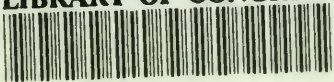
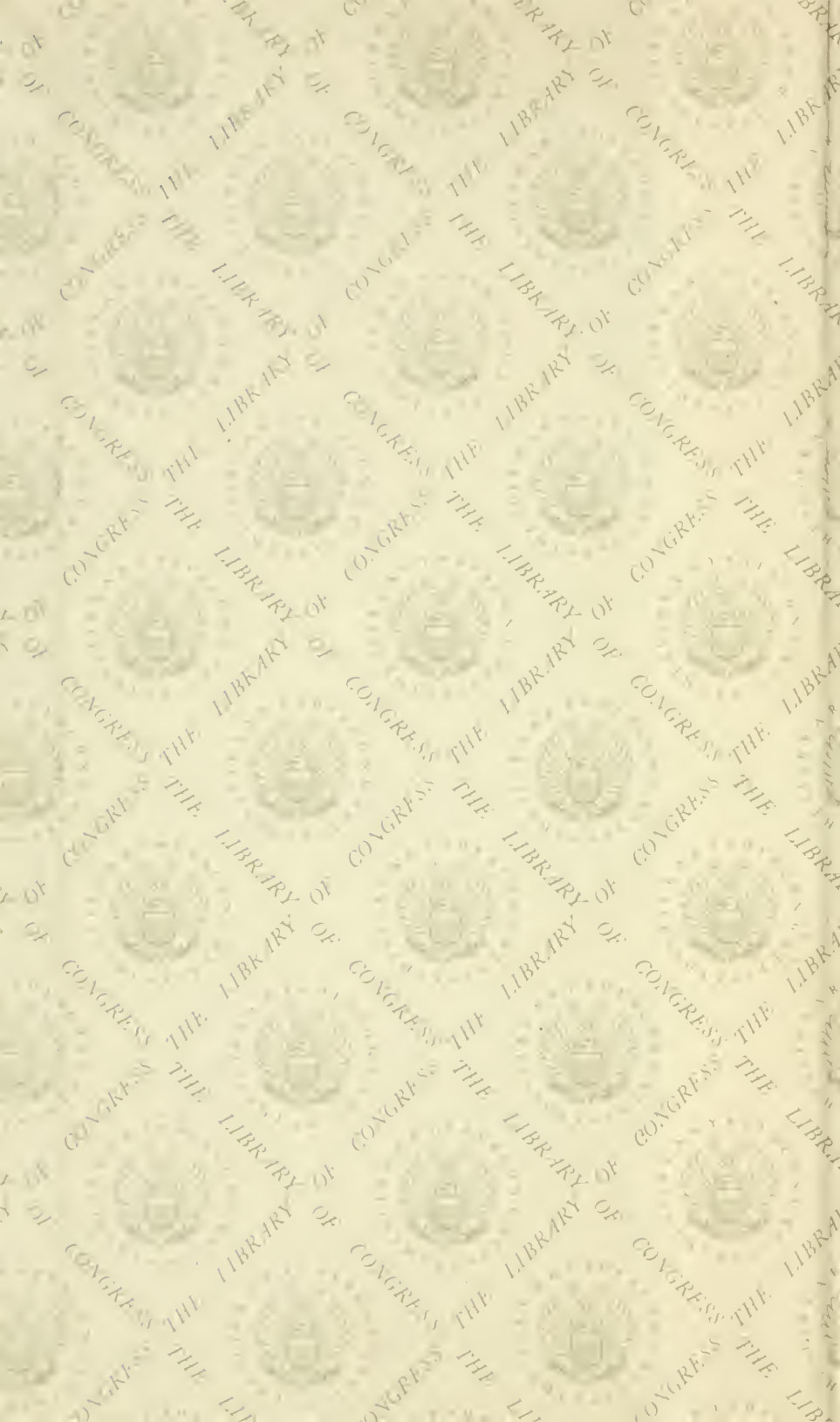


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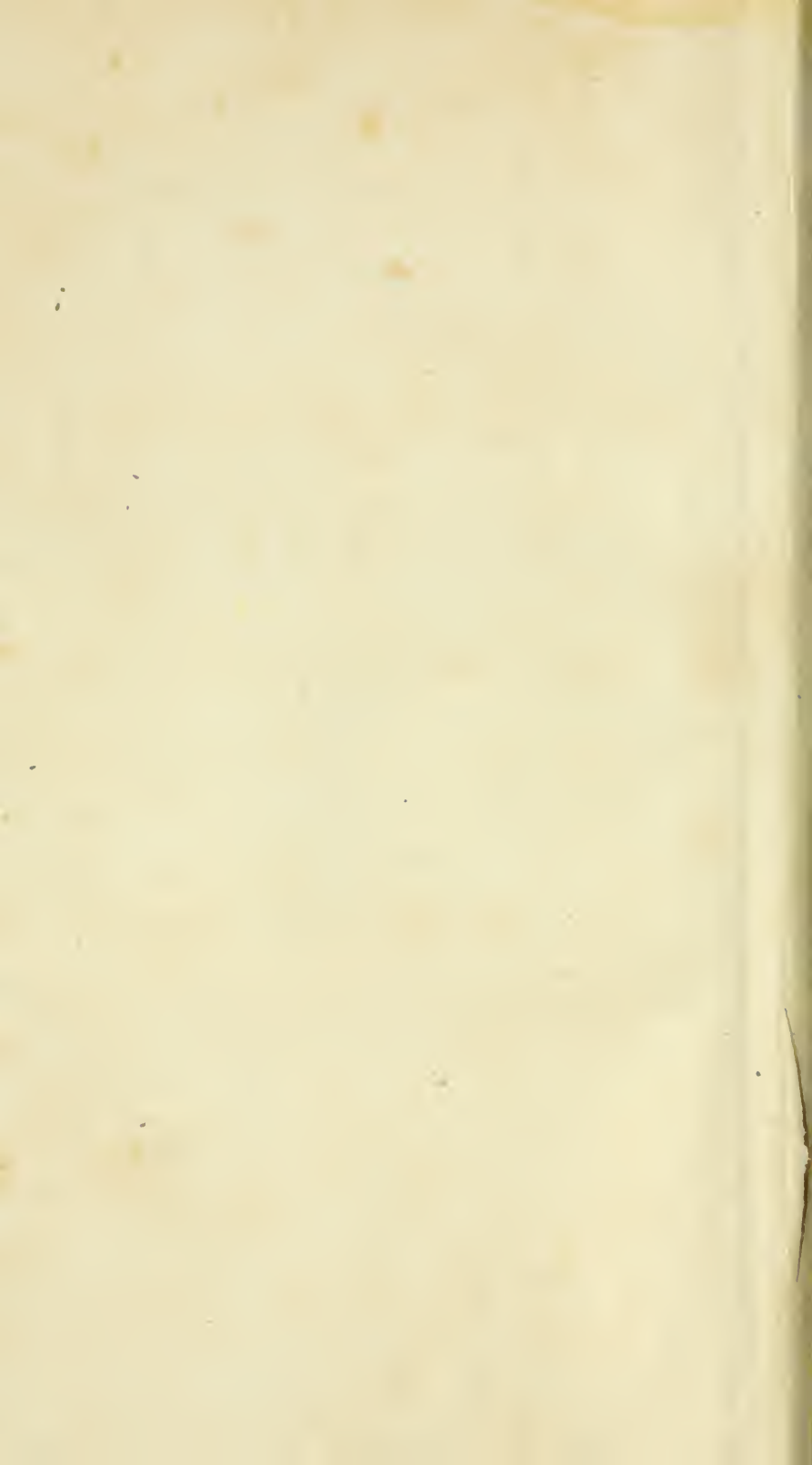












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L I V E S  
OF THE  
CHIEF FATHERS OF NEW ENGLAND.

The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our  
fathers; let him not leave us, nor forsake us.

1 KINGS 8: 57.

VOL. II.

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part 8

THE LIVES

OF

JOHN WILSON, JOHN NORTON,

AND

JOHN DAVENPORT.

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BY A. W. M'CLURE.

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*Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and  
revised by the Committee of Publication.*

BOSTON:  
MASSACHUSETTS SABBATH SCHOOL SOCIETY,  
Depository, No. 13 Cornhill.  
1846.

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## P R E F A C E .

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IT is now two hundred and twenty-five years, since "the May-flower furl'd her tattered sail," by the bleak and wintry shores of Plymouth. A handful of wayworn and careworn pilgrims planted their feet upon that famous rock, bedewing it with tears, still freezing as they fell. That handful of seed-corn has increased and multiplied by successive harvests, till the fruit thereof now shakes like Lebanon, and flourisheth like the grass of the earth. The foundation of the Roman State was as weak and unpromising as that of New England. But we may expect for our people a wider predominance than ever all-conquering Rome attained,—a dominion far more noble than that which is won by force of arms. Ours is the dominion of mind, girded with the armor of truth, and victorious under the banners of freedom and religion.

To achieve the triumph for which we hope, and for which our fathers struggled, it is needful to keep alive their memory, and diffuse their principles. This volume is offered as an humble aid in this great work. As our fathers have been noisily charged with having a spirit of extreme bigotry, and unequaled intoler-

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ance ; and as this charge, more than any other, tends to impede the good influence of their principles and examples, it was thought best to meet it once for all. This will be found attempted at some length, and, it is thought, with the necessary effect, in the third chapter of the Life of John Wilson. The rest of the volume is composed of biographical matter. It may be expected, that this series will soon be extended by other volumes, from several writers, descriptive of the compeers of those good men who are commemorated here.

May the descendants of the Pilgrims and Puritans follow their faith, order, and piety. Let us pray with Solomon ;—“ O Lord God of our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.”

BOSTON, MAY 1, 1846.

# LIFE OF JOHN WILSON.



## CHAPTER I.

All true ministers sent of God. John Wilson's birth—parentage—education. Eton school. King's College, Cambridge. Fellowship. Slander. Conversion. Prejudice against Puritans. Richard Rogers. Mr. Wilson joins the Puritans. Dr. Ames. Mr. Wilson obliged to leave the University. Inns of court. Return to Cambridge. Called to his father's death-bed. Troubled for non-conformity. "Some Helps to Faith." Countess of Leicester. Lecturers. Chaplain. Lady Scudamore. Sabbath-keeping. Mr. Wilson settled at Sudbury. His success there. His troubles in the bishop's courts. Suspended. Silenced. Restored. Death of Harsnet. Mr. Wilson departs to America.

ONE of the most famous of the Lord's ministers with whom the Bible acquaints us, is thus introduced—"There was a man sent from God whose name was John." All true ministers are sent of God. In this sense, they are all *missionaries*, all *apostles*; both of which terms, according to their derivations, have the same meaning. They designate such as are commissioned to go upon God's errand, to do his

work, and bear his messages to men. John, the son of Zecharias, was thus sent, as the text asserts, from God. He was a sort of herald, to precede and announce the near advent of our Lord. And a glorious office it was, to sound the trumpet in Zion, and make proclamation of the coming of the Son of Man. Great was the honor, to be the day-star to that rising orb.

In a lower sense, it may be said of him of whom we are to speak at this time, "there was a man sent from God, whose name was John." This man, like his illustrious namesake, that lone prophet of the desert, was a sort of forerunner of our Lord, proceeding before his face into this part of the wide wilderness. He was the first voice which cried upon the desert peninsula of Shawmut;—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!"

But the apostolic man whom we now commemorate, more resembles in character that other John, the favored disciple, beloved of God and man. Like that last surviving apostle, the first pastor of Boston, united a burning flame of zeal with a love-breathing spirit of the tenderest charity. Our fathers considered him to excel other men in love, as much as their venerated Cotton exceeded them in light.

John Wilson was born at Windsor, in Eng-

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land, in the year 1588. His family was highly respectable. His father, Rev. Dr. William Wilson, was a well-beneficed clergyman, being a prebend of St. Paul's, of Rochester, and of Windsor, and rector of the parish of Cliff. The mother was a niece of Dr. Edmund Grindall, the pious archbishop of Canterbury, who, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, favored the Puritans to the extent of his power, and at the cost of the severe displeasure of the imperious Queen. Under the care of his parents, John Wilson, who was their third son, was trained to an abhorrence of every form of vice, and especially of every appearance of falsehood. At the age of ten, he was placed under what was then the rigorous discipline of Eton college. While here he was twice rescued with difficulty from drowning. Such was his proficiency in study, that, when yet the smallest boy in school, he was appointed prepositor, or overseer of the other scholars. When the French ambassador, the Duke de Biron, visited the Seminary, our hopeful youth made a Latin oration so much to the Duke's satisfaction, that he gave him for largesse three *angels*; a sort of gold coin so called, of ten shilling's value. After four years' stay at Eton, he was admitted to King's College, Cambridge, in 1602, being then in his fifteenth

year. In due time, he was elected to a fellowship in his college. This election, effected by the warm interposition of the provost in his behalf, he had like to have lost, in consequence of some slanders which had been maliciously circulated to prevent the choice. This affliction led his mind to serious reflections, and disposed him to be much in prayer.

The injurious reports were soon cleared up, and vanished into forgetfulness. It has been said by one who was himself most unreasonably calumniated ;—“ A slander that has no truth to support it, is only a great fish upon dry land ; it may flounce, and fling, and make a fretful pother, but it will not bite you ; you need not knock it on the head, it will soon be still, and die quietly of itself.” The weapons of the slanderer are never more completely foiled, than when met by silent contempt. From that impenetrable shield, how often have the envenomed darts rebounded upon the assailant ! It was wisely sung by one of our older poets ;—

“ And I do count it a most rare revenge,  
That I can thus, with such a sweet neglect,  
Pluck from them all the pleasure of their inalice ;  
For that’s the mark of all their enginous drifts,  
To wound my patience, howso’er they seem  
To aim at other objects ; which, if missed,



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Their envy's like an arrow shot upright,  
That, in the fall, endangers their own heads."

The trouble of mind which young Mr. Wilson suffered from the malice of his detractor, proved to be an advantageous affliction; it is so true, that "the eye which sin shuts, affliction opens." "Certain it is," says Jeremy Taylor, "unless we first be cut and hewn in the mountains, we shall not be fixed in the temple of God."

Mr. Wilson, through the divine blessing upon the restraints of a careful and virtuous education, had ever continued in a course of serious and irreproachable morality. Strange as it may seem to such as have not known it by experience, persons of this character often endure the most distressing and protracted convictions of sinfulness before God; and are often the most earnest in renouncing, even with horror, all thought of relying on their own righteousness, and in trusting for salvation to the merits of Christ alone. There is no hopeful sign of grace in these "moral sinners," till they begin to manifest a painful consciousness of the native corruption of their hearts and their guiltiness in the sight of a holy God. Though sin be the cause of all our misery, yet a sense of sin is the first step to all the happiness of the Christian life.

Under the preaching of several godly divines, who were then the lights of the University, Mr. Wilson became an anxious inquirer for that one thing he yet lacked. And now the grace of Christ, which no one ever sought sincerely, and sought in vain, taught him to make strenuous exertions, that others might know that grace, and rejoice in its power. He regularly visited the prisons; and, through his patient and laborious efforts, many of the hardened convicts were softened, and melted to repentance.

This young and ardent Christian was filled with educational prejudices against the Puritans. Though his devout and zealous life caused him to be regarded as one himself, his high-church notions led him to shun their acquaintance. His strong prepossessions against a class of men whom he had ever been accustomed to hear decried, without knowing what their sentiments really were, at last were removed. Making purchases in a bookseller's shop, to increase his well-stocked library, he fell upon a highly esteemed work of the Rev. Richard Rogers, styled "The Seven Treatises." The reading of this book so affected Mr. Wilson's mind, that he made a journey to Weathersfield, in Essex, in order to listen to the preaching of its author.

Mr. Rogers was then an old minister, and had often been suspended, and silenced, and otherwise troubled for his non-conformity. He was a most faithful and laborious minister; and it is said, that "the Lord honored none more in the conversion of souls." He was an admired preacher. He used to say;—"I should be sorry if every day were not employed as if it were my last." He was called the *Enoch* of his day; and Bishop Kennet said of him, "that England hardly ever brought forth a man who walked more closely with God." He was grave and serious in all company. A gentleman once said to him;—"Mr. Rogers, I like you, and your company, very well, only you are *too precise*." To this he replied;—"Oh Sir, I serve a *precise God*."

Enlightened by the instructions, public and private, of this divine, and by the study of able writers, Mr. Wilson clearly saw, that the Puritans were far preferable to the Impuritans as companions of one who was diligently seeking eternal life. Returning to the University, he sought the counsels of Dr. William Ames, who was about this time, in 1610, driven to Holland, where he spent the rest of his days in great fame for learning, piety and usefulness. He died just as he was upon the point of embarking

for New England, whither his widow and children soon after went, carrying his valuable library. Mr. Wilson, following the advice of Dr. Ames, gathered around him a company of pious associates, who statedly met in his college chambers, for fasting, conference and prayer.

It was not long, before, like most other Puritans, he began to scruple at some of the rites imposed by the National Church. He procured all the books he could find on either side of the question, and seriously weighed the arguments they contained. Though early impressions and personal interests must have made the scale gravitate strongly in favor of conformity, yet conscience and duty preponderated the other way. As the result of this long and solemn deliberation, he began, in the worship of God, to omit some ceremonies, which he felt to be instituted in derogation from the kingly power of Christ in his Church. For these omissions, the Bishop of Lincoln, at a visitation of the University, pronounced against him the sentence of *quindenum*, or expulsion within fifteen days, unless he should desist from the offence. This news stirred up all the affection of his distressed father, who urgently wrote to him to conform; and exercised his influence with the bishop to procure three months' indulgence,

within which time the son must conform, or resign his fellowship and hopes of promotion. His father sent him to several divines of note, in hopes they would succeed in removing his scruples. But after much interchange of talking and writing, Mr. Wilson was more decided than before. Upon this, his father sought to withdraw him from the ministry, and placed him at the Inns of Court as a student of the law. Here too he found pious acquaintances, with whom he constantly met for devotional exercises. He also derived much benefit from the acquaintance of Scultet, the learned chaplain of the Prince Palatine of the Rhine, who was then making some stop in England.

After three years spent in the inns of court in pursuits uncongenial to his feelings, Mr. Wilson's father yielded to his wishes to enter the ministry, and consented that he should return to the University to take his degree of Master of Arts. He applied for this purpose to a different college from that in which he had formerly met with trouble. But Dr. Cary, vice-chancellor of the University, being aware of the old difficulty, would not admit him to his degree, unless he would subscribe to the articles of the Church by law established. Distressed by this impracticable condition, he went to his

father's house. There, at that time, was visiting a gentleman of influence, who had business with the Earl of Northampton, then Chancellor of the University. At the intercession of that gentleman, the Earl immediately wrote in Mr. Wilson's favor to the Vice-Chancellor. All difficulty gave way before this potent recommendation. The candidate obtained the desired degree, and resided for a while in Emanuel College. This was to him a matter of importance, by reason of the power which the University enjoyed of licensing persons to preach throughout the realm, without previous application to the diocesans. For this purpose, he made frequent journeys into the adjoining counties. At this time, Mr. Wilson made a solemn resolution before God;—"That if the Lord would grant him liberty of conscience, with purity of worship, he would be content, yea, thankful, though it were at the furthest end of the world." To this resolution he faithfully adhered, and God granted his desire.

Soon after he had preached his first sermon at Newport, he was summoned to his father's death-bed. According to the patriarchal custom, the children kneeled in succession for their dying parent's blessing. When the staunch young Puritan kneeled in his turn, there bowed

at his side the lady to whom he was betrothed, Elizabeth, the virtuous daughter of Sir John Mansfield. Upon this, the expiring father said;—"Ah John, I have taken much care about thee, such time as thou wast in the University, because thou wouldest not conform. I would fain have brought thee to some higher preferment than thou hast yet attained unto. I see thy conscience is very scrupulous, concerning some things that have been observed and imposed in the Church. Nevertheless I have rejoiced to see the grace and fear of God in thy heart; and seeing thou hast kept a good conscience hitherto, and walked according to thy light, so do still; and go by the rules of God's holy Word. The Lord bless thee, and her whom thou hast chosen to be the companion of thy life."

Consoled by this paternal benediction, Mr. Wilson gave himself wholly to the work of the gospel. Among other places, he preached in Moreclake. Here his non-conformity involved him in a tempest of troubles; from which, however, he found shelter, partly by a mistake of those who informed against him; and partly by the favor of the magistrate before whom he was cited, who happened to be Sir William Bird, a kinsman of Mr. Wilson's wife.

This storm being blown over, Mr. Wilson was occupied as chaplain in several honorable families. One was that of the Countess of Leicester, to whom he dedicated the only book, except a small poem, he ever published. It is entitled, "Some Helps to Faith; shewing the necessitie, grounds, kinds, degrees, and Signes of it; clearing divers doubts, and answering objections made by the Soule in temptation. Seruing also for a tryall of a man's spirituall estate. The third Edition, explaining and enlarging something in the former. By John Wilson, Preacher of God's Word in Guilford. Philip. 1.25,26. For your furtherance, and joy of faith, that you may more abundantly reioyce in Jesus Christ. London, Printed for Robert Milbourne, and are to be sold at his Shop at the sign of the Grayhound in Paul's Churchyard. 1630." The first edition was probably printed ten or twelve years before. This little volume, with its large title, indicating, as the custom then was, the contents of the book, is excellent of its kind. It abounds in divisions, and still more in appropriate Scripture. It is such a treatise of practical piety as none but a devout Calvinist could write. The celebrated Hannah More, who liked not the distinctive sentiments of such men, was very fond



of reading what they wrote upon experimental religion. She used to say, that she "loved the lean of their fat." Her taste is to be commended: for, in truth, to the devout soul, hungering for "strong meat," there is but little nourishment afforded by "the lean kine," of the Pelagian herd, or "the bulls of Bashan," who push with the horns of Arminius, and bellow in his tones.

The "Helps to Faith," is inscribed "to the truly noble ladie, The Ladie Lettice; Countesse of Leicester." In this address, Mr. Wilson says;—"It hath pleased God to stirre up your Ladyshippe for my good: First, in calling mee to bee a minister to your Honorable Family, how weake soeuer; yet not without some fruite by his blessing, whose power is seene in weaknesse; where, how I was cared for, my Conscience doeth witnesse: Secondly, in your oportunitie, (preferring publique good, so were your wordes,) giving mee a free and comfortable entrance into this charge, wherin I now labor, according to my measure. And from that time, I have been followed with kindnesse from that house: but it especially refresheth mee to remember, that for the worke of my Ministerie, your Honour willed mee to account you as my Mother." It is probable, that the duty to which

he was called in Guilford by his pious patroness, was that of "lecturer."

In those days, very many of the ministers, even of large parishes, were incompetent for their work. The patron, who had livings in his gift, or the right of conferring the parish on whom he would, too often abused this right which he had acquired by inheritance or purchase. Men who entered the ministry from the lowest motives would "come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread," and say, "Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." Many of these incumbents were incapable of praying except by a book, and incapable of preaching in any way. The reading of the Common Prayer, and sometimes of a printed Homily authorized by the government for the purpose, was all that they attempted for the instruction of their flocks. To "supply this lack of service," religious persons of wealth would often support a lecturer, to preach stately in some church thus unprovided with a preaching pastor. Nearly all these lecturers, and indeed almost all other zealous preachers, were of the Puritan stamp. Of course, they were viewed with much dislike by those whom the good martyr and bishop Latimer commonly

called "the unpreaching prelates." These prelates, and others who were inclined to despotism in Church and State, were quite of Queen Elizabeth's mind, who thought, that "one preacher was enough for a whole county." The lecturers were not, usually, suffered to pursue their labors without interruption. They were usually driven off under some charge of non-conformity. It is probable, that Mr. Wilson continued but a short time to be "preacher of God's Word in Guilford," though of this we have no certain information.

We have mentioned, that he was employed as domestic chaplain in several families of distinction. The last of these was the family of the pious lady Scudamore. While here, he was grieved to notice the worldly and unsuitable conversation of the gentry at the table on the Sabbath. At last he rose, and said;—"I will make bold to speak a word or two. This is the Lord's holy day, and we have been hearing his holy Word. We should think and speak about such things as have been delivered in the name of God; and not lavish out the time in discourse about hawks and hounds." Upon this one of the gentlemen very handsomely thanked him for the reproof; and expressed the hope that it might not be uttered in vain. However, the

next Sabbath, the gentlefolks were at their old table-talk again. Mr. Wilson did not fail to tell them ;—“ that the hawks they talked of, were the birds that picked up the seed of the Word after it was sown :” he also entreated them to talk of “ such things as might sanctify the day, and edify their own souls.” The same gentleman who had thanked him for the first admonition, again thanked him for his faithful warning. But Mr. Leigh, the husband of the lady of the house, was deeply offended. Lady Scudamore wished her chaplain to say something to appease him. But Mr. Wilson was ready to leave the family, rather than make any apology for having discharged his duty. When it was found that neither the kindness nor the displeasure of his patrons could make the good man swerve from his fidelity, Mr. Leigh and the others amended their fault ; and the day of sacred rest was no longer profaned by unsuitable discourse.

After he left this family, Mr. Wilson preached a while at Henley. He then, for three years, preached in rotation at four neighboring places, in Suffolk county, namely, Bumstead, Stoke, Clare, and Candish. At one of these places, some people of Sudbury happened to hear him ; and he was, in consequence, invited to become minister there, as successor to Mr. Jenkyn, an

eminent Puritan, who died in 1618. His call to this place was signed by many scores of the people, and the leading men among them. He would not accept this pastoral charge, till he was freely elected by the people on a day of solemn prayer and fasting, at which the neighboring ministers assisted. He was the more willing to settle in this town, because it placed him in the neighborhood of the aged Mr. Rogers, from whose counsels both he and his predecessor, Mr. Jenkyn, had obtained much spiritual aid; and from whose dying lips Mr. Wilson afterwards received a blessing among that good man's children. It was here, that Mr. Wilson became acquainted with the excellent John Winthrop, then living in the neighborhood, and afterwards the prime leader of the Massachusetts colony, and with whom Mr. Wilson first came to these shores.

During his ministry in Sudbury, Mr. Wilson, like a faithful ambassador for Christ, strictly followed his Master's instructions. He became eminent for the success with which God crowned his evangelical labors. Many remarkable cases of conversion attested that the Lord was with him. One instance is related of a tradesman in that place, who was much addicted to vicious practices; and, among them, to pilfering. One

day, as this man was observing the people flocking to Mr. Wilson's lecture, the thought occurred to him;—"Why should I tarry at home to work, when so many go to hear a sermon?" And so he went with the multitude. But when there, he heard a sermon specially applicable to himself, from the text;—"Let him that stole, steal no more." Receiving this as God's message to his soul, the penitent hearer became a reformed and pious man.

In those persecuting times, it was not to be expected, that a servant of God so eminent for zeal and usefulness as Mr. Wilson, should escape unharmed. There was a sort of upstart preacher among the Puritans at Sudbury, who, irritated at the superior respect paid to Mr. Wilson, became a conformist. In him the smoke of apostacy, as too often happens, burst forth into the blaze of persecution. This person made his complaints to the Bishop's courts, from whose sentence our worthy pastor escaped only by the powerful intercession of some influential men who exerted themselves in his behalf. On one occasion, his prosecutor employed a pursuivant, noticed above all others for his activity in such business, to arrest Mr. Wilson. But though this "mighty hunter," whose "prey was man," arrested scores of people, who were

returning from lecture, he dismissed them all, because he had missed of taking the preacher, who, by a good providence, had gone out of his way to visit a friend.

After this, a lady of rank, not intending any offence, chanced to speak too favorably of Mr. Wilson's preaching in comparison with that of a certain reverend doctor. Upon this the angry divine applied to the Bishop of London, who suspended Mr. Wilson from office for the scandalous offence of preaching better than some of his neighbors.

This suspension had not been long taken off, when he was wholly silenced, with several other worthy ministers, by Dr. Harsnet, Bishop of Norwich. After a while, the Earl of Warwick, a very potent nobleman, signed a letter to this Bishop, which letter Mr. Wilson drew up at the Earl's desire. Hereupon he was at once restored to the freedom of his ministry. That same Bishop, not long after, went forth upon an expedition to the northern part of his diocese, to put down the non-conforming pastors and people there. Meanwhile the ministers in the southern region set apart a day of fasting, to pray for the help of heaven in behalf of their brethren. On that very day, the oppressive prelate was taken with a violent fit, which

forced him to stop at a wretched inn on the road, when he suddenly expired. This is one out of the numberless instances which church history affords, of the miserable end which persecutors have commonly met. "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth."

But persecution died not with Dr. Harsnet. The harrassed and worn out Puritans began to sigh for that repose and security, which the old world could not offer them. They began to say one to another ;—"The sun shines as pleasantly on America as on England, and the Sun of Righteousness much more clearly. Let us remove whither the providence of God calls, and make that our country, which will afford us what is dearer than property or life, the liberty of worshipping God in the way which appears to us most conducive to our eternal welfare."\* Mr. Wilson, after he had ministered at Sudbury for ten or twelve years, embarked with many of his neighbors in the large company of fifteen hundred settlers, which came over with John Winthrop in the year 1630. They left the Isle of Wight on the 8th of April; and by the 12th of June, the principal vessel of their fleet of thirteen, arrived at Salem, which had

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\* Neal's Hist. Vol. II p 207.



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begun to be settled some three or four years before. Thus these good men went from one sore trial to another. They left behind them the home from which it was so painful parting; and before them were the sorrows of the wilderness.

## CHAPTER II.

Hard times. Mr. Wilson's activity. Church formed at Charlestown. Mr. Wilson installed as teacher of the church. Removal to Boston. Mr. Wilson returns to England. His second voyage to America. House of worship built. Prognostications. Excursion to Plymouth. Sabbath, and order of worship there. Mr. Wilson installed as pastor of Boston. Arrival of John Cotton, who becomes teacher. Mr. Wilson's labors among the Indians. Account of Sagamore John. His death and the destruction of his band. His son committed to Mr. Wilson's care. Treatment of the Indians. Land-title. John Cotton. Penn's treaty. Low price of wild lands. Revival in Boston Church. Intercourse between the ministry and magistracy. The clergy, the friends of liberty. Adventure at Nantasket. Mr. Wilson again returns to England. Dangers on the Irish coast. Driven to Ireland. Travels in England. Legacy of Dr. Wilson. Visit to Sudbury. Visit to Nathaniel Rogers. Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson. Good Mr. Dod's message to her. Her husband in peril. Edward Johnson. Sails for America the last time. His fellow voyagers, Shepard, Hugh Peters, &c. Arrival at Boston. Antinomian controversy.

MR. Wilson was about forty-two years of age when he came to this country. He exerted himself most energetically to encourage the people under the inconceivable difficulties of a new settlement. His "over-doing liberality," knew no bounds except his limited means. Morton, naming him as "eminent for love and

zeal," says that he "bare a great share of the difficulties of these new beginnings with great cheerfulness and alacrity of spirit." He was fully up to the spirit of that time of primitive zeal and love, when no disciple said, "that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." Such were their hardships as to afford full scope for his active benevolence. Some idea of their sufferings may be derived from the fact, that, within three months from their landing, they buried near two hundred of their number: those who survived were sadly prostrated by sickness: and two hundred of them abandoned the colony that fall. These distresses were owing to insufficient shelter as they lay "up and down in booths," and to the want of suitable food and remedies. Mr. Wilson was indefatigable in his endeavors to console the afflicted, and revive the hopes of the faint-hearted. There is a tradition of his preaching a comforting discourse upon the example of the patriarch Jacob, who was not discouraged though his beloved Rachel died by the way, as he was removing in obedience to the divine command.

In the face of disaster, Mr. Wilson still urged on the main design of the colony, which was, "to settle and enjoy the ordinances of the gos-

pel, and worship the Lord Jesus Christ according to his own institutions." Having settled at Charlestown in the month of July, with a considerable part of the colony, on the thirtieth of that month, a day of fasting was observed on account of the prevailing mortality. The services were held, as we derive from that old worthy, Roger Clap, under a shady oak; where, says that delightful example of puritanism in private life, "I have heard many a good sermon from Mr. Wilson and Mr. Phillips." In truth it was "a brave old oak," which springing from a poor acorn, but growing up till it becomes the branching monarch of the forest, was the fit emblem of their church and commonwealth. When the public services of that day were closed, four men, agreeable to previous arrangement, formed themselves into a visible church of God, by entering into a solemn covenant with God, and with each other. They were the Governor Winthrop, the Deputy governor Dudley, Mr. Isaac Johnson, and Rev. Mr. Wilson. Many others were soon after added to their communion which was formed by signing the following covenant:—

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to his holy will and divine ordinance.

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“ We whose names are here underwritten, being by his most wise and good providence brought together into this part of America, in the Bay of Massachusetts, and desirous to unite into one congregation or church, under the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head, in such sort as becometh all those whom he hath redeemed, and sanctified to himself, do hereby solemnly and religiously, as in his most holy presence, promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the gospel, and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect to each other, so near as God shall give us grace.”

At the first Court of Assistants, which was held in Charlestown, the twenty-third of August, 1630, the first business taken into consideration was the maintenance of the ministry. It was ordered, that houses be built for Mr. Wilson and Mr. Phillips, with convenient speed at the public charge. Sir Richard Saltonstall undertook to see it done for Mr. Phillips, at Wattertown, and the governor was to do the same for Mr. Wilson, at Charlestown settlement. Mr. Phillips was to have thirty pounds a year, beginning at the first of September following. Mr. Wilson was to have twenty pounds a year, till his wife should join him, beginning from the

tenth of July preceding. These dates, doubtless, indicate the times in which their stated labors respectively began. These salaries were to be paid at the common charge of the colony, excepting the settlers at Salem and Dorchester.

Four days after the meeting of the court, being the last Friday in August, another fast was held, when Mr. Wilson was chosen teaching elder; Mr. Increase Nowell, who was afterwards Secretary of the colony till his death in 1655, was chosen ruling elder; William Gager was chosen deacon, whom Governor Dudley calls "a right godly man, a skilful chyrurgeon," and who died in less than four weeks after. The other deacon was William Aspinwall, who was a notary public. These were all set apart to their respective offices by the laying on of the hands of the brethren. Governor Winthrop, who was active on the occasion, says;—"We used imposition of hands; but with this protestation by all, that it was only as a sign of election and confirmation; not of any intent that Mr. Wilson should renounce his ministry he received in England."\* It is singular that most of our historians should pay so little regard to this distinct and explicit protestation, as to repre-

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\* Savage's Winthrop, Vol. I., p. 33.

sent our fathers of this colony as renouncing the ordination received from the Church in the mother country. They had no such intention.

Thus they organized, and furnished with its officers, that which was afterwards known as the First Church of Boston, to which place most of the members removed within a few weeks from these transactions. At first those who removed went over to Charlestown to worship on the Sabbath. Very soon divine service was celebrated alternately on each side of the river: and ere long the First Church worshipped altogether on the trimontane peninsula. Long shone that Church as a light to the world, and eminent "as a city that is set on an hill."

The next year Mr. Wilson sailed for England. Before going, on the twenty-ninth of March, 1631, he met with the principal members of the congregation at the governor's residence. Having prayed with them, he exhorted them to love, union and fidelity; and advised them, during his absence, to use the liberty of prophesying,—that is, to avail themselves of the gifts of the lay-brethren in exhortation and religious instruction. He designated Governor Winthrop, Mr. Deputy governor Dudley, and Mr. Nowell the ruling elders, as specially fitted to this duty. These worthy men accepted the

charge, "knowing well," as good Mr. Hubbard says, "that the princes of Judah, in king Hezekiah's reign, were appointed to teach the people out of the law of God." The interview was closed with prayer by the devout governor, at Mr. Wilson's request, who was then conducted to the boat on his way to Charlestown, from whence he went by land to Salem. From this port he sailed, with many other passengers, on the first of April, and arrived at London on the twenty-ninth of the same month. His place was speedily supplied by Rev. John Eliot, who arrived soon after Mr. Wilson's departure.

He appears to have been unsuccessful in what had probably been the chief object of his voyage, the attempt to persuade his wife to accompany him into the formidable desert. The good report that he brought of the land, greatly stirred up the hearts of others to seek it. Mrs. Margaret Winthrop, one of the noblest spirited of the old puritan dames, fired by his representations, burned to be crossing the ocean to join her beloved husband, who impatiently waited for her coming. In a letter to her son upon this subject, she says;—"Mr. Wilson is now in London. He cannot yet persuade his wife to go, for all he hath taken this pains to come and fetch her. I marvel what mettle she is made of.



Sure she will yield at last, or else we shall want him exceedingly in New England."

It is a strong proof of Mr. Wilson's zeal and resolution in the path of duty, that he returned to his flock, though unable to prevail with a wife to whom he was tenderly attached to join him in the way. He reached Boston the twenty-sixth of May, 1632. He took the freeman's oath on the ensuing third of July. This latter step evinced his fixed purpose to settle permanently in this country.

During that month, the congregation began to erect their first house of worship. For this, and for Mr. Wilson's dwelling-house, they made a voluntary contribution of one hundred and twenty pounds. Wilson's Lane, leading from State Street to Dock Square, derives its name from the parsonage which stood therein. The meeting-house stood near the corner of Exchange and State streets. With its walls of mud, and its low thatched roof, it was indeed an humble structure to be the dwelling-place of the Most High. But "though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly." The Son of God himself dwelt in a tabernacle of clay: and when he arose from the dead, and ascended on high, he glorified that mortal dust. It has been the ordinary course of divine providence, "that

great endings should start from small beginnings." Morton in his "New England's Memorial," speaking of this very church, remarked;—"Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced by his hand that made all things of nothing: and as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many; yea, in some sort, to our whole nation. Let the glorious name of Jehovah have the praise in all ages."

In Governor Winthrop's journal, under the date of the fifth of July, 1632, there is a curious entry, which suits well to this connection, and which is characteristic of the time when it was penned.\* "At Watertown, there was, in the view of divers witnesses, a great combat between a mouse and a snake; and, after a long fight, the mouse prevailed and killed the snake. The pastor of Boston, Mr. Wilson, a very sincere, holy man, hearing of it, gave this interpretation: That the snake was the devil; the mouse was a poor contemned people, which God had brought hither, which should overcome Satan here, and dispossess him of his kingdom." Upon the same occasion, he told the governor, that is to say, Winthrop himself, "that, before he was

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\* Savage's Winthrop, I, 81.

resolved to come into this country, he dreamed he was here, and that he saw a church arise out of the earth, which grew up and became a marvelous goodly church."

Had our good Mr. Wilson lived among the Pharaohs, he would have been styled, like Joseph, Zaphnath-paaneah, which is by interpretation, "A revealer of secrets." His explanation of the combat and his significant dream, must be regarded as prophetic, if it be allowed that every prediction which actually comes to pass, is a true prophecy. Our fathers, no doubt, paid too much attention to signs and omens of that futurity which is so dark to all, but into which all are prone to look with anxious and searching gaze. It may be, that, in the explanation of the unequal contest between the mouse and snake, Mr. Wilson meant no more than to turn the incident into an allegory. Men were formerly much delighted with such parables. The excellent Flavel wrote one sizeable book called "Husbandry Spiritualized," and another named "Navigation Spiritualized," in both of which, those callings are allegorically treated in a very ingenious and instructive manner, without any thing like superstition. The night-vision of the rising church speaks for itself. It needs no "Belteshazzar" to expound its import. To a thoughtful and imag-

inative man, without being at all regarded as a special revelation, it might well seem to encourage high expectation and strenuous effort. Many instances are on record, of men of ardent piety who, in difficult circumstances, have been guided to happy issues by hints of this nature. Why should it be deemed incredible, that He "who heareth prayer" should in such ways intimate his will, and lead the minds of his servants toward the best results?

On the twenty-fifth of October, Mr. Wilson with the governor, and a few other men of note, set out on a friendly visit to the colony at Plymouth. Here they had a very generous and hospitable reception, having gone in a pinnace as far as Weymouth the first day, and traveled the rest of the way the next day, in independent style, on foot. On the Sabbath, a sacrament was held, at which the guest's partook. In the afternoon a singular scene took place, which gives us a view of the mode in which public worship was maintained by the emigrants from Leyden. Rev. Roger Williams, their teacher, proposed a question for consideration. The pastor, Mr. Ralph Smith spoke briefly upon it. Then Mr. Williams "prophesied," or explained upon it. Next Governor Bradford of Plymouth, a learned man, discussed the matter: and after him William

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Brewster, the ruling elder, and also a man of cultivated mind, continued the discussion. He was followed by two or three of the brethren of that church. Then the ruling elder, according to a custom used in the synagogues in the time of the apostles, called upon Governor Winthrop and Mr. Wilson to speak to the point in hand, which they severally did. The matter having been thus thoroughly deliberated, the deacon, Samuel Fuller, reminded the congregation of the duty of contributing to the gospel. Upon this, Governor Bradford, that "right worshipful man," goes to the deacon's seat, and others after him; and having deposited their offerings in the bag, they returned to their places. This religious exercise was originally introduced by their revered John Robinson, who grounded it upon the practice of the Christians at Corinth, as described by Paul in his first epistle to the church in that place. It was, after a while, disused, as being peculiarly appropriate only in an age when those who prophesied did so by direct revelation from God. Such a practice could hardly work to advantage, except in a church where some of the brethren have the gift of speaking to edification; and the rest have the rarer and richer gift of holding their peace. There is great truth in the rabbinical proverb;—"Speech may be silver, but silence is gold."

On the Wednesday following the Sabbath just described, the Boston company, having been honorably entertained, and affectionately escorted on their way out of Plymouth, set out for home with great contentment. Governor Winthrop returned in grander state than he went, on Governor Bradford's horse. In those slow and sure, and steady times, as they plodded along their weary way, we may be sure that "the Old Colony Railroad" was not in their thoughts.

The congregation at Boston held a solemn fast on the 22d of November. This day Mr. Thomas Oliver was chosen a ruling elder, and was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the teacher and the two deacons, in the name of the congregation. Mr. Wilson, who had before been ordained teacher, was now chosen to be pastor of the church, and was set apart to that office by the imposition of hands of the ruling elder, and the deacons. This circumstance confirms the remark that was made in regard to Mr. Wilson's installation as teacher, that our fathers did not consider this ceremony of laying on of hands as any renunciation of a ministry previously received. So they declared by express protestation in the first instance; and in this second instance, they manifest the same in practice, for it is certain they had no thought of nullifying their own

act in the first. Undoubtedly both Paul and Barnabas had been fully clothed with the ministerial office, before the church at Antioch sent them on their famous mission to Asia Minor: and yet they were specially set apart to that work by fasting and prayer, and laying on of hands of certain prophets and teachers, certainly of no higher rank than Paul and his companion.

During the first and second years, the Massachusetts colony received but small reinforcement of numbers from the mother country. But in 1633, and for seven years after, the accessions to its strength were very numerous and valuable, and the new settlements spread themselves in all directions. Among others who "were famous in the congregation, men of renown," was Rev. John Cotton. He was ordained, in the capacity of teacher of the church, as colleague with Mr. Wilson, on the fourth of September, 1633. These luminaries shone together, though with different colored rays, in the same conspicuous sphere. If the teacher shone with more of brilliance and illumination, the pastor glowed with a warmer and more genial radiance.

Mr. Wilson's missionary spirit led him to extend his labors to the destitute settlements which were then springing up in what we may call "the front-woods" of this forest-world. Thus,

on the twenty-sixth of November, he went, by special leave from his own congregation, to Agawam, now called Ipswich, to preach to that plantation, which was not yet furnished with a minister. Here, notwithstanding the earliness of the season, he was detained for some days beyond his intention by the depth of the snow, and the freezing of the river. Long and rigorous as our winters appear to us, the climate seems to be much ameliorated from what it was in the hard times of our fathers. This change has been ascribed to the disafforesting of so large a part of the continent, and laying the soil more open to the sun.

The missionary efforts of Mr. Wilson extended to the unevangelized savages. Johnson, of "wonder-working" memory, informs us, that "the English at their first coming did assay and endeavor to bring them to the knowledge of God : and, in particular, the reverend, grave and godly Mr. John Wilson, who visited their sick, and instructed others as they were capable to understand him." From Johnson's further remarks, it appears that the venerable pastor of Boston, was the first protestant minister, who attempted as he had opportunity, to impart the gospel to the North American Indians. The work was



soon after undertaken with great diligence and success by the apostolic Eliot and others.

When our fathers came here, Sagamore John or Wonohaquaham, was the chief to whom belonged the territory about Charlestown, having under him about thirty warriors. He was the eldest son of the "squaw-sachem," whose second husband was the priest Webcowet. In 1644, she submitted, with several other chiefs, to the government of the colony; and agreed that the children of her subjects should be taught the Bible. It is supposed that she died in 1667, at a great age, blind and helpless, at a fort of the Nipmuks, in consequence of ill-treatment from a hostile party of the Narragansetts. Sagamore John's father was the sachem Nanepashemet, who was slain by the Tarrentines or Eastern Indians, about 1619.

Sagamore John is spoken of in Charlestown records, as a chief "of gentle and good disposition," who gave leave to the emigrants from Salem to settle in that place, then known as Mishawum. From the first, he was friendly to the English. In April and May of 1630, the colonists were in great alarm because of a conspiracy among most of the Indian tribes to cut off the new settlements, beginning with an attack upon Plymouth. The plot was exposed by

Sagamore John; so that the English were enabled to break it up. He had ever been extremely courteous to the English, and tried to learn their language, and imitate their customs. Convinced of the superiority of their religion, he even desired to adopt it, and live among them as a fellow Christian: but was hindered by the bitter opposition of the heathen Indians. In the year 1632 he was seized by a disease then most terrible, and which has not lost all its terrors now,—the small-pox. This fatal malady had never been known among the natives before the arrival of Europeans. Poor Sagamore John now sadly lamented his want of decision. At his own desire, he was removed among the English; and promised, if he recovered, to live with them, and serve their God. He soon relinquished the hope of recovery. “Now,” said he, “I must die. The God of the English is much angry with me, and will destroy me. Ah, I was afraid of the scoffs of the wicked Indians. Yet my child shall live with the English, and learn to know their God when I am dead.” Mr. Wilson visited this forlorn and perishing creature, and with christian tenderness ministered to the wants of his body and his soul. To his care the dying chieftain committed his only child, saying;—“Mr. Wilson is much good man, and much love

me." This son of the forest, once the savage lord of these peopled hills, expired soon after, on the fifth day of December. Governor Winthrop says ;—" He died in a persuasion that he should go to the Englishman's God." It may be, he is known in a better world, as " the first fruits of" New England " unto Christ."

He gave to the governor a good quantity of wampumpeague, a sort of current-coin among the Indians. It was composed of beads, made from various colored marine shells, and often arranged in very tasteful figures on belts, and other articles of dress. In old times it served, in part, as a currency in the dealings of the English with each other, as well as with the Indians. The dying sagamore gave gifts to several other Englishmen : and took order for the payment of his own debts, and the debts of his men. His will was, that all the wampum and coats left, should be given to his mother : and his land about Powder-horn Hill, in Chelsea, which was probably his usual residence, was to go to his son ; and in case of his son's decease, it was to pass to his brother George, the sachem of Naumkeag or Salem, and ultimately the claimant of all the domain of his father Nanepashemet.

Mr. Wilson cheerfully accepted his difficult charge. He took into his family the fatherless

child, of whom we only know, that he was dead some time, perhaps a considerable time, before the eleventh of May, 1651, when his uncle George petitioned the General Court for the land conditionally left him by his brother. Almost the whole tribe perished about the same time with sagamore John, and with the same fell disease. Mr. Maverick of Winnesimmet, who, with his whole family, made the most honorable exertions to relieve the sufferers, had the melancholy task of burying thirty of them in one day. Many of the orphan children were distributed among families in the towns on the Bay: but most of them died soon after of the same wasting plague, which had proved so fatal to their parents. But three of these poor children survived to maturer age. One of them, taken by the governor, was called *Know-God*; because it was the Indians usual answer, when questioned on the subject of their knowledge of a Supreme Being:—"Me no know God."

Many of them, in their last sickness, owned that the Englishmen's God was a good being; and professed a resolution to serve him, if life should be spared. As to the cause of this impression, "it wrought much with them," writes Winthrop, "that when their own people forsook them, yet the English came daily, and minis-

tered to them : and yet few, only two families, took any infection by it." How often has it been found that a courageous benevolence is also the safest. How often too has the key of kindness unlocked the heart which was firmly fastened against the entrance of force or persuasion.

Among the neighboring tribes, civilization and religion went hand in hand. Mr. Wilson, with three other ministers and some of the brethren, visited the "praying Indians" at Nonantum in 1647, for the twofold purpose of instructing them and supplying their necessities. Here they had built with their own hands a house of worship fifty feet by twenty-five, which Mr. Wilson says, "appeared like the workmanship of an English housewright."

Our fathers have been very unjustly taxed with neglecting the spiritual welfare of the Indians. Whoever informs himself as to the life and labors of John Eliot, will see, that the charge is utterly groundless : and that they labored in this field with great zeal, perseverance and success. The blessing of God has never rested on Indian missions more largely than it did in their day. They were, many of them, the more ready to engage in this holy undertaking, in their eagerness to disappoint the devil. For "finding it difficult to account for the first peopling of the

western hemisphere, many in New England ascribed it to the aid of the devil, who thought by removing a part of the human race thither, they would be forever placed out of the reach of the gospel." This explanation will not seem to us very plausible: but it has the poor merit of being quite as much so as almost any that has been propounded by the learned.

Our ancestors have been heavily charged with injustice in dispossessing the Indians of the soil.

The Massachusetts settlers found the country, in a manner, depopulated by a wasting pestilence which swept away some entire tribes, about the year 1618. Most of the remnants of the people were very few and feeble, who cultivated but a very small portion of the country, of which, by far the greater part lay waste, and without inhabitant. King James' charter specifies this as one of the reasons for planting a region, which our forefathers, in legal phrase, called a "vacant domicile."

However contrary it may be to the prevailing impression, it is still the fact, that the coming of the pilgrims served to prolong the existence of these enfeebled tribes. John Cotton has made the following record;—"The Indians in these parts being by the hand of God swept away, many multitudes of them, by the plague, the

manner of the neighbor-Indians is, either to destroy the weaker countries, or to make them tributary; which danger, ready to fall upon their heads, in these parts, the coming of the English hither prevented."\* This explains why most of the smaller bands were, from the first, disposed to form close alliances with the white men; while the more powerful tribes were disposed to look with hostile aspect on these foreign protectors of the weak.

The treaty made with the Indians by William Penn in 1682, has been extolled beyond measure for the fairness and justice of its provisions. And yet it differs in no important respect, from all the treaties which the New England colonies had made long before, for similar purposes. The earliest instructions sent from the mother country to Endecot, upon the settling of Salem, required him to extinguish the Indian title to the soil on equitable terms. Though the title of many of the Indian claimants to the tracts which they ceded, was exceedingly dubious, yet the settlers were always scrupulous in quieting such claims, however slight the grounds on which they were made. The late President, John Adams, remarked that, in all his legal experience,

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\* Way of Congregational Churches cleared, p. 21.

he never knew a land-title contested in the courts, without its being traced up to the original purchase from the Indians. It cannot be pretended, that the treaty for which Penn is so much praised, made a compensation for the land acquired by him, more just and equal than what the New England colonists bestowed in like cases. There are no means of knowing what consideration he gave for the territory he obtained. It cannot be said, that it was more or less than what the pilgrims and their associates were in the habit of giving.

We hear of large tracts, comprising perhaps, whole townships now of great value, as being bought of the savages for a sum so small as to seem little better than nominal. At first, this may appear like an unrighteous imposition on the ignorance of the savage sellers. But it was not so. The colonists paid for their land all that it was worth at the time of the purchase. In fact, it had no value, except what it was to acquire under the change of ownership, by the industry of the new occupants. It could not be estimated at any fixed price, until it was subdued and cultivated by the sturdy settlers who began to make it what it is. The whole site of some of the wealthiest cities in the United States, like Cincinnati, Lowell and Rochester, were, each of



them, bought for a few thousands of dollars of their American proprietors not many years ago. But who thinks of reproaching the present owners on this account? Their enterprise and industry created a vast increase in the value of the property: and it is but just, that they should enjoy the work of their hands.

There is a further proof that our ancestors paid for their land all that it was worth to its former possessors. They sold it out to other Europeans at prices equally insignificant. Much of it was given away on condition of being settled within a limited time: for it was not worth so much as the presence of another settler and fellow-helper in the infant community. Even after it was transferred from the hands of the Indians to those of white men; its value did not begin to be enhanced till it was put into a way of being turned from a wilderness to a fruitful field. So late as the year 1716, in the old colony of Connecticut, more than one hundred and seven thousand acres of land were sold for six hundred and eighty-three pounds of New England currency; which is at the rate of two cents an acre. It is well known that in all new countries, settlers are encouraged to come, at the outset by donations of land, and sometimes by additional gratuities. This is clear proof that

their coming is a greater favor to the grantor, than the gift of a farm is to the grantee, who, in improving his lot, raises the value of all the land around it. A little reflection will show that the Indians suffered no injustice in the terms on which they transferred their territory to our fathers. It ill becomes the present generation to reproach their ancestors upon this point. Never did the Indians receive at the hands of our fathers such treatment as they have suffered from our people within the present century. The removal of the Cherokees, if there were no other case of the kind, may well seal our lips to silence on this subject.

It is certain, that the conversion of the natives to Christianity was one of the leading motives which induced our fathers to engage in their venturous enterprise on these shores. They omitted no opportunity to instruct the "untutored mind," in the worship of God. The haughty Miantonomoh, the sachem of the Narragansetts, when he was the guest of the honored Winthrop, was the auditor of Mr. Wilson, in that low-browed temple with its overhanging eaves of thatch.

The Boston church was highly prospered under Mr. Wilson and his colleague, John Cotton. Soon after the latter commenced his labors,

there was a revival of religion, in which, among other converts, "divers profane and notorious evil persons were brought to experience the power of religion." "Also the Lord pleased greatly to bless the practice of discipline, wherein he gave the pastor, Mr. Wilson, a singular gift, to the great benefit of the church." So high was his repute in this particular, that the renowned Dr. Ames is known to have said;—"If he might have his option of the best condition he could propound unto himself on this side heaven, it would be, that he might be the teacher of a congregational church, whereof Mr. Wilson should be the pastor.

In common with other leading ministers in the colony, Mr. Wilson was often consulted by the magistrates in difficult and important matters. And so far as the ministerial counsels are recorded, it is noticeable that, in all cases, they strenuously maintained the chartered rights of the colony. They favored no timid or half-way courses, no compliances or concessions, which could impair their cherished liberties. Sometimes the royal prerogative advanced to the very verge of absolute sway, and demanded instant surrender of the precious immunities of the infant commonwealth. But the ministers ever strengthened the hands of the magistrates to

cling to their charter with closer grasp. They never advised open resistance, which must have led to instant destruction; but always suggested plausible grounds of evasion; and proposed grounds of delay, and protracted negotiation. It is wonderful to observe how long these measures availed, in connection with favoring providences, to preserve their patent from violation. And when, at last, the treasure was wrested away, it was found that the young community had grown up to be strong enough to bear the loss without fainting. The clergy cherished the spirit of liberty among the people, as a religious passion: and it wrought intensely, till it worked out entire political independence.

There is a curious instance of the disposition of our fathers to seek the counsel of the ministers in matters very foreign to their calling; and which is related in Winthrop's Journal. It seems there was reason to fear, that the French were intending to become too near neighbors. Among other precautions, it was proposed to begin a plantation and fort at Nantasket, to prevent the French from taking possession of that place. An expedition was got up to view the spot, and decide what should be done there. On the twenty-first of February, being a very sunshiny, vernal sort of day,

the governor, and four of the assistants, and three of the ministers, of whom Mr. Wilson was undoubtedly one, with others, making twenty-six in all, went to Nantasket in three boats. While they were there, the wind suddenly changed to the North-west, extremely cold, and so violent as to detain them there two nights. They had to lie on the ground in an open hut, upon a little old straw pulled from the thatch. They were forced to lie in a heap, to keep from freezing: and to eat raw muscles, for want of other fare. On the third day, they got safe home; having come to the conclusion, that it was needless, for the present, to fortify a place which was so sternly defended by the severity of its climate.

Mr. Wilson returned to England, for the last time, late in the fall of 1634. He sailed for Barnstable, with John Winthrop, the younger, in whom shone all the virtues of his father with undiminished lustre. The ship was small and weak, and they were repeatedly in imminent danger of being wrecked. They were driven by a tempest upon the perilous coast of Ireland, with which no one in the ship was acquainted. After escaping some desperate risks, they got into Galloway. From this place, Mr. Winthrop went by land to Dublin. Mr. Wilson proceed-

ing in the ship by sea, came within sight of the mouth of the Severn, when another furious storm drove his vessel back to Kinsale on the Irish coast, where a number of vessels perished in full view. Being thus forced to make some stay in Ireland, both he and the governor's worthy son exerted themselves strenuously to promote the interests of religion in New England, wherever they came. At last they got safe back among old friends in England, with hearty and joyous welcome. Their travels extended into Scotland and the north of England: and wherever they went, they gave much satisfaction to Christian people about the prospects of New England, and stirred up many to make it their future home.

One object of Mr. Wilson's voyage was to secure a legacy of a thousand pounds, which his brother, the Rev. Dr. Wilson had bequeathed to the colony. If this large bequest had been left to our Boston pastor, he would have been no better pleased. He was happy to see the country benefited, though at the expense of his own inheritance. This sum was laid out in procuring artillery for the defence of Boston settlement. The purchase of cannons may seem an *uncanonical* use of a clergyman's gift, which should have thundered in the pulpit rather than on the

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battery. But in those warlike and troublous times, even men of God wielded either the civil or the ecclesiastical sword, according to the nature of the dangers which assailed their beloved flocks. They built the walls of Jerusalem, as in Nehemiah's day, with the implements of labor in their hands, and the weapons of defence ready girded to their side.

On all occasions, Mr. Wilson held up the favorable representations, which he had before sent over in writing, of the admirable civil and religious order which was now well settled in the new plantation. He strove to engage as many good men as he could in this great enterprise. He had a joyful visit with his old parishioners, at Sudbury, according to what he had intimated when bidding them farewell previous to his last voyage to America. "It may be," he said, "John Wilson may come and see Sudbury once again." He thus fulfilled this long indulged desire of his affectionate heart, which clung fondly to those scenes of former and successful labor in the gospel. Such spots no servant of God can ever forget, or cease to love. From thence he went to visit the Rev. Nathaniel Rogers, who afterwards came to this country, and lived and died as pastor of the church in Ipswich. Mr. Wilson happened to arrive at his

friend's house just before morning prayers. He was requested to offer some remarks upon the chapter which was read, and which chanced to be the first chapter of the First Book of Chronicles. Though it is a mere genealogical chapter, made up of proper names, and apparently suggesting no matter for remark, the pious pilgrim-guest soon showed that to a devoutly studious mind "all Scripture is profitable." He commented on the passage with such pertinence and fullness of edifying matter, that a good man, who was present, was amazed, and could never after rest till he had followed him to America.

But though so successful in directing the steps of many excellent people toward this distant land, he failed to persuade one who was dearer to him than all. His wife long remained unwilling to accompany him. The gentle daughter of Sir John Mansfield was bound to her native soil by clinging affections which not all the power of conjugal love seemed likely to loosen. Her discouraged husband made his last appeal to Him who has all hearts in his hand, to turn them as he will. On a day of fasting, which he observed for this special object, his many prayers were answered. His wife became willing and cheerful to cross with him the wilderness of waters to this wilderness of woods.



Upon this, her kinsman, the good old Puritan Dod, singularly renowned for wit and holiness, sent her a curious present for her consolation. It consisted of a brass counter, a silver crown, and a gold jacobus; each wrapped in a separate envelop. The gentleman who carried it was told to deliver first the brass counter; and if, on opening the envelop, she betrayed any discontent, he was to come away and take no further notice of her. But if she accepted the trifle kindly for the giver's sake, then he was to give her, first the silver piece, and next the gold. Lastly, by way of moral, he was to tell the lady;—"That such would be the dispensations of God towards her, and the other good people of New England:—if they would be content and thankful with such little things as God at first bestowed upon them, they should, in time, have silver and gold enough." It is pleasant to be able to state, that Mrs. Wilson so pleasantly accepted what seemed such a trifling token of remembrance from her good old friend, that the gentleman delivered the more valuable parts of the present, together with the annexed advice, more precious than the present itself. Though this prediction was uninspired, it has come to pass. The wealth of the goodly cities, and flourishing commonwealth of New England, is

God's reward of our father's piety, who "despised not the day of small things," but were humbly grateful for the least tokens of God's provident bounty.

While Mr. Wilson was exerting himself in England for the good of the people here, he was not forgotten by them. On the thirteenth of January, "the church of Boston kept a day of humiliation for the absence of their pastor and other brethren, gone to England, and like to be troubled and detained there." The special causes of this trouble and threatened detention it is not now in our power to trace. They were owing to that jealous and arbitrary spirit on the part of the persecuting powers, which so often prevented the embarkation of the emigrants. Edward Johnson gives us the following account. "Here, my endeared Reader, I must mind thee of the industrious servant of Christ, Mr. John Wilson, who this year landed the third time upon this American shore from his native country; where now again, by the divine providence of Christ, he narrowly escaped the hunters' hands, being clothed in a countryman's habit, passing from place to place, declared to the people of God what great works Christ had already done for his people in New England, which made many Christian souls long to see these

admirable acts of Christ, although it were not to be enjoyed but by passing through an ocean of troubles, voyaging night and day upon the great deep, which this zealous servant of God had now five times passed over."\* The attempt to prevent the Puritans from leaving the land of oppression, was a policy fatal to its authors. In forbidding the flight of these men, so deeply disaffected toward the tyranny in Church and State, it compelled them to stay at home, and bend all the formidable energies of their minds toward the overthrow of that despotism from whose presence they might not depart. Thus there were at one time in the river Thames, eight sail of ships bound for New England; and crowded with Puritan passengers, among whom were Oliver Cromwell, Sir Arthur Haselrig, and John Hampden. An order in council was despatched, which compelled them to come on shore, and gird themselves for a contest, in the course of which those men and their associates sent the king and his chief counselors to the scaffold.

Having finished the business which brought him to England, Mr. Wilson left his native shores, as has been mentioned, for the third

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\* Wonder-working Providences, Chap. XXXII.

and last time, and accompanied by his wife and four children. There came two large ships in consort, the *Defence* and the *Abigail*, with near two hundred passengers; many of them, persons of estate and repute. Among them, besides other ministers, was Thomas Shepard, afterwards the great luminary of the Cambridge Church. There was also the no less famous Hugh Peters, pastor of the English church at Rotterdam, from whence he had been newly driven by the persecutions of the British ambassador. Of his active life and tragical death, we need say nothing. His character having been only portrayed by his bitter foes, or such as took their opinions from his foes, has suffered extreme historic injustice. His only child became the wife of the younger Winthrop; and their descendants who yet live among us are happy to be able to trace their lineage to men neither noble nor priestly by the power of man; but yet "nobles by an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand."

This company sailed about the tenth of August, 1635. They had some rough weather, in which the decayed and unseaworthy ship was greatly endangered by a frightful leak, which could not, for a while, be found. The devout passengers betook themselves to their usual and

often successful resource. They held a day of solemn fasting and prayer, in the course of which, the cause of their danger was discovered and removed, just as they were thinking of going back. They arrived at Boston on the third of October, 1635. The Church, concerned that their pastor did not return so soon as they expected, had appointed a humiliation day for united prayer in his behalf. He arrived the afternoon before, in season to turn the mournful day, as reason required, into an extemporaneous thanksgiving. As painful as was the final parting of himself and wife from endeared connections at home, so joyful was their reception by their expectant friends, who had been looking for them here with longing eyes.

Soon after Mr. Wilson's return, the Antinomian controversy broke out, and raged for two or three years with a fury that threatened the destruction of his church. He with Governor Winthrop, and a very few other members, found themselves arrayed against Mr. Cotton, and almost the entire body of the communicants. All the neighboring churches sided with Mr. Wilson. The excitement lasted till the mind of Mr. Cotton, who had been imposed upon by the seeming sanctity of the leaders in the disturbance, was disabused. By his vigorous meas-

ures to repair his mistake, and the resolution of the civil authority to expel the two leading Antinomians, quiet was at last restored. A synod held at Cambridge conduced much to the restoration of quiet. That body drew up a list of the errors to be condemned. When it was asked, what was to be done with them, the zealous Mr. Wilson bluntly exclaimed ;—" Let them go to the devil of hell, from whence they came!" This fiery outbreak may be more easily excused in this "son of thunder," if we consider the corrupt and demoralizing tendency of the heresy in question. Of Antinomianism an old writer says ;—" It ham-strings all industry, and cuts off the sinews of men's endeavors towards salvation. For ascribing all to the wind of God's Spirit, which bloweth where it listeth, it leaveth nothing to the oars of man's diligence."

This controversy ran out into nice and complicated speculations, which are exceedingly wearisome and well-nigh unintelligible. Almost the only thing that relieves the painfulness of this violent contest, is the fact that the church retained as its ministers the heads of the opposing parties. There appears to have been no thought of removing either of them. There can be no more striking proof of the prudence and

good temper of the ministers; or of the moderation and reasonableness of the people, even amid the tempest of excitement. Both Mr. Wilson and his colleague suffered much reproach, but lost not their benevolence and charity.

“ Let narrow natures, how they will, mistake,  
The great should still be good for their own sake.”

## CHAPTER III.

Decision in religion not bigotry. Odium attached to bigotry. Fathers of New England wrongfully reproached. Timid defences of their memory. Veneration cherished for them. Bigotry not confined to any class. President Edwards. Independence of character frowned down. Spurious liberality. True liberality. Weigand Von Theben. Augustine. Dr. Owen. Thomas Fuller. Characteristics of the Puritans. Their cheerfulness. Their shades of difference. English Independents the main champions of toleration. Dr. Owen at Oxford. Dr. Goodwin. Alleged intolerance in New England compared with actual intolerance elsewhere. Mather to Lord Barrington. Object of the Pilgrims in emigrating. Liberty for their *own* consciences. Injustice of disorganizing intruders. Feelings of our fathers toward them. Hubbard. Necessity in those times of banishing the turbulent and seditious. W. Stoughton. Governor Winthrop. Katharine Chidley. Special necessity for excluding Church of England men. Hon. Josiah Quincy. The first author of free toleration. United Provinces of Holland. HENRY JACOB. London Baptists. The Puritans, like Shakspeare, to be tried by the standard of their own age. D'Israeli. Macaulay. Puritan administration compared with that of Henry VIII., Elizabeth, &c. Bartholomew Act. English laws against absence from public worship. Virginia laws. Temper of Roger Williams. Windmill on fire. Peculiar opinions of Williams. Necessity of his exclusion. Williams and Gorton. Hon. J. Q. Adams. Origin of the Baptists. Fears of the Puritans. Law of 1644. Declaration of 1646. Peaceable Baptists never molested. Speedy and entire toleration. Abusive Quaker pamphlets. Bishop Burnet. Rhode Island treatment of Quakers. Misdeeds of the Quakers. Would be punished for such conduct at the present day. History of proceedings. Quaker treatment of Williams. Reflections on the whole subject.

IN the character of Mr. Wilson there was a singular mixture of qualities. Although there



have been many other examples of this mixture, and although it is required by the gospel to be in every believer, yet there are many who are unable to comprehend the possibility of it. Mr. Wilson blended an intense love of truth with as intense a hatred of error. He abhorred the error, and loved the errorist, with equal fervor. In our day, such a character is not easily understood. Every man is now regarded as a relentless bigot, who is not an easy liberal, believing that one man is as likely to be right as another, and who attaches no importance to abstract principles, whether true or erroneous.

Mr. Wilson combined a most compassionate and loving nature, with a flaming zeal for orthodoxy. His dread of false doctrines and their practical influence was extreme. He would have had all the power of the magistrate exerted for their suppression and exclusion. Had it been possible, he would have drawn a sanitary cordon around the colony, established a theological quarantine, and sternly prohibited the smuggling in of infectious heresies. And yet the benevolence of his heart was most expanded, and glowed with pity to the mistaken men whose errors he anathematized without mercy.

In this respect, he was one of the best speci-

mens of our Puritan fathers, who were so enamored of the truth, that they watched over its purity with all the fire of passion and all the jealousy of love. Their zeal impelled them to lift at once the sword at the first advances of its assailants. Not every bosom is capable of feeling this fervid sentiment. They felt it: and it filled them with the spirit of power. Had they not felt it, they would have had no nerve to accomplish their mighty deeds.

“ The laboring bee, when his sharp sting is gone,  
Forgets his golden work, and turns a drone;  
Such is their nature, if you take away  
That generous rage wherein their noble vigor lay.”

It ought to be conceivable, that love to man may make us hate what is hurtful to man. To love him, is to hate that which injures him; and to hate it the more, the more injurious it may be.

“ It is thy skill  
To strike the vice, but spare the person still:  
As he, who, when he saw the serpent wreathed  
About his sleeping son, and as he breathed  
Drink in his soul, did so the shot contrive,  
To kill the beast, but keep the child alive.”

Happy indeed is he, who can boldly lift his hand, and strongly strike at error, from feelings of pure benevolence toward such as may be its victims. Thrice happy is he of whom it may be justly said,

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“ That malice never was his aim ;  
He lashed the vice, but spared the name.”

Though Mr. Wilson was in England when Roger Williams was banished, he yet approved the sentence as necessary and wholesome. In the expulsion of Mrs. Hutchinson, he fully concurred, as also in the exclusion of the Quakers at a later period. As he and his associates have been more universally and bitterly condemned for these measures than for any other of their actions, we will here, once for all, look to see what may be offered in their defence. We shall vindicate them as far as they may, and ought to be vindicated.

It is one evident mark of the progress of the human mind, and of the advancement of society in the knowledge of human rights, that religious bigotry and intolerance have come to be held in general reprobation. To be charged with such fault is now regarded as one of the darkest accusations which can be brought against the living or the dead.

There be many who, for selfish purposes, are ever ringing and resounding this odious charge against our pilgrim fathers. The most studious efforts are made to depict them as “the chief of sinners” in this respect, as a race of “graceless bigots,” and remorseless persecutors. In our

days, their enemies have mostly had the telling of the story. The haters of their memory and their sentiments have risen up, and ransacked every garret, and raked into every old cellar, to find matter wherewith to asperse their characters. These literary scavengers have plunged into forgotten reservoirs of slander, and have come out reeking with the antiquated filth, and have steeped themselves in obsolete infamy, in the vain hope of being able to pour lasting obloquy on the reputation of our holy and venerated dead. Musty pamphlets have been recalled from just oblivion. There has been a general resurrection of old publications, some of which died of their own inborn venom, and others dropped dead-born from the presses which gave birth to these abortive slanders. These writings were chiefly penned by bitter foes, and most of the authors of them were smarting under rightful punishment inflicted by the Puritans. From these sources have been culled every railing accusation, every calumnious fabrication, every disingenuous, wrested and falsified statement of things, which can be made to bear hard upon the memory of men of whom, in truth, the world was not worthy. All these assertions, which, in the time when they were first made, our fathers either refuted in full, or deemed too

absurd and contemptible for refutation, are now eagerly retailed by our modern venders of anti-puritanical slander, as if every word must be unquestionable truth. The partisan statements of maddened opposers are recited over and over again, without the least apparent misgiving as to their total inaccuracy and want of candor. Whatever can be picked up that makes against the pilgrims, is given out again as true of course, without farther inquiry.

This mode of procedure has gone on so long, that even many who cherish the names of our fathers with deep and affectionate respect, are not uninfluenced by these one-sided and wrong-sided declarations. Such persons will begin with almost angrily denouncing them as persecutors, and for a while are "outrageously virtuous" in their condemnation of such infringement of the rights of conscience. Having thus pacified with this high-seasoned sop, the irritated public sentiment of the day, they take another step. They suggest that our fathers went with the current of their times, were no worse than their contemporaries, and that if we had lived in "those times of ignorance" on the subject of toleration, we have no reason to think that we should have acted any better than they. Presently we are told, that our fathers acted accord-

ing to the light they had; and though its dimness misled them, they were conscientious and sincere in the steps they took. At last it is pretty plainly hinted, that unhappy circumstances constrained them to pursue the course they did; and that, taking every thing into view, it is not easy to see how they could have done any differently without exposing themselves and their cause to destruction. Such is substantially the way in which the subject is disposed of by Rev. Charles Emerson, and other later writers. They begin by viewing the subject according to the ideas of the present age, and speak the language of violent reprobation. But the longer and closer they examine it, the cooler does their indignation become, till they reach their natural temperature.

“ The calmer grown for so much anger spent,  
As is the case with rash and passionate men.”

Such critics are often heard to say;—  
“ Surely there have never been better or more useful men than our ancestors; but alas, the best of men have their faults! it is a pity that they were so uncharitable and intolerant.” And yet our forefathers, who abounded in every kind of good sense, did not regard themselves as justly obnoxious to this condemnation. It ought

to be considered, that there is another side to the story, which may wear a very different aspect when the whole truth shall come out. That our fathers sometimes erred, we shall frankly acknowledge: for it is the lot of poor humanity to present some weak spots in her strongest specimens, some blots on her fairest copies. But in their case, it will be found that a fair and equitable distribution of the blame will take off the greater part of what has been heaped upon them; and put it back where it properly belongs,—even on the shoulders of those whom they are said to have persecuted. It is a matter of high satisfaction, that the character of the pilgrims still stands so elevated in the minds of their descendants. Throughout New England, with the exception of a few degenerate renegades, their memory is held in the greatest veneration. As you leave New England, the farther South or West you go, the less will you find of this filial regard for the first settlers of the soil. And when you come to those countries first subjugated and colonized by other nations, you will find the people even abhorring the memory of their sires. Thus in 1823, the patriot mob in Mexico, in their detestation of the old Spaniards, “prepared to break open the tomb which held the ashes of Cortes,”

the founder of that community, and to scatter them to the winds. The authorities declined to interfere on the occasion; but the friends of the family, as is commonly reported, entered the vault by night, and secretly removed the relics.\* The great traveler Humboldt informs us, that we may traverse the whole length of Spanish America, and in no quarter shall we meet with a national monument which the public gratitude has raised to Christopher Columbus, or Hernando Cortes.† How different is the case with the sons of New England! With what filial enthusiasm do they maintain the renown of their fathers! The children pay an ample tribute of love and gratitude to the illustrious parents of the commonwealth, to whom we are indebted for our most valued institutions, our dearest social privileges, and our best traits of national character. Of this generous homage, not all the reproach of their malignant adversaries has been able to deprive them.

As the matter seems not to be properly understood, it may be well to say what bigotry is. It is such a blind attachment to our opinions as would force others to embrace the same; or would hate and injure them if they will not be

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\* Prescott. Conquest of Mexico, III. 350.

† Essai Politique, II. 60.



so forced. The matter is well expressed by Macaulay;—"The doctrine which, from the very first origin of religious dissensions, has been held by all bigots of all sects, when condensed into a few words, and stripped of all rhetorical disguise, is simply this,—I am in the right, and you are in the wrong; when you are the stronger, you ought to tolerate me, for it is your duty to tolerate truth;—but when I am the stronger, I shall persecute you; for it is my duty to persecute error."

The persecuting spirit is an essential element of bigotry, and its ruthless oppressions have been deplorable indeed. It has made itself "drunk with the blood of the saints," and in the madness of that intoxication has reveled in the agonies of the martyrs. The truths which such people hold seem only to confirm them in their phrenzy: like monomaniacs, in whom their sanity only strengthens their insanity. They who are hurried away by this terrible passion will perpetrate any atrocity in the sacred names of love and goodness; and seem, in the energetic phrase of Sir Walter Scott, to have invented "a new way of going to the devil for God's sake."

Nor do we find this odious vice of the mind confined to any class of men. There is a bigotry

of liberality, as well as a bigotry of illiberality. We have seen attempts strenuously made to compel people into free discussion, and force them into free inquiry. And a century ago, President Edwards thus uttered his complaints; —“ I have observed that these modern fashionable opinions, however called noble and liberal, are commonly attended, not only with a haughty contempt, but an inward malignant bitterness of heart, toward all the zealous professors and defenders of the contrary spiritual principles, that do so nearly concern the vitals of religion, and the power of experimental godliness. I have known many gentlemen, especially in the ministry, tainted with these liberal principles; who, though none seem such warm advocates as they for liberty and freedom of thought, or condemn a narrow and persecuting spirit so much as they; yet, in the course of things, have made it manifest, that they themselves had no small share of a persecuting spirit.”\* It is quite certain, that were the excellent president now alive, he would have abundance of occasion to renew his complaints.

The spurious liberality of these times will allow a man to be decided only in one way, that

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\* Works, I. 514. N. Haven Ed.

is, in its own favor. It tells you, that you must seek for the truth ; but you must never feel sure that you have found it. You must not say ;—“ I have sought the truth of God with humble diligence, and, by his blessing, have found it.” For people will turn upon you and ask ;—“ What ! do you say, that you are *certain* you are right ? In so saying you condemn all who think differently from you. Do you mean to say, that you are right, and all others are wrong ? ” Perhaps you dare answer ;—“ I concede to others the same privilege of forming their own opinions I claim for myself : but assured as I am, that I am right, of course, I must think that such as embrace opposite views are wrong. If I am right, they are in error : and so deeply as I am convinced in my soul that I am right, even so deeply must I feel that they are in error.” Now if you should be honest and decided enough to answer in this reasonable manner, the liberal public would cry out against you ;—“ Away with this bigot, who pretends no body is right who does not think as he does ! ”

The tyranny of public sentiment now-a-days, insists that we shall allow that one man is just as likely to be right as another. It allows me to say ;—“ I believe my opinions are correct : ”—provided, I will own that opinions precisely the

reverse of mine are quite as likely to be correct. Thus are we only permitted to believe as though we believed not; to know, as though we neither knew, nor could know. Thus are we required to stultify ourselves, and put on the fool's cap, by affecting to assent to a flat contradiction and utter impossibility. We must profess to be fully assured that we have the truth: and to be as well assured that we may be altogether deluded. If we will not agree to this absurdity, we are denounced at once as uncharitable, censorious, arrogant, bigoted, and intolerant.

Now what is this, but to require a universal skepticism? What is it, but to declare that the certainty of truth is unattainable? What is it, but to assert that the man who imagines that white is black, is, in all probability, as near right as I am, who am positive that white is white, and *not* black? How can a character for manly independence, truthful sincerity, and energetic decision, be formed under these preposterous dogmas of the spurious and abusive liberalism now in vogue.

No wonder that persons who entertain such sentiments should look upon our fathers as unmitigated bigots. Our fathers were not of their sort. They scorned such enervating inconsistencies. Our fathers were decided men.

They searched for the truth in earnest. And when they had found it, they held it firm ; not wavering in the presence of errorists, nor flinching before the frowns of the despot. Strong in this christian grace of decidedness, they were valiant for the truth, and endured unequalled sufferings, and achieved incomparable success.

It matters not how firm and uncompromising a man may be in holding to his opinions. This will not make him a bigot, provided he still have his mind open to conviction, and manifest no animosity against those whom he cannot constrain to agree with him. Decision of character is totally different from bigotry ; though many there be, who cannot see the difference. It is far easier to persuade decided people to embrace a truth they have once opposed, than to produce the same effect upon the irresolute and unstable.

“ 'Tis easiest dealing with the firmest mind,  
More just when it resists, and when it yields, more kind.”

How vain is the attempt to bring about a forced uniformity of opinions. So diverse are the minds of men as to temper, breeding, habit and prejudice, that the attempt must be as vain as to reduce them all to the same stature and complexion of body. This matter was once quaintly illustrated by Weigand von Theben, the

facetious parson of Calemberg, who, some centuries since, was a great favorite with Otho, archduke of Austria. This strange genius once took a basket full of skulls to the top of a mountain, and emptying it there, exclaimed, as he saw them roll down, each pursuing a different course;—"So many heads, so many opinions! If they do thus when they are dead, what would they have done had they been alive?"

The Puritans were indeed remarkably decided in their ways: but they rejoiced in all new light, if it deserved the name, let it shine from what quarter it might. They expected no new revelations: but they did expect, like John Robinson, that God would cause more light to break forth from his Word. Accordingly we find that there was scarcely any man of distinction among them but what, like Robinson, he changed his views upon important matters as he increased in years and knowledge. Of all the writings of Augustine, scarce any are so creditable to his piety, wisdom and firmness of mind, as his Confessions and Retractations. That leading Puritan, Dr. John Owen, said in his reply to Daniel Cawdry;—"He that can glory, that, in fourteen years, he hath not altered nor improved his conception of some things of no greater importance than that mentioned, shall not have me for his

rival." It was said by that good conforming Puritan, Thomas Fuller, with his usual felicity;—"To live, and not to learn, is to loiter, and not to live. Confession of our former mistakes is the honorable trophy of our conquest over our own ignorance."

"It is a conquest to submit to right,  
Nor so to yield think it the least despite."

As the race of Puritans was scattered along from the morning twilight of the protestant reformation to the brightness of its noon-day, they could not but experience a great improvement of their views, attended with much diversity as to the lights and shades of their opinions.

It is a great delusion to imagine, as many seem to do, that our fathers were all fashioned of the same molten mass of opinion and sentiment, and run in the same mould with cast-iron faces, hard and grim, which never relaxed into a smile of mirth or tenderness. Nay, to read some of their satirical pamphlets, such as "The Simple Cobbler," and many others, we might even suspect that they loved a good joke occasionally only too well. The truth is, they were full-blooded Englishmen: and their character was marked with a broad streak of nationality. They had all the British hardihood of endurance and

perseverance, as well as scrupulosity of conscience and tenacity of right. With this they had a due share of that hearty, cheery temper which belongs to the Anglo-Saxon composition, and which gets through troubles by keeping up a good heart and making light of them. It was this that helped to reconcile them here in the wilderness to their coarse and scanty meals. It was a saying often in their mouths at such times ;—“ Brown bread with the gospel is very good fare !” They were mostly of the middle class of English : a people of whom a foreign traveler long since said, that they were like a barrel of their own beer, of which the top is froth ; the bottom, dregs ; but the middle is a strong, substantial liquor. Belonging to this “ middling interest,” our fathers partook of its best peculiarities. It is not the nature of such men, when pious and intelligent, and such our fathers unquestionably were, to be blind and brutish bigots.

The English Puritans were arrayed in several divisions. Of the state Puritans, or political reformers, whose whole endeavor was to carry out the most free and liberal construction of the British constitution, we have no occasion here to speak.

Of those who studied to accomplish a thorough



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reformation of religion, there were some strong prelatists, who were never separated from the hierarchal establishment. They conformed to practices which, nevertheless, they struggled to abolish.

Then, at the other extreme, were the rigid separatists, like Roger Williams, who not only abjured all connection with the national church, but renounced the communion of all who would not denounce their former relation to that church, and partaking in its worship, as a crime requiring repentance and open confession. This class, which was called Brownist, Barrowist, and other uncouth names, was never very numerous, nor was it of long continuance.

Between the conforming Puritans and the Separatists, were the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists. The Presbyterians were for a modified hierarchy, with a large mixture of the popular element. The sentiments of the Congregationalists are too well known to need description here. The latter are often confounded with the Separatists or Brownists, though they abundantly protested against being so regarded, and vigorously controverted matters with the separating brethren. The Congregationalists are also sometimes confounded with the Presbyterians; although the distinction was broad enough

in those days, when the Presbyterians first hurled the king and his prelates from their seats of power ; and then were themselves ejected by Cromwell and the Independents. No man will ever suppose, that these two parties were but one, after he has read the tremendous invectives of Cawdry and Edwards against the Congregationalists, and the intensely passionate retorts of the poet Milton and other Independents. During the interregnum, the Presbyterians, when the dominant party, said ;—“ It seems to us that the Independent brethren desire liberty, not only for themselves, but for all men.” Hence they call *toleration*, “the great Diana of the Independents.”\* Dr. John Owen, a leading Congregationalist, was made vice-chancellor of Oxford University, by the Protector Cromwell. No man ever filled that place who, for piety and learning, was more meet for it than Dr. Owen. Many foreign divines, who had read his Latin works, learned the English tongue merely to have the benefit of reading his voluminous publications in his native language. During his government of that seat of science, he would not suffer the members of the old prelatie church in his near vicinity to be disturbed in their worship, which they were

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\* Bogue and Bennett's History, I, 133.

seeking to carry on in secret. The numerous church-livings in his gift, he presented to the Presbyterians. At that time, Dr. Thomas Goodwin was President of Magdalen College, in Oxford, where he formed a Congregational church, in which the celebrated Theophilus Gale, a distinguished benefactor of Harvard College, was a member, as was also the equally celebrated Stephen Charnock. John Howe, well worthy to be mated with these famous divines, was a member of the same College, and agreed with them in sentiment. When asked by Dr. Goodwin, why he did not join their church, Mr. Howe replied ;—" Because you lay more stress upon some peculiarities than I approve ; if you will admit me upon catholic principles, I will gladly unite with you." It is a sufficient proof of the liberal and tolerant spirit of these men, that he was received at once upon his own terms.

It would be easy to multiply proofs that the Congregationalists, when they had the power in England, though they were decided Calvinists, and root-and-branch reformers, manifested a freedom from bigotry and intolerance wholly unexampled in their times. But we must pass on to discuss the accusations alledged against their department in the early days of New England.

And here we may as well remark at the out-

set, that what has been unjustly regarded as the reign of intolerance in New England, was neither severe, nor was it of long continuance. There is a letter written by Dr. Cotton Mather, doubtless to Lord Barrington, and dated the fourth of November, 1718. Here it is stated ;—" That no church upon earth at this day so notably makes the terms of *communion* run parallel with the terms of *salvation*, as they are made among this people. The only declared basis for union among them is that solid, vital, substantial *piety*, wherein all good men, of different forms, are united. And Calvinists with Lutherans, Presbyterians with Episcopalians, Pedobaptists with Anabaptists, beholding one another to fear God and work righteousness, do with delight sit down together at the same table of the Lord ; nor do they hurt one another in the holy mountain."\*

Let us first ask for the errand which brought our fathers across the water. With what object in view did they brave the perils of the deep in that day of comparatively unskillful navigation ? Why left they a country, which they loved with an almost idolizing passion ? Why did they part with the comforts of their English homes,

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\* Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc., First Series, I., 105.

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to plant their cheerless cottages in a savage wilderness of rigorous clime ?

Did they come and subdue the uncultivated wastes, with the intention of opening an asylum for all sorts of opinions, and a refuge for all sorts of characters ? Nay, verily, they had no notion of any such Quixotical knight-errantry. It was far from their thoughts to establish a general receptacle for all manner of disorganizers, innovators, and rash experimenters in social reforms. Their tremendous personal sacrifices were not made for the purpose of clearing a space where every kind of sectarians, fanatics, enthusiasts and moral revolutionizers might rush in like winds from all quarters, and keep up an everlasting whirlwind of excitement. How groundless, then, the charge of inconsistency so loudly urged against them, because, though they fled from intolerance at home, they were not tolerant here of every interloping vagrant who strove to force himself into their community, for the sake of destroying all that the pilgrims had toiled and suffered to establish. It would seem that some sympathy is due to our fathers, who anxiously watched over the institutions they had founded at such fearful cost to themselves, and longed to preserve from the ruthless hands of disturbers and destructives. With what anguish did they

see the wild boar out of the woods, endeavoring to uproot the tender vine which they had planted with such care, and to water which they had poured out their prayers and tears, their blood, and their very souls! What wonder, if, in the desperation of their grief, they assailed the dreaded intruder with arrows and lances! They felt it to be a cruel persecution upon them, to be followed into their sad retreat, by those who were eager to thwart their last hope for themselves and their whole posterity.

And what was their mission to these stern and rocky shores, these rough and woody solitudes? What was the grand design so dear to their hearts, and so precious in their eyes, and which they prized so much above home, and friends, and life itself?

It was their cherished object to establish a Christian Commonwealth. They wished to model the frame of their Church and their State after the principles of the Bible, and according to the free spirit of Christianity, *as they understood the matter*. And this they had an undoubted right to do, so long as they interfered with no previous enterprise, or pre-existing settlements.

Truly this was a noble object. The plan was original, vast and comprehensive; and exceed-

ingly difficult to be carried into execution. In the infancy of their enterprise, the least untoward event might have made shipwreck of their expectations: and there is every reason to believe, that, had they been less peremptory and resolute in their treatment of those who came among them to oppose them, their whole undertaking would have proved a disastrous failure.

With extreme difficulty, our fathers obtained a royal charter, which gave them the powers necessary to effect their object. As free born subjects of the British crown, they claimed the protection of the monarch who claimed allegiance of them. Under that protection, they exercised the invaluable rights of electing their own magistrates, and enacting their own laws. It is true, that they restricted the privilege of becoming freemen or citizens to members of the churches which they had formed on the New Testament plan. But for this a very good and sufficient reason can be assigned. The charter was obtained for a *specific purpose*; namely, the founding of a Christian Commonwealth according to their own views of what the Bible taught. Now under the charter, the freemen were the corporators, to whom pertained the duty of carrying the intention of the charter into effect. How evident then the propriety of pro-

viding, that those corporators, so far as might be, should understand that intention, and cordially befriend it. And this, in general, could only be expected at that time from the members of the Church.

What company of men, having obtained an act of incorporation for the purpose of mutual insurance, would allow persons to become stockholders who avowed the design of turning the whole affair into a manufacturing concern? Who would blame the original undertakers for resisting to the utmost, such a gross perversion of their chartered rights? Each restless spirit who came here to trouble our fathers, knew perfectly well with what object they had pitched their tents upon this unpromising soil. And if that object was unacceptable to such restless natures, why were they so ungenerous as to take advantage of the supposed weakness of our fathers? If they wished to set up some different sort of commonwealth, why thrust themselves in where others had pre-occupied the ground, and laid out so much toil and expense upon it? Such intrusion was needless, injurious and culpable. Surely the new world was wide enough for a thousand independent experiments of the kind, all disconnected from each other. Our fathers regarded these aggressors upon their



rights very much as we might regard some lawless squatter, who should raise his log hut in the very midst of our home-lot which we had purchased, cleared and enclosed. And if they gave the unruly encroachers notice to quit, it was no more than any body would do to-day, under similar circumstances.

One of our older historians thus presents the matter ;—“ The inhabitants of the place having purchased the country for themselves, they accounted it an unreasonable injury for any to come presumptuously, without license or allowance, to live amongst them, and to sow the seeds of their dangerous and perverse principles amongst the inhabitants, tending to the subversion of all that was good, whether sacred or civil ; and therefore thought themselves bound to hold out the sharp, against any that should attempt, without leave, to thrust themselves amongst them : which renders them that obstinately and willfully would do so, *felones de se*, like them that will break into a man’s dwelling house, whether he will or no.”\*

This colony, at the outset, was a voluntary association for a special purpose. No one entered into it, except by his own choice and de-

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\* Hubbard’s Hist., Chap. LXVI.

sire, and with a full understanding of the object to be attained. And it is a settled maxim of the common law, that every voluntary association has the right of prescribing its own terms of admission and membership. If any one should dislike the conditions, they are no ways unjust as to him. Let him either stay away, or join some other association constructed on principles which accord with his own.

That our forefathers, in the first days of their republic, should exclude from their society all disaffected and turbulent characters, is to be regarded as an act of self-defence, rather than as an aggression upon those whom they expelled. Thus in the sentence of banishment passed upon the insidious Anne Hutchinson, this very reason is given for her banishment, that she was a person unfit for their society :—that is, unfit to be a member of their body politic, whose existence was endangered by her residence among them. They sent her off, not by way of punishing her corrupt sentiments or disorderly practices against the peace of the country : but for their own security, and the preservation of the state of things they had risked and sacrificed so much to establish. With them it was a struggle between life and death. And, by a dire necessity, they must maintain their ground or die. They had not

then a social state so thoroughly organized and settled down in a fixed condition, having strength to stand safe against all the earthquakes and hurricanes of revolution. No : in their weak, unsteady plight, they were reasonably alarmed at disturbances and commotions which, now that we are strong and well fenced, only excite the contemptuous smile of conscious security. That our ancestors took this view of the case, is quite certain. It was said by one who was afterwards a worthy governor of the colony, but then one of its excellent ministers ;—“ Certainly a weaker body cannot, ought not, to do that, or suffer that upon itself, or in itself, upon the account of charity to another, which a stronger body may, and in some cases may be bound to do or suffer.”\* When Governor Winthrop was called in question by numerous members of the Boston Church, for his agency in the banishment of the antinomians, he first made an effectual protestation against being made answerable to the Church for his official acts as a magistrate, though responsible for his private conduct as a man. But for the satisfaction of weaker brethren, he condescended to justify his course by several reasons. In doing this he alluded to the following

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\* W. Stoughton's Election Sermon, 1668, p. 33.

clause in his oath of office;—"In all causes wherein you are to give your vote, &c., you are to give your vote as, in your judgment and conscience, you shall see to be most for the public good." "And so for his part," he adds, "he was persuaded that it would be most for the glory of God, and the public good, to pass sentence as they did. He saw, that those brethren were so divided from the rest of the country in their judgment and practice, as it could not stand with the public peace, that they should continue amongst us. So, by the example of Lot in Abraham's family, and after Hagar and Ishmael, he saw they must be sent away."\* His explanations seem very satisfactory now, as they were, at the time when made, to those for whom they were designed. So true was the remark which Winthrop elsewhere made about the Boston people;—"They were generally of that understanding and moderation, as that they would be easily guided in their way by any rule from Scripture or sound reason."

Much light is shed upon this subject by a pamphlet of eighty-one quarto pages, published in 1641, by Katharine Chidley.† It is entitled,

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\* Journal I. 250.

† See an account of the tract in Hanbury's Memorials, II. 112.

“The Justification of the Independent Churches of Christ.” It was written in reply to one whom Milton has doomed to everlasting fame as “shallow Edwards,” often mentioned also as “Gangrene Edwards.” He had asserted, that the New England men “will not give a toleration for any other ecclesiastical government or churches.” In her reply, Mrs. Chidley tells him, among other things, that if it had been so, it was because they had, in England, taken upon them the oath of conformity. She then goes on to argue, that her co-religionists in New England were afraid, that, if they suffered any notorious disorders and dangerous sects to spring up among them, they should be summoned to London to answer for their negligence. It had been a grand charge against Congregationalism, that the laxity of its discipline opened the door for all manner of irregularities and fanatical explosions. It had been so often and so reproachfully alledged, that this was the tendency of their system, that our fathers had a natural sensitiveness upon the subject, and felt constrained to put down every thing among themselves which was likely to give currency to this charge. Knowing how closely they were watched for some pretence to deprive them of their colonial privileges, they trembled lest sects should arise in the midst of

them, whose numbers, outbreaks and extravagances might furnish the adversaries with a plea for destroying the whole enterprise.

Our fathers sundered the heart-strings of attachment which tied them to the home and friends of their youth, and fled into the wilderness from the dragon of persecution to obtain liberty for their own consciences; and not for all other consciences, however unconscionable and perverted.

Why should they have been tolerant of the Church of England men who straggled in among them, when they knew that that terrible oppressor, archbishop Laud, and others, had obtained so early as 1635, a royal commission for the government of the plantations, with absolute power "to make laws and constitutions, concerning either their state public or the utility of individuals, and for the relief of the clergy to consign convenient maintenance unto them by tithes and oblations and other profits according to their discretion." This commission also gave power to punish all opposers by imprisonment, or by the taking of life, or dismemberment of limbs. The formidable prelate and infatuated king, to be sure, found themselves too much busied with work nearer home, to carry this atrocious commission into effect. But mean-

while our fathers were quaking under apprehensions, that they would soon see ship loads of the ecclesiastical fetters, from which they had fled, sent after them. And what person in his senses can blame them for doing all they could to discourage the residence among them of men, who would be all ready to rivet those fetters on as soon as they could be landed? The Puritan settlers chose rather to bear themselves the charge of bigotry, than to suffer their children to be enslaved under the Romanized hierarchy of the tyrannical Stuarts. Now to keep out, if possible, that abhorred hierarchy, they must have a general rule for the excluding of all sects from political power and influence. It would not have answered to tolerate all other sects, and to exclude only that which was established by law in the mother country, and which would have required nothing more than the pointed affront of such an exclusion to provoke it to wield the dread powers with which it had been armed by the royal commission. They must tolerate all or none. To have tolerated all, would have been suicidal, for it would have invited the coming of those who were empowered to wrest away the whole of their dear-bought liberties. And therefore, though they silently overlooked much quiescent dissent from their

own views, and connived at many peaceable dissenters, they professed no open toleration of any.

The English court well understood the motives of all this defensive policy. This was the reason why Charles the Second interposed to protect the Quakers in Massachusetts, though he suppressed them in England. He made common cause with them in this country, because he saw that the exclusion of the Quakers was part of a policy intended to keep out those who would co-operate with him, in the introduction of his hierarchal idols. He knew that if he could effect a toleration for the Quakers, it must also extend to his minions and the ministers of his will.

Moreover those other dissenting sects, were imbued with the same spirit of intolerance as the hierarchy: and could any one of them have obtained the numerical ascendancy here, there is reason to think, that it would have proceeded to root up at once all that had been done by our fathers. Thus we see that when the Quakers obtained the ascendancy in Rhode Island, they turned upon Roger Williams, stripped him of his political influence, subverted his arrangements, and reduced him nearly to a nullity in the very refuge he had opened for them.



Our fathers have been ably vindicated by the Honorable Josiah Quincy, L. L. D., in an address delivered to the citizens of Boston, at the second centenary of the settlement of that place. He has defended them with the penetration of a jurist, and the wisdom of a scientific politician. He has made it manifest, that common prudence, and not a blind bigotry, led to the course they pursued. "It cannot be questioned," he says, "that the constitution of the State, as sketched in the first laws of our ancestors, was a skillful combination of both civil and ecclesiastical powers. Church and State were very curiously and efficiently interwoven with each other. It is usual to attribute to religious bigotry the submission of the mass of the people to a system thus stern and exclusive. It may, however, with quite as much justice, be resolved into love of independence and political sagacity."\* Their plan was to base the liberties of the country on a system of independent churches. And while this plan gave much political influence to the ministers, there was a safeguard against the abuse of that influence, in the right of each church to make a final determination in its own affairs.

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\* Address, page 32.

As the result of the course pursued by the early settlers of New England, we see a commonwealth in which their great object has been happily accomplished. We see an almost unexampled religious prosperity, and the most ample enjoyment of personal liberty and security, in "a church without a prelate, and a state without a king."

Nor can we drop the discussion of this subject without the remark, that it is wrong to try the actions of men in one age, by the standard of another. Tried by the standard of their own age, our fathers would not be found an intolerant class. The rights of conscience and of religious liberty, as matters lying exclusively between the soul of man and his God, were points which few had considered. It has been said, that Roger Williams was the first to claim entire freedom for the conscience from all human control. This is a great mistake. Before he was born, the United Provinces of Holland, in 1573, had established by law a universal toleration of sects. And while little Williams was handling his horn-book at his grandma's knee, the excellent Henry Jacob, the founder of the first Congregational Church ever gathered in England, printed the first document which ever plead with Authority for entire religious

toleration. It is a quarto, of forty-eight pages. It is addressed "To the Right High and Mighty Prince, James, by the Grace of God, King of Great Brittain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c.—An Humble Supplication for *Toleration*, and Liberty to enjoy and observe the Ordinances of Jesus Christ in the administration of his Churches in lieu of human Constitutions, 1609."\* Five or six years later, appeared some tracts on the same subject by persons of the Baptist persuasion, on which Crosby and others have grounded a mistaken boast of the *priority* of that sect in this good work. This honor belongs to Henry Jacob, the father of the modern Independents. Still these were but the speculations of a few individuals. The united current of public sentiment in the whole Christian world set strongly the other way. So that our ancestors appear to great advantage, as far in advance of their own times, even in this particular wherein they seem so much below the standard of ours.

It has happened with the Puritans as with Shakspeare. There are many passages in the dramas of that poet, which must mark him as

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\* For an account of this interesting Tract, see Hanbury's *Memo-rials of the Independents*, I. 224, 7.

an impure man and polluted writer, if we try him by the rules of decorum now observed. But if we compare him with the authors of his own day, we shall be surprised to see how far he exceeded them in decency, and the sense of that beauty and loveliness with which virtue is so delicately graced. When our fathers are compared with the men of their own times, we see them leading on the van as well of religious as of civil liberty.

It has been justly said, by D'Israeli;—"Men who appear at certain eras of society, however they be lauded for what they have done, are still liable to be censured for not doing what they ought to have done." It is easy for our modern smatterers and whipsters to start up, and petulantly condemn our sires for not seeing some things as clearly as we do after the increasing light of two centuries. "Just so," says Macaulay, "we have heard a baby mounted on the shoulders of his father, cry out, 'How much taller I am than papa!'" It is too much to expect that such prating sciolists will ever have reflection enough to consider, that our ancestors then lived in the midst of great moral changes:—and that, "in sudden alterations, it is not to be expected that all things be done by the square and compass."

Look at the English commonwealth under the protectorate of Cromwell, when religious affairs were conducted according to the ideas of the Independents who were then in the ascendant. Cromwell's senate enacted a law, abolishing all penal statutes for religion, and allowing every one to think and worship as he pleased, on taking an oath of allegiance to government.

Compare the conduct of the Puritans as to the spirit of toleration in either hemisphere, with that of any other governments, in or near their own times. Compare it with the behavior of that regal butcher, the eighth Henry. Of Edward the Sixth, we may speak in just commendation, for he was a Puritan so far as a crowned prince could be. But look at the "bloody Mary;" and Elizabeth, with crimson stains almost as deep as her sister's; and Charles the First, whose bigotry was of the most insensate kind. Compared with these, Endicott and the harshest of the Puritans, were mildness and liberality itself. Or contrast Puritan administration with that of Charles the Second after the restoration, whose hypocrisy and profligacy made his Stuart bigotry the more dark and hideous. This perjured and debauched head of the Anglican Church, by the act of uniformity, silenced in one day two thousand Puritan min-

isters, who were deprived of their livings, forbidden from preaching, keeping schools, taking boarders, or living within five miles of any place where they had lived before, and might have friends who would relieve them. And yet, the historians record the pleasing fact, that, "during twenty-eight years of sufferings, their enemies were never gratified by any resistance; nor was any of them imprisoned for debt." During the reign of that "lord of misrule," and of his brother, James the Second, near eight thousand non-conformists perished in prison, for dissenting from the national worship; and a list was made of some sixty thousand persons who suffered in various ways for the same offence.

Speaking of the divines ejected by the Act of Uniformity, it was observed at the time, by a person who was not a dissenter;—"I am glad so many have chosen suffering, rather than conformity to the establishment; for, had they complied, the world would have thought there had been nothing in religion; but now they have given a striking proof, that there are some sincere in their professions." Some ministers, who had conformed from worldliness rather than conscience, once taunted Mr. Christopher Jackson, who was of the immortal two thousand, with

having "a bare coat." He tartly retorted;—"If it is bare, it is not turned." How much more honorable is such poverty, than the affluence gained by the sacrifice of principle! In the many revolutions of the English Church from Henry VIII., to William III., there were enough of ministers who changed with the times, subscribed all the articles required, swore all the oaths exacted, and followed all the religions imposed by law, without the slightest regard to consistency, except in the one point of keeping their benefices, like "the vicar of Bray." They were like vessels riding at anchor in tide-water, heading either way as the current changed, but without quitting their moorings. Or, to vary the comparison, they were like the millers, who, though they cannot turn the wind, can turn their mill-sails, so that however it blows, they are sure to grind their grist. In such times, it was no small praise, that the Puritans with so great constancy, bore persecutions very far exceeding in severity aught that they have been charged with inflicting.

Thus great complaint has been made against our fathers, because they had laws by which persons who absented themselves from public worship a certain number of times in succession, without good and sufficient reason, were liable

to fines and other penalties. But were they alone in this sin of enforcing attendance on public worship? By a law passed in England in the thirty-fifth year of Queen Elizabeth, persons obstinately refusing to come to church, were doomed to banishment, and were sentenced to death if they returned from banishment. Or turn, if you please, to "the old dominion," the ancient colony of Virginia, settled by cavaliers and zealous Church of England men. In the first code of laws adopted for that government, we find the following sanguinary clause:—  
"Likewise no man or woman shall dare to violate or breake the Sabbath by any gaming, publique, or priuate abroad, or at home, but duly sanctifie and obserue the same, both himsele and his familie, by preparing themselues at home with priuate prayer, that they may be the better fitted for the publique, according to the commandments of God, and the orders of our Church, as also euery man and woman shall repaire in the morning to the diuine seruice, and sermons preached vpon the Sabbath day, and in the afternoon to diuine seruice, and Catechising, vpon paine for the first fault to lose their prouision, and allowance for the whole weeke following, for the second to lose



the said allowance, and also to be whipt, and for the third to suffer death." \*

In comparison with these severe statutes, the penal laws of the New England colonies compelling the same duties, are mildness itself. But how comes it to pass, that men are ever declaiming with such bitterness against our "Blue-Laws," most of which indeed never existed except in imagination? And yet the same men have never a word to say against the Black-Laws of "good queen Bess," nor the Blood-Laws of the gay cavaliers of Roanoke? If the enactments of our fathers on this point were based upon an erroneous principle, it is certainly contrary to the truth of history and moral justice, to represent them as sinning in this respect above all that dwelt on the earth in their time.

The age will arrive when the Pilgrims will be regarded as having been surprisingly in advance of their generation, even in the matter for which they have been so much reproached. They strove to find a moderate or middle way of procedure. Their maxim was;—"To tolerate all things, and to tolerate nothing, are both

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\* See the Laws at large in the third volume of Force's Historical Tracts.

alike intolerable." The maxim is not so very bad. They sometimes erred in its application.

Our fathers have been severely blamed for the banishment of Roger Williams. It has been a matter of wonder, that they could not bear with such a sincere good man in his harmless peculiarities. That he was a good man, we make no doubt;—that he was a safe or harmless man, is not so clear. This fiery Welchman had a conscience which was a snarl of tangled scrupulosities; and he was frantic to cast the same intricate net over the heads of all around him. His principles and practices were such as must have frustrated the whole design of the colony, and must have been fatal to its peace and permanence. Mather uses the following singular similitude in regard to him. "In the year 1654, a certain windmill in the Low Countries, whirling round with extraordinary violence, by reason of a violent storm then blowing; the stone, at length, by its rapid motion, became so intensely hot as to fire the mill, from whence the flames, being dispersed by the high winds, did set a whole town on fire. But I can tell my reader, that, about twenty years before this, there was a whole country in America like to be set on fire by the rapid motion of a windmill, in the head of one particular man. Know then,

that about the year 1630, arrived here one Mr. Roger Williams; who being a preacher that had less *light* than *fire* in him, hath, by his own sad example, preached to us the danger of that evil which the apostle mentions;—*They have a zeal, but not according to knowledge.*”\*

At his first coming, he would not join any church here, whose members would not profess repentance for having formerly communed in the parish churches of England. He held that the magistrates could not rightfully punish offences against “the first table;” that is to say, the first four commands of the decalogue:—an opinion which has never yet been acceded to by the good people of Massachusetts; whose Revised Statutes still contain enactments against blasphemy and Sabbath-breaking. At Salem, he taught that the patent, or charter of the colony, was a mere nullity; thus destroying all the rights of property acquired under it. He insisted that it should be hurled back to the monarch, whom he taxed with uttering lies and blasphemy in that very document. He refused the oath of allegiance, and disowned the authority of the existing government. He not only denied the right of the government to pro-

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\* Magnalia. Book VII. Ch. II. Sec. 2.

vide for the raising of money for religious purposes, but even for the support of schools; and thus would have bereft the children of New England of the glorious birthright of free and universal education. He refused to hold communion with his own church, unless its members would renounce all fellowship with the other churches:—an act which must have separated all the freemen in it from civil, as well as ecclesiastical, connection with the other members of the body politic. He wrote to the churches of which the magistrates were individually members, complaining of their official acts, and urging that they should be disciplined for the same:—this too was a plain moving of sedition; for the excommunication of a magistrate must have taken away his franchise,—and with it, the capacity to hold his office.

This good-hearted and wrong-headed man held many other extravagant notions of minor importance; refusing to commune with his own wife, because she would not cast off all Christian fellowship but his; causing Endicott to cut the cross out of the flag which protected the country, thereby involving the colony in extreme perplexity and considerable peril; denying that magistrates may administer an oath to an unregenerate man; opposing family prayer,

if any unregenerate soul were present ; contending that thanks must not be returned *after* meals ; and upholding many other such like un-socialities and absurdities.

Can we think it strange that our fathers were filled with consternation at the movements of this erratic genius ? At every expense, they were toiling to rear the frame-work of their new social state. And now they felt the fabric reeling and tottering under his frantic and convulsive efforts to lay the whole in ruins : for the structure was then far from being braced, and pinned, and knit together with the garnished strength it now exhibits. With many excellent traits of character, Mr. Williams was a reckless, turbulent, seditious “non-resistant and no-human-government man.” Even in our day, such an one has been “lynched” in the city of Boston by “a mob of gentlemen,” and protected from farther violence only by a sort of incarceration :—and this was done at an era when we have nothing to fear, as to our social institutions, from such wild opinionists. Inexcusable as such a measure has now become, who are we, that we should reproach our sires with their treatment of Williams ? With them the case was far different. He was jeopardizing the whole success of their costly experiment,

and threatening to demolish their dearest hopes. And shall they be blamed for hurling the fire-brand out of doors, and quenching the flames before they had kindled among the chips and shavings, and spread through the whole of the unfinished building? No man can charge them with inconsistency for refusing tolerance to one, who was madly striking at their very vitals, and endangering their existence. At least, no man can so charge them, who does not senselessly shut his eyes to the facts as they then stood. For our fathers in their then existing circumstances, to have let this ruthless agitator go on without stopping him, would have been to consent to their own destruction.

It has been alledged, that his banishment was attended with needless and aggravated harshness;—that he was forced to fly in the winter, and to find a refuge among savages. But these hardships he precipitated upon himself by his restless turbulence. He could have tarried till the spring : but abusing this indulgence to carry on his machinations, the rulers were preparing to send him for trial to England, in a ship which was about sailing. Knowing that much severer handling would await him in the mother country, he secretly withdrew. In his new refuge he was never molested ; though his

vicinity, and the influence he exercised through his writings and his emissaries, caused great uneasiness to our ancestors.

Governor Winthrop befriended him in his difficult undertaking; and scores of amicable letters passed between them. Winslow, then Governor of the Plymouth colony, visited him at his rude habitation, and aided his wife with money. When his occasions required it, he was permitted to pass, untroubled, through our territory. On his own part, he showed such generous magnanimity toward the Massachusetts settlers, as sets his Christian character in a commendable light, and disposes us to grant such absolution as we may for his many previous errors.

It is quite remarkable, that Mr. Williams should afterwards indirectly sanction the justice of the procedure against himself, by procuring a similar sentence of banishment upon Samuel Gorton. This Gorton was a strange fanatic, a self-styled "Professor of Mysteries," who having been sued in Massachusetts for debt, behaved in court so mutinously and abusively, that he was fined and expelled from the jurisdiction. He then betook himself to the Rhode Island colony, "where he affronted what little government they had with such intolerable in-

solencies, that he was then whipped and sent out of that colony." He then repaired to the Providence Plantations, where he committed such outrages, that Mr. Williams and his people entreated the Massachusetts government for protection from Gorton and his outlaws. The result of this application was, that Gorton was banished again.

Now Williams was an offender of the same class with the "Gortonists;" and the laws under which he had suffered some seven years before, were the same laws which he waked up against that crazy crew. If it was right for him to procure the banishment of Gorton, then was it right for the people of Massachusetts to exclude Mr. Williams from their community. He has afforded the strongest practical proof of the necessity of such legislation in the circumstances of the infant colonies. "And against necessity, there is no law." As Seneca has said;—"Necessity excuses whatever it exacts."

No man can say, what the consequences would have been, had Mr. Williams remained in Massachusetts, to leaven the people with his incongruous mixture of sound sentiments and fantastical opinions. The character of the man has left its impress upon the genius of the people of Rhode Island. The demonstrations of



the mob-spirit there and in Pennsylvania, have been regarded by judicious persons as the natural result when a people has been extensively pervaded by the non-resistant leaven. After a while, that leaven will pass from the vinous to the acetous fermentation. Its repugnance to the divine ordinance of magistracy and lawful order will remain, and will operate with explosive violence, whenever the counteracting repugnance to the use of physical force shall have evaporated and passed away. Every community which is not trained to venerate the law and its ministers, must have a strong tendency to anarchy and confusion.

The course pursued by our fathers has been amply vindicated by those best able to judge of its propriety. Among others, we may refer to one whom it is needless to style the *honorable* John Quincy Adams. In a discourse recently published by him, after a candid recital of the insurrectionary spirit and intolerable proceedings of Mr. Williams at Salem, he asks;—“Can we blame the founders of the Massachusetts colony for banishing him from within their jurisdiction? In the annals of religious persecution, is there to be found a martyr more gently dealt with by those against whom he began the war of intolerance? whose authority he per-

sisted, even after professions of penitence and submission, in defying, till deserted even by the wife of his bosom? and whose utmost severity of punishment upon him was only an order for his removal as a nuisance from among them?"\* Let newspaper wittings scribble as they may, their detractions cannot blast the memory of the men whom "the sage of Quincy" has thus frankly justified.

Our fathers have been severely rebuked for not tolerating the Baptists at their first appearance among us. No one has undertaken to apologize for them in this matter. And yet, in addition to the general considerations already advanced, there are such as greatly alleviate the blame which may attach to their treatment of a sect now so respectable.

It had never been known as an organized body till the rise of the Anabaptists in Germany, in the sixteenth century. They who have read the history of that period are well aware, that, in all the fury of fanaticism, that sect waged a wild crusade against every government which would not join them, laying waste the country,

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\* The New England Confederacy of MDCXLIII. A Discourse delivered before the Mass. Hist. Soc. 1843. pp. 25—30.

and giving themselves up to the most shocking excesses, till they were with difficulty suppressed and dispersed. This is no place to recount the horrors they enacted. We are unwilling to dwell upon them. Suffice it to say, that our fathers, in whose memory these tragedies were fresh, regarded an Anabaptist even as Edmund Burke would have regarded a French Jacobin reeking from the atrocities of "the reign of terror." Now this infelicity attending the origin of the Baptists as a distinct denomination, occasioned them, at the first forming of their churches in Britain, which was about the time of the settlement of this country, to be regarded with extreme anxiety and foreboding of direful results. Though these dark suspicions have proved to be groundless and unjust, yet, under the circumstances, they were very natural; and it is not strange, that the Baptists were subjected to strong opposition from such as feared that they would walk in the bloody tracks of their German predecessors. Thus one of the historians speaks of the laws made to restrain their proceedings, in these terms;—"The General Court were so afraid lest matters might at last, from small beginnings, grow into a new Munster tragedy, that they enacted some laws to restrain anabaptist exorbitances ;

which laws, though never executed unto the extremity of them, yet were soon laid by, as to any execution of them at all." \*

This explanation has been boldly denied by some, who maintain, that the Baptists were too well known as to their principles and temper, to leave them liable to such suspicions. It is certain, however, that, though the German anabaptists had been for near a century endeavoring to spread their sentiments in Great Britain, they met with little or no success. No churches of that order were formed till about the time the New England emigrants left that country : nor did such churches become at all numerous, till the time of the civil wars, when they were greatly favored by Cromwell's famous army. It is clear, therefore, that our ancestors could have had no special knowledge of their character, except what they inferred from the behavior of those unhappy Germans.

That we have assigned the true reason of the proceedings of our fathers, is evident from the very terms of the law, as it stands on the Massachusetts' records, under date of the thirteenth of November, 1644.

“ Forasmuch as experience hath plentifully

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\* Magnalia, Book VII., Ch. IV., Sec. 4.

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and often proved, that, since the first rising of the Anabaptists, about one hundred years since, they have been the incendiaries of the commonwealths, and the infectors of persons in main matters of religion, and the troublers of churches in all places where they have been, and that they who have held the baptizing of infants unlawful have usually held other errors or heresies together therewith, though they have (as other heretics use to do) concealed the same till they spied out a fit advantage and opportunity to vent them, by way of question or scruple, &c., &c. ; it is ordered and agreed, that if any person or persons, within this jurisdiction, shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of infants, or go about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use thereof, or shall purposely depart the congregation at the administration of the ordinance, or shall deny the ordinance of magistracy, or their lawful right and authority to make war, or to punish the outward breaches of the first table, and shall appear to the court willfully and obstinately to continue therein after due time and means of conviction, *every such person or persons shall be sentenced to banishment.*" \*

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\* Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections, Second Series, I. 210.

Such was the law : from which it plainly appears, that the practice of rebaptism was closely connected, in the minds of the legislators, with the German atrocities, as well as with hostility to government, and to the magistrates' care over good manners and morality. It is readily admitted, that, in the case of the Baptists of Massachusetts, there was no occasion for these fears. But it is no less true, that our fathers felt those fears, and acted honestly, though mistakenly, under the influence of those fears. They felt compelled to suppress what they deemed to be sentiments dangerous to the peace of civil society. It has been already intimated, that this law, the result of misapprehension, was not rigorously enforced. It was intended only for such as were deemed turbulent and factious offenders. This appears from a Declaration of the General Court holden at Boston, November fourth, 1646; and issued by order of court. From this we take the following paragraph. "They are offended also at our lawe against Anabaptists. The truth is, the great trouble we have been putt unto, and hazard also, by familisticall and anabaptisticall spirits, whose conscience and religion hath been only to sett forth themselves and raise contentions in the country, did provoke us to provide for our safety

by a lawe, that all such should take notice, how unwelcome they should be unto us, either coming or staying. But for such as differ from us only in judgment, in point of baptism or some other points of lesse consequence, and live peaceably amongst us, without occasioning disturbance, &c., such have no cause to complaine; for it hath never beene as yet putt in execution against any of them, although such are knowne to live amongst us." \* Thus did our fathers speak for themselves: and there is no reason to call their sincerity in question. The devastated fields of Germany were, in a manner, still smoking before their eyes. They knew, that there anabaptism was a conspiracy, whose declared object was the destruction by fire and sword, of every government and individual who would not submit to the new baptism. We may smile at these terrors of our good fathers, and we may regret the measures they adopted with a view to secure themselves from similar disasters. But to them the danger seemed real and imminent: and it is no wonder that they acted like people in a state of alarm, who think of safety, rather than of questions of abstract rights. Time, and the good behavior of the

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\* Hutchinson's State Papers, p. 216.

Baptists, at last dispelled their fears, and gradually and speedily brought about an entire toleration.

As some fault may be found with every one, so the Baptists themselves were not wholly without blame. They disturbed the public worship during the administration of infant baptism, and at other times, by openly manifesting their contempt in ways that gave great offence. They resorted also to other irregularities, which even good men are prone to do when excited by the ardor of a new reform, or the expectation of resistance to their views. These things tended still further to excite the apprehensions to which the community were already predisposed, that the Anabaptist sentiments had a natural and innate connection with contempt of magistrates and laws.

Yet, from the beginning, men of that persuasion who were peaceably disposed, lived quietly among us, and even retained their membership in our churches. Two of the early presidents of Harvard College were known to be of this class. There was no disposition to trouble people merely for holding Baptist sentiments; unless, they also, in some way, infringed the public peace. Perhaps of all the sects which have become rather numerous in the world, the



Baptists have been the least persecuted of any. In this country, a few, who made unnecessary difficulty, were banished: but, in general, they were patiently borne with, and suffered less and less of molestation; till the people became satisfied that they were an orderly and exemplary sect of Christians, and they have obtained the fullest equality of privileges, whether civil or religious. So early as the time of Dr. Increase Mather, we find him assisting to ordain the pastor of a Baptist church in his neighborhood.\* At the present time, it cannot be said, that there is any want of kind fraternal feeling between those brethren and "the standing order." The latter are certainly not the most backward to cultivate mutual charity and fraternal communion.

Our fathers have been violently censured for their proceedings in reference to the Quakers, which is the only remaining point belonging to this subject which requires our consideration.

Most of the allegations against the Puritans are derived from the writings of the Quakers themselves, which are violent and abusive beyond what any one can imagine who has not read them.

Indeed much misapprehension has arisen in

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\* Remarkables of Dr. I. Mather, p. 61.

respect to the merits of this business, from ignorance of what the Quakers were in that day. It is a huge mistake, to suppose, as many do, that they were the same sort of excellent, inoffensive personages, as those whom we now see arrayed in sanctified drab, and hats with pious breadth of brim. Because this people are noted in our times, for their mild spirit and moral virtues, and are, in the main, good members of society, we are not to suppose at once, that they have been so from the beginning.

In truth, they were then a dangerous sect. Bishop Burnet wrote a letter to the Princess Sophia of Hanover, the mother of the first George, and ancestress of the present royal family of England. He penned this letter under the impression that that princess might soon be called to the British throne. He gives her information respecting the different sects of dissenters, considered in a political point of view;—or as to the manner in which their respective principles bore on the probable welfare of the government. Among other things, he says;—“The most ridiculous, and yet the most dangerous sect we have among us, is the Quakers.” For this assertion the good bishop has been laughed to scorn;—“What! the Quakers dangerous! a people so

intensely opposed to the shedding of blood, dangerous to the State! What folly!"

But after all, the bishop of Old Sarum was apt to know what he was talking about. He thought that people might be dangerous, though without dagger in hand, or pistol in belt. He saw that their transcendental notions about "inward light" were perilous to revealed religion, the main defence and support of Christian States. He saw, that their non-resistance sentiments must disarm the magistracy, and deprive justice of her sword, and subvert the order of society. Even the government of Rhode Island, in a letter to the General Court of Massachusetts, dated October, 1557, makes the following remark;—"We conceive, that their doctrines tend to very absolute cutting down and overturning relations and civil government among men, if generally received."\* In 1655, the government and council of Rhode Island passed an order for outlawing the people called Quakers, because they would not bear arms, and to seize their estates; but the people in general rose up against these severe orders, and would not suffer it.†

In these colonies, the early Quakers did noth-

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\* Hutchinson's History. I, 526.

† Mass. Hist. Soc. Col. First Series. V. 219.

ing but inveigh with astonishing bitterness and rancor against the magistrates and ministers, whom, without waiting for any provocation they denounced with every odious epithet, stirring up with all their might the spirit of insubordination. Any one who knows in what profound veneration our ancestors held both Moses and Aaron, both the magistrate and the minister, must see what indignation the Quakers must have excited by their rabid railings against whom they called the "charter tyrants and the charter priests."

The followers of George Fox, without firing guns, or smiting with the sword, were wholesale breakers of the peace. Not content to operate within their own sphere, or to hold forth to such as were willing to hear them, they broke in everywhere without regard to decency and the just rights of others. In contempt of justice they volunteered to assail the judges on the bench with furious tirades against them and their offices. If, tomorrow, any one were to be guilty of one tithe of the "contempt of court" they practiced, he would feel, with instant rigor, the strong arm of the law. In the churches, they would tumultuously disturb the order of public worship with their vociferous harangues. Men and women would carry on noisy mechanical operations in

the midst of divine service, by way of practically testifying their devout scorn of all carnal ordinances:—and this would be done through a succession of Sabbaths, unchecked by the infliction of the ordinary penalties for misdemeanors of that nature. Of late, we have seen certain noted men and women taken out of conventions and churches by main strength, because they would not restrain that unruly member, the tongue. Nay, our own civil tribunals have dealt with these characters according to course of law, for breaking the peace;—and yet the mal-practices so punished were trifling in comparison with those which harrowed the feelings and exhausted the patience of our forefathers. Perhaps the recent acts of our municipal tribunals may be cited a hundred years hence, to prove that the spirit of religious intolerance lingered even unto this day.

If, instead of giving full credence to the colored, distorted and falsified statements of the angry Quaker pamphlets, we have recourse to the records of our courts, as would be done in regard to any other matter, we shall find, that much of what has been called persecution, was but the punishment of gross misconduct committed under fanatical excitement. Such offences, if perpetrated to-day, would be as promptly punished by

our correctional police as by that of our fathers. It is true that some of the penalties imposed by the latter may seem, according to our ideas, excessively severe. But we must remember, that the penal codes of all Europe were then far more severe than at present. According to the scale of penal inflictions then in use, our fathers meant to apportion no sorer retribution than would now be imposed for the like misdeeds.

The Quakers were punished, in general, not as religious offenders, not as heretics,—but as civil offenders, transgressing against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth. It is true, that, according to the records, they were arraigned as Quakers: but this was because the class of civil offences which the law was intending to take hold of, was then known by that name. If we read the minutes of evidence, we shall see the stress laid upon the disorderly behavior of the accused. Good Mr. Norton, in his doleful sermon, entitled “The Heart of New England Rent at the Blasphemies of the present Generation,” strongly disclaims the right of the magistrate to interfere with Quakers, or any other heretics, who were of quiet and peaceable deportment. But he argues, that they ought to be suppressed, when they become factious, turbulent and insurrectionary. These were the

views of our fathers : and it is believed that they are the views of all sober, humane and law-abiding people, at this present time. In the application of these principles, the Puritans may possibly have erred in some particular cases, without being more prone to error than mortals generally are.

Other measures failing to put a stop to the disturbances, a law was made for banishing such as were convicted thereof, on pain of death in case they returned. Some may be shocked at this, as well as at the extreme commonness of capital punishments for minor offences throughout the civilized world in that sterner age. But they who condemn them for resorting so freely to this dreadful penalty ought to consider that this country was not then provided with prisons fit for the confinement and employment of convicts for life or long terms of years. If a criminal could not be adequately punished by fines and personal chastisement, the legislators knew not how to dispose of him except by hanging, or banishment under pain of hanging in case of returning to the jurisdiction.

Under this statute four quakers were hanged for so returning. Some of these had repeated the offence. The court felt compelled to enforce the law, or give up the attempt to maintain civil

government. Upon the execution of two of these unhappy enthusiasts, the General Court printed a declaration, dated the eighteenth of October, 1659, explaining the grounds of their proceedings. From this document it appears evident, that they considered the sufferers to be engaged in seditious and treasonable designs to overthrow the government of the country. Be it, that this was a mistake, which is by no means admitted, our fathers sincerely thought that such was the fact; and felt constrained to resort to strong measures for their own security. Remarking that other penalties had proved to be "too weak a defence against the impetuous fanatic fury" of these intruders, they say that they were "necessitated to endeavor their own security," by enacting a law, "that such persons should be banished on pain of death, *according* to the example of England in their provision against Jesuits." They contend that their "own just and necessary defence called upon them, other means failing, to offer the point which these persons have violently and willfully rushed upon, and thereby become *felones de se*." They appeal to the repeated reprieves which were easily granted to some of the offenders; which, say they, "will manifestly evince we desire their lives absent, rather than their death present."



And truly, the circumstances are calculated to call to mind the characteristic remark of Luther;—“He that bringeth himself into needless dangers, dieth the devil’s martyr.” Thus poor Mary Dyer, having been sentenced to execution for “rebellious sedition and and obtruding herself after banishment upon pain of death,” was reprieved on condition that she speedily departed and did not return. Return she did, within a few months, and suffered accordingly. She was the last who suffered under that law, which was suspended soon after by order of the king; as would have been voluntarily done by the General Court itself, had it not been anticipated by the royal rescript, after the law had been in force about three years.\*

Among other instances we read of the whipping of two Quaker women at Salem. Upon this, our hearts are ready to ache, that these hapless females should thus suffer merely for religion. But how was it? Were they scourged merely for cherishing Quaker principles? By no means:—but for appearing in the churches in open day wholly divested of apparel. The poor misguided creatures professed to be acting prophetically, under special divine inspiration, as a

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\* Hubbard’s History. Ch. LXV.

sign of the naked truth, and as a sign of the nakedness of the land. It would be hard to say when gentle castigation was ever merited, if not then ! When Roger Williams afterwards reproached George Fox with this scandalous procedure on the part of his female disciples, Fox, in his printed reply, applauds it as a pious and admirable action, and raises a horrid outcry of indignation against the persecuting magistrates who punished them for it.

The Quakers, in their way, and an ugly way it was, were as intolerant as possible. Williams, who, next to Penn, was the greatest benefactor they ever had, received the most thankless usage at their hands, and his old age was embittered by them. He held public debates with them at Newport and Providence ; of which he published an account, under the title, "George Fox digged out of his Burrows ;"—Burroughs being the name of one of Fox's subalterns. Whoever reads this book is ready to regard it as the most abusive and scurrilous that ever was penned. But when he comes to read the reply by Fox and Burnyeat, entitled, "A New England Firebrand Quenched," he will presently begin to think that Williams' work is all milky mildness and silky softness.

The Quakers sometimes dealt pretty hard

measure to one another. In the year 1694, one of the followers of George Keith published a tract containing the following clauses;—"Since the English in New England hanged their countrymen for religion is thirty six years:—since at Philadelphia, some did little less, by taking away goods, and imprisoning some, and condemning others without trial, for religious dissent, is three years."

But it is a painful and undesirable task to bring back to remembrance the errors of those who have so long reposed in their forgotten graves. There would we gladly leave them to rest in oblivion,

"Nor draw their frailties from their dread abode."

We wish to do no more than was needful to remove the unjust aspersions which had been cast upon our fathers, as though they had persecuted the most meek and inoffensive characters, for no other cause than mere difference of opinion on disputable points in religion. We have arrayed facts sufficient to show, that most of what is called their persecution was but the punishment of such violations of public order, as must ever be punished so long as the public peace is to be secured by law. We have showed, that the rest of their persecution nat-

urally grew out of these irritating cases of misdemeanor. We have argued that whatever judicial proceedings of our forefathers are called intolerant, were either dictated by the law of self-preservation; or by the spirit of the age, rather than by the temper of the men.

Our fathers were the first to emerge from that deep and wide-spread pool of persecution for conscience sake, under which the world had stagnated during ages of Popish oppression. Nor will men of sense be astonished, if, at their first coming forth from the miry brink, they dripped for a while with the ooze from which they were escaping. Soon they purged themselves from these last remaining impurities: and became the spotless champions of the freedom of the human mind.

And here we rest our defence of that noble race of men, the Puritans; of whom, their bitter enemy, the historian Hume was compelled to own, "that for all the liberty of the English constitution that nation is indebted to the Puritans."

But why speak we of defending these worthies, who stand impregnable, at a lofty height of goodness unassailable by their weak and dwarfish detractors. They were men, the blest consequences of whose heroic and holy exer-

tions must occupy the pen of history, "to the last syllable of recorded time," and whose virtues must be resounded as with angels' trumpets to the ends of the world. Let us praise the grace of God in them. Be it ever owned as one of our chief debts to a bounteous Heaven, that it gave us this godly ancestry. Whoever shall dishonor such a parentage, may well expect the anathema of the Most High, to which all the people will say, Amen.

The topic we have been considering, teaches us to set a high estimate upon Christian charity. There is no virtue in which even good men have been so apt to be wanting. "This grace," says Warburton, "regulates and perfects all the other virtues; and is, itself, in no want of a reformer." It is this which draws together the bonds of union. It closes up the breaches of Zion, and joins her walls in impregnable strength. It teaches men to "love alike, though they may not think alike." We may hope that this heavenly temper is more generally spreading among all evangelical Christians at the present day. May the past ravages of the spirit of proscription and persecution stimulate the growth of this divine disposition among men, even as the ashes of the herbage over which the

fire has passed promotes the springing of a fairer and tenderer growth.

The subject which has been before us, inspires us with confidence in the indestructible nature of truth. No force can keep it down. The blasts of opposition only blow each spark of it into a flame. Like the gold of Ophir, the fiery furnace can but purge out its alloy, and prove its worth. The very shreds and filings of truth are precious. It is the treasure of eternity, and the currency of heaven. It is the light of immortality, and the breath of angels. It is the sceptre of Jesus, and is of the essence of godhead. How vain the efforts of earth and hell to suppress it, or distort it into shapes of falsehood. It rises again in its original beauty, and defies the power of corruption. It must triumph in the end.

“ The destined hour must come,  
When it shall blaze with sun-surpassing splendor,  
And the dark mists of prejudice and falsehood  
Fade in its strong effulgence.”

Meanwhile let us venerate our fathers for the sacrifices they so cheerfully made for the truth they loved, and which they felt in their hearts like a life that could not die. To permit their sufferings in behalf of principle to be forgotten, would wrong posterity, which needs to see their

example and the reverence it inspires. "To go on the forlorn hope of truth," as they did, "is a service of peril. Who will undertake it, if it be not also a service of honor?"

The memory of the Pilgrims should awaken our gratitude for the noble legacy of liberty. Of all the rich heritage they have left us, this is the chief blessing. They learned its value by what it cost to win it. And how are we, in these times of peaceful enjoyment of the wealthy bequest,—how are we to estimate its worth, except by recurring to the price they had to pay to obtain it. Let us be thankful to God who conferred it upon them, and through them, transmitted the inestimable boon to us. An eloquent writer has said of religious liberty;—"Human agency is insufficient to extinguish it. Oceans may overwhelm it. Mountains may press it down. But, like the earth's central fires, its own violent and unconquerable force will heave both sea and land, and some time or other, and in some place or other, the volcano will burst forth, and blaze to heaven."

To the young men and young women of New England may this humble vindication of our pilgrim sires not prove unacceptable or unavailing. May they never feel ashamed of that noble stock whence they are sprung, nor ever

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prove recreant to the principles and faith of their ancestors. May they emulate the virtues of the sainted dead, and add fresh laurels to their urns, and cover their lineage with new honors. May they be, not only the sons and daughters of the Pilgrims, but pilgrims themselves in very deed, following the same bright path through the dark and dreary wilds of earth, in radiant progress to a glorious home in heaven.



## CHAPTER IV.

The Pequod war. Mr. Wilson goes as chaplain. His faith. J. Norton made his colleague, and dies soon after. Mr. Wilson's old age. His last illness. Parting with his brethren. Anticipations of the future world. Closing scene. His funeral. His property disposed of. His afflictions in life. Repeatedly burned out. Death of his eldest son. Death of his wife Elizabeth. Death of his daughter, Mrs. Rogers. Deaths of his grandchildren. His behavior under his sorrows. Answers to prayer. John Hull. An undutiful son. Mr. Bird and Dr. Duke. A secret Papist admonished. Mr. Adams' child. Thomas Venner. A troubler of Israel. Sickness and recovery of Mary Wilson. Severe fall and remarkable recovery of John Wilson, Jr. Edmund Wilson and the Italian Inquisitor. Edmund's escape from "the snare of the strange woman," and his father's dream. Mr. Wilson's manner of preaching. His last "Thursday Lecture." His last sermon. The weekly lectures in the days of old. Mr. Wilson's pastoral qualities. His pastoral visits. His personal appearance. Admissions to the church. Baptisms. His zeal against error, tempered with love to the errorist. His popularity. Muster on the common. His poetry. Anagrams. His humility. An example of its excess. Refusal to sit for his portrait. Cotton Mather's touches. Conclusion.

IN the midst of the Antinomian contest, in which he bore so active a part, Mr. Wilson was enlisted in another whose weapons were more carnal. Those were days in which it was said of the saints ;—" Let the high praises of God be

in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand ; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people ; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron ; to execute upon them the judgments written." When the expedition was sent out against the Pequods, which was " a just and necessary " defensive war, if ever there was one, it was thought as indispensable to send a chaplain to pray as a captain to fight. So the ministers set apart two of their number ; " and a lot was cast between them in a solemn public invocation of the name of God." The chaplain's lot fell on Mr. Wilson, of whom Johnson says ;— " Having formerly passed through perils by sea, perils by land, and perils among false brethren, he now followed the war purposely to sound an alarm before the Lord with his silver trumpet." He did not fail, on this occasion, to fight the better fight of faith ; for dreadful as was the savage and numerous foe, he did not hesitate, before his departure, to profess himself " as fully satisfied, that God would give the English a victory over those enemies, as if he had seen the victory already obtained." The event accorded with his faith. Another instance of what was called his " particular faith," occurred during this expedition. A Pequod, in his canoe,

was carrying off a captive English maid. Though passing within gun-shot of our soldiers on the shore, they were afraid to fire, lest they should kill the prisoner. Mr. Wilson told them never to fear. He confidently exclaimed ;—"God will direct the bullet !" The shot was sped accordingly, and killed the savage, while the captive was rescued unharmed and untouched. The result of this war is sufficiently known. The few Pequods who escaped, and who became blended with other tribes, always acknowledged that the blame lay with themselves, and that the English were a just and righteous nation.

On the lamented death of Mr. Cotton in 1652, the church was much troubled to find a teaching elder to fill the place of that luminary, whose extinction had left them in darkness. Their eyes and hearts were fixed on Mr. Norton, who occupied the same office in the Ipswich church. As that was much the smaller church, and as it was also furnished with a very able pastor in Mr. Rogers, a descendant of the Marian martyr of Smithfield, it was thought that they ought to relinquish Mr. Norton. A warm dispute arose between the respective claimants. It was argued that Ipswich ought to part with her teacher, on the ground of the gospel precept ;—" He that hath two coats, let him impart

to him that hath none!" To this plea one of the Ipswich brethren replied;—"Nay, but Boston hath one coat now!" meaning the pastor. Mr. Wilson, who was very zealous in the matter, and whose humility outran even his zeal, exclaimed;—"Who? Me! I am nothing!" When some of his people told Mr. Rogers, that they were afraid Mr. Wilson would at last get Mr. Norton away from them by his arguments or entreaties, or both, Mr. Rogers replied, that he was "more afraid of his faith than of his arguments." After several councils had been called, and after four years of contest for this prize, the governor and magistrates interfered so effectually that Mr. Norton was installed in Boston on the twenty-third of July, 1656.

After the decease of Mr. Norton, which took place in 1663, seven years after his installation, Mr. Wilson was left alone in his labors, at the advanced age of seventy-six. For four years he bore the burden of all that charge on his enfeebled shoulders; and yet the prosperity of religion was not lessened. When his head and hands were benumbed with the frosts of age, the vital warmth retreated to the heart, and glowed intenser there. The central heat of the chief grace, charity, burned quenchless to the last. Like the beloved and last surviving disciple, in

his extreme old age at Ephesus, this venerable pastor could do little more than repeat with tremulous accents the fervent exhortation;—  
“ Little children, love one another ! ” He had a strong presentiment, that, during his time, no public judgment or calamity should fall upon New England. In him was fulfilled the angelic benediction ;

“ So mayst thou live, till, like the ripe fruit, thou  
Drop into thy mother’s lap, or be with ease  
Gathered, not harshly plucked ; for death mature.”

His infirmities at last assumed the form of a sickness which long confined him. Patient and resigned he awaited the result, desiring to return to that God in whose errand his life had been spent. “ Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.” Few men have more resembled the son of Zebedee in personal character than this old disciple.

So strong was the confidence felt by his friends in his prayers which had been so often answered, and in the power of his blessings, that the principal persons in the country came, some from a distance, bringing their children to receive the benedictions of this patriarch. There was a sort of prophetic tone to his remarks. As

the curtain which hides eternity was slowly withdrawn to give him a passage thither, he seemed to catch some glimpses which had less of earth than of heaven. He could adopt the lines with which Edmund Waller, when about fourscore years of age, ended his "Divine Poems."

"The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
Lies in new light through chinks that time has made;  
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,  
As they draw nearer to their eternal home;  
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,  
That stand upon the threshold of the new."

At the same time, his friends, unable to spare him, could accord with the verses in which Dryden responded to the aged Waller;—

"Still here remain, still on the threshold stand,  
Still at this distance view the promised land;  
That thou mayst seem, so heavenly is thy sense,  
Not going thither, but new come from thence."

In his last illness, Mr. Wilson took solemn leave of the ministers, who had long held their weekly meetings at his hospitable mansion, and who were then assembled from all parts to their annual convention in the election week. They asked him what he thought might be the sins which threatened the most to bring down the

displeasure of heaven upon the land. He replied, that he had long feared several sins ; but especially the sin of Corah ; that is, lest the people, like Corah, and his company, should rise up against the Lord's ministers, and proudly contemn the counsels and ordinances by them dispensed agreeable to the word of Christ.

When his brethren had retired, he engaged in a fervent prayer, in which, after the example of the dying patriarchs, he pronounced his parting blessing upon each of his relations and attendants, one by one. This was done in a sort of prophetic manner : and it was observed, that his death-bed aspirations for them were remarkably fulfilled in his children, and his children's children.

He then began to comfort himself with the sweet thought, that he should ere long be with his old friends, who were gone before him. He instanced by name those famous divines of the University, who had been the guides of his youth ; his colleagues, who had shared the toils of his ministry ; and his consort, with such of their children and grandchildren as had preceded him to the kingdom of God ? When some that stood by began to speak of his great usefulness, and the loss they must suffer in parting with him, he cried out ;—" Alas, alas !

use no such words concerning me ; for I have been an unprofitable servant, not worthy to be called a servant of the Lord : but I must say, The Lord be merciful to me a sinner ! and I must say, Let thy tender mercies come unto me, O Lord ; even thy salvation according to thy word.”

The evening before he died, his daughter asked after his health. Lifting his hand, he said ;—“ Vanishing things ! vanishing things !” He then prayed most affectionately with and for his friends. After this he reposed in quiet, till he gave up the ghost into the hands of his fellow-servants, the angels. This weary pilgrim reached the heavenly rest, on the seventh day of August, in the year of grace 1667, in the seventy-ninth year of his age. Thus went home that ripened saint, of whom, when he left the land of his birth, an eminent personage said ;—“ New England shall flourish, free from all general desolations, as long as that good man liveth in it.”

His funeral obsequies were attended with mournful solemnity. A lamentation was then pronounced by Rev. Richard Mather, from the appropriate text ;—“ Your fathers, where are they ? and the prophets, do they live forever ? ” Years afterward, one who knew him exclaimed,



on a great public occasion ;—“ Blessed Wilson ! thy body, thy dust, remaineth still in Boston. But where is thy spirit ? where is thy zeal ? ”

His movable property, at his death, was valued at £419. 14s. 6d. It was distributed by his will chiefly to his son Rev. John Wilson, jr. of Medfield, to his daughter Mary, wife of Rev. Samuel Danforth, of Roxbury, and to John Wilson, a minor child of his son Edward, “ Doctor of Physick, and late of London.” Very numerous small bequests were made, as one to “ my ancient and good friend, Mrs. Norton, as a small expression of my affectionate love to her.” Similar testimonials were left to nine or ten of the neighboring ministers : nor were the poor of his church forgotten.

During his sojourn in this wilderness, Mr. Wilson had his share of those afflictions by which God chastens his children. He was several times burnt out with considerable loss of his property, to which he cheerfully submitted. He was once returning from a journey, when a person met him on the road with the intelligence ;—“ Sir, I have sad news for you : while you have been abroad, your house is burnt.” To which the homeless man, nothing disconcerted, promptly replied ;—“ Blessed be God !

He has burnt this house, because he intends to give me a better." He probably meant in these words to speak figuratively, of a heavenly habitation: but it was granted unto him according to the letter.

Sore bereavements came upon him, by which he was broken with breach upon breach. His eldest son, a truly pious and accomplished gentleman, had completed his education by studying first in Holland and then in Italy, where he took his degree as doctor in medicine. He then went back to England adorned with every quality which could excite the fond expectations of his friends. Their hopes were blasted. He died about the year 1658. This sorrow hastened the death of his mother, ere the year came round, more than doubling the father's grief. Still deep called unto deep to make his afflictions more profound. His eldest daughter, the wife of the excellent and reverend Ezekiel Rogers, the founder of the church and town of Rowley, soon after died, as also her only child. The widowed and heart-broken father stood by her grave in patient sorrow. The funeral service done, he took the spade himself, and threw in the first shovelful of dust unto dust;—"In token," as he said, "of his grounded and joyful hopes, to meet her again in the

morning of the resurrection ; and of his willingness to resign her into the hands of Him who would make all things work together for good."

Mr. Wilson suffered a succession of griefs in the family of his second daughter, the wife of the learned and reverend Samuel Danforth, minister of Roxbury. When this worthy couple were affianced, sometime previous to their marriage, which took place in 1651, Mr. Cotton preached a betrothal sermon, according to an old custom of New England. In December, 1659, the eldest child of this family suddenly died. Though less than six years old, this little one was so bright an example of piety, that she was quoted as a sort of commentary on that expression of the prophet ;—" The child shall die an hundred years old." The affectionate grandparent vented his sorrows and consolations in some verses, among which were the following ;—

" And what if God their other children call,  
Second, third, fourth, suppose it should be all ?"

And it was even so. Within a fortnight's time, the three were carried away by the croup, which had proved so fatal to the first. The old man wept for these darlings, to whom he was attached with all the doating fondness that often marks that relationship. But while one of the

bodies was lying by the walls of the church waiting its interment, which was on a day of public thanksgiving, the aged sufferer preached "a most savory sermon," from the words of the bereaved and patient Job;—"The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" It is indeed easy to bless a giving God:—but ah, what grace it needs to be able with full contentment to bless a taking God!

Other children were afterwards given to this desolated family, of whom some lived, and attained to distinction. The first of these was so weakly an infant, that no one thought he could live. But his grandfather would have the child named for himself, saying;—"Call him John. I believe in God he shall live, and be a prophet too, and do God service in his generation." That child grew up before the Lord; and, for near half a century, was the faithful minister of Dorchester.

Mr. Wilson, in his numerous bereavements, could respond to the sentiment of one of the Greek fathers;—"Was Job miserable when he had lost all that God had given him? No, he had still that God who gave him all." He felt with one of his non-conforming brethren in England at that time, Rev. James Burdwood,

that "it is better to be preserved in the brine of affliction, than to rot in the honey of prosperity." As good Mr. Danforth said in the hearing of his father-in-law, at the obsequies of the very children of whom we have been speaking;—"The holy fire is not to be fetched out of such a flint as I am, without smiting."

Like most men in whom the habit of prayer is become intense and all-absorbing, he often felt great confidence that his supplication should be granted. The Sadducees of our times coolly call these things, when the event coincides with the expectation, "singular coincidences," "remarkably accidental!" But when we consider that the people of God, in the long continuing Bible times, often had such assurance of faith as to the success of their petitions; and when we consider that the Bible promises that God in all ages shall be the hearer of effectual, fervent and believing prayer; we ought not to be utterly faithless as to such matters. It is true, that great caution ought to be exercised in regard to a "particular faith," so deceitful is the heart, and so prone to receive its own wayward impulses for the movements and suggestions of the Spirit of God. Some of the best of men, like Cromwell's chaplain, and the eloquent Whitefield, have found themselves grossly mistaken in

some strong impressions to which they gave utterance. But let us learn to be cautious, without doubting the efficacy of prayer. Let us neither believe too much nor too little. It is a wise faith, says a sound divine, "which is neither over-froward, nor over-forward."

We have already incidentally touched upon several instances of Mr. Wilson's special gift of faith. Many others are recorded, of which some were only such prognostications as an aged man might draw from long observation of the ordinary course of God's providence. Thus observing a young man exceedingly kind and duteous to a poor and infirm mother, Mr. Wilson said ;—" I charge you to take notice of what I say. God will certainly bless that young man : John Hull shall grow rich, and live to be a useful servant of God." John Hull accordingly became a wealthy and most beneficent man, and died a respected magistrate. At another time Mr. Wilson was crossing a ferry. A young man in the boat spoke very insolently to his aged father. The faithful pastor, greatly troubled, rebuked the offender, saying ;—" Young man, I advise you to repent of your undutiful, rebellious carriage towards your father. I expect else to hear, that God has cut you off, before a twelvemonth come to an end !"

And sure enough, within that time, this unhappy breaker of the fifth commandment, straggling off to the southward, was taken and cut to pieces by the hostile Pequods. In these two cases, the man of God doubtless ventured his predictions by reason of his extensive observation of the fact, that filial piety is usually rewarded, and filial impiety commonly punished in the life that now is.

But there are other instances recorded of his foresight of events, which are not so easily accounted for. A few of them will be here rehearsed.

When Mr. Wilson was living at Sudbury in England, he and other worthy ministers were silenced by the Bishop of Norwich, as has already been related. The informer and prosecutor was a man by the name of Bird, who proved to be "a bird of ill omen." This person was taken sick, and attended by a celebrated physician, Dr. Duke of Colchester. The physician left his patient, as he thought, safely recovered: and calling upon Mr. Wilson, mentioned the occurrence. "Recovered!" exclaimed Mr. Wilson, "you are mistaken, Mr. Doctor: he is a dead man." The physician confidently replied;—"If ever I recovered a sick man in my life, that man is recovered." But Mr.

Wilson as confidently insisted;—"No, Mr. Doctor; he is a dead man. He shall not live. Mark my words!" Dr. Duke gave an incredulous smile: but as it happened, before he departed, the tidings came, that his patient was no more. We may imagine his emotions at hearing this news under such circumstances.

During his ministry at Sudbury, he seems to have had something approaching to the special gift of "discerning of spirits." He was administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when a man presented himself as a communicant, who for some time had been absent, and consorted with the Papists. Mr. Wilson publicly addressed him to the following effect. "Brother, you here present yourself, as if you would partake in the holy supper of the Lord. You cannot be ignorant of what you have done in withdrawing yourself from our communion, and how you have been much conversant for a considerable while with those whose religion is anti-christian. Though we cannot absolutely charge you with it, God, who is the Searcher of hearts, knows whether you have defiled yourself with their worship and way. If it be so, and you have not repented of it, by offering to partake at this time in the Holy Supper, you will eat and drink your own damnation. But if you



are clear, and have nothing of this wherewith to charge yourself, which you yourself know, then may you receive." Under this solemn adjuration, the man ventured to take the sacrament: but soon after, goaded by the stings of a remorseful conscience, ended his life as Judas did.

Mr. Wilson was once going from Hartford to Weathersfield. He was attended by a Mr. Adams, who was followed by the news, that his daughter was taken suddenly and dangerously ill. Mr. Wilson, raising his eyes to heaven, began to wrestle mightily in prayer for her life. "Lord," said he "wilt thou now take away thy servant's child, when thou seest he is attending on thy poor unworthy servant in most Christian kindness? Oh, do it not!" Then turning to the distressed parent, he said;—"Brother, I trust your daughter shall live. I believe in God she shall recover of this sickness." It was indeed granted to him according to his faith. The young woman was remarkably restored to health, and lived to become the mother of a worthy family.

About the year 1655, the Lord Protector Cromwell, tried to induce the New England settlers to migrate to the West Indies, and people the islands he had wrested from the Span-

iards. In this scheme he enlisted the excellent Daniel Gookin, the Major-General of Massachusetts: but without succeeding. There was, however, a company of the colonists very intent upon the project; and headed by a frantic enthusiast, Thomas Venner, a cooper of Salem. They called the chief magistrates and ministers to a sort of synod, to give advice about the undertaking. They counseled the company, with very weighty reasons to abandon the plan. Venner, however, with some of his crew, stood up and declared, that, notwithstanding this advice, they were certain that they were called of God to remove. Mr. Wilson arose, and sternly replied;—"Aye! do you come to ask counsel in so weighty a matter as this, and to seek help from an ordinance of God in respect to it? And yet were aforehand resolved, that you will go on? Well, you may go, if you will: but you shall not prosper. What! do you make a mock of God's ordinance?" They went on; and the enterprise resulted in a complete failure. Venner, who had spent some twenty years in New England, betook himself to London. He was one of those confused, but fiery fanatics, whom Carlyle oddly describes as a sooty kitchen-chimney all in a roaring blaze, fummy and flamy. Here he engaged with some

other frantic fifth-monarchy-men, in a plot to blow up Cromwell with gunpowder in Whitehall. But Oliver's vigilant police exploded the plot. For leading an insurrection for the same cause soon after the restoration of Charles II., poor Venner was hanged and quartered January the nineteenth, 1661. It required, indeed, but little of the prophetic spirit to foresee that such a person would come to an untimely and miserable end.

In Mr. Wilson's view, it augured ill to any one, to be an opposer of ecclesiastical order and discipline. It boded no good. He was once on a council called to settle some differences in a church. He observed a man who was extremely perverse, and a sore troubler of the peace of the church. Upon this Mr. Wilson expressed to the council his confidence, "that the jealousy of God would set a mark upon that man, and that the ordinary death of men should not befall him." Nor was it long after, that the hapless mortal fell into the power of the Indians, and expired under the hands of his savage tormentors.

In some of the affairs of his own family, Mr. Wilson's faith was powerfully exercised.

His daughter Mary appears to have been his youngest child, and the only one of his children

born in this country. He took great delight in her, and often called her "his New England token." She was seized with a malignant fever, which brought her so low, that every one despaired of her life, except her father. He summoned several ministers, and other Christian friends, to keep a sort of household fast-day, to pray for her life and soul. While listening to the prayers of Mr. Cotton on this occasion, he found his hopes raised to such a pitch, that he did not hesitate to declare;—"While I heard Mr. Cotton at prayer, I was *confident* the child should live!" And live she did, to a good age, eminent for her piety, and the mother of a numerous and distinguished family. She became the wife of Rev. Samuel Danforth, the faithful pastor of Roxbury.

Mr. Wilson's younger son, when he was a child, fell headlong, from a loft four stories high, into the street. He was taken up for dead, so battered and gored by his fall as to strike the beholders with horror. But the father's importunate prayers were wonderfully answered in the recovery of his child to life and sense. He too, having taken a new lease of his clay cottage, remained its tenant to a good old age: and finally departed from it at Medfield,

where he had been for forty years, the useful and honored pastor.

The elder son, Edmund, traveled in Italy, with a view to perfect himself in the study of medicine; his chosen calling, which was then cultivated with greater success in that country than anywhere else. While there, he was in continual peril from the popish Inquisition. The constant prayers of the distressed father were answered by a signal preservation. The young gentleman was seized by that most unhallowed "Holy Office." While he was under examination, a friend of the Chief Inquisitor suddenly arrived. Not having met this friend for many years, the Inquisitor was put into such good humor, as to invite his prisoner to dine with him. At the table they became very sociable. The Inquisitor here astonished the young Mr. Wilson, by calling him by his *true* name, instead of that which he had assumed for greater safety during his travels. The formidable man also showed himself well acquainted with the character of the father, and with the zeal and industry by which he served the heretics of New England. In this country, we know not what espionage is.

Released from this peril, Edmund Wilson was delivered from another of a different and

more formidable kind, and with a more noticeable interference of his faithful father's prayers. We are about to relate an event which is extraordinary and right marvelous: but which no studious, or philosophical, or devout mind will pronounce to be incredible in itself. While the young man was traveling in Italy, the anxious father dreamed that he was himself transported into that country, where he saw a fair tempter in his son's apartment, striving with a thousand blandishments to lure him from the path of virtue. Upon this the father was overheard by a person who occupied the same couch, making prayers to God full of agony, and then vehemently warning his tempted son to beware. And now for the "singular coincidence," as some will term it. A considerable time afterwards, the younger Mr. Wilson writes to his father, that, on a certain night, which was found to have been the same with that of the dream, he was situated even as he appeared to be in his parent's vision; and that his chastity would have been overcome by those caresses, had he not been suddenly and powerfully impressed with a remembrance of his father's prayers over him, and the warnings he had so often given. It was this that broke the snare of the fowler, and enabled him, like the youthful Joseph in

Egypt, to avoid the pit, from which "whoso pleaseth God shall escape," but "he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein."

It is a natural transition, to pass from Mr. Wilson's praying to his preaching. During his ministry in England, he had been much admired as an argumentative and logical preacher. But when he came to Boston, and was associated as pastor with such famous teachers as Cotton and Norton, he restricted himself chiefly to exhorting and admonishing the flock. He usually spoke in the later services, taking the same text which his colleague had previously handled in a doctrinal manner. He strove to put an edge upon the truth which had been delivered, and drive it home to the heart. Such was the pastoral unction with which he spake, that the celebrated Mr. Shepard would say;—"Methinks I hear an apostle, when I hear this man." The last time he preached the Boston Thursday lecture, which was then a great occasion, he was obliged to take the place of a preacher who had disappointed them. It was on the sixteenth of November, 1665. Mr. Wilson spoke extemporaneously on a text which had caught his attention in the chapter, Jeremiah 29, read at morning prayer in his family. The words were these;—"For thus saith the

Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, let not your prophets, and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you ; neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed." This discourse was taken in short hand, and printed about twelve years after his death. It is a most pathetic warning against the dreamers of his day, to wit, the Quakers, who were then causing much disturbance. Every line seems tremulous with the anxieties of the shepherd for his flock, while the howling of the wolves is rending his ears. "Go not after these enthusiasts," was his monitory cry, "for, whatever they may pretend, they will rob you of your ordinances, rob you of your souls, rob you of your God."

The last time Mr. Wilson spoke in the pulpit, was in that of Mr. Danforth, his son-in-law, at the weekly lecture in Roxbury. His text was gathered from the beginnings and endings of the last five Psalms, sometimes called, from this peculiarity, the Hallelujah Psalms. Having read them with great animation and spirit, he exclaimed ;—"If I were sure this were to be the last sermon that ever I should preach, and these the last words that ever I should speak, yet I would still say, Hallelujah, hallelujah, praise ye the Lord !" With him it was but a



natural transition from the Alleluias of earth to those of heaven.

Speaking of these weekly lectures, it may be well to mention, that the ministers with many of their people, attended not only their own, but those in the neighboring towns, which, for this reason, were held on different days of the week, either weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly, as the case might be. They were occasions of great resort. The diaries of Winthrop, Sewall, and other distinguished magistrates, make constant allusions to them. It was a godly sight, to see large companies of Christians, with their pastors at their head, flocking to the lecture in the neighbor-town, and communing of Christ by the way, till their hearts burned within them. Till the infirmities of old age prevented, Mr. Wilson delighted to attend this duty, through storm or shine, with unweariable constancy. He feared not the unventilated and unwarmed churches. One of his brethren said, in some home-spun elegiacs, containing more truth than poetry,

“ Christ’s word, it was his life ; Christ’s church his care :  
And so *great* with him his *least* brethren were,  
Nor heat, nor cold, not rain, or frost, or snow,  
Could hinder, but he’d to their lectures go.”

The fathers of New England manifested an incomparable zeal in the duties of private and

public devotion, family religion and government, and sanctification of the Sabbath. Shall that "golden age" ever return? "Oh Lord God, thou knowest!"

After what has been incidentally said, it is scarcely necessary to speak of Mr. Wilson's pastoral qualities. In him was verified the beautiful similitude of the fond and faithful shepherd, watching, defending, guiding and feeding his flock; a flock which knew his voice, loved his person, and followed his leading to "the pastures of tender grass" and to "the waters of quietness."\* When "grievous wolves" drew nigh, he failed not to assail them with the utmost boldness and vigor, assisted by his sagacious watch-dogs, the godly magistrates. As a pastor, he knew that he had a special charge from the Great Shepherd to "feed his lambs," which are in truth "the hope of the flock." He "gathered them with his arm, and carried them in his bosom." He strenuously insisted, that Christ's own mark should be put upon them, the sacred seal of baptism: and contended earnestly for their covenant-rights, and especially that they should be

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\* Psalm 23: 2, marginal readings.

“nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine.”

He cheerfully, and not ungraciously, stooped to the humblest means of rendering himself serviceable to the souls of men. And when, in his old age, the failure of his voice cut him off from public ministrations in his great congregation, he spent the last remainders of his strength in visiting his people from house to house. He still put to good use his eminent powers of conversation. To many he sent, as need required, warnings or consolations, by letters and copies of verses. To the last of his life, he never abated

“His care to guide his flock, and feed his lambs,  
By words, works, prayers, psalms, alms and anagrams.”

There was nothing imposing in his personal appearance. “His bodily presence was weak.” Johnson of Woburn, who knew him well and greatly revered him, speaks of him in this particular as “a weak, sorry man,” and casually alludes to his “thick utterance.” But these outward disadvantages were so compensated by spiritual succors, that his usefulness was not diminished. The grace of God often and wonderfully renders such slender reeds the firm and sufficient supports of his eternal temple.

During his ministry of thirty-seven years in

Boston, there were added to his church four hundred and ninety-nine males, and five hundred and forty-eight females. The total of one thousand and forty-seven gives an average of nearly thirty annual admissions for the whole period of his ministry. Taking into consideration his labors in the gospel for near twenty years in his native country, of which we only know that they were eminently successful in winning souls to Christ, we must regard him as a servant whom his Lord delighted to honor. We doubt not that he shines in the firmament of glory, as one who, by the grace of God, "turned many to righteousness."

The number of children baptized by him during his pastorship in Boston was, of males, nine hundred and thirty-one; and of females eight hundred and twenty-two. The total of one thousand seven hundred and fifty-three, gives an annual average of nearly fifty, thus enfolded in the embrace of the church, and cherished on her bosom. Of these, two-fifths, probably, were soon laid to sleep in their grass-covered cradles, and "went unto Jesus" in their infancy.

We have already alluded to his extreme generosity, ever emptying his purse to relieve the needy. Though this Boanerges was a son of

thunder, ready to flash fire from heaven upon the heads of gross errorists and seducers of the people, he had withal a heart of melting pity when he saw them struck down to the ground by the electric stroke. He testified with a dauntless zeal against all offences. Like the beloved apostle whose name he bore, he showed no quarter to false teachers. He could say;—“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.” And yet, like that same apostle, he had an overflowing tenderness of heart, full of love and endearment. “When malefactors had been openly scourged upon the just sentence of authority, he would presently send for them to his house: and having first expressed his bounty to them, he would then bestow upon them such gracious admonitions and exhortations, as made them to become, instead of desperate, remarkably penitent.” It may be questioned whether the boasted penitentiary system of our times is any very marked improvement upon his.

He is a proof of the mistake of those, who take their ideas wholly from Dr. South, and king Charles’ cavalier preachers. They look upon an ancient Puritan as resembling one of the old-fashioned box-stoves we used to have

in our churches some twenty years ago, with its stiff plates, its sharp angles, its grim and gloomy complexion, looking as if devoid of feeling itself, but ready to blister *you*, if you so much as touch it with your finger. Such notions of the Puritans may well be dissipated by one little incident. Mr. Wilson was once looking at a great muster of soldiers on the common. A gentleman said to him ;—“ Sir, I will tell you a great thing : here is a mighty body of people, and there is not seven of them all but what loves Mr. Wilson.” The good man pleasantly replied ;—“ Sir, I will tell you as good a thing as that : here is a mighty body of people, and there is not so much as *one* of them, but what Mr. Wilson loves.” Surely the secret of being loved, is to be loving ourselves.

For hospitality he was renowned. His house was the stranger’s home.

No less was he famed for his poetic gift, which the taste of his times held in high estimation. He was continually exercising this faculty ; sending his effusions in all directions, especially for the consolation of mourners. His verses were carried, like the handkerchiefs from Paul, for the healing of wounded souls. His fertile fancy could see an allegory in every event. In the year 1626, he published some verses at

London, upon the famous deliverances of the English nation. They were reprinted by his son at Boston, in 1680: but no copy of them is known to be in existence. Though Poesy may not mourn the loss, Piety may regard the privation with regret.

Another fancy which Mr. Wilson indulged was the making of anagrams on the names of all his friends and acquaintance.\* He made these "difficult trifles" both numerous and nimbly. And if they were not often ingenious or exact, they were always instructive. If he could not readily fetch good matter from some untractable name, he would force it, rather than lose the moral. The scion was often more fruit-

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\* An anagram is such a transposition of the letters which compose a person's name, as to form some significant word or phrase. Thus Mr. Wilson, hearing Increase Mather, then a young man, preach upon the glory of Christ, made on the spot an anagram of his name in Latin, *Crescentius Matherus*, which he turned into "En, Christus merces tua,"—"Lo! Christ is thy reward." A nearly perfect anagram, and quite characteristic of the man, was made on the name John Willson, often so spelled;—"Wish no one ill." On his hearse was the following, which shows the taste of the times, though Cotton Mather tells us, that "some thought the Muses looked very much dissatisfied" to see them there.

" JOHN WILSON.

*Anagram.*

John Wilson.

Oh! change it not; no sweeter name or thing,  
Throughout the world, within our ears shall ring!"

ful than the stock on which it was grafted. The best anagram made upon his own name was by Rev. Nathaniel Ward of Ipswich, alias Theodore de la Guard, alias "The Simple Cobbler of Agawam." This queer writer, alluding to the generous and unbounded hospitality of the Boston pastor, said of him ;—"The anagram of JOHN WILSON is, I PRAY YOU, COME IN, YOU ARE HEARTILY WELCOME !"

This good man's humility was the preservative of his graces. It was a fitting casket for those jewels, a casket as rare and precious as any thing it contained. Sometimes, indeed, his unfeigned modesty was excessive. He had once promised to preach for a neighboring minister : but afterwards came in sufficient good season to excuse himself. "Sir," said he, "I told you that I would preach for you, but it was rashly done of me ; I have on my knees begged the pardon of it from the Lord, that I should offer thus to deprive his people of your labors, which are so much better than any of mine can be. Wherefore, Sir, I now come seasonable to tell you, that I shall fail you." No persuasion could induce him to change this last purpose of his excessive humility. He may be the more easily pardoned for this fault, considering that it is so rarely committed.



From the same cause, he would never suffer his portrait to be taken. Though often and urgently importuned by his friends, their entreaties on this point were unavailing. He would still reply ;—"What ! such a poor vile creature as I am ! shall my picture be drawn ? I say, No ; it never shall." His honored kinsman, Edward Rawson, long the secretary of the Colony, once introduced the artist with all his apparatus ; but he could neither be surprised nor supplicated into yielding his consent. There is, it is true, a portrait of him, most venerable to behold, in the gallery of the Massachusetts Historical Society. But it was probably taken after his decease, as is often done. It has the rigid and cadaverous look, which, in such cases, the best skill of the limner cannot wholly avoid.

Cotton Mather, however, to whom we are greatly indebted for the materials wrought into this sketch, has well delineated Mr. Wilson's character, the features of which are more important than those of his countenance. His words may suitably close this imperfect delineation of an admirable man. "If the picture of this *good*, and therein *great*, man, were to be exactly given, great zeal, with great love, would be the two principal strokes, that, joined with orthodoxy, should make up his portraiture."

And now we drop the curtain over the acts and scenes in the life of this worthy. When the curtains of eternity shall be drawn aside, and the heavens rolled away as a scroll, at the signal of the last trumpet, in what blessedness shall we see him, robed in righteousness, crowned with light, and throned in glory forevermore!

LIFE OF JOHN NORTON.



# LIFE OF JOHN NORTON.

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## CHAPTER I.

Preliminary Remarks. Birth of John Norton. Education. Peter-House, Cambridge. Romish Priest. Teacher and curate at Storford. Conversion. Becomes a zealous Puritan. Church Reform. Mr. Norton declines a benefice and a fellowship. Becomes a Chaplain. Marries. Resolves to repair to America. With T. Shepard at Yarmouth. Adventure with Pursuivant. Embarkation. Perilous Storm. Driven back to Yarmouth. Mr. Norton resumes his voyage next year. Sails for Plymouth with Gov. Winslow. Another terrible Storm. Winter at Plymouth. Removal to Boston. Debate with French Friar. Mr. Norton's scholastic learning. John Cotton on the Schoolmen. Synod of 1637. Mr. Norton ordained at Ipswich. New England Prayer-meetings. Giles Firmin's account. Morality of the Colony. N. Ward's testimony. New England's first Fruits. Sir James Mackintosh. Reply to Apollonius. Hornbeck. Fuller. Fraternal Reproof. Letter to Dury. Union of Sects. Evils of division. New England divines the true "Reformed Catholics." Election Sermons. Synod of 1646. Boston Church refuses attendance. Persuaded by Mr. Norton. Cambridge Platform. Richard Baxter. Mr. Pyncheon's heretical book. Confuted by Mr. Norton. "Orthodox Evangelist." Scheme of Doctrine. Political influence of Calvinism. Macaulay. Bancroft. The benefits conferred by Calvinism in New England.

THERE are some dark lanterns, which burn, but shine not: men of illuminated minds, who yet shed no light upon the minds of others. And

some there are, like an ice-block glistening in the moon-beams, which shines indeed, but with the cold and cheerless rays of far-fetched and oft-reflected light. But he is the man of God, in whom the burning fire of love and zeal radiates the cheering light of truth and salvation. Such an one was that John, to whom Jesus bare witness, that he was both a burning and a shining light.

Happy is the church, in which, like the tabernacle of old, the fire that comes down from heaven kindles in the golden candlestick, and burns on the glowing altar. The flame of the branching lamp, fed by the oil of grace, shines as it was wont in heaven, revealing something of heaven itself. And the same hallowed fire, as it blazes on the altar, sheds abroad the fragrance of its incense breathing sweets; and, with its genial heat, warms into life and action the sacred passions of the soul.

He, of whom we are now to speak, was a luminary of this kind, and of no inferior magnitude. He burned with heavenly love, and shone with living light. "There was light in his fire, and fire in his light." He was "a bright, particular star," in Christ's right hand: and though now far down toward the horizon, yet in the time of his ascendant, there were many that rejoiced

in his light, and were guided by it, like the wise men, unto Christ. They hailed it as a star of hopeful guidance through the perilous night-voyage of life, and over its surging seas.

John Norton was born of respectable parentage, on the sixth of May, 1606, at Storford in Hartfordshire. In the spring-time of his life, he blossomed profusely with such flowers of the mind, as gave promise of rich fruit in his riper years. He early acquired the power of writing Latin with uncommon elegance, which proved to him in after years a very useful accomplishment.

At fourteen years of age, he was entered at Peter-House in the University of Cambridge. Here he remained, noted for his scholarship, till he had taken his first degree. Soon after graduating, in consequence of the utter ruin of his father's estate, he was forced to leave the University, and betake himself to active employment for the means of subsistence. During his abode at that seat of learning, his eminent talents drew the attention of a Romish priest, who, coveting such a prize, used his best endeavors to win him over to the papal cause. But the youth, though as yet a stranger to the grace of God, resisted the temptations of this seducer of souls.

Being naturally of a gay and light-hearted temper, he indulged in dancing, card-playing,

and other youthful vanities. The admonitions of a pious servant of his father, first led him to more serious thoughts, and induced him to follow "such things as are of good report."

On leaving the University, he at once, young as he was, became usher to the school and curate to the church in Storford, his native place. In that town a weekly lecture was maintained by a company of devout and able ministers, with several of whom he became acquainted. One of these was Rev. Jeremiah Dyke, rector of Epping; a divine of considerable note. Under the searching ministry of Mr. Dyke, the young curate was awakened to a deep sense of the sin and misery of his unregenerate state. The deep conviction of guilt he felt in his heart, till he was driven nearly to despair. Thus he mourned a while beneath the dark and boding cloud which lowered over his drooping soul. The Spirit of God, the only efficient Comforter of such mourners, disclosed to him the grace of Christ, and the consoling promises of the gospel. His rejoicing was equal to his sorrow. He now felt himself truly called of God to the work of the ministry; and felt it his duty, now that he was converted, to strengthen his brethren.

His thorough classical studies well fitted him for the study of theology, to which Lord Bacon,



himself no mean theologian, assigns the throne as queen of the sciences, who are her ministrant princesses. Addicting himself to divinity, which he cultivated with the life and affection of an experimental christian, he became an able minister, and rose to high repute. He wrote in a sententious and vigorous style. He was fond of pointed and figurative expressions. His sentences, though not polished in our fine modern fashion, were usually condensed and forcible. He delighted in the warm and living presentation of the Saviour ; and came up to his own admirable maxim, that " Christ evidently held forth is divine eloquence."

He was one of the old staunch Puritans, immovably grounded upon the doctrines of grace ; and with a conscience perfectly inflexible, when once set right. His dislike of Arminianism rose even to an antipathy, from the time when he was " touched by the sceptre of grace." His orthodoxy, and much more his unwillingness to submit to things which had been imposed on the church in derogation from the kingly power of Christ, kept Mr. Norton down. He could not expect to rise to the quiet enjoyment of any preferment, in an age when the lordly prelates used to say, that men of his stamp " must not be allowed to rise till the resurrection day."

The history of the Church, in the main, presents a succession of corruptions and reforms. The Jewish church, at intervals, was like gold seven times refined. But, during intervening ages, corruption dimmed the burnished metal, and destroyed its ductility by large alloys of base and drossy mineral. By his prophets, God promised his people a thorough purification; as when he said ;—" I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin." Refining is a work which may diminish the quantity, but it much more increases the value of what remains. All that is lost by it proves to be clear gain. By the removal of what is taken away, the precious residue is restored to its real worth, utility and beauty. Happy is the Church when thus " purely purged " and reduced to her primitive state and order. Then is the promise fulfilled ;—" I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning : afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, The faithful city."

The Christian Church furnishes a striking parallel to that of the Mosaic. Here too, the golden age of pristine purity was short. The rich mass of virgin ore soon suffered repeated alloys of the soft tin of human additions, and be-

gan to be cankered with the eating rust of corruption. At last, the pious beholder was forced to cry out with the prophet bewailing the captive daughter of Zion;—"How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" Then, in the times of reformation, God purified his Church in the hot crucible of divine judgments and fiery trials. And so the word came to pass;—"He is like a refiner's fire;—and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

By his royal prerogative, God recalled the Church into his mint, and purged the debased and adulterated currency; and then re-coined and re-issued it, pure and bright, and stamped afresh with his own sovereign image and superscription.

But this grand reformation was not wrought out without the use of the fire and the hammer. It was in the height of this terrible, but necessary operation, that our puritan fathers lived and acted. As Mr. Norton said;—"The best of the servants of God have lived in the worst of times." It was in the midst of such trials and excitements, that his character was formed, and his religious principles developed. He there attained

to that conscientious integrity, which no worldly interest could warp.

His uncle would have presented him to a valuable benefice, which he was obliged to decline in consequence of his scruples against the ceremonies which were enforced to the infringement of the royal rights of Jesus in his kingdom. He was also earnestly solicited by Dr. Sibbs, Master of Katharine Hall in Cambridge, to accept a fellowship in the University, for which his abilities eminently fitted him. This too, he declined, because the office was hampered with conditions which he conscientiously held to be unlawful in the sight of God.

Thus precluded from other employment, he contented himself with the duties of chaplain in the house of Sir William Masham, at High Lever, in Essex. Here he resided for some time, waiting for a more public opportunity to exercise his ministry, preaching as he had opportunity, and rapidly improving all his qualifications for so great a work. Though highly esteemed for his abilities, he was, after a time, utterly silenced for his non-conformity.

Convinced, at last, that he could not hope to worship God according to the decisions of his enlightened conscience, in his native land, he turned his thoughts to America, and to "the

church in the wilderness." Mr. Norton was then recently married to a lady of handsome property, and of estimable character, and who cheerfully accompanied him to what was the "Far West" of those times: a region so remote, that it was fancied the last conflict with anti-christ must be decided there.

They accordingly repaired to Yarmouth, about the middle of September, 1634, to take ship for New England. Here they were joined by that famed servant of God, Rev. Thomas Shephard, afterwards pastor of Cambridge, where Harvard College was located for the express purpose of placing the scholars under the influence of his powerful ministry. While these clergymen tarried at Yarmouth awaiting the sailing of their vessel, which was near two months, a few pious people privately resorted to their preaching. This was matter of no small peril, as vigilant measures were adopted for their apprehension. Mr. Shepard was in great danger, as the animosity of archbishop Laud was excited to special fury against him.

The chief pursuivant made an arrangement with a boy, some sixteen years of age, who lived in the house where these ministers were secreted, and to which they had been tracked. The youth, on the promise of a considerable

sum of money, agreed to open the door for these emissaries at a certain hour of the night. After this plot was laid, the unhappy traitor was much affected by hearing the solemn and religious conversation of Mr. Shepard, and began to repent. His pensive and troubled appearance roused his master to question him for the cause; and, after much urging, he made full confession of his intended treachery. The good man of the house obtained the aid of some trusty friends, who conveyed the ministers away by a retired lane, and carried them in a boat to another hiding-place. The officers came at the time appointed: but, on lifting the latch, were thoroughly vexed to find the door firmly closed against them. In their irritation, they exceeded their authority by attempting a forcible entry. They had thrust their staves under the door, and were in the act of lifting it from the hinges, when they were caught in this house-breaking business by some friends of the owner who had employed them for the purpose. The ungentle handling they received, added to the mortification of the officers at losing the prey of whose capture they felt so sure. This was one of the little comic scenes which sometimes relieved the many and melancholy acts of the tragedy of persecution. The incident may serve a more

important purpose, as illustrating the power of a holy conversation to awaken the conscience of the wicked, as in the case of that misguided youth. It also teaches a lesson of trust in the providential protection of God over his suffering servants, who are often snatched from the very jaws of the lion.

It was late in that year, 1634, when these good men succeeded at last in setting sail from Harwich, in the *Great Hope*, a ship of four hundred tons, commanded by an able captain, of the name of *Girling*. Within a few hours from their setting out, they met with a succession of disasters. At night, they came to anchor in a dangerous place. In the morning, the wind became violent, and drove the ship toward the sands near Harwich harbor, till she grated heavily upon them. But she still drifted along, in the direction of Yarmouth. At this juncture one of the seamen was washed overboard. It was sometime before any effort could be made to save him : but after he had been about an hour in the sea, though unable to swim, he was picked up by three of the men in a boat, before life was extinct.

The vessel came to anchor in Yarmouth road. The next morning, there arose a terrible westerly gale of such devastating fury, that the day

was long afterwards known as "the windy Saturday." Many vessels, some in full view, perished with their crews. The Great Hope lost all her upper works and her anchors, and drifted till she was but little more than a cable's length from the sands. The master cried out that they were all dead men: and the whole ship's company betook themselves to prayer. Thousands of people on shore looked with unavailing pity upon their distress, as they were still drifting toward the raging breakers, where the staunchest ship must soon "melt amid the yeast of waves." Some compassionate spectators offered large sums of money to any that would go to help them: but none durst venture. An officer of rank, on the walls of Yarmouth castle, scoffingly remarked, that he felt sorry for a poor collier in the road: "but," said he, "as for the Puritans in the other ship, I am not concerned; their faith will save *them*." This unbelieving scoff turned out very differently from the expectation of him who uttered it.

Among the passengers, there was one Mr. Cork, an intemperate man, who was no sailor, though he had often been to sea. He had been taken with the whim of going to New England, to view the country. He saw what needed to be done, and called upon the captain, who was



stupified with consternation, to cut away his masts. The captain being unwilling, Cork procured hatchets, called upon the master to be a man, and encouraged the desponding seamen, till they cut the mainmast away, just as they had given themselves up for lost. They had one small anchor left, which they dropped: but the ship still drifted toward the spot where they expected shortly to be swallowed up by the waves. The trembling passengers saw the breakers tumbling in their might, and roaring for their prey, which the yelling winds were forcing resistlessly toward them. The victims were no strangers to the power of prayer, which is able to save from death; or, what is better still, to prepare for death the children of the resurrection. Mr. Shepard assembled the mariners upon deck, and Mr. Norton gathered the passengers, two hundred in number, below. They then applied themselves to fervent prayer, and found that their hope in God was the "best bower,"—an anchor both sure and steadfast. The wind speedily abated: and the ship ceased drifting just at the last extremity. They found that their last cable had not parted, as they supposed it had; but only dragged the anchor, which was not quite heavy enough to break it, along the sandy bottom. The vessel rode out

the storm, though still very rough, and though the cable was let out so far, that it was held only by a small rope. One of the company observed this, and remarked;—"That thread we hang by will save us!" And so indeed it did. The passengers, astonished at their deliverance, felt that if ever the Lord brought them to shore again, they would live like men who had risen from the dead. The next morning, being the Sabbath, they were conveyed to shore by boats from the town. How applicable to them were the words of the Psalm;—"They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses: he maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still."

The voyage of the ministers was thus defeated for that season. Mr. Norton spent the winter with his friends in Essex county; where his spiritual father, the excellent Mr. Dyke, joyfully received him as one restored from another world, rejoicing that his friend had so well sustained the trial of his faith.

Undaunted by his brief, but rough experience of the dangers of the sea, Mr. Norton was ready to resume his voyage the next year. Governor Winslow was then in England as agent for the Plymouth Colony. He was also authorized to procure a teaching elder, to be colleague with

Rev. Ralph Smith, pastor of the church. The worthy governor was happy to obtain for that office a man so able as Mr. Norton. They were fellow-voyagers to this country. At their departure, an aged minister said ;—" I believe there is not more grace and holiness left in all Essex, than what Mr. Norton has carried away with him."

Unavoidable delays made it late in 1635, before they began the voyage. They came upon our coast in the month of October. Here arose another terrific tempest, which raged for eight and forty hours with such force, that the ship must have been knocked to pieces had she not been built with more than usual strength. As it was, " they used helps, undergirding the ship" with the cable, to assist in holding her battered sides together. It would seem as though " the prince of the power of the air" raised all his storms, to prevent these men of God from proceeding on an enterprise which was destined to endamage so greatly his kingdom of darkness. They then saw " the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." Among other marvels, they shipped a sea, which washed several of the sailors overboard, and then threw them in again. Such an event, though rare, has not been without other, and well authenticated examples.

Ten days afterwards, the ship came safe into Plymouth harbor.

There Mr. Norton remained, and preached through the winter. The church very courteously and importunately urged him, with large offers, to settle among them. Mr. Smith also resigned in his favor. But all would not do. He alledged, that "his spirit could not close with them:" though to his dying day, as Morton's Memorial tells us, "he retained a good affection unto them." The state of affairs in the Massachusetts colony, was more congenial to his feelings: and he removed to that jurisdiction in 1636, being then thirty years of age.

He speedily received a call to be teacher of the church at Ipswich. Such things were not hastily concluded in those days; and he remained sometime in Boston, deliberating the matter. The neighboring ministers entertained the highest opinion of him: and some that were noted men, and older than he was, consulted him in their most important affairs, as a sort of oracle of wisdom. The magistrates also soon began to avail themselves of his great abilities in conducting some arduous matters. Among other things, he held a public debate with a French friar, who had roamed into these anti-Roman parts. The Frenchman relied mainly

on the old scholastic logic : but he found in the young Puritan a ripe scholar, and one thoroughly versed in all the chief writings of the schoolmen. The friar retreated, surprised at his own discomfiture in this trial of skill at dialectic fencing.

Mr. Norton, Mr. Stone, and others of our old divines, though they despised the doctrines of the schoolmen, had a high opinion of their mode of arguing, on account of its brevity and nice distinctions. John Cotton, in an introductory epistle to one of Mr. Norton's volumes, thus explains the pre-eminence of the schoolmen, which lay, he says, "not in the light of divine grace, whereof most of them were wholly destitute; nor in their skill in tongues and polite literature, wherein they were barbarians; nor in their deeper insight into the holy Scriptures, in which they were far less conversant than in Peter Lombard and Aristotle: but in their rational disputes, with distinct solidity and succinct brevity." Mr. Norton was a match for any of them in their own craft :

" For he a rope of sand could twist,  
As tough as learned Sorbonist."

His controversial skill was often called into exercise : for in those days, as now, every thing

had to be discussed. He was an influential member of the synod of 1637, which brought the antinomian war to a close in a decisive pitched battle, so that no severe conflict with that heresy has since been waged in New England. Antinomianism was so effectually killed, that it has never lifted up its head, not even in this general resurrection of dead, buried and long-forgotten errors, which is now taking place around us.

It was not till the 20th of October, 1638, that Mr. Norton was ordained as teacher of the church in Ipswich, which was his first parochial charge. On the same day, the Rev. Nathaniel Rogers was ordained as pastor of that church. Mr. Rogers himself preached the ordination sermon, a much admired discourse from the text;—"Who is sufficient for these things?" That church was then renowned for its many enlightened Christians and distinguished members; and felt itself happy in its celebrated ministers, who, "with different gifts, but united hearts," labored for them in the Lord. Mr. Norton was followed to that place by a number of families which came all the way from England on purpose to enjoy his ministry.

We may here take occasion to remark, that for the first half century, the Massachusetts

churches were not only served by a very learned, orthodox and zealous ministry: but that the private brethren were exceedingly active in the duties of social piety. The country was full of their meetings for prayer and religious conference, and continued to be so for near a century. In these, the younger candidates for the ministry, made trial of their gifts, and accustomed themselves to speak to the edification of the church. Questions relating to practical religion were there debated. A very usual exercise in these small assemblies, was the repeating of the sermons last preached by the pastors, and which were taken down for the purpose in short hand, an art more common then than now. This repetition of the sermons gave occasion to profitable comparisons of the views of different hearers, as each stated how his mind was affected by the truths delivered from the pulpit. Thus was suggested an abundance of fruitful remarks, and the instructions of the sanctuary were more deeply and indelibly impressed. In these social meetings whole days were sometimes spent in fasting and prayer; especially if any in the neighborhood were in affliction, or the administration of the Lord's Supper were at hand. Those old Christians were nobly skilled in the holy work of

prayer. In a book printed at London in 1681, Giles Firmin, makes the following statement of what he had often seen in this country;—“Plain mechanics have I known, well catechized and humble Christians, excellent in practical piety. They kept their station, and did not aspire to be preachers: but for gifts of prayer, few clergymen must come near them. I have known some of them, when they did keep their fasts,—as they did often,—they divided the work of prayer. The first begun with confession; the second went on with petition for themselves; the third with petition for Church and kingdom; the fourth with thanksgiving. Every one kept his own part, and did not meddle with another part. Such excellent matter, so compacted without tautologies, each of them for a good time, about an hour, if not more a piece; to the wondering of those which joined with them. Here was no reading of liturgies. These were old Jacob’s sons: they could wrestle and prevail with God.” From such witnesses as these, it is evident, that the professing Christians of those times eminently prospered in religion, and grew strong in grace under the laborious ministrations of their able teachers.

The tone of public morality was high. The



Rev. Nathaniel Ward was Mr. Norton's predecessor at Ipswich. In a book once very celebrated, Mr. Ward remarks;—"I thank God I have lived in a colony of many thousand English almost these twelve years, and am held a very sociable man. Yet I may considerably say, I never heard but one oath sworn, nor never saw one man drunk, nor never heard of three women guilty of adultery, in all that time, that I can call to mind." In a document of those times, it is said of New England;—"As Ireland will not brook venomous beasts, so will not that land vile persons, and loose livers."\* "To God's praise be it spoken, one may live there from year to year, and not see a drunkard, hear an oath, or meet a beggar."† Though we live in sadly degenerate times, and the ancient simplicity and purity of manners are much impaired, the traces of better days are still distinctly visible. In a recorded conversation of Sir James Mackintosh, that distinguished and philosophical historian is reported to have said;—"The remarkable private morality of the New England States is worth attention, especially when taken in connection with the very moral char-

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\* New England's First Fruits. Lond. 1643. p. 26.

† *Ib.* p. 23.

acter of the poorer people in Scotland, Holland and Switzerland. It is rather singular that all these countries, which are more moral than any others, are precisely those in which *Calvinism* is predominant." Being told, upon this, that Boston and Cambridge, for it was some thirty years ago when this conversation took place, had in a great measure abandoned Calvinism, Sir James replied;—"I am rather surprised at that: but the same thing has happened in other places similarly situated. Boston, Geneva and Edinburgh might once have been considered as the three high places of Calvinism; and the enemy is now, it seems, in full possession of them all. The fact appears to be a consequence of the principle of reaction, which operates as universally in the moral as in the physical world."\* Since then, there has been another "reaction" back again, which is still going on. The much commended Orthodox morality cannot long survive the destruction of the Orthodox truth and piety. Unless the tree shall revive, the fruits must disappear.

The General Court, fully sensible that the labors of the ministers diminished the cares of government, by cherishing good order in the

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\* Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, &c. by Alexander H. Everett. p. 301.

community, encouraged the clergy to the extent of their means. Among numerous grants of the kind, we find two hundred acres of land voted to Mr. Norton, on the fifth of November, 1639.

Besides his exertions for the benefit of his flock, he made himself useful to the religious community at large. He performed one special service to the cause. In 1644, William Apollonius, pastor of Middleburg, in Holland, at the request of the divines of Zealand, sent a series of questions, relating to church government, to the Congregational ministers of London. The London divines referred the matter to those of New England: and these last unanimously devolved the duty of replying upon Mr. Norton. With that modesty and humility which he never lost, he for some time declined the duty. His reply, published the next year, was elegantly written in Latin, and is said to have been the first book prepared in that language in this country. It has an elaborate Introductory Epistle, signed "Johannes Cotton, in Ecclesia Bostoniensi Presbyter Docens." It is a valuable exposition of the church-practice of our fathers: and gave great satisfaction to those at whose instance it was drawn up. Dr. Hornbeck, a learned professor of divinity at Leyden, though

strongly opposed to it, as being a strict Presbyterian himself, warmly commended the work for the singular acumen joined with ingenuous candor, which it manifested. In his Church History of Great Britain, Dr. Fuller, one of the best divines of the Church of England, remarks;—"Of all the authors I have perused concerning these opinions, none to me was more informative than Mr. John Norton, one of no less learning than modesty, in his answer to Apollonius."

While Mr. Norton was deeply engaged in the preparation of this important work, an incident occurred which illustrates the times and the men. Some of his critical hearers imagined that his absorption in that study prevented him from bestowing that careful preparation upon his pulpit discourses, to which he had accustomed them. Upon this, one of them went, not directly to his pastor, but to Rev. Samuel Whiting, the excellent minister of Lynn. This gentleman took occasion, in a very kind and respectful manner, to say to Mr. Norton;—"Sir, there are some of your people, who think that the services wherein you are engaged for all the churches, do something take off from the edge of the ministry wherewith you should serve your own particular church. I would intreat you, Sir, to

consider this matter; for our greatest work is, to preach the gospel unto that flock whereof we are overseers." This admonition, precise and formal as it may seem to us, had the desired effect. It was as kindly taken, as it was well meant: so true is the wisdom of Solomon, which saith;—"Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee."

Some years afterwards, Mr. Norton drafted a letter in Latin, signed by himself and forty-three other ministers, and addressed to John Dury. This Dury was a visionary man, who spoiled an immense number of reams of paper, in writing and printing upon the subject of a general pacification and union of all Protestant churches. In one of his prefaces, he says;—"I think myself bound to declare this, That I am under a vow to prosecute upon all occasions, as long as I live, the ways of evangelical reconciliation among Protestants." Many were his votive offerings at the shrine of peace. There have been many such pleasant schemers, and there are some such now, who seem to have taken the hint of their plan of union from Aaron's rod, which swallowed up all its competitors. What a beautiful union it would make, if all other denominations would only be good natured enough to come over to the be-

nevolent writer's sect! Some have even started new sects for this purpose, which, like so many cuttings of a polypus, have each become complete organizations, and increased, rather than diminished, the great sectarian swarm. Dury carried on an immense correspondence to promote his project: and officiated as clergyman in several denominations successively. He finally fulfilled his vow oddly enough by dying, so they say, a Quaker!

The multiplicity and distraction of sects has long been regarded as a sore evil. Mr. Norton, in his "Life of Mr. John Cotton," makes the following striking remarks;—"The present vexation of consciences, and of the civil estates, with uncertainty and manifold heresy in matter of faith, hath no small tendency to bring back the Infallible Chair. People will accept of a quiet harbor, though upon hard conditions, rather than be afflicted with continual tossings upon stormy seas. It is natural to man to covet any quiet land, rather than to dwell with the terror of a continual earthquake." These words were prophetic. They indicate the motives which afterwards made Papists of Dryden and many others. In our times, many have taken shelter from the contending winds of faction in the solemn cave of prelacy: but alas for them!

they have found it to be the cave of Eolus, where not the wind-god himself hath power to bind his rebellious subjects. In running from the rain, men have stumbled into the ditch. While human nature remains what it has been ever since the fall, party spirit will stalk through the sanctuaries: and like a demon, whom no exorcist hath power to cast out, will haunt the cathedral, no less than the chapel.

In the Latin epistle to Dury, which Mr. Norton drew up in 1645, for himself and the other angels of the churches in Massachusetts, they utterly disclaim the charge of being moved by a schismatical temper.\* “We must ingenuously confess,” say they, “that then, when all things were quiet, and no threatening signs of war appeared, seeing we could not be permitted by the bishops at that time prevailing, to perform the office of the ministry in public, nor yet to enjoy the ordinances without subscription and conformity, as they were wont to speak, nor without the mixture of human inventions with divine institutions, we chose rather to depart into the re-

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\* A copy of this document, in the handwriting of Rev. John Wilson, and bearing the *autographs* of the subscribing ministers, is in the possession of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester. This proof that those good men were what the puritan Perkins called REFORMED CATHOLICS, is a curious and precious relic.

mote and unknown coasts of the earth, for the sake of a purer worship, than to lie down under the hierarchy in the abundance of all things, but with the prejudice of conscience. But that in flying from our country, we should renounce communion with such churches as profess the gospel, is a thing which we confidently and solemnly deny. Certainly, so far as concerns ourselves, in whatever assemblies among us the whole company of them that profess the gospel, the fundamentals of doctrine, and essentials of order are maintained, although in many niceties of controversial divinity they are at less agreement with us, we do hereby make it manifest, (which yet we would always have understood, so as the least part of truth, according to the nature of that reverence which ought exactly to be yielded thereunto, may be preserved,) that we do acknowledge them, all and every one, for brethren: and that we shall be ready to give unto them the right hands of fellowship in the Lord, if in other things they be peaceable, and walk orderly." This public act and testimony is sufficient to evince that the principles of our fathers in the matter of communion were truly Christian and catholic.

Mr. Norton preached the annual election sermon in 1645, before the Great and General



Court. This ancient custom is still maintained among us. Very many of the early discourses preached upon this occasion are extant in printed form, and furnish a lively picture of the times. Many of them are noble patterns of ministerial boldness, fidelity and zeal.

Mr. Norton took a leading part in the celebrated synod which met at Cambridge in 1646, and drew up the Platform of Church discipline. It was at first proposed that this synod should be summoned by order of the civil authority. But great objection being made, lest this might lead to some encroachment on the liberty of the churches, the General Court refrained from a positive order, and merely passed a vote *recommending* to the churches to send their pastors and delegates. Even this modification would not appease the jealous scruples of some of the churches; and that of Boston especially refused to send a delegation. As it was very important that a church so influential should not stand aloof from the undertaking, strenuous efforts were made to overcome the reluctance of its members, till a majority of four-sevenths was obtained in favor of the measure. As that church had always before this acted unanimously in matters of consequence, there was an un-

willingness to proceed against the wishes of so large a minority.

In this emergency Mr. Norton came forward and united the breach. Coming over from Cambridge with the whole synod, he preached the Thursday lecture in the Boston Church from Exodus 4 : 27, where the history tells how Aaron met Moses in the mount of God, and kissed him. He showed, that the ecclesiastical power should meet the reasonable requirements of the civil authority ; and the ministry co-operate with the magistracy, when called upon by the latter, in deliberating for the public peace and welfare. He explained, that the synod had no power, except to consult, declare and advise : and that it claimed no judicial or coercive authority. Mr. Norton's suggestions were so well taken, that the dispute was ended ; and Boston Church sent her pastor, and teacher, and three lay delegates to the synod. When the result of the synod was declared, Mr. Norton used all his influence to procure its acceptance with the churches. The Platform having thus received a full ecclesiastical sanction, was then presented to the General Court, which gave it what further sanction the civil government had to bestow. The Cambridge Platform was highly approved by many of the most eminent divines

across the water. Richard Baxter, one of the holiest and most studious men that ever lived, but a few months before his death, wrote to Dr. Increase Mather;—"I am as zealous a lover of the New England Churches as any man, according to Mr. Norton's and the synod's model."

In 1646, the colony stood in need of agents to attend to its affairs in England: and Governor Winthrop and Mr. Norton were selected for that business. But the matter was dropped from the fear, that if they once got to England, it being the time of the civil wars, these eminent men would be detained there in public employments, to the great detriment of the colony which could not spare them. It was an honorable appointment, showing the great trust reposed in them: and the recall of it was still more honorable to them, as showing the fear that was felt of losing them.

A Mr. Pyncheon had written a dialogue, which went against the doctrine of the vicarious sufferings of Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness for the justification of the believer. The General Court was zealous for the orthodoxy they sincerely loved, and fearful that Christians abroad might be led by Pyncheon's book to doubt whether their New England brethren were sound in the faith. The Court

called upon Mr. Norton, as "a ready scribe," on such occasions, to confute the objectionable book. He accordingly prepared a confutation of it, in which he discusses Christ's "active and passive righteousness, and the imputation thereof." This reply was presented to the Court in December, 1651, when it was read to the offender, who appears not to have yielded his objectionable opinions. However the work was sent to England, and printed at the colony's charge. It contains a dedication to the General Court of the Massachusetts Colony, which says ;—" You have been among the first of magistrates which have approved and practiced the Congregational way: no small favor from God, nor honor to yourselves with the generation to come."

Mr. Norton's last work of importance was published at London, in 1654, under the title of "The Orthodox Evangelist." It is a comprehensive system of divinity, written in the taste of the times, full of careful divisions, removing objections, abounding in texts of Scripture, and arraying a host of theological authorities. His style is that of a man who thinks nothing about it, in his anxiety to make each link in the chain of his argument as strong as possible. No time was spent in filing and polishing. As a soldier of the cross, he was not decked like a "carpet-

knight," to make a figure in a pompous procession, or a courtly levee. As his friend, John Cotton said of him, he arrayed himself not for the parade ground, but for the battle-field. "There was a noble negligence in his style; for his great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words."

The doctrines which Mr. Norton chiefly taught from the pulpit, are systematically presented in his *Orthodox Evangelist*. In this work, he treats of the being and perfections of the Triune God, with all imaginable nicety and subtlety of distinction and inference. The divine and human agency, and the doctrine of decrees, are discussed with great ability; and all conceivable objections are stated and removed. It is an abbreviation, though long enough, of the whole controversy relative to these points. The reader can hardly fail to be struck with the reflection, that there has been but little progress in this "high argument;" wherein almost every thing, which can now be said upon either side, was anticipated so long ago. Mr. Norton maintains, that the will of God is the cause of all other causes. "Second causes are the effects of the First Cause. The will of man is an instrument disposed, and determined unto its action, according to the decree of God. The

rod is not more subordinate unto the hand of the smiter, nor the staff to the hand of the mover, nor the axe to the hand of the hewer, nor the saw to him that shaketh it, Isa. 10 : 5, 15, nor any other passive instrument to the hand of a free agent ; than the will of man is unto the decree of God." "Man, even in violating God's command, fulfilleth God's decree." "Though sin, as sin, be evil, yet the being of sin for a better end is good." Though sin be voluntary, yet God controls and overrules it for good. "The water whilst it runneth its own course, serveth the end of the artificer in turning about the mill according to his intent. An illegitimate child is a creature of God ; but its illegitimacy is the crime of its parents." Mr. Norton earnestly contends, that, though God has decreed the existence of sin, he is not the author of sin. The idea that God is the author of sin, is spoken of as "a blasphemy, which the devil has spit out at the divine providential purposes." "The liberty of man, though subordinate to God's decree, freely willeth the very same thing, and no other, than that which it would have willed, if (upon a supposition of that impossibility,) there had been no decree. Man acts as freely, as if there were no decree ; yet as infallibly, as if there were no liberty. Liberty is the effect of the decree, so far is the

decree from being a prejudice to liberty." Reprobates freely commit such a measure of sin, as shall fit them for the intended measure of wrath: and yet will certainly commit neither more nor less. "God determineth the will suitably and agreeably to its own nature; that is, freely. He so determineth the will, as that the will determineth itself. The efficiency of God offereth no violence, nor changeth the nature of things; but governeth them according to their own natures." "Necessity doth not prejudice liberty. God is necessarily good, yet freely good." Man is a free agent, having a real, though subordinate, efficiency.

In the book we are reviewing, it is taught, that all mankind partook in Adam's sin, which is justly imputed to them; and that original sin is a hereditary and habitual opposition of the heart to the divine will; that God, of his wisdom and mercy, hath elected whom he would to eternal life; that these are converted by the Spirit of God; that the whole guilt of their sins is imputed to Christ, and his perfect obedience is imputed to them, and is received by faith alone; that the faith of the elect is the effect of irresistible grace; and that the soul is passive in the first reception of faith, because faith is first a faculty, and then an act.

Such are some of the positions sustained in the Orthodox Evangelist, with a vast variety of reasons, and illustrations, and authorities, and Scriptures. All objections are diligently sought for and confuted ; and the whole is done with a marvelous method and brevity. The volume ends with some striking speculations upon the state of the blessed after death, and after the resurrection. It closes in the following strain : “ Add this consideration of the blessedness of our souls, which immediately follows upon our dissolution from the body, and admits no delay. The soul is no sooner out of this earthly, than it is in its heavenly house. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, before the eyes of the dead body are closed, the eye of the living soul shall behold the face of Jesus Christ. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

Such was the system of doctrine with which the puritan preachers fed the souls of their people. With this “strong meat,” they were raised up to that elevated stature of piety, and giant strength of character, which their great work required. The diluted diet of a laxer theology would have so dwarfed and enfeebled their minds, as to spoil them for their destiny, and marred or prevented its fulfillment.

The moral and political influence of Calvin-



ism is one of the most interesting and instructive studies among all the lessons of history. It has ever been remarkable for generating a high tone of principle, and a spirit of firmness and independence. Of its disciples in the seventeenth century, it is said by the most eloquent of modern essayists ;—"The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged,—on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest,—who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes had been ordained on his account. For his sake, empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake, the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been rescued by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him, that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had arisen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings

of her expiring Lord!"\* A character bred and trained under the influence of the doctrines of personal election and redemption, must reach to something of that sublimity which tramples on earthly crowns and distinctions; and with still higher flight, attains to a glorious prostration at the feet of God.

As a sort of pendent, or parallel to the splendid effusion of Macaulay, we may present the sketch of a living American writer. "Every individual who had experienced the raptures of devotion, every believer, who, in his moments of ecstasy, had felt the assurance of the favor of God, was in his own eyes a consecrated person. For him the wonderful counsels of the Almighty had chosen a Saviour; for him the laws of nature had been suspended and controlled, the heavens had opened, earth had quaked, the sun had veiled his face, and Christ had died and had risen again; for him prophets and apostles had revealed to the world the oracles and the will of God. Viewing himself as an object of the divine favor, and in this connection disclaiming all merit, he prostrated himself in the dust before heaven: looking out upon mankind, how could he but respect himself, whom God

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\* Edinburgh Review. No. LXXXIV. 1825.

had chosen and redeemed. He cherished hope ; he possessed faith ; as he walked the earth, his heart was in the skies. Angels hovered round his path, charged to minister to his soul ; spirits of darkness leagued together to tempt him from his allegiance. His burning piety could use no liturgy ; his penitence could reveal his transgressions to no confessor. He knew no superior in sanctity. He could as little become the slave of a priestcraft as of a despot.”\* Such is the natural tendency of truth. “Election implies faith, and faith freedom.” Says the same able writer ;—“The political character of Calvinism, which, with one consent and with instinctive judgment, the monarchs of that day feared as republicanism, and which Charles II. declared a religion unfit for a gentleman, is expressed by a single word—*predestination*. Did a proud aristocracy trace its lineage through generations of a high-born ancestry ?—the republican reformer, with a loftier pride, invaded the invisible world, and from the book of life brought down the record of the noblest enfranchisement, decreed from all eternity by the King of kings. His few converts defied the opposing world as a world of reprobates, whom God had despised

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\* Bancroft, Hist. U. S. I. 461,2.

and rejected. To them the senses were a totally depraved foundation, on which neither truth nor goodness could rest. They went forth in confidence that men who were kindling with the same exalted instincts, would listen to their voice, and be effectually "called into the brunt of the battle" by their side. And standing serenely amidst the crumbling fabrics of centuries of superstitions, they had faith in one another."\*

We have here the testimony of two eminent scholars, richly endowed with the historical spirit, and with the rare gift of discerning the operation of moral causes. Neither of them can be charged with being biassed by an undue partiality to Calvinism. The leaning of their minds is rather in the opposite direction. It is not from experience, that they describe the workings of the ancient orthodoxy upon the souls of its adherents. But as keen-eyed investigators, they have looked upon the results it wrought out: and they have traced its noble and lasting consequences in their lofty strains of eulogy. We see in what mould of doctrine those minds were cast, whose iron strength subdued kingdoms and wildernesses, triumphed

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\* Bancroft. II. 462,3.

over native infirmity, shattered the chains of darkness in every link, and proclaimed the jubilee of freedom to the children of God. The Pauline theology bred that courageous recklessness which broke in pieces the enslaving images of civil and ecclesiastical oppression, before which servility had crouched, and superstition had groveled, for ages. No matter for the costly carvings of the seats of irresponsible and absolute power: no matter how gorgeous the stainings which glazed the oriel windows of the fanes, where priestly usurpation dwelt amid congenial gloom. All, all must be courageously demolished, as monuments and supports of tyranny and corruption. The Puritans were the men for this work. The tenets of their faith cast them upon the Lord in almost superhuman confidence: and "through God, they did valiantly."

✧ To the labors of Mr. Norton and his brethren in the inculcation of religious truth, New England is indebted for nearly all that constitutes her happiness and renown. Her character of dauntless independence, public spirit, resolute enterprise, and invincible perseverance, was cherished by the orthodoxy which fed and exercised her infancy and youth. This was the nursing-mother of her greatness, "severely

kind," careful of her childhood, and prodigal to her maturity. Each family of the early colonists has multiplied, on the average, to more than a thousand souls. Their descendants are now numbered by millions; and, true to the colonizing spirit, have spread the puritan influence over the newer states, and the most distant settlements, of our land. Bible orthodoxy was the fountain-head of those extending influences, so salutary to our nation and the world.

## CHAPTER II.

Mr. Cotton on his death-bed recommends that Mr. Norton should be his successor. Mr. Norton invited to Boston. Removes. Reclaimed by Ipswich. Contentions and Councils. Interference of Government. Mr. Norton installed in Boston. His influence. His second marriage. "Heart of New England Rent." Quakers. Alleged persecutions. Bancroft's vindication of the Fathers. Mr. Norton's views. His commission to England with Governor Bradstreet. Letters of General Court to Boston Church and neighboring ministers. Audience at Whitehall. Commissioners return. Discontents. Mr. Norton's Death. His last discourses printed. Norton's Memorial. Anagrams. Elegy. Last will and testament. Relatives. Mrs. Norton's benefactions to Old South Church. Her extravagant funeral expenses. Mr. Norton's natural disposition. His hilarity. Ann Hibbens hung for witchery. Beach's Letter. Mr. Norton's opposition to the execution. Witchcraft delusion universal. Sweden. England. Scotland. France. Last executions for witchcraft. Massachusetts the first jurisdiction to abolish the practice. False impressions of Puritan character. Puritan women. Mr. Norton's scholarship. His Diary. I. Mather. Mr. Norton's extraordinary gift in prayer. Conclusion.

WHEN Mr. Cotton lay upon his death-bed, his church requested him to recommend a fit person to be his successor. The sick man, while revolving in his mind what advice to give, dreamed that he saw Mr. Norton riding into Boston on a white horse to succeed him. The dream, as it happened, afterwards came to pass in every cir

cumstance. The dying patriarch, finding his waking thoughts could not better his dreaming cogitations, nominated the teacher of Ipswich, if he could be obtained, to take the place which was about to be vacated. Mr. Cotton, however, was not directed in his advice by his night-vision; but by his knowledge of the fact, that Mr. Norton had gained the consent of his people to his leaving them, and returning to England within twelve months, unless some contingency should prevent.

When Mr. Cotton had departed to his rest, his church acted upon his advice, and sent brethren to Ipswich to obtain the consent of that people to part with him who had been their guide for fifteen years. There the matter was long debated, till an honest member of the Ipswich Church remarked;—"Brethren, a case in some things like to this, was once that way determined,—*'We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth:'* wherefore I propose that our teacher himself be inquired of, whether he be inclined to go."

Mr. Norton, who had resolved to have no responsibility in the business, was much troubled at the question. He answered, that if it were judged that as good reasons as caused his removal to America, now called for his removal to Boston,



he should resign himself, but could not take an active part in the business. It was at last agreed to postpone a final decision, and that meanwhile he should reside in Boston, and wait for plainer intimations of the pleasure of Providence. The General Court, May eighteenth, 1653, ordered a letter of thanks to the Ipswich Church for their self-denial in this particular.

When he had been about two years in Boston, the excellent Nathaniel Rogers, who was pastor at Ipswich, died in gospel peace. That church now loudly reclaimed their teacher: and there is a tradition that he was almost persuaded to return. But the Boston flock refused to give up the precious deposit, to which they had become exceedingly attached. A large council was convened, which advised the Ipswich church to grant Mr. Norton a fair dismissal, so that in Boston he might serve all New England. Several lesser councils labored to get this advice carried into effect, but they labored in vain. Mr. Norton, wearied with the contentions of the two churches about his dismissal, was on the point of dismissing them both, by carrying out his former purpose of returning to England.

This was during the protectorate of Cromwell, when the tide of emigration which had been forced this way by hierarchal persecution, was

ebbing back again to the beloved mother country. They, who were for remaining, were sorely distressed to find themselves so much weakened by these numerous departures. And when it was found that a man so considerable as Mr. Norton was about to abandon them, it was thought to be high time to awake. The governor and other magistrates summoned a council of twelve churches whose expenses were paid by the colony, to prevent, if possible, so sad a discouragement. Under this potent influence the dispute came to an end. Mr. Wilson, the pastor of Boston, obtained the colleague he desired: and the Boston church joyfully installed their teacher on the twenty-third of July, 1656, after the lapse of four years. They had previously given him two hundred pounds towards the purchase of a house. It appears that he purchased Governor Winthrop's estate, called "The Green," at the corner of Milk and Washington streets; and which was afterwards given by Mr. Norton's widow to the Old South church, to whom it still belongs. The Ipswich people soon consoled themselves "by doing as they had been done by." They called from Lynn, Rev. Thomas Cobbet, a minister of the highest repute.

Mr. Norton's settlement in Boston was regarded as a very auspicious event. Ministers

fifty years of age, were not then considered as old and superannuated. His former parishioners would often come all the way from Ipswich, to hear him preach at the Thursday lecture. He exerted a wide influence through the country, and visited the remotest settlements to assist in settling ecclesiastical difficulties. The rulers also profited by his wisdom and prudence: for he counseled the councilors. It was mainly owing to his discreet interposition, that actual hostility was prevented from breaking out between our people, and the Dutch who were settled at Manhadoes.

It is not known when his first wife deceased. He married Mary Mason of Boston, on the same day in which he was installed in that place. It does not appear that he ever had any children. At any rate, there were none who survived him.

He published a treatise in 1660, under the title;—"The Heart of New England rent at the Blasphemies of the Present Generation." This pamphlet he prepared at the request of the Legislature. It is a piteous invective against the Quakers, containing an athletic exposure of their practices, and confutation of their principles. According to his account of them, those old Foxian Quakers were as different from the worthy people who now bear that name, as a wolf is from

a sheep. "For the security of the flock," he says, speaking of the law for the imprisonment and banishment of the Quakers, "we pen up the wolf; but a door is purposely left open whereby he may depart at his pleasure." On this point, it is justly remarked by Bancroft;—"Prohibiting the arrival of Quakers was not persecution; and banishment is a term hardly to be used of one who has not acquired a home. When a pauper is sent to his native town, he is not called an exile."\* Our forefathers had an instinctive dread of confusion; and guarded against its approach with a jealousy, which, but for its occasional extremes, must have received the commendation of all men of sense. "Religion," said Mr. Norton, "admits of no eccentric motions!" To them, the movements of the Quakers, those "wandering stars" which shot so madly from their spheres, seemed eccentric and portentous to the last degree. They shuddered at the flight of those baleful meteors.

The accomplished historian already quoted, himself an enthusiastic champion of the utmost freedom of inquiry and action, has so candidly stated the case, that it would be wrong to omit his statement in this connection. "It was in

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\* History I, 451.5.

self-defence that Puritanism in America began those transient persecutions of which the excesses shall find in me no apologist; and which yet were no more than a train of mists, hovering, of an Autumn morning, over the channel of a fine river, that diffused freshness and fertility wherever it wound. The people did not attempt to convert others, but to protect themselves; they never punished opinion as such; they never attempted to torture or terrify men into orthodoxy. The history of religious persecution in New England, is simply this;—The Puritans established a government in America such as the laws of natural justice warranted, and such as the statutes and common law of England did not warrant; and that was done by men who still acknowledged the duty of a limited allegiance to the parent State. The Episcopalians had declared themselves the enemies of the party, and waged against it a war of extermination; Puritanism excluded them from its asylum. Roger Williams, the apostle of soul-liberty, weakened the cause of civil independence by impairing its unity; and he was expelled, even though Massachusetts always bore good testimony to his spotless virtues. Wheelwright and his friends, in their zeal for strict Calvinism, forgot their duty as citizens, and they also were exiled.

The Anabaptist, who could not be relied upon as an ally, was guarded as a foe. The Quakers denounced the worship of New England as an abomination, and its government as treason; and therefore they were excluded on pain of death. The fanatic for Calvinism was a fanatic for liberty: and he defended his creed; for, in the moral warfare for freedom, his creed was a part of his army, and his most faithful ally in the battle.\*

In the "Heart of New England Rent," Mr. Norton contends, that originally this country "was a religious plantation, not a plantation for trade. The profession of the purity of doctrine, worship and discipline, was written on her forehead." Hence he cries out bitterly against the cruel aggressions of such as came on purpose to break up the declared object of this costly enterprise. He strongly asserts, that neither Quakers, nor other heretics, ought to be punished for their consciences. He even maintains, that it is impossible to do so, because there is no means of ascertaining judicially what a man's conscience is. The law, he declares, takes hold only of their outward acts; and that only when they are subversive of the public peace and

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\* History I, 463,4.

established order of the land. It is on this ground, that he vindicates the penalties inflicted upon the Quakers; and warmly insists that they were not punished for their consciences; but for their factious, seditious and turbulent proceedings. Had the Worcester Asylum been then in existence, most of the convicted Quakers would, no doubt, have been sent there for appropriate treatment. Such matters, like many other points of medical jurisprudence, were not then understood as well as now. The world was then, and always had been, in midnight darkness on the subject of religious toleration. In New England they had the morning twilight just dawning, in which they were looking anxiously about; but saw not all things distinctly. It was one hundred and fifty years later, ere the daylight shone so strong upon the piercing eye of Napoleon, that the imperious autocrat saw his way clear to say;—"My dominion ends, where that of conscience begins." His present majesty, the king of the French, seems to be mystified in a thick and unwholesome fog which invests the subject there. In Great Britain and Ireland, entire religious freedom and equality has never been granted even to this very day, except during the brief protectorate of Cromwell. Nor have these just principles any where obtained full

acknowledgment, except in this land, where the Puritans introduced them, and prepared the way for their perfect triumph.

Before closing his active and useful career, Mr. Norton performed one more general service for these colonies. At the restoration of Charles II. in 1660, it was thought necessary to send deputies to address him in behalf of New England. This was a difficult and delicate mission. The people felt, that they had little to hope from a prince of Charles' temper. They were apprehensive, that he would despotically snatch away their charter, and wrest out of their grasp all the liberties they had found and cherished in this wilderness. They were solicitous in the extreme to obtain, if it might be, some satisfactory assurance upon a matter of such vital interest.

Mr. Norton was commissioned to go upon this errand with Governor Simon Bradstreet, who was called the "venerable Mordecai of his country." In this case, the honored commissioners seem to have "had greatness thrust upon them." They evidently shrank from the appointment, and many tedious preliminaries had to be adjusted. No one could foresee in what temper the restored monarch would receive them. It was feared, that the envoys of a



people so thoroughly puritanical would find but little favor in his eyes; and that not improbably, fines and imprisonment might be the reward of their temerity in appearing before him. The colonial government pledged itself, as far as it could, to support them to the utmost of its power. They were furnished with letters to various noblemen of influence at court, calculated to secure their good offices with the king, or to deprecate any hostile sentiments. Among others, there were letters to lord viscount Say and Seal, and to the earls of Clarendon and Manchester. In the instructions given to the commissioners, the General Court manifested its usual and commendable jealousy of any encroachment upon the chartered rights of the colony. It was said even to these trusty messengers;—"You shall endeavor the establishment of the rights and privileges we now enjoy."—"You shall not engage us by any act of yours to any thing which may be prejudicial to our present standing, according to patent."—"You shall give us a speedy and constant account of all your transactions, and what else may be of concernment to us." \*

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\* Many documents relating to this mission are printed in Hutchinson's Collection, pp. 315,—330.

There is preserved among the Massachusetts Records a letter from both branches of the General Court, "to the more ancient church of Christ at Boston." The letter says;—"This Court having, with serious advice from the reverend elders, and no small deliberation, at length concluded, for the preservation of the order of the gospel in all the churches of Christ here established, to send for England the reverend, beloved and much desired Mr. John Norton from amongst you; wherein we are sufferers with yourselves in parting with so worthy an instrument of spiritual good, (although, we hope, but for a time,) and cannot but expect, that the same arguments which have guided this Court may also work a readiness in yourselves to concur with us herein, because, namely, the Lord hath need of him." The church is also informed, that the Court has taken order with the reverend elders in the Colony to assist the church, during the absence of its Teacher. This letter is dated the eleventh of May, 1661. There is another letter of the same date, addressed by the General Court to the ministers by whose "reverend advice and counsel" the Court had acted; and requesting them to assist in supplying the wants of "the

more ancient church of Christ in Boston whereof Mr. Wilson is pastor ;” and which is, “for the present, left destitute of so able an ‘help’ as is the reverend, pious, prudent and laborious minister of Christ Jesus, Mr. John Norton.” So fraternal, in those days, were the relations of “Moses and Aaron !”

The envoys sailed on the eleventh of February, 1662 ; having been long delayed by Mr. Norton’s sickness. His place in the pulpit was supplied during his absence by the neighboring ministers in rotation. On arriving at Whitehall, they had an audience of the king. They presented an address which plainly and frankly asserted the motives which led to the settlement of this country. It declared that the colony was undertaken by men who wished to escape the yoke of hierarchal impositions ; and sought “liberty to walk in the faith of the gospel, with all good conscience, according to the order of the gospel.” This document says ;— “We are not seditious as to the interests of Cæsar, nor schismatical as to the matters of religion. We distinguish between churches and their impurities.” It expresses an earnest desire to “enjoy divine worship, free from human mixtures, without offence to God, or man,

or their own consciences." For this, with leave, but not without tears, they departed from their country, kindred and homes, and fled to this Patmos. The reception of the commissioners was more favorable than they had anticipated. Charles treated them with courtesy, for he was always polite: and made them fine promises, such as he always broke, like the other Stuarts, when convenience required. He agreed to confirm the charter; and granted an amnesty for all political offences committed during the late disturbances; but required certain large alterations in the colonial legislation and religious practices under the charter.

The commissioners having most faithfully performed their duty, and brought every influence possible to bear in favor of the Colony, returned in September of the same year. They had gone, very reluctantly, on a mission which they felt to be impracticable; for they were expected to conciliate the unfriendly monarch, and yet secure the independence of their country. Their English friends thought that they had succeeded wonderfully in both respects. But the people here, ever jealous of the liberties which had cost them so dear, were always discontented with their agents at their first re-

turn from England. In this case, many were much dissatisfied with the faithful Norton and Bradstreet for not having somehow exacted from a tyrant, surrounded as he was by their bitterest enemies, an unconditional pledge that every thing should remain unaltered. Some began to cry out, that the agents had "laid the foundation of ruin to all our liberties." Mr. Bradstreet, in his incorruptible patriotism, outlived for many years these unreasonable clamors. But they embittered the short residue of Mr. Norton's days. It has been supposed, that the troubles of his too sensitive mind on this account, hastened his death. But there is good reason to think, that the dissatisfaction felt at the result of his mission was neither general nor deep enough to have such an effect. Emerson mentions a tradition "that even the venerable and benevolent Wilson was heard to say that he must have another colleague." But this would seem to be sufficiently confuted by the manner in which that patriarch, when on his death-bed, three or four years after, spoke of Mr. Norton; as well as by his manner of mentioning Mrs. Norton in his will.

The truth is, that Mr. Norton's constitution, worn out by a life of study, had been breaking up

for some time before. He died about six months subsequent to his return from England, at the age of fifty-seven. He passed the gates of death so easily and so quickly, as scarce to feel the transit. It was on the fifth of April, 1663. In the forenoon he was well, and expecting to preach in the afternoon; but was taken with an apoplectic fit, and shortly after expired.

His death filled Boston with such lamentations, as caused that mournful night long to be remembered; and his funeral, which took place at the Thursday lecture, was attended with great sorrow and solemnity. His dear friend, Rev. Richard Mather, "wept over him a sermon most agreeable to the occasion."

His old friends the Quakers did not fail to represent the sudden death of "the chief priest of Boston," as a judgment of God upon him for the treatise he had published against their delusions. His parishioners, on the contrary, thought that, in this case, it was "sudden death, sudden glory!" The short-hand writers sent to the press their notes of his last sermons, three in number. One of them was the election sermon, which he had recently preached, having been repeatedly called to the discharge of that duty. The text is Jeremiah 10: 17, and the title is

“Sion, the Outcast, healed of her Wounds.” It contains many excellent and seasonable instructions; and also the anti-schismatical assertion which was usually made in some form on those august occasions, that “in matters of religion, we are for reformation, and *not* for separation.” The second of these sermons is the last of his Sabbath performances; it is entitled;—“The Believer’s Consolation,” and is a devout meditation on the heavenly mansions. The third of these sermons is the last of his Thursday lectures; it is entitled;—“The Evangelical Worshipper,” and goes to prove, that, in divine worship, every thing must correspond with the prescriptions of God’s Word. The text is very happily selected from Hebrews 8: 5; “See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.” These three discourses, thus published together, were the death-song of the expiring swan. His affectionate people regarded them, in their beautiful phrase, as the falling mantle of the ascending prophet.

Secretary Morton, in an obituary notice contained in his “New England’s Memorial,” makes honorable mention of him whose departure was thus lamented. “Although the church of Boston in a more special manner felt the

smart of this sudden blow, yet it reflected upon the whole land. He was singularly endowed with the tongue of the learned, enabled to speak a word in due season, not only to the wearied soul, but also a word of counsel to a people in necessity thereof, being not only a wise steward of the things of Jesus Christ, but also a wise statesman; so that the whole land sustained a great loss of him." All the customary tokens of respect were paid to his memory. The letters of his name JOHN NORTON, were fondly transposed, till they stood INTO HONNOR; whereunto he had gone to abide. Not content with this, his anagrammatizing friend, Mr. Wilson, first turned the name into Latin form, IOHANNES NORTONUS; and then turned the helpless letters over and over, till, with clever success, he brought them into satisfactory shape, as NONNE IS HONORATUS! Nor were there wanting some of those uncouth and rugged elegiacs which would have made Quintilian "gasp and stare;" and doubtless forced the agonized Muses to muffle their unfortunate ears. Rev. Thomas Shepard, of blessed memory, vented his sorrows in some metres, which abounded in sincerity in inverse proportion to their want of the spirit of poesy. We give a few of the least unendurable of his rhymes, those dried salt-fish



from Helicon. Having compared Mr. Norton with the most famous of the scholastic doctors, very much to their disadvantage, he says of his hero;—

“Of a more heavenly strain his notions were,  
More pure, sublime, scholastical and clear,  
More like the apostles Paul and John, I wist,  
Was this our *Orthodox Evangelist*.”

Among other commendations, he speaks of him as a father to all the churches ;

“Zealous for *order* ; very critical  
For what was truly Congregational.”

The good man's reputation must have been formed of lasting material to survive such ex-cruciating praises.

By his last will and testament it appears, that Mr. Norton left a brother William, living at Ipswich, Mass., where he cultivated a large farm ; and that he had an aged mother, a brother Thomas, and three sisters, Martha, Mary and Elizabeth, residing at London. To the poor of his church he left a bequest of ten pounds. His widow, who was his second wife, as has been stated, gave to the Old South church in Boston, during her life-time, most of the valuable estate now held by that society ; and nearly all

the residue, she gave, by her will, after her decease. There is in the Probate Office an account of her funeral expenses, which is so singular, and so illustrates the customs of those days, that it is inserted here, at the risk of shocking the modern ideas of temperance and economy.

167 7-8, Jan. 20. Account of Funeral Charges of Mrs. Mary Norton.

|          |                                                                   |            |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Jan. 20. | 51 1-2 gallons of best Malaga with cask and carriage, at £10. 13. | £10. 13.   |
|          | 50 1-2 ells of best broad Lutestring silk at 10 s. ell,           | 25. 5.     |
| " 25.    | Paid money to Wm. and Joseph Gridley for opening the tomb,        | 1. 16.     |
| " 28.    | Money Solomon Ransford for coffin and plate,                      | 1. 18.     |
| " "      | Gloves 6 doz. pair.                                               | 5. 12. 6.  |
| " "      | do. 2 do. do.                                                     | 2.         |
| Feb. 5.  | do. 10 do. and 3 pair,                                            | 10. 19. 9. |
| " 16.    | do. 12 do. 6 do.                                                  | 12. 8.     |
| " "      | do. 2 do. 10 do.                                                  | 2. 8. 2.   |
|          |                                                                   | <hr/>      |
|          |                                                                   | 73. 0. 5.  |

This enormous bill of seventy-three pounds currency, amounting to nearly two hundred and fifty dollars, contains but two necessary items, not much exceeding twelve dollars. The offering of gloves and refreshments to the mourning attendants was the usual practice. If each receiver of a pair of gloves had his share of the other articles provided for distribution, he would have had a strip of silk some five inches wide as a badge of his grief, and about a pint of Malaga for his consolation! The disposition to testify respect for the dead by extravagant and stately funerals is much abated among us; and it must be owned, that, in this one instance, the children, if less loving, are more wise than their fathers.

In his natural temper, Mr. Norton was quick and somewhat irascible. Whitefield used to tell of "grace grafted on a crab-stock." And truly those trees which naturally yield the sourest and harshest fruit; when their crabbed branches are pruned away, and they are grafted with fairer scions, their fruit will often be the most abundant and the sweetest. Such was the effect of the engrafted grace of God in Mr. Norton's soul. He was noted for his affable and winning behavior, and became one of the most amiable of men.

Another natural infirmity of this good man was a strong inclination to levity. Some of his humorous table-talk is on record; enough to indicate the hilarity of his temper. A single instance of this may suffice. Ann Hibbens, an unhappy woman, whose husband had been a magistrate, and a Boston merchant of note, and who was sister to Governor Bellingham, was arraigned for witchcraft in 1656. She appears to have been a sad termagant. Her temper, naturally bad, was further soured by her husband's losses in business; and after his death, she became so violent, as to make herself extremely odious to her neighbors. She was excommunicated from the church for her strange malevolent behavior; which at last provoked against her the fatal charge under which Joan of Arc was doomed to die. The truth of the accusation was as much disputed in the case of Ann Hibbens as in that of the "Maid of Orleans." The jury brought her in guilty; the magistrates set aside the verdict; but the Deputies in the General Court confirmed it, and she was executed accordingly. She was the second person who died under this charge in Massachusetts. Mr. Beach, a minister in Jamaica, in a letter to Dr. Increase Mather, gives the fol-

lowing relation ;—“ You may remember what I have sometimes told you your famous Mr. Norton once said at his own table, before Mr. Wilson the pastor, elder Penn, and myself and wife, and others, who had the honor to be his guests :—That one of your magistrates’ wives, as I remember, was hanged for a witch *only for having more wit than her neighbors*. It was his very expression ; she having, as he explained it, unhappily guessed that two of her persecutors, whom she saw talking in the street, were talking of her. Which proving true, cost her her life, notwithstanding all he could do to the contrary, as he himself told us.”

It must be owned, that Mr. Norton’s taunting expression, on this festive occasion in the presence of his colleagues, the pastor and the ruling elder, and other guests of consideration, had in it more of wit than of fun. It is likely that he had the laugh mostly to himself. But it is honorable to his independence and soundness of judgment, that he withstood the popular prejudices on this exciting point. One of our historians has said ;—“ Witchcraft had not been made the subject of skeptical consideration ; and in the years in which Scotland sacrificed hecatombs to the delusion, there were three victims

in New England. Dark crimes, that seemed without a motive, may have been pursued under that name; I find one record of a trial for witchcraft, where the prisoner was proved a murderess."\*

During the last few years of the seventeenth century, there was an epidemic on the minds of the Massachusetts colonists, during which nineteen persons were executed for witchcraft, and one was pressed to death for refusing to plead to the indictment. We cannot sufficiently deplore this delusion by which our forefathers were hurried to such shedding of innocent blood. But it is astonishing to observe how much reproach has been heaped upon them, as if, in this particular fault, they were sinners above all who dwelt on the earth in their day. These reproaches can only come from persons of very limited information on this subject. Any one who wishes to see the literature of the subject, may find the most of it collected by Sir Walter Scott, in his work on Demonology. Such local delusions were very common in that age. During the seventeenth century, many thousands were put to death in England for

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\* Bancroft. Hist. I. 465.

alleged witchcraft. "In Scotland, during the last forty years of the sixteenth century, the executions were not fewer than seventeen thousand!"\* About the time of what is called the "Salem Witchcraft," there was another very similar, but more destructive excitement in Sweden. During that century, reputed witches perished by thousands in France, and the same took place in the other European States, both Protestant and Romanist. Perhaps in no civilized country were there so few victims as in New England, where there were no executions later than 1692; and in some of whose colonies there were never any sufferers of the sort. The English statute against witchcraft, enacted under James I., in 1603, when the great philosopher, lord Bacon, was a member of the house of commons, was not repealed by act of Parliament till 1736, not much above a century since. The last judicial execution in England was at Huntingdon, in 1716; the last in Scotland was at Dornoch, Sutherlandshire, in 1622; some of the last that ever took place in a civilized country were at Wurtzburg, Bavaria, in 1749, and in the Swiss canton of Glarus, in 1780, much

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\* Edinburgh Review, CLXI. p. 123. See also Encyclopedia Americana, article "Witchcraft."

less than a hundred years ago. All these, and many others, occurred long after such sorrowful scenes had wholly ceased in New England. Strange as it may seem to some who have listened all their days to calumnies on this subject, it is nevertheless true, that Massachusetts was the first civilized government TO ABOLISH THE PRACTICE OF EXECUTION FOR WITCHCRAFT. In this, as in so many other respects, that noble commonwealth has led the way, and strode foremost in the path of reform!

It has been observed that Mr. Norton could unbend his bow of steel; and relax the tension of his laborious mind amid the cheerfulness of social intercourse. This has been the more willingly mentioned, because some who have considered his deportment only when under extreme perplexity and trouble have termed him "the melancholic Norton." This notion is too commonly extended to all the Puritans. It is true, that, as compared with a vain and frivolous world, they were serious and sedate. If deep religious meditation and experience had not made them sober and grave in their ordinary deportment, they had enough to make them so in the pains, perils and privations with which they were ever conversant. But it is a great



mistake, to suppose that they never had their seasons of relaxation. They had high social enjoyments, and knew how to indulge a becoming cheerfulness. It is a mere prejudice to conceive of them only according to those caricatures of "the godly," which the profane cavaliers were fond of drawing. Their enemies loved to depict them as gloomy and unsocial beings, mortally opposed to the courtesies, refinements and endearments of life. We have too long been told of their grim visages and sour aspect; as if "hanging out a devil in their faces, were a sign that an angel dwelt within." Far different was the truth! They were men of the most generous sympathies, and the most enlarged public spirit. And their women were patterns unsurpassed of conjugal tenderness and maternal love. How honorable it is to the female character in that day, "that their sensibility was not greater than their fortitude." They could act, as well as pray; they could endure, as well as weep. If their affections were tremulous, they were also muscular. How sweet and precious is their memory, embalmed in the spices of piety and goodness!

After what has been said of Mr. Norton, it is needless to dilate upon his learning. He was

not only a skillful linguist, but a universal scholar. But all that he gained from secular literature he consecrated, by applying it to the adornment and illustration of the doctrine of the cross. It was with the spoils of the Egyptians, that Moses enriched the tabernacle of the Lord. President Stiles, no incompetent judge of such things, ranks Mr. Norton in the first quaternion of the ancient divines of New England, who were "equal to the first characters in theology, in all Christendom, and in all ages."

Of the character of his daily religious experience we are not so fully informed, as we are in regard to many of his cœvals. That was "an age of diaries;" and he, like others, kept one of those diurnal transcripts of the frames of his mind. It is not known to be in existence. Dr. Increase Mather, who was for several years his pupil, and who greatly loved and honored him, had seen it, and gives this testimony to his venerated teacher. "He was much in prayer; he would very often spend whole days in prayer, with fasting before the Lord alone in his study. He kept a strict daily watch over his own heart. He was an hard student. He took notice in a private dairy, how he spent his time every day. If he found himself not so much inclined to dili-

gence and study as at some other times, he would reflect on his heart and ways, lest haply some unobserved sin should provoke the Lord to give him up to a slothful, listless frame of spirit. In his diary, he would sometimes have these words ;—“ *Leve desiderium ad studendum : forsitan ex peccato admissio.*” \*

As a part of the fruit of his labors, he left some writings which he designed for the press if his life had been prolonged. The principal work is a large “Body of Divinity” preserved among the manuscripts of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

As a preacher, he was remarkable for that “copious eloquence, which is equally captivating to the scholar and to the unlettered Christian.” But he is even more celebrated for his extraordinary gift in prayer. His whole soul was let loose in the public devotions, and swept along in a torrent of emotion. His hearers were carried away by these overflowings of the fullness of his heart. The aged magistrates and the men of cultivated mind, would unite in his supplications above an hour together, with unflinching interest ; transported, in a manner, by

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\* “Slight inclination to study : owing perhaps to allowed sin.”

the vast variety, the fitness, and the fervency of his petitions. One godly man would ordinarily travel on foot from Ipswich to Boston, which was then a journey of thirty miles, merely to attend the Thursday lecture in the First church. And if any notice was taken of his singular perseverance, he would say ;—"It is worth a great journey, to be a partaker in one of Mr. Norton's prayers." Nor did this man of prayer plead with God in vain. His ministry was greatly blessed : and the multitudes converted to God by means of his labors, are the jewels of his crown. Long has he slept in silence with his flock. Their mingled dust reposes together in their earthy bed. What an awakening awaits them ! How joyously that clustered band shall assemble around their pastor in the destined morning when their slumbers shall be broken by the welcome voice of the Son of Man !

But their departed spirits are now with Christ. Ere we were born, our pilgrim sires, who found, and cleared for us the good old paths, which for ages had been forsaken, and overgrown, and obstructed ;—our fathers, whose hallowed memory must be our shame and condemnation if we forsake those paths again ;—our fathers, sainted and made perfect, have long

been blest with Jesus. They have sung the victor's song. They have been harping with their harps of gold. They have mingled in the raptured chorus of angelic praise. They have lost themselves in the ecstasy of those mighty thunderings rolling evermore their tuneful peals. The anthem is like "the voice of many waters:" and the undulations of that ever-rising tide shall forever swell and break, like the booming billows of the resounding sea.

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*The following is a list of John Norton's printed works:*

1. A Latin letter to John Dury on the pacification of the Protestant Churches, signed by nearly all the New England ministers.
2. Responsio ad totum Quaestionum Syllogen a clarissimo viro dom. Gul. Apollonio propositam, ad componendas controversias in Anglia. Lond. 8vo. 1648.
3. A Discussion of the sufferings of Christ, and the questions about his righteousness active and passive, and the imputation thereof, in answer to a dialogue of Mr. Pinchin. Lond. 12mo. 1653:—written at the request of the General Court.
4. The Orthodox Evangelist, or a treatise wherein many great evangelical truths are briefly discussed. Lond. 4to. 1654.
5. Election Sermon. 1657.
6. The Life of Mr. Cotton. 1658. A very small quarto.
7. The Heart of New England Rent by the Blasphemies of the

present Generation : a treatise concerning the doctrine of the Quakers, by the desire of the General Court. 8vo. 1660.

8. Election Sermon. 1661.

9. A Catechism. Date unknown.

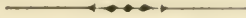
10. Three choice and profitable sermons on several texts, being the last sermons, which he preached at the election, at the Thursday lecture, and on the Sabbath. Small quarto. 1664.

LIFE OF JOHN DAVENPORT.





## LIFE OF JOHN DAVENPORT.



It is to meet the wants of the human mind, that the Old and New Testaments are so much occupied with narrative and chronicle. No later history is so instructive as that of the Church and its chief members. Ecclesiastical history, including religious biography, is theology taught by example, and is the most impressive and profitable teaching. "It is velvet study, and recreation work."

The early history of New England and its settlers is a choice part of this fruitful field. It was to "raise up the foundations of many generations," that they came to these "old waste places," which from time immemorial had lain desolate and almost untrodden. Scarce could these wilds be said to be peopled by the thin and scattered bands which roamed them at random. Of the savage inhabitants it was said, that they were never away from home: for one spot was as much home to them as another, even where the wigwam chanced for the time to be pitched.

Here, in this vast, vacant domicil, the Puri-

tans toiled at their foundation work. Their great right-angled corner-stone, massive and moveless, was the Bible. On this firm basis they reared amain their spiritual masonry. They were for strong abutment work to begin with. It was to last for many generations. And so, amid the old waste places, they builded up their social fabric of imperishable minds, cemented with imperishable truth. And the stately structure rose in fair proportions, reared

" With pyramids and towers,  
From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold. "

Among these " wise master-builders," John Davenport was one of chief renown. We now propose to give some account of him, as one of the founders of our political and religious institutions. His reputation does not rest upon feats of arms or military prowess. But, as " a good soldier of Jesus Christ," he endured much hardness, waged many a hard-fought contest, and won many a righteous conquest. For, as Milton has grandly said,

" Peace hath her victories,  
No less than war. "

Mr. Davenport was born at Coventry, in England, in the year 1597. He was the child of worthy and respectable parents. His father,

who was at one time mayor of that ancient city, belonged to a family of good repute in the county of Chester. He had a pious mother, "who, having lived just long enough to devote him, as Hannah did her Samuel, unto the service of the sanctuary, left him under the more immediate care of Heaven to fit him for that service." And gracious Heaven accepted the charge of this child of the covenant. The mother's dying prayer is the infant's best legacy. She follows the prayer to heaven with such speed, that it is doubtful which enters first. Let not such little ones be accounted of as orphanized or forlorn. They have a shepherd to feed, and a fold to guard them. As one of the old puritan divines has said ;—"Jesus opens to them his arms and the bosom of his Church, to warm them into spiritual life to be manifested in due time." \*

The mother's last prayer was so effectually answered, that the child gave evidence of the grace of God ere he was sent to the university, and lived all his days a devout and conscientious life, without one blemish left on record against him.

At the age of fourteen, he had made great

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\* J. Angier, 1652.

proficiency in his studies, and was admitted to Brazen-Nose College at Oxford, in 1611. Here he addicted himself to the closest mental application, and formed those habits of intense and protracted study which he maintained through life. The vigorous buddings of his youth decidedly indicated "the growth and greatness of his honorable age." At that seat of science he remained about five years: but left it, soon after taking his first degree, to enter, young as he was, upon the active duties of that ministry, to which he had been consecrated by his mother's expiring breath.

He appears to have officiated at first as chaplain at Hilton castle, in the neighborhood of Durham. In this sort of duty many of the most distinguished divines of that day began their ministrations. When he was nineteen years of age, he was called to London, where he labored, at first, as assistant to another clergyman; but was, soon after, made vicar of St. Stephen's Church, in Coleman street.

One of his parishioners here was Theophilus Eaton, who, though somewhat older than Davenport, was his fellow-townsmen and the friend of his childhood. Eaton's father was one of the ministers of Coventry, where Davenport's father

was chief civic magistrate. Eaton, declining to enter the ministry to which he had been urged by his friends, became a substantial and successful London merchant. It is probable that Eaton's influence was active in bringing his early friend, the youthful preacher, to the great metropolis. From that time they lived in the closest intimacy, and afforded a lovely example of religious friendship. Together they came to these shores, together they settled the New Haven colony, where they presided for many years, the one as governor, and the other as pastor, over the rising fortunes of that community. The ties which united them are unbroken :

‘ Bonds, which defying still all Fortune’s power,  
Time could not loosen, nor could Death divide.’

Blessed is the man who has even one such tried and trusted confidant. He can never be wholly wretched.

‘ True happiness  
Consists not in the multitude of friends,  
But in the worth and choice.’

Mr. Davenport's youthfulness gave some celebrity to his early ministry, to which his high accomplishments as a preacher conduced still more. About this time too, the city of London

was visited by a dreadful plague, which swept away its victims with ruthless rapidity. While many of the pastors forsook their flocks, and fled from the wasting pestilence, the young vicar of St. Stephen's continued to watch over his charge, and courageously visited the afflicted and the dying with the consolations of the gospel. His Christian fidelity raised him to notice and to high esteem.

As Mr. Davenport "sowed beside all waters," he, by the grace of God, laid the Baptist denomination under some obligation; as being, about this time, the means of the conversion of William Kiffen, who afterwards became a minister of note in that communion.

Although removed from the University, and burdened with the care of a great parish, he intermitted none of the studies needful to a "universal scholar." He went to Oxford in 1625, and passed the customary trials with much approbation; receiving at the same time the degrees of Master of Arts, and of Bachelor in Divinity. He continued all his days to be an indefatigable scholar. With him, "the midnight lamp" was no figure of speech, but a customary matter of fact. The habit of late studies, which has proved fatal to so many

others, appears in him to have had no injurious effect.

He bestowed great care upon the preparation of his sermons, writing them out more fully than was usual with the ministers of his day, and then enlarging in the delivery. In his manner of speaking was combined a calm gravity with an intense earnestness, which fixed the attention of his hearers in an extraordinary manner. His veriest enemies were constrained to own that he was "the prince of preachers." Indeed one of his friends has said, that "he was worthy to be a preacher to princes."

During his ministry in London, he was "acquainted with great men, and great things, and was great himself, and had a great fame abroad in the world." Some of the most distinguished men around him were his intimate friends. Of these we may mention Dr. John Preston, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. His popularity as a teacher was such, that Fuller calls him the greatest *pupil-monger* ever known in England. This man, a learned theologian, and most eloquent preacher, was also a deep politician. James I. made him chaplain to the Prince of Wales, and to himself;

and urged upon him the rich bishopric of Gloucester. On the death of James, Dr. Preston rode up to London in a close coach with the young king and the Duke of Buckingham. He was again offered a bishopric, and the office of Lord-Keeper of the Great Seal, which was the highest office in the State, and entitled the holder to preside in the house of peers. These tempting lures were offered, in the hopes of bringing over the puritan party to the king's side by means of Dr. Preston's vast influence. But the good man was not to be bought. Here was a man with a conscience. He held fast his integrity : choosing to bear the frown of the tyrant, and the scoffs of minions, and the persecution of hierarchs, rather than swerve from his integrity, or be enticed from his principles. Before he died, which was in 1628, this celebrated man showed his confidence in the young vicar of St. Stephen's, by leaving his writings to be published under Mr. Davenport's care ; by whom, accordingly they were edited.

A year or two before Dr. Preston's death, and while he was chief manager of the affairs of the Puritans, there was an association formed, about the year 1626, for the purpose of supplying with an able ministry such parts of England as were



destitute. The greater part of the church livings were in the hands of men, who pocketed the profits without discharging the duties of their sacred office. These duties were usually delegated to miserable starvelings, hired at the very shabbiest wages, incapable of preaching, and whose labors extended only to the reading of the Book of Common Prayer, and sometimes of a printed homily. This was all the spiritual instruction provided for many, even of the largest, parishes. The ministry was thus brought into contempt, religion degraded into a mercenary affair, and the souls of the people pined under a famine of the Word of God.

The case was made still worse by what are called "lay-impropriations." By the laws of the land, one tenth part of all the annual products of the soil belongs to the established Church. These tithes should, properly, be paid to the rector of the parish. But in the popish times, when the country abounded in monasteries, the tithes of very many of the parishes were appropriated to the support of different monastic establishments. In such cases the monastery was bound to furnish a priest to serve the parish, who as he acted vicariously, in their behalf, was called the vicar. The tithes, after

paying the vicar his stipend, went to increase the wealth of the monastery. When the conventual establishments were suppressed by Henry VIII., he scattered their riches among his courtiers and satellites. Among the rest, these appropriated tithes became the property of laymen, and are called "lay-impropriations:"—and very gross improprieties they are! This enormous abuse, and perversion of funds, continues to the present time. Many of the wealthiest noblemen and commoners of England luxuriate in these spoils of the Church, spoils which did not originally belong even to the *Church* by any law of Christ, or any righteous ordinance of man's enacting. Lay-impropriations are bought and sold, like any other species of property. The lay-owner grasps the revenues wrested from the Church, and doles out some pittance thereof to his clerical vicar; who in his turn, perhaps, squeezes out a paltry modicum to some lean and hungry curate on whom it devolves to feed the flock as well as he may. The people, all the while, have no voice in the matter, and no privilege but that of paying over their money, whether they conform or dissent, to men who render not the slightest equivalent.

To say nothing of the atrocious injustice of

this system, it is evident that its tendency must be to depress the working-clergy, and to consign their duties to men incompetent, and of the lowest order of qualifications. It occurred to the Puritans in Dr. Preston's time, to apply a remedy to this shameful state of things. A fund was raised by voluntary contribution for the purchase of as many of these lay-impropriations as possible. The income of them was to be expended in the support of preachers called lecturers, who were to preach statedly in those parish-churches where the incompetency of the minister in charge made such assistance desirable. It was a sort of home-missionary society. It met with very great favor, so that in a short time above six thousand pounds were collected, and invested in the purchase of thirteen impropriations. It seemed as though this association in no long period would be able to buy in all this description of property, and restore it to those religious uses from which it had been so scandalously alienated.

But as all the lecturers employed by this association were zealous Puritans, the persecuting party soon took the alarm. Dr. Heylin, one of Laud's sycophantic underlings, raised a prodigious panic: and it was not long before the

trustees who conducted the business, or, as they were called, the "feoffees in trust," found themselves arraigned before the Court of Exchequer. The feoffees were twelve in number: four of them clergymen, of whom our Mr. Davenport was one; four of them were lawyers, of whom one was a king's serjeant; and four of them were citizens, one of whom was the Lord Mayor of London. At the instigation of attorney-general Noy, the Exchequer condemned the association as dangerous and illegal; confiscated to the king's use the whole of the property it had acquired; and referred the punishment of the feoffees, as criminals, to that infamous tribunal the star chamber."\* The unpopularity of the prosecution, however, prevented the matter from being carried any further: and Mr. Davenport and his associates in this pious and laudable undertaking, after suffering much anxiety, were permitted to escape the fines and other penalties with which they had been threatened.

On this afflictive occasion, Mr. Davenport wrote the following passages in his great Bible;—

"Feb. 11, 1632. The business of the feoffees

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\* Hanbury's Hist. Memorials. Vol. I., p. 470-2.

being to be heard the third time at the Exchequer, I prayed earnestly that God would assist our counselors in opening the case, and be pleased to grant, that they might get no advantage against us, to punish us as *evil doers*; promising to observe what *answer* he gave. Which, seeing he hath graciously done, and delivered me from the thing I feared, I record to these ends;—

“ 1. To be more *industrious* in my family.

“ 2. To check my *unthankfulness*.

“ 3. To quicken myself to *thankfulness*.

“ 4. To awaken myself to more *watchfulness* for the time to come, in remembrance of his mercy.

“ Which I beseech the Lord to grant; upon whose faithfulness in *his* covenant, I cast myself to be made faithful in *my* covenant.

“ JOHN DAVENPORTE.”\*

In the year 1631, he was convened before bishop Laud, and subjected to trouble and expense, on the ground of his Puritanism. He was also convened before the High Commission Court as a notorious delinquent, though in a matter very honorable to him. The Queen of

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\* He always spelled his name with this final letter.

Bohemia, the king's sister, had earnestly solicited Charles, that collections might be made throughout England in aid of the poor banished ministers of the Palatinate of the Rhine. This part of her husband's dominions had been subjugated in a religious war by the papist emperor of Germany : and the ministers were driven into exile. The king was disposed to grant the desired brief for the collections : but Laud interposed to prevent it, first, because those impoverished ministers, suffering as they were for the faith, were Calvinists and Presbyterians ; and secondly, because, in the brief, the Church of Rome is said to be anti-christian. From whence it would follow, as his *lordship* inferred, that Rome "was in no capacity to confer sacerdotal power in ordinations, and, consequently, the benefit of the priesthood, and the force of holy ministrations, would be lost in the English Church, forasmuch as she has no orders but what she derives from the Church of Rome." As the result of Laud's opposition, the brief was altered, and the undertaking fell through. Upon this, Mr. Davenport united with Doctors Sibbs, Gouge, and other puritan divines, who pitied the necessities of their exiled brethren of Germany, in promoting a private subscription for their re-

lief. As soon as the bishop, whom Milton calls "the grim wolf," heard of this charitable proceeding, he arraigned its promoters before his infamous High Commission, and stopped the business. This is the man so fondly lauded by the "Oxford divines," as the "martyred Saint William!" And this, indeed, was one of the least of his misdoings.

Up to this time, Mr. Davenport had been a conformist. Though disliking many things enjoined in the established church, and resolute to have them reformed, he persuaded himself that it was his duty, for the present, to practice them. When he heard that John Cotton had resigned his church at Boston in old England, and was endeavoring to escape to America, Mr. Davenport sought a conference with him, not doubting but he should convince Mr. Cotton, that he ought to conform, rather than to leave his flock. In the "Life of John Cotton," we have given some account of the interesting conferences held for this purpose, in which Mr. Davenport was assisted by two other learned and noted ministers. Instead of bringing Mr. Cotton over to their views, the result was, that they went entirely over to him. There was no resisting the meekness and mildness of that

godly and erudite man. Mr. Davenport also discussed these matters with bishop Laud, who, trusting to the terrors of ecclesiastical penalties, made the remark ;—" I thought I had settled his judgment." The prelate was vexed to find himself mistaken, and to learn that Mr. Davenport had resigned his benefice, and fled across the seas from the pursuivants who were after him with their warrants. And yet the relentless oppressor testified to the moral worth of the fugitive in a speech to the house of Lords, speaking of him as " a most religious man, who fled to New England for the sake of a good conscience ! " \*

From the time of his becoming an avowed non-conformist, Mr. Davenport was made to feel the wrath of his diocesan. Being seasonably warned of what was in preparation against him, he felt it his duty to secure himself by flight. He was too conscientious to leave his flock without their full consent. He was not one of those who " too slightly and suddenly quit, what they had before so seriously and solemnly accepted : as if their pastoral charges were like their clothes or upper garments, to be

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\* Answer to Lord Say's speech.



put off at pleasure, to cool themselves in every heat." He convened the principal members of St. Stephen's church. Owing their right in him as their pastor, he declared that no danger should drive him from any service or exposure they might require at his hands. He then asked their advice in regard to the existing exigency. After sad and serious deliberation, they discharged him from all special obligation to them, and sorrowfully consented to accept his resignation.

Finding that his retirement from his sphere of pastoral duty did not exempt him from the eager pursuit of the bishop's officials, he betook himself to Holland, in the latter part of 1633. The blasts of persecution only convey the winged seeds of truth upon the pinions of the wind. The stormy breath of opposition may blow with all its fury. It cannot quench the flame. It will but scatter the glowing sparks, and kindle each of them to a living blaze, and spread around a wider conflagration.

On getting to Holland, Mr. Davenport became colleague with Rev. John Paget, for many years pastor of an English church at Amsterdam. For some six months, affairs went on happily. But the senior pastor, an aged man, was a violent

Presbyterian ; and, among other things, insisted that baptism should be administered to all children who might be presented for the purpose. This indiscriminate baptism of all children without regard to the character of the parents, was the practice of the Dutch churches. Mr. Davenport utterly refused to sanction such a practice, and argued strenuously against it. A warm controversy on this subject arose between him and Mr. Paget. The latter procured a decision of the Dutch classis or presbytery, to which their church belonged, adverse to his colleague. Mr. Davenport, who was as much opposed to presbyterial government as he was to the profanation of the sacrament of baptism, would not acquiesce in that decision. Being constrained, after some six months, to retire from the public duties of his ministry, he restricted himself to lecturing catechetically on Sabbath evenings to a small assemblage which met at his lodgings. But even this private meeting was forbidden by the civil authority. Beside the usual strife of tongues, this dispute occasioned a pamphletary war ; of which the last publication was Mr. Davenport's "Apologetical Reply," printed at Rotterdam in 1636.

Satisfied by this time, that the yoke of Dutch

presbyterianism was nearly as insupportable as that of English prelatism, he resolved to betake himself to the free wildernesses of America. He had received letters from Mr. Cotton giving a glowing account of matters here ; and telling him, " that the order of the churches and the commonwealth was now so settled in New England, by common consent, that it brought into his mind the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Mr. Davenport had always been a warm advocate of that colonial enterprise. He was one of those by whose means the Massachusetts patent was obtained. At his own request, his name was not inserted among those of the patentees, for fear it might provoke a fiercer opposition in the privy council, from his old adversary Laud, who was then bishop of London. He contributed the generous sum of fifty pounds to help in procuring the charter, and exerted his influence every way he could, to promote the undertaking. He felt that the leadings of Providence were drawing him to this western strand. " He that openeth, and no man shutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth,"—He, with providential hand, had closed every door of usefulness against him, except that which stood open beyond the Atlantic.

To prepare for this voyage, Mr. Davenport returned to London. Ever tenacious of his principles, he told his old friends there, "that he thought God carried him over into Holland, on purpose to bear witness against that *promiscuous* baptism." He and his faithful companion, Theophilus Eaton, collected a band of colonists, whom they led out of spiritual Egypt, the house of bondage and oppression, into the distant land of promise. He who divided the Red Sea before the Israelites, gave this little company as safe a passage across the ocean. They arrived at Boston in the *Hector* and another ship, on the twenty-sixth of June, 1637. Among other passengers, who came with this expedition, was Edward Hopkins, son-in-law of Governor Eaton, and himself for many years governor of Connecticut colony. By his will, he became a distinguished benefactor of Harvard College, and several other institutions of learning in New England. With these came also Lord Leigh, son and heir of the Earl of Marlboro', a youth of nineteen, humble and pious, who came merely to see the country; and returned to England a few weeks after, in company with Sir Henry Vane.

Mr. Davenport was heartily welcomed by

Mr. Cotton and his associates. His arrival occurred while the whole country was agitated by the antinomian convulsion. On the seventeenth of August, he preached in the clay-built church of Boston, from the text;—"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." 1 Cor. 1: 10. In this sermon, as Governor Winthrop, who heard it, tells us, "as he fully set forth the nature and danger of divisions, and the disorders which were among us, so he clearly discovered his judgment against the new opinions and bitter practices which were sprung up here. He at once took an active part in the adjustment of that perilous controversy: and his wisdom and knowledge were made conspicuous in the Synod of 1637, by which those dangerous errors were suppressed. At the request of the Synod, he closed the proceedings by a sermon on the text, Phil. 3: 16;—"Nevertheless, whereunto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." In this discourse, he declared the result of the assembly, and, "with much wisdom and sound argument," urged to unity and harmony.

This troublesome business being disposed of, he set himself in earnest to find a place of abode for his colony. This body of emigrants was composed of "very desirable folk," and the Massachusetts people were very earnest to have them settle in "the Bay." The Charlestown settlers made them large offers of their territory; the grantees of Newbury offered them their whole town; and the General Court begged their acceptance of any ungranted region within the bounds of the patent. The refusal of these urgent invitations was regarded as almost an unkindness by those who coveted this accession to their strength.

But Mr. Davenport and Mr. Eaton had already visited Quinipiac, to which they afterwards gave the name of New Haven. They were much taken with the beauty and fertility of that tract of country: and, inasmuch as they had no royal grant or patent, and that region was not included in the limits of any patent already given, they hoped, by living there, to be exempted from the authority of any governor general. The people, at that time, were apprehensive that such a governor would be sent out by the king to restrain their liberties; and the wish to escape from such authority was very natural. More-

over, it was taken into consideration, that it was important to forestall the Dutch colonists of New Amsterdam, now New York, who were intending to secure Quinipiac for themselves. Another advantage likely to result from the forming of this English settlement was, the strengthening of the infant colony of Connecticut, whose headquarters were at Hartford. These two colonies continued to be entirely distinct for many years. It was also thought, that Mr. Davenport's residence in Massachusetts might tend to draw down upon that colony the speedier wrath of archbishop Laud, who loved them not before. When he heard, that Mr. Davenport had fled to New England to avoid the storm of prelatie indignation, that bitter persecutor grimly said ;—“ My arm shall reach him there ! ” It was supposed that the scattering of those who were obnoxious to Laud into different places, might lessen the motives for stretching out his potent arm against them. As it was, that arch-priest of unrelenting superstition had obtained a commission from the king to exercise his ghostly tyranny over these colonies, and compel conformity by the severest measures. But the political excitements at home obliged him and his monarch to confine their activity to resisting

a revolution whose whirlings threw their heads from off their shoulders. As John Cotton expressed it;—"God rocked three nations with shaking dispensations, in order to procure some rest for these infant churches."

Mr. Davenport and his companions gave as their principal reason for removing to New Haven after nine months' stay in the older colony, that most of them were Londoners, who were not so well fitted for an agricultural, as for a commercial, settlement; which they thought might be formed with better prospects at Quinipiac than at any unoccupied place on the Bay. They sailed from Boston for the place of their destination on the thirtieth of March, 1638. They left a letter, dated the twelfth of the same month, and addressed to the government at Boston. In this affectionate farewell, they acknowledge gratefully the kindness they had experienced. They anticipate the future services which shall be mutually rendered by the older plantation and that which they are going to make. These plantations, they say, "the Divine Providence hath combined together in a strong bond of brotherly affection, by the sameness of their condition, as Joab and Abishai were, whose several armies did mutually



strengthen them both against several enemies :—or rather they are joined together as Hippocrates his twins, to stand and fall, to grow and decay, to flourish and wither, to live and die together.”

After all, it is not unlikely, that one of the principal motives which induced Mr. Davenport to urge his companions to plant themselves in an unsubdued part of the wilderness, was an inclination to have their own way. They wished to frame their church and commonwealth on a model more thoroughly scriptural than could be found anywhere else. Mr. Davenport, as well as John Robinson, had observed, that reformation is seldom carried further in any place than where the first reformers left the work. Mr. Davenport remarked, that “as easily might the ark have been removed from the mountains of Ararat, where it first grounded, as a people get any ground in reformation after and beyond the first remove of the reformers.” With such sentiments, it was natural, that he should wish to have the religious and civil affairs of his colony, from the outset, fashioned in the strictest conformity with the rules of the Bible. This could be best effected where every thing was to be begun anew.

This band of pilgrims reached Quinipiac, the future New Haven, on the fourteenth of April, 1638. Mr. Davenport was then forty-one years of age. The next day is the Sabbath. A drum beats in the rude and hasty encampment. The armed men, with their wives and children, gather at this signal under a branching oak. They meet to consecrate to God a new region reclaimed from heathen darkness. For the first time the aisles of that forest-temple resounded with the praises of the Most High. Here are men who were nurtured in the halls of Oxford and Cambridge; and women used to all the elegant refinements of the British metropolis. They are gathered under the oaken tree. Why are they here? Why this change in their condition? Why are they here, far from the haunts of civilization, confronting privation and suffering in every form? It is for conscience, to keep that sacred thing unspotted:—it is for posterity:—for eternity:—for God! Surely angels rejoiced, while Infinite Love smiled upon the scene. Mr. Davenport preached from the text, Matthew 4: 1,—“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil:”—and his subject was, “the temptations of the wilderness.” Every place, however

sequestered, has its trials. In every place, we have need to watch and pray.

The colonists were in no rash haste to frame their institutions. During the fourteen months in which they were laboriously erecting their dwellings, and clearing their lands, they were much occupied in social prayer and conference, with reference to the important undertaking before them. During this period Mr. Davenport prepared his "Discourse about civil government in a New Plantation whose Design is Religion." This treatise was published many years after, in 1673. It is a vindication of the practice, long maintained by our fathers, of restricting the rights of voting, and of holding office, to such as are members of the Church.

When ripe for action, "all the free planters" assembled on the fourth of June, 1639, in a barn, for the purpose of organizing a civil government. There was a sermon by Mr. Davenport from Proverbs 9 : 1,—“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.” After much other discourse by different individuals, they formed a literal “social contract,” and erected themselves into a body politic by a mutual compact. It was then unanimously agreed to choose twelve men to lay the

foundation of the church. These twelve men were empowered to select seven out of their own number to constitute the new church. This number may have been suggested as an allusion to the seven pillars of Wisdom's house: but more probably it was adopted because our fathers considered seven to be the smallest number which could issue a case of discipline according to the directions of our Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. Of this particular seven, Mr. Davenport was one. He, with the six, entered into a covenant, and constituted the first church in New Haven on the twenty-second of August, 1639. Being thus gathered, they proceeded to admit others into their fellowship.

Shortly after the church was organized, Mr. Davenport was chosen pastor. He was ordained by the hands of two or three of the lay-brethren, though Mr. Hooker and Mr. Stone, the reverend pastors of the church in Hartford, were present, and one of them made the prayer. This ceremony was used, notwithstanding the validity of Mr. Davenport's ordination in the Church of England was not doubted. But it was held, that his earlier ordination could not constitute him a minister of this new church,

any more than a man's being a lawful magistrate in England would make him a magistrate in a foreign jurisdiction without further commission. Such ordinations of one who had previously been admitted to the ministry, our fathers regarded just as we do what we call installations. The laying on of hands was used, as often as a minister was translated from one pastoral charge to another. It was intended merely as a solemn recognition of him in his new relation to a particular church.

Ordination by laymen, usually the ruling elders and deacons of the church, was practiced only in a few instances in the first settlement of this country : and soon went into disuse.

Other churches rapidly sprung up around New Haven ; and religion in its highest purity as to faith and order flourished among them. They could soon sing with satisfaction Sternhold's antiquated stave ;—

“ Go walk about all Syon hill,  
 Yea, round about her go :  
 And tell the towres that thereupon  
 Are builded on a roe :  
 And marke you well her bulwarkes all,  
 Behold her towres there,  
 That ye may tell thereof to them  
 That after shall be here.  
 For this God is our God forevermore is hee ;  
 Yea, and unto the death also, our guider shall he be.”

Their minister was an original genius, and the plan he adopted was his own, "and if success be any evidence of merit, he certainly has high claims to the veneration and gratitude of nations." "There the famous church of New Haven, as also the neighboring towns, enjoyed his ministry, his discipline, his government, and his *universal direction* for many years. The holiness, the watchfulness, and the usefulness of his ministry, are worthy of the remembrance of all who would set before them an example of ministerial excellence." \*

From this time Mr. Davenport exercised his ministry in great peace, and with the happiest effects. He was the spiritual father of the community which grew up around him, taking its character from the strong impression of his irresistible influence. He was regarded with the reverence and love which belonged to the patriarchs of old: and rejoiced in many seals of his ministry whom he gathered into the church, not without a most careful, and yet gentle examination, on which duty he laid the greatest stress.

The society of his old friend, the excellent Eaton, for twenty years the governor of the new

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\* Brooke's Puritans, III. 450.

colony, was a great solace to the exiled Puritan. An eloquent passage from Dr. Bacon's invaluable "Historical Discourses" is entitled to insertion here. "He and his friend Eaton build their dwellings over against each other on the same street; and the intimacy begun when they were children, and strengthened in their early manhood, is prolonged without interruption, till in a good old age, death separates them for a season, to meet again in heaven. They were never out of each other's thoughts; and rarely could a day pass by, in which they did not see each other, and take counsel together. The voice of prayer, or the evening psalm, in one of their dwellings, might be heard in the other. Whatever changes came upon one family, the other was sure to partake immediately in the sorrow or the joy. In such neighborhood and intimacy, these two friends passed their days here, till the full strength of manhood in which they came, had gradually turned to venerable age. They saw trials, many and various; trials such as weigh heaviest on the spirit, and cause the heart to faint; but, in all their trials, they had one hope, one consolation; and how refreshing to such men, in such vicissitudes, is the sympathy of kindred souls, well-tryed and

true. Strong in themselves, with the gifts of nature, the endowments of education and experience, and the unction of Almighty grace; strong in their individual reliance upon God, their help and Saviour; they were the stronger for their friendship, the stronger for their mutual counsels, the stronger for the sympathy by which each drew the other towards the great Fountain of strength, and love, and life. Such are the friendships of good men. Their intimacies make them better, holier, happier, more patient for endurance, wiser for counsel, stronger for every godlike action."

In 1651, the Second Church in Boston, which was then recently formed, invited Mr. Davenport to become their pastor: but he was too firmly attached to his flock, to leave it without clearer convictions that such was his duty than he felt at that time.

As he became an old man, he saw the face of society around him changing. His beloved Eaton and many more of his fellow-pilgrims had gone the way of all the earth, and others were coming up in their room. But nothing could quench his zeal, or slacken his industry. He made strenuous and successful exertions to bring about the establishment of a college in



New Haven, which, in time, was effected. The common-school system of New England rose up very much from his influence, being ever zealous for universal education.

On the restoration of Charles II., in 1660, some who had been active in the times of the commonwealth, were brought to the scaffold; and others fled for their lives. The surviving members of the court which condemned Charles I. to the scaffold, were pursued with special fury. Of these regicide judges, as they were called, four, at least, escaped to this country. One of them, Thomas Revel, died in Braintree; one, Col. Dixwell, died in New Haven, and two more in the town of Hadley. These two were Whalley and Goffe, who had been major generals; and stood in the same relation to Cromwell, wherein Napoleon's marshals stood to that "man of destiny." Goffe and Whalley were too conspicuous marks of royal vengeance to be allowed an easy escape.

Great efforts were made by the partizans of the king to effect the arrest of this pair of compatriots, who were men of interesting personal character and eminent piety, as well as distinguished for the high stations they had filled. They sought concealment in one place after

another; avoiding arrest, only through the strong sympathy of the magistrates and people. They came to New Haven on the seventh of March. On this occasion Mr. Davenport preached a sermon whose boldness bordered on temerity. He courageously and successfully sought to awake the strongest public sentiment in behalf of the fugitives. He applied to the case those striking words of the prophet;—“Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noon-day; hide the outcasts, bewray not him that wandereth: let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler.”

The people were thus prepared to do their utmost to screen the hunted men. Of the many individuals who must have been aware of their hiding-places, not one was tempted either by fear of punishment, or hope of rich reward, to betray them. Among other places, they were concealed for more than a month in Mr. Davenport's house. Chased from one retreat to another, they were secreted for some three months in a cave in the vicinity of New Haven. Learning, while there, that Mr. Davenport was in danger of being arrested under a charge of

concealing them, they came into the town, and showed themselves openly, for the purpose of clearing him of the charge. After "wandering in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth," the violence of pursuit gradually died away. They passed many years in devout seclusion, and died at last in peace.

In Mr. Davenport's conduct on this occasion, was blended great courage and adroitness. "Not fearing the wrath of the king," he displayed a generous and magnanimous friendship worthy of those heroic times, when good men felt, that "opposition to tyrants is obedience to God."

The people of the Connecticut colony, in 1662, obtained a charter from Charles II., of the most favorable character. In this charter the New Haven territory was added to theirs; and they at once claimed jurisdiction. The New Haven colony, for a time, warmly resisted the change; but was at last constrained to acquiesce. This change was exceedingly distasteful to Mr. Davenport, who feared that the civil and religious order he had fostered with such care might be impaired as to its purity or efficacy.

Another thing which sorely afflicted him was, the introduction of what was called the "Half-

Way Covenant," into the New England churches. After many attempts to bring in this practice, it was decided in a synod held in Boston in 1662, that all persons who had been baptized in their infancy, and who would come forward and own their covenant obligations, should have the privilege of baptism for their children. The next innovation was, to consider this class of persons as members entitled to the actual enjoyment of all the privileges of the church, except the right of coming to the Lord's table. It required but one step more to make such persons members in full communion, though professing to be total strangers to any such thing as a work of grace in the heart. At last it was argued that such as were members of the church, might also enter the ministry; and accordingly many confessedly unregenerate persons were inducted into the sacred office. It took some seventy years or more to complete all these successive declensions. But a hundred years ago these corruptions had nearly reached the lowest depth of laxity. The glory of New England had mostly departed. Arminianism had made great inroads; and although speculative orthodoxy still held the most of the ground, it was for the most part dead and barren. The great

revival in the time of Edwards and Whitefield, for a season, checked the decay of evangelical sentiments. But the process of corruption soon resumed its course, until the early part of this century witnessed that terrible apostacy from the faith of our fathers and the doctrines of the gospel, over which the Massachusetts churches are still mourning in sackcloth.

This train of innovations was not started without a warm opposition. When the result of the synod in 1662 was published, the whole country was at once divided into parties, which were distinguished by the names of Synodist and Anti-synodist. Among the Synodists, strange and sad to say, were some of the most beloved and venerated of the old stock of puritan ministers. Alas, these good men saw not whither the path they were opening would tend. But Mr. Davenport fully anticipated the deplorable results which were reached at last. Many years before, he had combated the same erroneous principles while an exile in Holland. And now that they had broken out in New England, he opposed them with the firmness of age, as well as the unabated fire of his youth. He became the leader of the Anti-synodists, and discharged some of the heaviest guns in that

pamphlet-war. Several of his manuscripts relating to this contest are preserved by the Antiquarian Society at Worcester.

While this controversy was waging, the First church in Boston was deprived by death of both its pastors. The learned Norton and the beloved Wilson were gone. Both of these good men were in favor of that unfortunate synod; and the greater part of the church-members had assented to its canons. But in those difficult and exciting times, it was thought that no young man, and no man not bred at the English universities, could be competent to take the charge of that important church. The eyes of the majority were turned towards Mr. Davenport. He was then in his seventieth year, and had been an invalid for a long time; but he was at the height of his reputation, and his powers in the pulpit were unimpaired by age. The changes which had taken place at New Haven, where he had ministered for thirty years, made him more willing than formerly to leave it. He felt too, that he had a great duty in reference to withstanding the dangerous deviations which were going on at Boston. He accepted the call which was tendered him. The church of New Haven clung to him with a desperate tenacity;

utterly refused to grant him any kind of dismission ; and, after long and tedious correspondence, would only passively acquiesce in letting him do as he pleased. They adopted the language of the saints at Cesarea, when Paul would not desist from going to Jerusalem ;—" When he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done."

At the same time his settlement at Boston was vigorously opposed by a minority of the members of the church, many of them persons of note and eminence. They were warm upholders of the Synod ; and, of course, were vehemently opposed to coming under the ministry of the leading divine on the other side of the question, which then was " the most exciting topic of the day." Their resistance was unavailing. Mr. Davenport and Mr. James Allen were, on the ninth of December, 1668, installed as co-pastors of the First Church.

The disaffected members, to the number of twenty-eight, withdrew, and were organized at Charlestown into what is now known as the Old South Church. This division produced a long and disturbing contest between these two churches, in which most of the ministers and churches in the colony took part. Seventeen

ministers, probably of the council at Charlestown, gave their public testimony against the proceedings of the First Church, and especially of the pastors, Davenport and Allen, and ruling-elder James Pen'n. The old church published a reply. Some of the members of the new church appear to have been fined and imprisoned for the supposed irregularity of their proceedings. The whole colony was drawn into the contest. Governor Bellingham, who was a member of the First Church, espoused its cause with zeal. Of this we find an instance preserved among the Massachusetts Records. In 1669, his pastor, Mr. Davenport, preached the Annual Election Sermon, which was published. In this, he expressed his sentiments on the controverted point. The Deputies who, in that Court, favored his views, were for passing the customary vote of thanks for the discourse. The Magistrates or Assistants, who formed the other branch, hearing of the pending vote, sent a communication, on the twenty-fifth of May, 1669, to the Deputies about it, saying that they "conceive the same to be altogether unseasonable, many passages in the said sermon, being ill-resented by the reverend elders of other churches and persons present; and, therefore, they would



forbear further proceeding therein." The Secretary of the "upper house," Edward Rawson, attests, that the Governor, who was the presiding officer, and who agreed with the Deputies in sentiment, refused to put this resolve to the vote; and so the vote was taken by Mr. Bradstreet, who was called by the Magistrates so to do. The Deputies, of course, did as they pleased in the premises. The next year also, Governor Bellingham tried in vain to get the Council of Magistrates to unite with him in measures for preventing the erection of the new house of worship. But though he had no success in that quarter, he was warmly supported by the Deputies; who, at their session in May, 1670, censured the formation of the new church as "irregular, illegal and disorderly." Great agitation was the result; and parties were organized among the people at large. The next election turned upon this point; and the new house of Deputies, at the petition of many of the ministers, annulled the censure. Thus the new church triumphed at last. The origin of all this disturbance, and this ardor in favor of the Half-Way Covenant, was political. According to the basis of the government as it then stood, none could be freemen of the colony, entitled to vote

and be voted for, except such as were members of some church acknowledged by the laws of the land. The Half-Way Covenant was intended to bring in a multitude of church-members, who could be admitted in no other way; and who thus became capable of admission to all the civil privileges of the colony. This was the object of most of the Synodists. Mr. Davenport, with the Anti-synodists, was for keeping up the primitive order, both in church and commonwealth. With him, it was altogether a religious question; with the Synodists, it was, in great part, a question of civil rights, though they too rested their defence mostly on considerations of a religious kind.

Thus the connection between the Church and State, though at first intended for the advantage and security of the former, resulted in its corruption. And it is singular, that most of the laws which were framed, at intervals, to favor the Orthodox and Congregational order, in the process of time and change, came to operate against that order with ruinous effect, till the last of those laws was repealed in 1834. The history of Congregationalism in Massachusetts is an instructive commentary on such laws, and proves their pernicious and disastrous bearing

upon the communities which they are designed to favor. By no people on earth would the union of Church and State be more strenuously resisted than by the good people of Massachusetts, whose experience has bitterly taught them the impolicy of such measures.

The contentions between the First and Third Churches of Boston were sharp and violent. We have not room to give the particulars. Suffice it to say, that, after fourteen years of strife, the First Church and the Old South were happily reconciled. It is a matter of serious meditation, that the First Church, in those days, represented the primitive and high-toned orthodoxy of the land; while the Third, or, as we now say, Old South Church, was considered as leaning toward a laxer discipline.

Mr. Davenport's ministry, which had lasted nearly twenty years in London, and nearly thirty years in New Haven, was of short duration at Boston. "It is ill transplanting a tree that thrives in the soil." In less than two years after his last removal, he died very suddenly, of apoplexy, on the fifteenth of March, 1670, being seventy-two years of age. He was buried with every testimonial of respect in the tomb of the venerated Cotton.

Mr. Davenport was too familiar with the thoughts of death to be disconcerted at this sudden call. Such was his habitual state of preparation, that he could have adopted the language of another good man ;—" I bless God I can lie down with comfort at night, without being solicitous whether I awake in this world or another." He who had spent his life in communing with Christ and his saints on earth, was ever ready to go and commune with Christ and saints in heaven. As good Mr. Hooker said of himself, in his dying hours, he was only going to change his place, but not his company.

So quickly was Mr. Davenport's life taken away,—or rather, so quickly was death given to him,—that he left none of those golden words which so many expiring saints have bequeathed as a treasured legacy, to help such as are coming after them to die.

It may have been a presentiment that his end might be too sudden to allow of a long death-prayer, that made Mr. Davenport constantly use those devout ejaculations which were his wont. He once solemnly counseled a young minister, "that he should be much in ejaculatory prayer ; for indeed ejaculatory prayers, as arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are

they. Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them." Those who knew him best, were satisfied of his skill in this spiritual archery. He was not only uniform in stated devotions, whether secret, domestic, or social; but at every pause or turn in his daily affairs, he was ever tying the desires of his soul to these winged missives; and vigorously drawing the bow of faith, he sped them over the walls of heaven. His example taught what has been beautifully expressed by Quarles;

" Dart up thy soul in groans; thy secret groan  
 Shall pierce His ear, shall pierce His ear alone;  
 Dart up thy soul in vows; thy sacred vow  
 Shall find Him out where heaven alone shall know;  
 Dart up thy soul in sighs; thy whispering sigh  
 Shall rouse His ears, and fear no listener nigh;  
 Shoot up the bosom-shafts of thy desire,  
 Feathered with faith, and double-forked with fire;  
 And they will hit!—Fear not where Heaven bids come,  
 Heaven's never deaf, but when man's heart is dumb."

Mr. Davenport was a laborious student throughout his long life. So unremitting was his application, that it excited the attention of the wild Indians in his vicinity, who used to call him, according to their custom of applying significant or descriptive names, "So-big-study-man." Most of his published treatises relate to

the obsolete controversies of his day ; and have little interest now, except for the historian or the antiquary. One volume of his, a work of experimental piety, called "The Saint's Anchorhold, in all Storms and Tempests," is worthy of the republication it would receive, could a perfect copy be found. He left some expository and practical writings prepared for publication ; but, to use one of John Cotton's singular metaphors, these fair clusters of grapes have never passed under the press, that all who would might quaff the juice, and rejoice.

"This grave and serious-spirited man," was regarded as one of the first preachers of his day. One who knew him well has said ;—"He was a person beyond exception and compare, for all ministerial abilities." Increase Mather, who, in his earlier life was the intimate friend of Mr. Davenport's old age, gives him this testimony ;—"I have heard some say, who knew him in his younger years, that he was then very fervent and vehement, as to the manner of his delivery. But, in his later times, he did very much imitate Mr. Cotton ; whom, in the gravity of his countenance, he did somewhat resemble."

Venerable man ! We can almost see him

rising up in the antiquated pulpit of the First Church; the thinness of his frame, wasted by hard study and disease, concealed by the gown which the ministers of "the standing order" then generally wore, when abroad, as a customary article of dress. Being university-men, they used it, rather as an academical, than a clerical garb. We notice next the benevolent visage, mild even to an expression almost feminine, were it not for the trim tufts of silvery beard upon either lip. We see a few bleached locks escaping from the confinement of the old "Roundheads' close black cap." The broad bands of "formal cut" smoothly cover his neck and bosom. And we are caught by the radiating eyes, those windows of the soul, through which is seen the inward burning, the quenchless life-fire, which age and sorrow cannot dim. While he is pronouncing his text in measured tones and slow, the congregation rises up from the seats as a token of respect for the eternal word of God. The audience is again seated, to listen intently to strains of oratory, impassioned, but well-controlled; such as is the child of entire conviction, and the mother of full persuasion. Says the historian, Hubbard, who knew him well, speaking of him in his old age;—"Yet

was he of that vivacity, that the strength of his memory, profoundness of his judgment, and floridness of his doctrine, were little, if at all abated."

This was John Davenport;—"old when young, such was his gravity of behavior; and young when old, such was the quickness of his endowments."

Shall it be said, that this race of men is extinct? Is there no survivor to be found? Nay:—where is that father, or that venerated grand-sire,—that conscientious, devout, Sabbath-keeping Puritan whom you knew in your best, your youthful days? Have you forgotten the gathering of the household to the morning and evening sacrifice of the family altar? Do you no longer remember the godly man, who, ere he bowed in prayer, recited a portion of Holy Writ "with judicious care," with an altered voice, and an intonation which bespoke his awful sense of the majesty of the oracles of God, read as no other book was read? Does not every sight of the old Family Bible, between whose Testaments is the written record of your own birth and baptism, bring up the patriarchal form to view? And is it in your heart to forsake your father's faith and your father's God? Will you seem to discredit



the wisdom and goodness of your parent by forsaking "the good old ways" he chose and loved? Will you turn aside to courses, which, if he be yet living, must bow that reverend head beneath the weight of sorrow? Is there left in your soul no cherished memory of that mother in Israel, whose holy living looked so saintly and heavenlike in your youthful days? Do you verily feel that the course she took conducted her safely through the gloomy vale of death to the city of God, the eternal home of the pure? O follow on in that luminous track, that radiant path to heaven's gate, which opened so brightly at her coming.

But if ever there was danger, that the Puritans might be forgotten, all such danger is now rapidly passing away. If their offspring could ever prove so degenerate as to forget them, their memory will be devoutly blessed by others. Never can the writer of these pages cease to remember the emotions with which he once listened to that immortal lay,—“The Landing of the Fathers.” It was in the unpuritanical, but lovely clime of Florida. The accomplished daughter of one of the old Spanish families, herself a Romanist, and bred within convent-walls, took her place at the instrument amid a brilliant

assembly gathered from many distant regions. As her fingers ran along the keys, he thought he could not be mistaken in the familiar symphony and "soft prelusive strain." But when her rich full voice burst forth in the stirring words,

" The breaking waves dashed high  
On a stern and rock-bound coast,"—

he was lost in surprise and pleasure. The spell was ended all too soon, as the last solemn notes died away,—

" Aye, call it holy ground,  
The soil where first they trod:  
They have left unstained, what there they found,  
Freedom to worship God!"

Her gratified hearer could not refrain from advancing to the side of this bright daughter of the sunny South, and accosting her in the words of Coleridge to a truly noble Duchess,

" O lady, nursed 'mid pomp and pleasure,  
Whence learned you that heroic measure?"

She turned upon him her intense dark eye, which flashed with the humid fire peculiar to the women of her race, and her countenance kindling with enthusiasm; and replied,—“ O Sir, this is my favorite song. Where can you find such sentiments combined with such music?” This incident, in a far-off region, among

people of other lineage, was felt as a proud tribute to our pilgrim-sires.

While engaged in these humble, but affectionate endeavors to keep alive the memory of the good old Puritans of New England;—and while rehearsing the mighty deeds of some of “the chief fathers” of the tribes of our Israel, it has been like preaching their funeral sermons. So vital and operative is their surviving influence, that, though dead and silent in the tomb, they “still speak in reason’s ear.” So active are they yet among us, and so familiar to our contemplations, that they seem almost like old acquaintances, with whom we have held reverent and endearing converse. Let us bless God for the power of religion, so gloriously exemplified in them! Let us adore him for the grace which made them what they were!

We have been wandering-pensively “in the place of graves,” among the memorials of the noble and pious dead. We have raised up the sinking tablets, and retouched the time-worn and moss-grown inscriptions. It has been a labor of sweet, grateful love to twine the fresh garlands of remembrance around the old sepulchral urns. And now what does natural piety and filial gratitude demand of us, who inherit

the rich fruits of the wisdom, the prayers, and the sufferings of our sires? Can we do less than maintain our stand upon their approved principles and practices? Can we do less than use, and act upon, the customary petition of the pious Deans, to be "delivered from right-hand extremes, and from left-hand defections?" Shall we ever permit ourselves to relapse into that hierarchal thralldom from which our fathers so conscientiously fled? Or to sink down into those heresies which they so religiously abhorred? May the God of our fathers forbid it! We are told of the ancient Scythians, that when forced to retreat in battle, if they chanced to come to the graves of their ancestors, they would give back no further. There they would stand immovable: and either conquer, or die upon the spot. Oh, let us take our stand where our fathers sleep in God, and where their dust is resting in hope. Let us be steadfast to their faith and order in the gospel; and be firm, in cherishing, like them, the life and power of godliness. So shall we either win the day, or achieve a death more glorious than victory itself.

*The following list of Mr. Davenport's printed works, to which, after very careful research, but little in addition could be found, is mostly taken from Rev. Dr. Bacon's Historical Researches.*

A Royal Edict for Military Exercises, published in a Sermon preached to the captains and gentlemen that exercise arms in the Artillery Garden, at their general meeting in Saint Andrews Under-shaft in London. *Lond.* 1629. There is a copy in the Atheneum Library, Boston.

A Letter to the Dutch, containing a Just Complaint against an Unjust Doer: Wherein is declared the miserable Slavery and Bondage that the English Church of Amsterdam is now in, by reason of the Tyrannical Government and Corrupt Doctrine of Mr. John Paget, their present Minister. By John Davenport.—*Amst.* 1634. 4to.

Certain Instructions delivered to the Elders of the English Church deputed, which are to be propounded to the pastors of the Dutch Church in Amsterdam, 1634. Wood, (*Athenæ Oxonienses*,) calls it a quarto paper.

1. A Report of some passages or proceedings about his calling to the English Church in Amsterdam, against John Paget. 2. Allegations of Scripture against the baptizing of some kind of infants. 3. Protestation about the publishing of his writings. These three "little scripts," as Wood calls them, were all printed in quarto at Amsterdam, in 1634. Mr. Paget replied in a book of 156 pages quarto, entitled, "An Answer to the Unjust Complaints, &c." To this book Mr. Davenport made a rejoinder in the following article.

An Apologetical Reply to a book called "An Answer to the Unjust Complaint of W[illiam] B[est], &c." quarto. Rotterdam, 1636. A copy of this is among the books deposited by the Old South Church in the Library of the Mass. Historical Society.

Profession of Faith made publicly before the Congregation at his admission into one of the Churches of New England; containing twenty several heads. 1. Concerning the Scriptures, &c. *Lond.* 1642. One sheet, quarto.

The Messiah is already come. A Sermon on Acts 2: 36. *Lond.* 1653. Quarto.

The Knowledge of Christ, &c., wherein the types, prophecies, genealogies, miracles, humiliation, &c., of Christ are opened and applied. Quarto, printed 1658 or before.

Catechism containing the chief heads of the Christian Religion. Lond. 1659, octavo. Published at the desire and for the use of the Church of Christ in New Haven.

The Saints' Anchor-hold, in all storms and tempests, preached in sundry sermons, and published for the support and comfort of God's people in all times of trial. Lond. 1661. 12mo.

Another Essay for investigation of the truth, in answer to two questions, &c. Cambridge, 1663. Quarto. There is a copy in the possession of Rev. Thomas Robbins, D. D., of Hartford, Conn.

Election Sermon, at Boston, 1669.

God's Call to his People to turn unto him, &c., in two sermons on two public fasting days in New England. Lond. 1670. Quarto

The Power of Congregational Churches Asserted and Vindicated; In answer to a Treatise of Mr. J. Paget, intituled, "The Defence of Church Government, exercised in Classes and Synods." By John Davenport, B. D., and Pastor to the Church in New Haven in New England.—Isai. 1 : 26.—Lond. Printed in the year 1672. 16mo. pp. 179. There is a copy in the Library of Harvard University. It was not published till twenty-seven years after it was first written; the original draft being lost at sea on its way to the press. See a good abstract in the second volume of Hanbury's Memorials.

A Discourse about Civil Government in a New Plantation whose design is Religion. Cambridge, 1673. Quarto. This is the Tract erroneously bearing the name of John Cotton on the title-page.

He also published a Latin epistle to John Dury on the Union of Protestant Churches.

He wrote several Introductorys to other men's works: among which his epistle before Scudder's Daily Walk is mentioned as worthy to be reckoned itself a book.

His Exposition of the Canticles was just going into the press at London, when the death of the undertaker of the publication stopped it. This is to be lamented, because it was prefaced by a life of the

author, drawn up by Increase Mather, which is now lost. Mr. Davenport also wrote an unprinted life of John Cotton, which was once in Governor Hutchinson's hands; but is now lost. Several of his manuscripts relative to the Synodalian controversy are in the Library of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester, Mass.

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