in the parish churches, but also condescended to accept of the parochial tithes. But the great majority had no more support from government than the dissenters of the present day. With regard to civil government, the congregational churches were divided into two classes.--The one left the consideration and regulation of it to the constituted authorities, and esteemed it their duty to be subject to the powers that were, whether the supreme authority was in the King, the Parliament, or the Protector. Contented with enjoying liberty of conscience in religious matters, and fearing God and the king, they meddled not with those who were given to change. They were not persecuted during the Protectorate of Cromwell, it being a principle of his government that no person should be persecuted for his religious sentiments. See *An Olive Leaf: or some Peaceable Considerations, &c.* for Mr. Rogers, Mr. Powel, and the rest of the good people of Christ Church, by William Erbery, January 9, 1653. Wherein are asked the following questions: "Is it according to the order of the gospel, for ministers of Christ to meddle with civil government, seeing his kingdom is not of this world? John 18:36; Luke 22:25.--Did ever the ministers of the gospel speak against principalities and powers, though as bad as Nero? Rom. 13:1,2, &c.; 1 Tim. 1:2; Titus 3:1,2; 1 Pet. 2:13,14.--Doth civil government concern the glory of the gospel? Is monarchy in a king any more

against the reign of Christ, than aristocracy in a parliament? Is not the state of Holland, and commonwealth of Venice, as much for Antichrist as the king of France or Spain? Isaiah 19:11,13." The other class maintained that the reign of Antichrist was approaching to a close; that the time was at hand spoken of by Daniel, when the saints should take the kingdom and possess it; that Christ was about to reign on the earth in the midst of his people for a thousand years; and that he by his power would shortly make the wicked as ashes under the feet of the righteous. Hence Harrison, Powel, Feak, Simpson, Rogers, and others, were greatly displeased when Cromwell usurped the supreme power. So great was the discontent which they manifested, that, fearing insurrections in the city, he committed them to prison. To this they cheerfully submitted, calling it persecution for conscience sake, whilst those of the former class pitied their ill-directed zeal and were of opinion that they were buffeted for their faults.

We learn from this correspondence that the ministers that presided over these churches in England, Ireland, and Wales, and the people that composed them, were all of them opposed to those Baptists that intermeddled with the civil affairs of the country. While those who confounded the church and the world together were in constant perplexity and alarm, they seem to have enjoyed peace themselves, and to have endeavoured to promote peace amongst their brethren, who had not learned to be in subjection to the supreme power, by whatever name it was called.

Those who were called fifth-monarchy men ought to be distinguished into different classes. Venner and his associates were certainly mad enthusiasts, and thought that the kingdom of Christ was to be established by the sword. But none who know the characters of such men as Mr. Jessey and Mr. Knollys will suppose that they would go to the same lengths, although they lived at a period in which the nature of Christ's kingdom was far from being clearly understood. Without, however, attempting farther to vindicate them, we will give the sentiments of those who were called fifth-monarchy men in their own words, as contained in the declaration before mentioned.--"We find much misunderstanding among some, (they say,) and misrepresentation among most, of the fifth-monarchy, or kingdom of Christ in the nations, which the holy scriptures of the old and new testament do clearly and plentifully declare, with a positive period to the worldly heathenish laws, ordinances, and constitutions of men, as they are now executed in the nations of the world: and whereas it is also upon the hearts of many of the choice servants of God, that in this present age the Lord Jehovah is setting up the fifth kingdom, (Dan. 2:44; 7:22, 26, 27,) which shall not be left to other people, but shall break in pieces all the other kingdoms, and remain for ever and ever; and that whereas at this time the fourth monarchy is partly broken in these nations, it is that Christ may be the only Potentate, the King of Kings, and of all nations. Mic. 4:7; Zech. 9:9,10; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 6:15; Heb. 2:8; Rev. 11:15,17; Rev. 14; Rev. 19. Now finding this the present truth so much opposed by the national rulers and their clergy, yea, and by some godly people and church members accounted orthodox, who cannot endure the day of the Lord's coming; we therefore are resolved, according to the presence and assistance of the Lord with us, to entertain a serious consideration and debate for the benefit of all others, touching the premises; viz. of the laws, subjects, extent, rise, time, palce, offices and officers of the fifth-monarchy or kingdom, whereby the world must be governed according to the word of God, without the mixture, as now is, of men's laws and inventions, whether in respect of magistracy or ministry, church or civil affairs. Which debate we intend to hold in this city of London; and we desire our beloved brethren who are one with us in the present truth and sufferings, whether in church or out, in city or country, who are

enlightened, to take special notice of it for this end, that they may enjoy the like freedom with us in those meetings and debates, as often as they please to come. And if the Lord give us the liberty, we do propose to proceed with the debate of it from this day onward, until we have taken a full narrative thereof, so far as it shall appear to us out of the scriptures fit to publish to the view of all men, that our principles on that point of the fifth-monarchy may be fully known." [Declaration, &c. pp. 16,17.]

10. A.D. 1653-1660 Part 2

It is highly probable that this design was prevented by the vigilance of the government. The protector found these persons, with the republicans in the state, who were generally deists, the most difficult to manage of any. The religious commonwealth-men he endeavoured to gain by kindness. He told them that "he had no manner of inclination to assume the government, but had rather been contented with a shepherd's staff, were it not absolutely necessary to keep the nation from falling to pieces, and becoming a prey to the common enemy. That he merely stepped in between the living and the dead, as he expressed it, and this only till God should direct them on what bottom to settle, when he would surrender his dignity with a joy equal to the sorrow with which he had taken it up." With the chiefs of this party he affected to converse upon terms of great familiarity, shutting the door, and making them sit down covered in his presence to let them see how little he valued those distances he was bound to observe for form's sake with others. He talked with them in their own language, and the conversation generally ended with a long prayer.

Notwithstanding all this familiarity, they were so opposed to the government's being in a single person, as in their opinion contrary to the kingly interest of Christ, that instead of being allured to acknowledge it, they say, "Our bowels are so moved at these things that we cannot refrain from bewailing our condition, after so vast a stream and treasure of our blood, tears, prayers, lives, and spoils of our dearest relations. O, did we ever think to see so many hopeful instruments in the army, churches, and elsewhere, to be so fully gorged with the flesh of kings, captains, and nobles; with their lands, manors, estates, parks, and palaces, so as to sit at ease and comply with antichrist, the world, worldly church, and clergy!" [Declaration, &c. p. 4.] When the protector found they could not be gained by favour, he was determined to crush them; and therefore, as we have heard, several of the ministers were imprisoned, and Major General Harrison was deprived of his commission. For several years the republicans attempted a revolution in the government; and at length, failing in their design, they agreed in 1658 to the number of three hundred to attempt it by force; and having killed the protector, to proclaim King Jesus. But Secretary Thurloe, who spared no cost to gain intelligence, had a spy among them who discovered their intentions, and seized their arms and ammunition in Shoreditch with their standard exhibiting a lion conchant, alluding to the lion of the tribe of Judah, with this motto, Who will rouse him up? The chief of the conspirators, as Venner, Grey, Hopkins, &c. were imprisoned in the gatehouse till the protector's death, with their accomplices, Major General Harrison, Colonel Rich, Colonel Danvers, and others. The protector appears to have formed more correct sentiments on the subject of religion in reference to the state than most of the ministers, whether Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, or the fifth-monarchy men, who were principally, though not exclusively, Baptists. These all, in different ways confounded the church and the state together, and did not keep the civil and religious privileges of men upon a separate basis. Hence many of them who "meddled with those that were given to change," were swallowed up in the vortex of worldly politics; and, as Cromwell used to tell them, suffered not for conscience sake, but for being busy bodies in other men's matters, and for not minding their own business.

It is presumed that the protector never permitted any to be oppressed for religious principles, except in the case of John Biddle, the Socinian, and which it is generally thought he endeavoured to prevent. When Mr. Kiffin was brought before the lord-major at Guildhall, July 12, 1655, and charged with having violated the laws by preaching that the baptism of infants was unlawful, the lord-mayor, being occupied about other matters, deferred the execution of the penalty required by that act till the Monday following.--From the manner in which Mr. Kiffin was treated by the mayor, it is probable that he never heard any more of the prosecution; and there is no doubt but this arose more from the friendship of Cromwell, than the good will or liberality of the governing Presbyterians.

We have said that there were several eminent Baptist ministers among the Teiers who were appointed by the protector, instead of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, for removing those from the parish churches who were ignorant and scandalous. "They had power (says Mr. Baxter,) to try all that came for institution or induction, and without their approbation none were admitted. They themselves examined all that were able to come up to London: but if they were unable or of doubtful qualifications, they referred them to some ministers in the county where they lived, and approved them if they approved them. And with all their faults, thus much must be said of these Triers, that they did a great deal of good to the church, and saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers. That sort of ministers who either preached against a holy life, or preached as men that never were acquainted with it; all those who used the ministry only as a common trade to live by, and were never likely to convert a soul,, they usually rejected; and in their stead admitted of any that were able, serious preachers, and lived a godly life, of what opinion soever they were that was tolerable." [Baxter's Life, p. 72.]

It was doubtless at this time that some of the Baptists accepted of livings in the national establishment, though it is presumed the far greater part of them viewed this as a dereliction of principle in Dissenters, and more especially in Baptists. Of those who thus conformed were those who accepted the appointment of Teiers. Mr. Tombes, B.D. had the living of Leominster in the county of Hereford; Mr. Daniel Dyke, M.A. of Great Hadham in Hertfordshire; and Mr. Henry Jessey, of St. George's, Southwark. There must have been some difficulties arising from the Independent, and still more from Baptist ministers becoming rectors of parishes; but their churches were not composed indiscriminately of their parishioners, neither were they confined to persons resident in their respective parishes.

Edwards, in his Antapologia, charges them with the last of these things as an inconsistency, and says, "Your congregations, as in London, where the meeting-place is, and the ministers reside, are made up of members, as of some living in London, so of some in Surrey, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Essex, where they have fixum domicilium, being twenty miles asunder; and many members meeting but once in a month, where neither ministers can oversee them, nor members watch over one another, not knowing what the conversation of each other is, which are yet brought as the main grounds of your church-fellowship; which non-residence of the members from each other, and of the officers from so many of the members, whether it overthrow not, and be not point-black against many of your principles on the church-way, I leave to yourselves to judge." [p. 96.]

Mr. Jessey appears to have continued as pastor of his church, notwithstanding his being rector of St. George's.--He was ordained over Mr. Lathorpe's church in 1637; and in this vineyard, it is said,

he continued a faithful and laborious minister till his death. Crosby says, "He divided his labours in the ministry according to the extensiveness of his principles. Every Lord's day in the afternoon he was among his own people; in the morning he usually preached at St. George's church, Southwark, being one of the fixed ministers of that parish."

It is probable that Mr. Jessey's people either attended St. George's church in the morning, or else obtained a supply, as it does not appear that Mr. Jessey had any assistant. It is likely that his church of Dissenters was attended to in the same manner as before, and that as rector he did not do much besides preaching in his parish. As he was "one" of the settled ministers, perhaps there was another, either of the Presbyterian or Independent congregation, settled with him, who baptized the children, &c.; and as Mr. Jessey always admitted of mixed communion in his church, he would find no difficulty in administering the Lord's supper, as it is presumed the canons of the church were now no longer binding, and ministers would be at liberty to admit those only to the table of whose piety they were well satisfied.

Respecting Mr. Tombes, we are told by Mr. Crosby, that the people at Bewdley having invited him to become their minister, "he began here to preach and dispute publicly against infant baptism; and seeing no prospect of any reformation of the church in this point, he then gathered a separate church of those of his own persuasion, continuing at the same time minister of the parish." This is asserted by Crosby on the declaration of Fisher, in his *Baby baptism no baptism*; where, in the place referred to, he says, "I find all the people in Bewdley were church-members with Mr. Baxter at Kidderminster." Hence it is inferred, that Mr. Tombes would not administer the Lord's supper to any who had not been baptized. Mr. Baxter says that this church never increased to more than twenty persons. Crosby acknowledges "this society of Baptists was never very numerous, but consisted of those who were of good esteem for their piety and solid judgment; and that three eminent ministers were trained up in it: Mr. Richard Adams, Mr. John Eccles, and one Captain Boylston. The church continued till the restoration. The Baptists who were in opposition to Cromwell must have been very uncomfortable during the remainder of his government, as he never suffered them to act to the full extent of their principles. But those who acted peaceably, and who were denominated the sober party, were much esteemed, and universally protected.

"At length (says Calamy) Cromwell, who had escaped the attempts of many who sought to dispatch him, could not escape the stroke of God, but died suddenly of a fever, September 3, 1658. In giving his character, he adds

"Never man was more highly extolled, or more basely reported of and vilified than this man, according as men's interested led their judgments. The soldiers and sectaries highly magnified him, till he began to seek the crown, and the establishment of his family; and then there were so many that would behalf kings themselves, that a king seemed intolerable to them. The royalists abhorred him as a most perfidious hypocrite; and the Presbyterians thought him little better in his management of public affairs. Upon the whole, Mr. Baxter has left this as his judgment concerning him:--'That he began low, and rose higher in his resolutions as his condition rose; and the promises he made in his lower condition he used as the interest of his higher following condition required; and kept as much honesty and godliness in the main as his cause and interest would allow him, and there they left him. His name stands as a monument of pillar to posterity, to tell them the instability of man in strong temptations, if God leave him to himself; what pride can do to

make men selfish, and corrupt the heart with ill designs; what selfishness and ill designs can do to bribe the conscience, corrupt the judgment, make men justify the greatest errors and sins, and set themselves against the clearest truth or duty; what bloodshed, and great enormities of life, an erring deluded judgment may draw men to do and patronize; and that when God hath dreadful judgments to execute, an erroneous sectary, or a proud self seeker, is oftener his instrument than a humble innocent saint." [Baxter's Life, p. 71.]

While it is readily acknowledged that Mr. Baxter had many opportunities of knowing the protector's read character, and though his integrity in giving it is not in the least suspected, yet it should be considered that as a Presbyterian he was likely to be prejudiced against him. We therefore think it right to give the opinion of Dr. Owen also; who knew him probably better than even Mr. Baxter; and who gave his opinion of him after Cromwell had attained the summit of his ambition, and had practised all those arts of hypocrisy with which his memory has been loaded. The following is extracted from Dr. Owen's excellent work dedicated to the protector, entitled, *The doctrine of the saint's perseverance*, printed at Oxford in the year 1654:

"In the midst of all the changes and mutations which the infinitely wise providence of God doth daily effect in the greater and lesser things of this world: as to the communications of his love in Jesus Christ, and the merciful gracious distributions of the unsearchable riches of his graced, and the hid treasures thereof purchased by his blood! he knows no repentance: of both these you have had full experience. And though your concernment with the former, hath been as eminent as that of any person whatever in these latter ages of the world, yet your interest in and acquaintance with the latter is of incomparable more importance in itself, so answerably of more value and esteem unto you. A sense of the excellency and sweetness of unchangable love, emptying itself in the golden oil of distinguishing spiritual mercies, is one letter of that new name which none can read but he that hath it. The series and chains of eminent providences, whereby you have been carried on, and protected in all the hazardous work of your generation, which God hath called you to is evident to all. Of your preservation by the power of God through faith, in a course of gospel obedience, upon the account of the immutability of the love, and the infallibility of the promises of God, which are yea and amen in Jesus Christ, your own soul is only possessed of the experience. That I have taken upon me to present my weak endeavour to your highness is so far forth from my persuasion of your interest in the truth contended for, (and than which you have none so excellent and worthy) that without it, no consideration whatever, either of that dignity and power whereunto of God you are called, nor of your particular regard to that society of men whereof I am an unworthy member, nor any other personal respect whatever, could have prevailed with or emboldened me thereunto.--*Sancta sanctis.*" In summing up his character, Neal says, "Upon the whole, it is not to be wondered at that the character of this GREAT MAN has been transmitted down to posterity with some disadvantage, by the several factions of royalists, presbyterians, and republicans, because each were disappointed, and enraged, to see the supreme power wrested from them; but his management is a convincing proof of his great abilities. He was at the helm in the most stormy and tempestuous season that England ever saw; but by his consummate wisdom and valour he disconverted the measures and designs of his enemies, and preserved both himself and the commonwealth from shipwreck. I shall only observe further, with Rapin, that the confusion which prevailed in England after the death of Cromwell, clearly evidenced the necessity of this usurpation, at least till the constitution could be restored."

Richard Cromwell, who succeeded his father, was not able to rule the different sects, and it appears that the religious people of the fifth-monarchy principles were very troublesome to him. Calamy says, "The fifth-monarchy men, under Sir Henry Vane, raised a clamorous party against him from amongst the city sectaries. Rogers and Feak, and such like fire-brands, blew the coals, but the assembly at Wallingford-house did the main business. They set up a few among themselves under the name of a council of state, wherein Fleetwood was uppermost, and Lambert next to him."

"But these officers (says Neal) had lost their credit; their measures were disconcerted and broken; one party was for a treaty, and another for the sword, but it was too late; their old veteran regiments were dislodged from the city, and Monk in possession. In this confusion, their General Fleetwood, who had brought them into this distress, retired, and left a body without a head, after which they became insignificant, and in a few months quite contemptible. Here ended the power of the army, and of the Independents." As our work is designed to be rather a history of religion than of politics, we conclude this chapter by shewing what was the influence of those strict religious principles which were acted upon at this time on the morals and happiness of the people; and on the general prosperity of the nation.--We shall do this by copying the judicious reflections of Neal on the times before and after the restoration.

"And here was an end (says he) of those unhappy times which our historians have loaded with all the infamy and reproach that the wit of man could invent. The Puritan ministers have been represented as ignorant mechanics, canting preachers, enemies to learning, and no better than public robbers. The universities were said to be reduced to a mere Munster, and that, if the Goths and Vandals, and even the Turks, had over-run the nation, they could not have done more to introduce barbarism and disloyal ignorance; and yet in these times, and by the men that then filled the university chairs, were educated the most learned divines and eloquent preachers of the last age, as the Stillingfleets, Tillotsons, Bulls, Barrows, Whitbys, and others, who retained a high veneration for their learned tutors, after they were ejected and laid aside. The religious part of the common people have been stigmatized with the character of hypocrites; their looks, their dress and behaviour, have been painted in the most frightful colours; and yet one may venture to challenge those writers to produce any period of time since the reformation, wherein there was less open profaneness and impiety, and more of the spirit and appearance of religion. Perhaps there was a little too much rigour and preciseness in indifferent matters, which might be thought running into a contrary extreme. But the lusts of men were laid under a very great restraint; and though the legal constitution was unhappily broken to pieces, and men were governed by false politics, yet better laws were never made against vice, and those laws never better put into execution. The dress, the language, and conversation of people was sober and virtuous, and their manner of house-keeping remarkably frugal. There was hardly a single bankruptcy to be heard of in a year, and in such a case the bankrupt had a mark of infamy upon him that he could never wipe off. The vices of drunkenness, fornication, profane swearing, and every kind of debauchery were banished and out of fashion. The clergy of these times were laborious to excess in preaching and praying, in catechizing youth, and visiting their parishes.--The magistrates did their duty in suppressing all kind of games, stage plays, and abuses in public-houses. There was not a play acted in any part of England for almost twenty years. The Lord's day was observed with unusual strictness; and there were a set of as learned and pious youths in the university as had been

known. So that if such a reformation of manners had been obtained under a legal administration, they would have deserved the character of the best of times.

"But when the legal restoration was restored, there came in with it a torrent of all kinds of debauchery and wickedness. The times that followed the Restoration were the reverse of those that went before; for the laws which had been made against vice for the last twenty years being declared null, and the magistrates changed, men set no bounds to their appetites. A proclamation indeed was published against those loose and riotous cavaliers, whose loyalty consisted in drinking healths, and railing at those who would not revel with them; but in reality the king was at the head of these disorders, who was devoted to his pleasures; having given himself up to an avowed course of lewdness; his bishops and doctors said, that he usually came from his mistresses' lodgings to church, even on sacrament days.--There were two play-houses erected in the neighbourhood of the court. Women actresses were introduced upon the English stage, which had not been known till that time; the most lewd and obscene plays were acted; and the more obscene, the better did they please the king, who graced the acting every new play with his presence. Nothing was to be seen at court but feasting, hard drinking, revelling, and amorous intrigues, which produced the most enormous vices. From the court the contagion spread like wild-fire among the common people, insomuch that men threw off every profession of virtue and piety, under colour of drinking the king's health; all kinds of old cavalier rioting and debauchery revived; the appearances of religion which remained with some furnished matter of ridicule to the profane mockers of real piety. Some who had been concerned in the former transactions thought they could not redeem their credit better than by laughing at all religion, and telling or making stories to expose their former piety, and make them appear ridiculous.

"To appear serious, or make conscience of one's words and actions, was the way to be avoided as a schismatic, a fanatic, or a sectarian; though if there was any real religion during the course of this reign, it was chiefly among those people. They who did not applaud the new ceremonies were marked out for Presbyterians, and every Presbyterian was a rebel. The old clergy, who had been sequestered for scandal, having taken possession of their livings, were intoxicated with their new felicity, and threw off all the restraints they were under before. Every week (says Mr. Baxter) produced reports of one or other clergyman who was taken up by the watch drunk at night, and mobbed in the streets. Some were taken with lewd women; and one was reported drunk in the pulpit. Such was the general dissolution of manners which attended the tide of joy that overflowed the nation upon his majesty's restoration!" [Neal, vol. iv. p. 271-274.] Who can help exclaiming on surveying this picture, RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION; BUT SIN IS THE REPROACH OF ANY PEOPLE.

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