

THE
LIFE AND TIMES
OF
RICHARD BAXTER.

CHAPTER I.

1615—1638.

Birth of Baxter—Character of his Father—Low State of Religion—Baxter's first religious Impressions—His early Education—Progress of his religious Feelings—Residence at Ludlow Castle—Escapes acquiring a Taste for Gaming—Returns Home—Illness and its Effects—Nature and Progress of his Education—Its Defects—Troubled with Doubts—Distress of Mind—Dis-eased Habit of Body—Goes to Court—Remarkable Preservation—Death of his Mother—His Attachment to the Ministry—His Conformity—Becomes acquainted with the Nonconformists—Ordained to the Ministry.

THE excellent person whose life and writings constitute the subject of the following memoirs, was the son of Richard Baxter, of Eaton-Constantine, in Shropshire. His mother's name was Beatrice, a daughter of Richard Adeney, of Rowton, near High-Ercall, the seat of Lord Newport, in the same county. At this place Richard Baxter was born, on the 12th^a of November, 1615; and here he spent, with his grandfather, the first ten years of his life.

His father was a freeholder, and possessed of a moderate estate; but having been addicted to gaming in his youth, his

* It seems rather singular that Baxter should be guilty of a mistake respecting the day of his own birth. There is, however, a discrepancy between the date here given by himself, and that in the parish register. The following extract from it, made by my friend Mr. Williams, of Shrewsbury, shows that either Mr. Baxter or the parish clerk must have made a mistake. "Richard sonne and heyr of Richard Baxter of Eaton Constantyne and Beatrice his wife, baptized the *sixth* of November, 1615." If he was baptised on the sixth, he could not be born on the twelfth! But perhaps *sixth* is a mistake in the register for *sixteenth*.

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property became so deeply involved, that much care and frugality were required to disencumber it at a future period of his life. Before, or about the time that Richard was born, an important change took place in his father. This was effected chiefly by the reading of the Scriptures, as he had not the benefit of christian association, or of the public preaching of the Gospel. Indeed, the latter privilege could scarcely then be enjoyed in that county. There was little preaching of any kind, and that little was calculated to injure, rather than to benefit. In High Ercall, there were four readers in the course of six years; all of them ignorant, and two of them immoral men. At Eaton-Constantine, there was a reader of eighty years of age, Sir William Rogers, who never preached; yet he had two livings, twenty miles apart from each other. His sight failing, he repeated the prayers without book, but to read the lessons, he employed a common labourer one year, a tailor another; and, at last, his own son, the best stage-player and gamester in all the country, got orders, and supplied one of his places. Within a few miles round were nearly a dozen more ministers of the same description: poor, ignorant readers, and most of them of dissolute lives.^b Three or four, who were of a different character, though all conformists, were the objects of popular derision and hatred, as Puritans. When such was the character of the priests, we need not wonder that the people were profligate, and despisers of them that were good. The greater part of the Lord's-day was spent by the inhabitants of the village in dancing round a may-pole, near Mr. Baxter's door, to the no small distress and disturbance of the family.

To his father's instructions and example, young Richard was indebted for his first religious convictions. At a very early period, his mind was impressed by his serious conversation about God and the life to come. His conduct in the family also, and the manner in which he was reproached by the people as a Puritan and hypocrite, gave additional effect to his conversation. Parents should be careful what they say in the pre-

^b In his Third Defence of the Cause of Peace, Baxter gives the names of all the individuals above referred to, with additional circumstances of a disgraceful nature in the history of each. The statement is a very shocking one, even in the most mitigated form in which I could present it; but justice to Baxter and to his account of the times, required that the facts should not be withheld. They give a deplorable view of the state of the period, and show, very powerfully, the necessity of some of the measures which were pursued at a future period for the purification of the church.

sence of children, as well as what they say to them; for if occasional addresses are not supported by a regular train of holy and consistent conduct, they are not likely to produce salutary effect. There must have been some striking indications of religious feeling in Baxter, when a child; for his father remarked to Dr. Bates, that he would even then reprove the improper conduct of other children, to the astonishment of those who heard him.* The account, too, which he gives of the early visitings of his conscience, shows that something was operating in him, the nature and design of which he did not then fully understand. He was addicted, during his boyhood, to various evils—such as lying, stealing fruit, levity, pride, disobedience to parents. These sins made him occasionally very uneasy, even in his youth, and cost him considerable trouble to overcome. It would be improper, however, to attach much importance to these uneasy feelings, as such emotions have frequently been experienced in early life, yet never followed by any evidence of decided change of character. It is only when they continue, or are afterwards accompanied by an entire change of life, that they ought to be considered as of heavenly origin. This was happily the case in the present instance. Baxter's early impressions and convictions, though often like the morning cloud and early dew, were never entirely dissipated; but at last fully established themselves in a permanent influence on his character.

His early education was very imperfectly conducted. From six to ten years of age, he was under the four successive curates of the parish, two of whom never preached, and the two who had the most learning of the four drank themselves to beggary, and then left the place. At the age of ten he was removed to his father's house, where Sir William Rogers, the old blind man of whom we have already spoken, was parson. One of his curates who succeeded a person who was driven away on being discovered to have officiated under forged orders, was Baxter's principal schoolmaster. This man had been a lawyer's clerk, but hard drinking drove him from that profession, and he turned curate for a piece of bread. He only preached once in Baxter's time, and then was drunk! From such men what instruction could be expected? How dismal must the state of the country have been, when they could be tolerated either as ministers or

* Funeral Sermon for Baxter.

teachers ! His next instructor, who loved him much, he tells us, was a grave and eminent man, and expected to be made a bishop. He also, however, disappointed him ; for during no less than two years, he never instructed him one hour ; but spent his time, for the most part, in talking against the factious Puritans. In his study, he remembered to have seen no Greek book but the New Testament ; the only father was Augustine de Civitate Dei ; there were a few common modern English works, and for the most of the year, the parson studied Bishop Andrews' Sermons.^d

Of Mr. John Owen, master of the free-school at Wroxeter, he speaks more respectfully. To him he was chiefly indebted for his classical instruction. He seems to have been a respectable man, and under him Baxter had for his schoolfellows the two sons of Sir Richard Newport, one of whom became Lord Newport ; and Dr. Richard Allestree, afterwards a distinguished loyalist, for which he was made Regius Professor of Divinity, at Oxford, and Provost of Eton College.^e When fitted for the University by Owen, his master recommended that instead of being sent to it, he should be put under the tuition of Mr. Richard Wickstead, chaplain to the Council at Ludlow, who was allowed by the king to have a single pupil. From him, as he had but one scholar, to whom he engaged to pay particular attention, much was naturally expected. But he also neglected his trust. He made it his chief business to please the great and seek preferment ; which he tried to do by speaking against the religion and learning of the Puritans, though he had no great portion of either himself. The only advantage young Baxter had with him, was the enjoyment of time and books.

Considering the great neglect of suitable and regular instruction, both secular and religious, which Baxter experienced in his youth, it is wonderful that he ever rose to eminence. Such disadvantages are very rarely altogether conquered. But the strength of his genius, the ardour of his mind, and the power of his religious principles, compensated for minor defects, subdued every difficulty, and bore down with irresistible energy every obstacle that had been placed in his way. As the progress of his religious character is of more importance than that of his learning, it is gratifying that we are able to trace it very minutely.

^d Apology for the Nonconformist Ministry, p. 58.

^e Athen. Oxon. vol. ii. p. 505.

The convictions of his childhood were powerfully revived when about fifteen years of age, by reading an old torn book, lent by a poor man to his father. This little work was called 'Bunny's Resolution,' being written by a Jesuit of the name of Parsons, but corrected by Edmund Bunny.^f Previously to this he had never experienced any real change of heart, though he had a sort of general love for religion. But it pleased God to awaken his soul, to show him the folly of sinning, the misery of the wicked, and the inexpressible importance of eternal things. His convictions were now attended with illumination of mind, and deep seriousness of heart. His conscience distressed him, led him to much prayer, and to form many resolutions; but whether the good work was then begun, or only revived, he never could satisfactorily ascertain. This is a circumstance of little importance. Regeneration can take place but once, but more conversions than one are required in many an individual's life.^g If we are assured that the great change has really been effected, the time and circumstances in which it occurs are of small moment.

Another work which was very useful to him at this time, is better known; 'The Bruised Reed,' by Dr. Richard Sibbs; a book which has passed through many editions, and has been honoured to do good to many. Here he discovered more clearly the nature of the love of God, and of the redemption of Christ; and was led to perceive how much he was indebted to the Redeemer. Till these things are understood, and their influence felt, no man can be considered as converted. The works of Perkins 'On Repentance,' on 'Living and Dying well,' and 'On the Government of the Tongue,' also contributed to instruct and improve him. Thus, by means of books rather than of living

^f This work was originally written on the principles of Popery; but Bunny expunged and altered whatever was unsuitable to the Protestant belief, and published it in an improved form. The Jesuit was naturally enough displeased at the freedom used with his work, which led Mr. Bunny to write a pamphlet in defence of his conduct. Bunny was a Puritan of the oldest class. He was rector of Bolton Percy, and enjoyed some other preferments in the church; but he was a man of apostolic zeal, and travelled much through the country for the purpose of preaching the gospel. He died in 1617. ('Athen. Oxon.' vol. 1. p. 364.) The work edited by Bunny was useful to others as well as to Baxter. Two other Nonconformist ministers, Mr. Fowler and Mr. Michael Old, were first seriously impressed by it; and Baxter tells us that he had heard of its success with others also. (Baxter against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction, p. 540.)

^g Luke xxii. 32.

instruments, God was pleased to lead him to himself. His connexions with men tended to injure and to stumble him rather than to do him good. Among the things he mentions which had no tendency to promote his spiritual profit, was his confirmation by Bishop Morton, to whom he went when about fourteen, with the rest of the boys. He asked no questions, required no certificate, and hastily said, as he passed on, three or four words of a prayer, which Baxter did not understand.^h The careless observance of the forms of religion, whether these forms be of human or divine ordination, is never defensible; and must always have a hardening effect on the mind.

While residing at Ludlow Castle with Mr. Wickstead, he was exposed to great temptation. When there, he formed an acquaintance with a young man, who afterwards unhappily apostatised, though he then appeared to be decidedly religious. They walked together, read together, prayed together, and were little separate by night or by day. He was the first person Baxter ever heard pray extempore, out of the pulpit; and who taught him to do the same. He appeared full of zeal and diligence, of liberality and love; so that, from his example and conversation he derived great benefit. This young man was first drawn from his attachment to the Puritans by a superior, then led to revile them, and finally to dishonour his profession by shameful debauchery. Such frequently is the progress of religious declension.

During his short residence at Ludlow Castle, Baxter made a narrow escape from acquiring a taste for gaming, of which he gives a curious account. The best gamester in the house undertook to teach him to play. The first or second game was so nearly lost by Baxter, that his opponent betted a hundred to one against him, laying down ten shillings to his sixpence. He told him there was no possibility of his winning, but by getting one cast of the dice very often. No sooner was the money down, than Baxter had every cast that he wished; so that before a person could go three or four times round the room the game was won. This so astonished him that he believed the devil had the command of the dice, and did it to entice him to play; in consequence of which he returned the ten shillings, and resolved never to play more. Whatever may be thought of the fact or of Baxter's reasoning on it, the result was to him important and beneficial.

^h Third Defence of Noncon. p. 40.

On returning from Ludlow Castle to his father's, he found his old schoolmaster, Owen, dying of a consumption. At the request of Lord Newport, he took charge of the school till it should appear whether the master would die or recover. In about a quarter of a year his death relieved Baxter from this office, and as he had determined to enter the ministry, he placed himself under Mr. Francis Garbet, then minister of Wroxeter, for further instruction in theology. With him he read logic about a month, but was seriously and long interrupted, by symptoms of that complaint which attended him to his grave. He was attacked by a violent cough, with spitting of blood, and other indications of consumption. These symptoms continued to distress him for two years, and powerfully tended to deepen his religious feelings. A common attendant on such a state of body, depression of spirits, Baxter also experienced. He became more anxious about his eternal welfare, entertained doubts of his own sincerity, and questioned whether he had any spiritual life whatever. He complained grievously of his insensibility: "I was not then," he says, "sensible of the incomparable excellence of holy love, and delight in God; nor much employed in thanksgiving and praise; but all my groans were for more contrition, and a broken heart; I prayed most for tears and tenderness."

Ezekiel Culverwell's 'Treatise on Faith,' and some other good books, together with the assistance of Mr. Garbet, and other excellent men, were the means of comforting and still further instructing him. The apparent approaches of death on the one hand, however, and the smittings of conscience on the other, were the discipline which, under gracious influence, produced the most valuable results. They made him appear vile and loathsome to himself, and destroyed the root of pride in his soul. They restrained that levity and folly to which he was, by age and constitution, inclined. They made this world appear to him as a carcass without life or loveliness, and undermined the love of literary fame, of which he had before been ambitious. They produced a higher value for the redemption of Christ, and greater ardour of devotedness to the Redeemer himself. They led him to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and to regard all other things as of subordinate and trifling importance. The man who experienced such benefits from the divine treatment, had reason to rejoice, rather than to complain of it; and so did Baxter.

In consequence of these things, divinity was not merely carried on

with the rest of his studies,—it had always the first and chief place. He was led to study practical theology in the first place, in the most practical books, and in a practical order. He did this for the purpose of instructing and reforming his own soul. He read a multitude of the best English theological works, before he read any foreign systems of divinity. Thus his affections were excited, while his judgment was informed; and having his own benefit chiefly in view, he pursued all his studies with the greater ardour and profit. It is matter of regret that theology is often studied more with a view to the benefit of others than of the student himself. It is pursued as a profession, rather than as belonging to personal character and enjoyment. Hence it frequently produces a pernicious instead of a salutary effect on the mind, and debases rather than elevates the character. Familiarity with divine things, which does not arise from personal interest in them, is to be dreaded more than most evils to which man is liable.

The broken state of his health, the irregularity of his teachers, and his never being at any university, materially injured his learning and occasioned lasting regrets. He never acquired any great knowledge of the learned languages. Of Hebrew he scarcely knew any thing; his acquaintance with Greek was not profound; and even in Latin, as his works show, he must be regarded by a scholar as little better than a barbarian. Of mathematics he knew nothing, and never had a taste for them. Of logic and metaphysics he was a devoted admirer, and to them he dedicated his labour and his delight. Definitions and distinctions were in a manner his occupation; the *quod sit*, the *quid sit*, and *quotuplex*—*modes*, *consequences*, and *adjuncts*, were his vocabulary. He never thought he understood any thing till he could anatomize it, and see the parts distinctly; and, certainly, very few have handled the knife more dexterously, or to so great an extent. His love of the niceties of metaphysical disquisition plunged him very early into the study of controversial divinity. The schoolmen were the objects of his admiration; Aquinas, Scotus, Durandus, Ockham, and their disciples, were the teachers from whom he acquired no small portion of that acuteness for which he became so distinguished as a disputer, and of that logomachy by which most of his writings are more or less deformed.

Early education exerts a prodigious power over the future pursuits and habits of the individual. Its imperfections or peculiari-

ties will generally appear, if he attempt to make any figure in the scientific or literary world. The advantages of a university or academical education will never be despised except by him who never enjoyed them, or who affects to be superior to their necessity. It cannot be denied, however, that some of our most eminent men in the walks of theology, as well as in other departments, never enjoyed these early advantages. The celebrated Erasmus,—“that great honoured name,” and Julius Cæsar Scaliger, had neither of them the benefit of a regular early education. As theological writers, few men, among our own countrymen, have been more useful or respected than Andrew Fuller, Abraham Booth, and Archibald Maclean, yet none of them received much education in his youth. Dr. Carey is a prodigy, as an oriental scholar, and yet never was twelvemonths at school in his life. Among these, and many other men of eminence, who never walked an academic porch, Richard Baxter holds a prominent place. In answer to a letter of Anthony Wood, inquiring whether he was an Oxonian, he replied, with beautiful and dignified simplicity—“As to myself, my faults are no disgrace to any university, for I was of none ; I have little but what I had out of books, and inconsiderable helps of country tutors. Weakness and pain helped me to study how to die ; that set me on studying how to live ; and that on studying the doctrine from which I must fetch my motives and comforts : beginning with necessities, I proceeded by degrees, and now am going to see that for which I have lived and studied.”¹

Academical education is valuable, when it excites a taste for learning, sharpens the natural powers, and smoothes the path of knowledge ; but when it is substituted in after life for diligent application, and is supposed to supply the lack of genius or industry, it renders comparatively little service to its possessor. Those who have not enjoyed it, frequently make up the deficiency by the greater ardour of their application, and the powerful energy of natural talent. This was eminently the case with Baxter. Conscious of the imperfections of his early education, he applied himself with indefatigable diligence ; and though he never attained to the elegant refinements of classical literature, in all the substantial attainments of sound learning he excelled most of his contemporaries. The regrets which he felt at an early period, that his scholarship was not more eminent, he has expressed with a great degree of feeling, if not with the highest poetical elegance.

¹ Athen. Ox. vol. ii. 1125.

"Thy methods cross'd my ways : my young desire
 To academic glory did aspire.
 Fain I'd have sat in such a nurse's lap,
 Where I might long have had a sluggard's nap;
 Or have been dandled on her reverend knees,
 And known by honoured titles and degrees;
 And there have spent the flower of my days
 In soaring in the air of human praise.
 Yea, and I thought it needful to *thy* ends,
 To make the prejudiced world my friends;
 That so *my* praise might go before *thy* grace,
 Preparing men thy message to embrace;
 Also my work and office to adorn,
 And to avoid profane contempt and scorn.
 But these were not thy thoughts; thou didst foresee
 That such a course would not be best for me,
 Thou mad'st me know that men's contempt and scorn
 Is such a cross as must be daily borne."

Referring to what had once been his feelings, he expresses himself with great indignation, and then gives utterance to the high satisfaction he felt in the enjoyments God had bestowed on him—better far than titles and learning.

"My youthful pride and folly now I see,
 That grudged for want of titles and degree;
 That blushed with shame when this defect was known;
 And an inglorious name could hardly own.
 Forgive this pride, and break the serpent's brain;
 Pluck up the poisonous root till none remain.
 Honours are shadows, which from seekers fly,
 But follow after those who them deny.
 I brought none with me to thy work; but there
 I found more than I easily could bear:
 Although thou would'st not give me what I would,
 Thou gavest me the promis'd hundred-fold.
 O my dear God! how precious is thy love!
 Thy ways, not ours, lead to the joys above."^k

During many of his early years, Baxter was greatly troubled with doubts about his own salvation. These were promoted in a considerable degree, perhaps, by the particular cast of his mind, and the state of his body. They respected various things which discover the imperfection of his knowledge at the time; but which, as they may be useful to others, are worthy of some attention.

He was distressed because he could not trace, so distinctly, the workings of the Spirit on his heart, as they are described by some divines; because he could not ascertain the time of his conversion; because he felt great hardness of heart, and a want of lively apprehension of spiritual things; because he had felt

^k Poetical Fragments, pp. 31—33.

convictions from his childhood, and more of the influence of fear than of love in the regulation of his conduct; and because his grief and humiliation, on account of sin, were not greater. He was afterwards satisfied that these were not sufficient or scriptural grounds for doubting his personal interest in the salvation of Christ. He found that the mind is, in general, too dark and confused, at the commencement of the divine work, to be able to attend to the nature or order of its own operations; and that the first communications of gracious influence, in most cases, it is impossible to trace. He perceived that, while in the body, the influence of spiritual and eternal things is greatly impeded, or counteracted, in all. He saw that education and early convictions were the way in which God communicates his salvation to many; and that the soul of a believer is but gradually delivered from the safe, though troublesome, operations of fear, till it arrives at the high and excellent enjoyments of love.

Persons who are agitated with perplexities similar to those of Baxter, are frequently directed to means little calculated to afford relief. Refined disquisitions on the nature of spiritual operation, on the *kind* or degree of conviction which must be possessed at the time of conversion, or afterwards; on the evidences of faith and repentance, are not much fitted to remove the fears and anxieties of conscience. It is very questionable, indeed, whether any individual will ever obtain comfort by making himself, or the evidences of personal religion, the object of chief attention. All hope to the guilty creature is exterior to himself. In the human character, even under christian influence, sufficient reason for condemnation, and therefore for fear, will always be found. It is not thinking of the disease, or of the mode in which the remedy operates, or of the description given of these things by others, but using the remedy itself, that will effect a cure. The Gospel is the heavenly appointed balsam for all the wounds of sin, and Jesus is the great Physician: it is to him, and to his testimony, therefore as the revelation of pardon and healing, that the soul must be directed in all the stages of its spiritual career. When the glory of his character and work is seen, darkness of mind will be dissipated, the power of sin will be broken, genuine contrition will be felt, and joy and hope will fill the mind. It is from the Saviour and his sacrifice that all proper excitement in religion must proceed; and the attempt to produce that excitement by the workings of the mind on itself, must inevitably fail. Self-examination to discover the power of truth and the progress of

principle in us, is highly important ; but when employed with a view to obtain comfort under a sense of guilt, it never can succeed : nothing but renewed application to the cross can produce the latter effect.

Baxter himself, long before his death, arrived at these very views. "I was once," he says, "wont to meditate most on my own heart, and to dwell all at home. I was still poring over either my sins or wants, or examining my sincerity. But now, though I am greatly convinced of the need of heart-acquaintance and employment, I see more the need of higher work ; and that I should look oftener on God, and Christ, and heaven, than upon my own heart. At *home*, I can find distempers to trouble me, and some evidences of my peace ; but it is above that I must find matter of *delight*, and *joy*, and *love*, and *peace* itself. I would therefore have one thought at home, on myself and sins, and many thoughts above, on the amiable and beatifying objects."¹

But the thing which distressed him most, and from which he found it most difficult to obtain deliverance, was the conviction that, after his change, he had sinned knowingly and deliberately. Every wilful transgression into which he fell, renewed and perpetuated his distress on this account. He was led, however, to understand that though divine grace implants in the soul enmity to every known sin, which appears in general in the superiority which it maintains over evil, yet it is not always in such a degree as to resist strong temptation. That will sometimes prevail against the Spirit and the love of God ; not, however, to the extinction of love, or the destruction of the habit of holiness. There is but a temporary victory : the bent and ardour of the soul are still most towards God ; the return to him after transgression, when the mind has been humbled and renewed to repentance, shows more evidently than ever the fixed character of the Christian : as the needle in the compass always returns to the proper point, when the force that turned it aside is withdrawn ; and as the running stream appears to flow clearer than before, when that which polluted it is removed. The continual enjoyment of divine strength, and the actual presence of spiritual motives in the mind, can alone preserve it from the evil to which it is here exposed. Sin will always generate fears, which will increase in proportion as it has been wilful or persevered in ; so that the best way to keep off doubts and alarms, and to main-

¹ Life, part i. 129.

tain comfort, is to keep up obedience and dependence on God, or quickly and penitently to return when we have sinned. But "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou us from secret faults: keep back thy servants from presumptuous sins, that they may not have dominion over them."

Other perplexities, and the means of their removal, are stated at great length, and with great minuteness, by him, in his own life. A specimen of them has been given above; and if these are understood, all the rest, which are only varieties of the same disease and subject to the application of the same remedy, will be sufficiently comprehended. As it is dangerous for persons afflicted with nervous disorders to read medical books, so those who are much troubled with perplexity about their spiritual state, are liable to be injured, rather than benefited, by descriptions of mental disease. The disquisitions of such a spiritual metaphysician as Baxter are more likely, if deeply pondered, to perplex the generality of Christians, than to enlighten and comfort them.

Notice has already been taken of Baxter's consumptive complaints: it may be proper, once for all, to give some particulars respecting his state of health, which will save the trouble of subsequent repetitions, throw light on his state of mind and peculiarities of temper, and enable us more correctly to appreciate, and more strongly to admire, the unconquerable ardour and devotedness of soul which could accomplish such peculiar labours with so feeble and diseased a body.

His constitution was naturally sound, but he was always very thin and weak, and early affected with nervous debility. At fourteen years of age, he was seized with the small-pox, and soon after, by improper exposure to the cold, he was affected with a violent catarrh and cough. This continued for about two years, and was followed by spitting of blood, and other phthisical symptoms. He became, from that time, the sport of medical treatment and experiment. One physician prescribed one mode of cure, and another a different one; till, from first to last, he had the advice of no less than thirty-six professors of the healing art. By their orders he took drugs without number, till, from experiencing how little they could do for him, he forsook them entirely, except some particular symptom urged him to seek present relief. He was diseased literally from head to foot; his stomach flatulent and acidulous; violent rheumatic headaches; prodigious bleedings at the nose; his blood so thin and acrid that it oozed out from the points of his

fingers, and kept them often raw and bloody; his legs swelled and dropsical, &c. His physicians called it *hypochondria*, he himself considered it *præmatura senectus*—premature old age; so that, at twenty he had the symptoms, in addition to disease, of fourscore! To be more particular would be disagreeable; and to detail the innumerable remedies to which he was directed, or which he employed himself, would add little to the stock of medical knowledge. He was certainly one of the most diseased and afflicted men that ever reached the full ordinary limits of human life. How, in such circumstances, he was capable of the exertions he almost incessantly made, appears not a little mysterious. His behaviour under them is a poignant reproof to many, who either sink entirely under common afflictions, or give way to indolence and trifling. For the acerbity of his temper we are now prepared with an ample apology. That he should have been occasionally fretful, and impatient of contradiction, is not surprising, considering the state of the earthen vessel in which his noble and active spirit was deposited. No man was more sensible of his obliquities of disposition than himself; and no man, perhaps, ever did more to maintain the ascendancy of Christian principle over the strength and waywardness of passion.

We return to the regular narrative of his life. In 1633, when he was in his eighteenth year, he was persuaded by Mr. Wickstead, to give up his design and preparation for the ministry, and to go to London and try his fortune at court. His parents, having no great desire that he should be a minister, advised him to follow the recommendation of his former tutor; who, in consequence, introduced him to Sir Henry Newport, then master of the revels. With him he lived about a month at Whitehall, but soon got enough of a court life, being entertained with a play instead of a sermon, on the Lord's Day afternoon, and hearing little preaching, except what was against the Puritans. These were the religious practices of the court, in the sober times of king Charles the martyr, and furnish us with a practical commentary on the book of sports. Tired and disgusted with the situation in which he was now placed, and his mother being ill, and desiring his return, he left court, and bade farewell to all its employments and promises.

While in London at this time, he formed an acquaintance with Humphrey Blunden, afterwards noted as a chemist, and for procuring to be translated and published the writings of Jacob

Behmen. Blunden was then apprentice to a bookseller, and possessed of considerable knowledge and piety; to his letters, conversation respecting books, and christian consolation, Baxter was much indebted. On his way home, about Christmas, he met with a remarkable deliverance. There was a violent storm of snow succeeding a severe frost; on the road he met a loaded waggon, which he could pass only by riding on the side of a bank; his horse slipped, the girths broke, and he was thrown immediately before the wheel. Without any discernible cause, the horses stopped when he was on the verge of destruction, and thus his life was marvellously preserved! How inexplicable to us are the ways and arrangements of Providence! In some cases, the snapping of a hair occasions death; in other, life is preserved by an almost miraculous interference.

On reaching home, he found his mother in the greatest extremity of pain, and after uttering heart-piercing groans the whole winter and spring, she took her departure on the 10th of May, 1634. Of her religious character he says nothing, except when noticing the religion of the family; from which we have reason to believe that there was hope in her end. His father, about a year afterwards, married Mary, the daughter of Sir Thomas Hunks, a woman who proved an eminent blessing to the family. She reached the advanced age of ninety-six; and her holiness, mortification, contempt of the world, and fervency of prayer, rendered her an honour to religion, and a pattern to all who knew her.

Baxter's mind was now more than ever impressed with the importance of the christian ministry. He did not expect to live long, and having the eternal world, as it were, immediately before him, he was exceedingly desirous of communicating to the careless and ignorant the things which so deeply impressed himself. He was very conscious of his own insufficiency for the work, arising from defective learning and experience; and he knew that his want of academical honours and degrees would affect his estimation and usefulness with many. Believing, however, that he would soon be in another world; that he possessed a measure of aptness to teach and persuade men; and satisfied that, if only a few souls should be converted by his instrumentality, he would be abundantly rewarded; he got the better of all his fears and discouragements, and resolved to devote himself to the work of Christ. So powerful, indeed, were his own convictions of the madness and wretchedness of presumptuous sinners, and of the clearness and force of those

reasons which ought to persuade men to embrace a godly life, that he thought the man who was properly dealt with, and yet capable of resisting them, and persevering in wickedness, fitter for Bedlam than entitled to the character of sober rationality. He was simple enough to think, he had so much to say on these subjects, that men would not be able to withstand him ; forgetting the experience of the celebrated reformer, who found, " that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon."

Till this time, he was a Conformist in principle and practice. His family, though serious, had always conformed. His acquaintances were almost all of the same description ; and, as Nonconformist books were not easily procured, his reading was mostly on the other side. Mr. Garbet, his chief tutor, of whose learning and piety he had a high opinion, was a strict churchman ; he supplied him with the works of Downham, Sprint, Burgess, Hooker, and others, who had written strongly against the Nonconformists.^m One of that party also, Mr. Barnel, of Uppington, though a worthy, blameless man, was but an inferior scholar, while the Conformists around him were men of learning. These things increased his prejudices at the cause which he afterwards embraced. By such means he was led to think the principles of churchmen strong, and the reasonings of the Nonconformists weak.

With the exception of Hooker, the other episcopal writers here mentioned are now little known or attended to. The 'Ecclesiastical Polity' of that distinguished man both superseded and anticipated all other defences of the church of England. In it the strength of the episcopal cause is to be found, and, from the almost superstitious veneration with which his name is invariably mentioned, by the highest, as well as the more ordinary, members of the church, it is evident how much importance they attach to his labours. Of the man whom popes have praised, and kings commended, and bishops, without number, extolled, it may appear presumptuous in me to express a qualified opinion. But truth ought to be spoken. The praise of profound erudition, laborious research, and gigantic powers of eloquence, no man will deny to be due to Hooker. But, had his celebrated work been written in defence of the Popish hierarchy, and Popish ceremonies, the greater part of it would have required little alteration. Hence we need not wonder at the praise bestowed on it by Clement VIII.,

^m Apology for Nonconformists, p. 59.

or that James II. should have referred to it as one of two books which promoted his conversion to the church of Rome. His views of the authority of the church, and the insufficiency of Scripture, are much more Popish than Protestant; and the greatest trial to which the judiciousness of Hooker could have been subjected, would have been to attempt a defence of the Reformation on his own principles. His work abounds with sophisms, with assumptions, and with a show of proof when the true state of the case has not been given, and the strength of the argument never met. The quantity of learned and ingenious reasoning which it contains, and the seeming candour and mildness which it displays, have imposed upon many, and procured for Hooker the name of "*judicious*," to which the solidity of his reasonings, and the services he has rendered to Christianity, by no means entitle him.^m

About his twentieth year, he became acquainted with Mr. Symonds,ⁿ Mr. Cradock,^o and some other zealous Nonconformist

^m A very important and curious note respecting the Ecclesiastical Polity the reader will find in M'Crie's '*Life of Melville*,' vol. ii. p. 461. The edition of Hooker's Works, which has lately issued from the press of Holdsworth and Ball, is the only correct edition which has appeared for many years; while the curious notes of the editor furnish much important illustration of Hooker's meaning, as well as supply some of the arguments of his adversaries, to which he often replies very unfairly.

ⁿ There were several Nonconformist ministers of the name of Symonds; so that it is difficult to determine to which of them Baxter refers. One of them was originally beneficed at Sandwich, in Kent, and went to London during the civil wars, where he became an Independent, and a Baptist, if we may believe Edwards. According to that abusive writer, he preached strange things "for toleration and liberty for all men to worship God according to their consciences!" He appears, also, to have been one of Sir Thomas Fairfax's chaplains; and was afterwards appointed one of the itinerant ministers of Wales, by the House of Commons.—*Edwards's Gangrena*, part iii. passim. Another Mr. Joseph Symonds was sometime assistant to Mr. Thomas Gataker, at Rotherhithe, near London, and Rector of St. Martin's, Ironmonger-lane. He afterwards became an Independent, and went to Holland, where he was chosen pastor of the church at Rotterdam, in the place of Mr. Sydrach Sympson. He preached before Parliament in 1641.—*Brook's Puritans*, vol. iii. pp. 39, 40. It is probable that one of these two respectable men was Baxter's acquaintance at Shrewsbury.

^o Mr. Walter Cradock, a Welshman, on account of his Puritanical sentiments, was driven from the church in 1634, shortly before Baxter became acquainted with him. He formed an Independent church at Llanfaches, in Wales, in the year 1639. He was one of the most active labourers in the principality during the Commonwealth, and procured the New Testament to be printed in Welsh, for the use of the common people. He died about 1660, leaving some sermons and expositions, which were collected and printed in two vols. 8vo, in 1800.—*Brook's Lives*, vol. iii. pp. 382—386.

ministers, in Shrewsbury and the neighbourhood. Their fervent piety and excellent conversation profited him exceedingly; and discovering that these were the people persecuted by the bishops, he began to imbibe a prejudice against the hierarchy on that account; and felt persuaded that those who silenced and troubled such men could not be followers of the Lord of love. Still, when he thought of ordination he had no scruple about subscription. And why should he? for he tells us himself "that he never once read over the book of ordination; nor the half of the book of homilies; nor weighed carefully the liturgy; nor sufficiently understood some of the controverted points in the thirty-nine articles. His teachers and his books made him think, in general, that the Conformists had the better cause; so that he kept out all particular scruples by that opinion." It is very easy to keep free from doubts on any subject, by restraining the freedom of inquiry, and giving full credit to the statements and reasonings of one side.

About this time, 1638, Mr. Thomas Foley, of Stourbridge, in Worcestershire, recovered some lands at Dudley, which had been left for charitable purposes; and adding something of his own, built and endowed a new school-house. The situation of head master he offered to Baxter. This he was willing to accept, as it would also afford him the opportunity of preaching in some destitute places, without being himself in any pastoral relation, which office he was then indisposed to occupy. Accordingly, accompanied by Mr. Foley, and his friend Mr. James Berry, he repaired to Worcester, where he was ordained by Bishop Thornborough;^p and received a licence to teach the school at Dudley. Thus was he introduced to that ministry, the duties of which he discharged with so much diligence and success for many years; which proved to him a source of incessant solicitude, and of many trials; but its blessedness he richly experienced on earth, and now reaps the reward in heaven.

^p Of Thornborough, I have not observed that Baxter has said any thing. He lived to a great age, dying in the year 1641, in his ninety fourth year. He was the author of a few pamphlets of a philosophical and political nature. What he was, as a religious man, I cannot tell. — *Hood's Athen. Oxon.* (Edit. Bliss,) vol. iii. p. 3.

CHAPTER II.

1638—1642.

Baxter preaches his First Sermon—Examines the Nonconformist Controversy—Adopts some of the principles of Nonconformity—Progress of his mind—Residence in Bridgnorth—The Etc-etera Oath—Examines the subject of Episcopacy—In danger from not conforming—The Long Parliament—Petition from Kidderminster—Application to Baxter—His Compliance—Commences his Labours—General View of the State of Religion in the Country at this time—Causes of the Civil War—Character of the Parties engaged in it—Baxter blames both—A decided Friend to the Parliament—Retires for a time from Kidderminster.

BAXTER preached his first public sermon in the upper church of Dudley, and while in that parish began to study with greater attention than he had formerly done the subject of Nonconformity. From some of the Nonconformists in the place, he received books and manuscripts which he had not before seen; and though all his predilections were in favour of the church as it was, he determined to examine impartially the whole controversy.

On the subject of episcopacy, Bishop Downham had satisfied him before; but he did not then understand the distinction between the primitive episcopacy, and that of the church of England. He next studied the debate about kneeling at the sacrament, and was satisfied, by Mr. Paybody, of the lawfulness of conformity to that mode. He turned over Cartwright and Whitgift; but, having procured Dr. Ames' 'Fresh Suit against Human Ceremonies in God's Worship,'^a and the work of Dr.

^a Ames' 'Fresh Suit,' 4to, 1633, is one of the most able works of the period, on the subject on which it treats. Its author was a man of profound learning, great acuteness, and eminent piety. This work enters very fully into all the great points relating to the exercise of human authority in the things of God, and the introduction of human customs and ceremonies into divine worship; and though not professedly an answer to Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, embraces every thing of importance in that noted work. It has also the advantage of the Polity, in the higher respect it everywhere discovers for the Word of God, and the decided appeal it uniformly makes to it. In a sentence or two of the Preface, he gives the turning point of the whole controversy:—"The state of this war is this: we, as it becometh Christians, stand upon the sufficiency of Christ's institutions for all kind of worship. *The word, say we, and*

Burgess,^r on the other side, he devoted himself chiefly to the examination of these two works as containing the strength of the cause on both sides. The result of his studies at this time, according to his own account, was as follows:

Kneeling at the sacrament he thought lawful. The propriety of wearing the surplice he doubted; but was, on the whole, inclined to submit to it, though he never wore one in his life. The ring in marriage he did not scruple; but the cross in baptism he deemed unlawful. A form of prayer and liturgy he thought might be used, and, in some cases, might be lawfully imposed; but the church liturgy he thought had such confusion, and many defects in it. Discipline he saw to be much wanted; but he did not then understand that the very frame of diocesan episcopacy precluded it; and thought its omission arose chiefly from the personal neglect of the bishops. Subscription he began to judge unlawful, and thought that he had sinned by his former rashness; for, though he yet approved of a liturgy and bishops, to subscribe, *ex animo*, that there is nothing in the articles, homilies, and liturgy, contrary to the word of God, was what he could not do again. So that subscription, the cross in baptism, and the promiscuous giving of the Lord's supper to drunkards, swearers, and all who had not been excommunicated by a bishop, or his chancellor, were the three things to which at this time he became a nonconformist. Although he came to these conclusions, he kept them, in a great measure, to himself; and still argued against the Nonconformists, whose censoriousness and inclination to separation he often reproved. With some of them he maintained a dispute in writing, on kneeling at the sacrament, and pursued it, till they were glad to let it drop. He laboured much to repress their boldness, and bitter-

nothing but the word, in matters of religious worship. The prelates rise up on the other side, and will needs have us allow and use certain human ceremonies in our Christian worship. We desire to be excused, as holding them unlawful. Christ we know, and all that cometh from him we are ready to embrace: but these human ceremonies we know not, nor can have anything to do with them. Upon this they make fierce war upon us; and yet lay all the fault of this war, and the mischiefs of it, on our backs."

^r The work of Dr. John Burgess, to which the 'Fresh Suit' was a reply, is his 'Answer to the Reply to Dr. Morton's Defence.' 4to. 1631. Bishop Morton had written 'A Defence of the Innocence of the three Ceremonies of the Church of England—the Surplice; the Cross after Baptism, and Kneeling at the Sacrament.' 4to. 1618. To this Dr. Ames published a reply. Morton did not think proper to meet Ames himself, but devolved the task on Burgess, who gave hard and abusive words in abundance, but great poverty of argument, as the work of Ames very successfully shows.

ness of language against the bishops, and to reduce them to greater patience and charity. But he found that what they suffered from the bishops was the great impediment to his success; that he who will blow the coals must not wonder if some of the sparks fly in his face; and that to persecute men and then invite them to charity, is like whipping children to make them give over crying. He who will have children, must act as a father; but he who will be a tyrant, must be content with slaves.

It is gratifying and instructive to be furnished with such an account of the progress of Baxter's mind. It strikingly displays his candour, and his fidelity to his convictions. Whether he employed the best means of arriving at the truth, may be questioned; the shorter process, of directly appealing to the Bible, might have saved him a great deal of labour and perplexity; but this was not the mode of settling controversies then generally adopted. The conclusions to which he came, were fewer than might have been expected, or than afterwards satisfied his own mind; but they probably prepared him for further discoveries, and greater satisfaction. He who is faithful to that which he receives, and who studies to know the mind of God, will not only be made more and more acquainted with it, but will derive increasing enjoyment from following it.

Baxter continued in the town of Dudley about a year. The people were poor but tractable; formerly they were much addicted to drunkenness, but they became ready to hear and obey the word of God. On receiving an invitation to Bridgnorth, the second town in Shropshire, however, he saw it his duty to leave Dudley, and to remove thither. Here he acted as assistant to Mr. William Madstard, whom he describes as "a grave and severe divine, very honest and conscientious; an excellent preacher, but somewhat afflicted with want of maintenance, but more with a dead-hearted, unprofitable people." In this place Baxter had a very full congregation to preach to; and was freed from all those things which he scrupled or deemed unlawful. He often read the Common Prayer before he preached; but he never administered the Lord's Supper, never baptised a child with the sign of the cross, never wore a surplice, and never appeared at any bishop's court. The inhabitants were very ignorant. The town had no general trade, and was full of inns and alehouses; yet his labours were blessed to some of the people, though not to the extent in which they were successful

in some other places. He mentions that he was then in the fervour of his affections, and never preached with more vehement desires of men's conversion; but the applause of the preacher, was the only success he met with from most of the people.

The first thing which tried him, while here, and, indeed, threatened his expulsion, was the *Et-cætera* oath. This oath formed part of certain canons or constitutions enacted by a convocation held at London and York, in 1640. The main thing objected to in it, was the following absurd clause: "Nor will I ever give my consent to alter the government of this church by archbishops, bishops, deans, and archdeacons, &c., as it stands now established and ought to stand."^a This oath was ordered to be taken by all ecclesiastical persons on pain of suspension and deprivation. Alarmed at this imposition, the ministers of Shropshire, though all friends to episcopacy, appointed a meeting at Bridgnorth, to take it into consideration. Here the subject was argued *pro* and *con* by Mr. Christopher Cartwright, a man of profound learning, on the one side, and by Baxter on the other. Baxter's objections to the oath appeared to the ministers more formidable than the answers were satisfactory, so that the meeting broke up in a state of great consternation. An oath binding fallible men never to change themselves, or give their consent to alterations however necessary, and including in an "*et cætera*" nobody knows what, is among the greatest instances of ecclesiastical despotism and folly on record. A measure more ruinous to the church could scarcely have been devised.

Its effect on Baxter was, not only a resolution never to subscribe to it, but a determination to examine more thoroughly the nature of that episcopacy, the yoke of which he began to feel so insupportable. For this purpose he procured all the books he could get on both sides, and examined them with great care. Bucer de Gubernatione Ecclesiæ, Didoclavii Altare Damascenum,[†]

^a Neal, ii. 203.

[†] The '*Altare Damascenum*,' is the work of David Calderwood, author of the '*True History of the Church of Scotland*,' and one of the objects of James the First's implacable dislike. It was published in Holland, in 1623, where the author was in exile, on account of his opposition to the court and episcopacy. It is intended as a refutation of '*Linwood's Description of the Policy of the Church of England*;' but it embraces all the leading questions at issue between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. It attracted great attention at the time; so that King James himself is said to have read it, and replied to one of the bishops, who affirmed it would be answered—"What the devil will you answer, man? There is nothing here but Scripture, reason, and the fathers."

Jacob,^u Parker,^z and Baynes,^y on the one side; and Downham, Hooker, Saravia,^x Andrews, &c. on the other. The consequence of these researches, was his full conviction that the English episcopacy is a totally different thing from the primitive, that it had corrupted the churches and the ministry, and destroyed all christian discipline.^a Thus this *Et-cætera* oath, which was framed to produce unalterable subjection to prelacy, was a chief means of alienating Baxter and many others from it. Their former indifference was shaken off by violence, and those who had been disposed to let the bishops alone, were roused by the terrors of an oath, to look about them and resist. Many also, who were formerly against the Nonconformists, were led by the absurdity of this oath, to think more favourably of them: so that on the whole it proved advantageous rather than injurious to their cause.

The imposition of the service book on Scotland, at this time, produced great disturbances there also, and led the Scots first to enter into a solemn covenant against Popery and superstition, and afterwards to march an army into England. The imposition of ship-money, which occasioned the celebrated resistance of Hampden, excited great and general discontent in England, and hastened on those civil commotions which so long agitated the country, and from which the most important effects arose.

The King met the Scots at Newcastle, and after a time formed an agreement with them. The Earl of Bridgewater, lord president of the Marches of Wales, passing through Bridgnorth

^u Jacob was a Brownist, and one of the earliest Independents in England. The work referred to by Baxter, was probably his 'Reasons taken out of the Word of God and the best human Testimonies, proving a Necessity for reforming our churches in England.' 1604. It is written with very considerable ability; and, amongst other things, endeavours to prove "that for two hundred years after Christ, the churches were *not* diocesan, but congregational."

^z The work of Parker, 'De Politeia Ecclesiastica Christi, et Hierarchica opposita, Libri Tres,' 4to, 1621, was posthumous, the author having died in Holland, 1614. He was a learned and pious man: his work against 'Symbolizing with Antichrist in Ceremonies,' produced a great effect, and occasioned much trouble to the writer. Parker was, in sentiment, partly Presbyterian, and partly Independent.

^y Paul Baynes was the author of 'The Diocesan's Trial,' in answer to Dr. Downham's Defence.

^x Adrian Saravia was a celebrated scholar, a native of Hedrin in Artois, but who lived many years in England, and was one of the warmest supporters of episcopacy. He published, among other things, a treatise on 'The divers Degrees of Ministers of the Gospel,' and a reply to Beza's tract 'De Triplici Episcopatu.' He was one of the translators of the Bible appointed by King James, and died shortly after the finishing of that work, in his eighty-second year.—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. i. p. 765.

^a Baxter's 'Treatise of Episcopacy;'—Preface.

to join his majesty, was informed on Saturday evening, that neither Mr. Madstard nor Baxter used the sign of the cross; that they neither wore a surplice, nor prayed against the Scots. These were crimes of no ordinary magnitude in those days of terror. His lordship told them that he would come to church on the morrow, and see what was done. Mr. Madstard went away, and left the reader and Baxter to face the danger. On the sabbath, however, his lordship suddenly changed his purpose, and went to Litchfield, so that nothing came out of the affair. "Thus I continued," says Baxter, "in my liberty of preaching the Gospel at Bridgnorth, about a year and three quarters, which I took to be a very great mercy in those troublesome times."

The Long Parliament now began to engage attention, and its proceedings produced the most powerful effects on the country. The members soon discovered their hostility both to ship-money, and the *Et-cætera* oath; while their impeachment of Strafford and Laud, showed their determination to resist the civil and ecclesiastical domination, under which the country had so long groaned. The speeches of Faulkland, Digby, Grimstone, Pym, Fiennes, and others, were printed and greedily bought. These excited a strong sense of danger among the people, and roused their indignation against the king and the bishops.

The unanimity of this celebrated assembly in its opposition to prerogative and high-church claims, did not arise from the members being all of one mind on religious subjects. One party cared little for the alterations which had been made in the church; but said, if parliaments be once put down, and arbitrary government set up, every thing dear to Englishmen will be lost. Another party were better men, who were sensible of the value of civil liberty, but were most concerned for the interests of religion. Hence they inveighed chiefly against the innovations in the church, bowing to altars, Sunday sports, casting out ministers, high-commission courts, and other things of a similar nature. And because they agreed with the former party in asserting the people's rights and liberties, that party concurred with them in opposing the bishops and their ecclesiastical proceedings.

When the spirit of the Parliament came to be understood, the people of the different counties poured in petitions full of complaints. The number of ministers who had been silenced by the bishops, and of individuals and families who had been banished on account of religion, was attempted to be ascertained. Some who had been condemned to perpetual imprisonment, after

suffering the basest indignities, were released and brought home in triumph. Among these were Mr. Peter Smart,^b Dr. Leighton,^c Mr. Henry Burton,^d Dr. Bastwick,^e and Mr. Prynne;^f all of whom

^b Mr. Smart, for preaching a sermon, in which he spoke very freely against the ceremonies of the church, was fined, excommunicated, degraded, deprived, and imprisoned nearly twelve years. The damage he sustained amounted to several thousand pounds, for which he afterwards received some compensation by order of Parliament. Laud and Cosins were his chief persecutors.—*Fuller's Church Hist.* b. xi. p. 173.

^c "Leighton (says Heylin) was a Scot by birth, a doctor of physic by profession, a fiery Puritan in faction."—*Life of Laud*, p. 126. His crime consisted in the publication of 'An Appeal to Parliament, or Sion's Plea against Prelacy.' For this offence he was condemned to suffer the loss of both ears, to have his nostrils slit, his forehead branded, to be publicly whipped, fined ten thousand pounds, and perpetually imprisoned! When this sentence was pronounced, Laud, it is said, took off his hat, and gave thanks to God. The sentence, in all its parts, was executed with shocking barbarity. At the end of his twelve years imprisonment, when set at liberty by the Parliament, he could neither see, hear, nor walk. 'Sion's Plea' is certainly written with much acerbity, and some parts of it are liable to misconstruction. When Heylin alleges that he incites Parliament "to kill all the bishops, and smite them under the fifth rib," he lies and defames. The last expression, indeed, occurs; but that it does not refer to the persons of the bishops, the following sentence from the conclusion of the appeal clearly shows—"We fear they (the bishops) are like pleuritic patients, that cannot spit, whom nothing but incision will cure, we mean of their callings, not of their persons, to whom we have no quarrel, but wish them better than they either wish to us or to themselves." (p. 179.) Some of his language is certainly unguarded, but in moderate times would have been liable to no misinterpretation. The physician had, no doubt, more of asperity and vindictiveness in his temper than his son, the amiable, enlightened, and heavenly-minded Bishop of Dumbleane.

^d Henry Burton was an Independent, and originally engaged about court, when Charles I. was Prince of Wales. To the loss of his place, Heylin, with his usual charity, ascribes his hostility to the hierarchy.—*Life of Laud*, p. 98. His own account is more deserving of credit. By several publications, he provoked the wrath of the High Commission Court; but for one, 'For God and the King,' he was sentenced to be punished in a similar manner to Leighton, and suffered accordingly. A narrative of himself, which he published, and the substance of which was reprinted in the 'Cong. Mag.' for 1820, is uncommonly interesting. If I may judge from this memoir, and his 'Vindication of the Churches commonly called Independent,' he was a man of piety, talents, and moderation.

^e Dr. Bastwick, a physician at Colchester, for publishing a Latin book which reflected on the bishops, and denying their superiority to presbyters, was excommunicated, debarred the exercise of his profession, fined one thousand pounds, and imprisoned till he should recant. For another book, supposed to be written by him while in prison, the same sentence was passed and executed on him as on Burton and Prynne. Dr. Bastwick, I doubt not, was a good man; but his spirit was very violent. His book, 'The Utter Routing of all the Independent Army,' in which his fellow-sufferer Burton is the chief object of attack, is shameful for a Christian to have written.

^f William Prynne, "a bencher, late of Lincoln's Inn," was the most extra-

had been treated with the most wanton and unmerited cruelty. Acts were passed against the High-commission court, and the secular power of churchmen; and for the continuance of the parliament till it should dissolve itself. A committee was appointed to receive petitions and complaints against the clergy, which produced multitudes of petitions from all parts of the country. As a specimen of what was brought in, White, the chairman, published 'One Century of Scandalous Ministers,' in which a most dreadful exposure is made of the ignorance, immorality, and incompetency of many of the established teachers.

The town of Kidderminster, amongst other places, prepared a petition against their minister, whose name was Dance. They represented him as an ignorant and weak man, who preached but once a quarter, was a frequenter of alehouses, and sometimes drunk. His curate was a common tippler and drunkard, a railler, and trader in unlawful marriages. The vicar knowing his incompetency, offered to compound the business with the town. Instead of his present curate, he offered to allow sixty pounds per annum to a preacher whom a committee of fourteen of them should choose. This person he would permit to preach when he pleased; and he himself would read prayers, and do any other part of the parish routine. The town having agreed to this, withdrew their petition.

After trying a Mr. Lapthorn, the committee of Kidderminster applied to Baxter to become their lecturer on the above terms. This invitation is dated the 9th of March, 1640. The legal instrument appointing him to the situation, bears the date of April 5th, 1641, and is signed by about thirty individuals. He also received a very affectionate letter from a number of persons

ordinary man of all the sufferers. His first crime consisted in writing the "Histriomastix, or a treatise against plays, masquerades," &c.; for this his ears were cropped, &c. His second crime was a libel against the bishops; for which he received sentence along with the other two. As his ears had formerly been cut off, the stumps were now literally sawed off, or in the words of a coarse, humorous epitaph composed for him, "they fanged the remnant of his lugs." He wrote more books, and quoted more authorities, than any man of his time; and did much to expose the unconstitutional and lawless measures which had been long pursued by the bishops and the court. He seems to have been an Erastian respecting church government. It is wonderful, that after having suffered so much from government interference in religion, he should have written a book to prove "that Christian Kings and Magistrates have authority, under the Gospel, to punish idolatry, apostasy, heresy, blasphemy, and obstinate schism, with pecuniary, corporal, and in some cases, with capital punishments."—*Athen. Ox.* ii. pp. 311—327.

belonging to the congregation.^s With this invitation he was very willing to comply, as, on various accounts, he felt disposed to labour in that place. The congregation was large, and the church very convenient. The people were ignorant, rude, and loose in their manners; but had scarcely ever enjoyed any faithful, evangelical preaching. There was, at the same time, a small number of pious people among them, who were humble and holy, and fit to assist a minister in instructing the rest. The state of Bridgnorth had made him resolve never to settle among people who had been hardened under an awakeneing ministry; but that he would go either to those who never had enjoyed such a blessing, or to those who had profited by it. He accordingly repaired to the place, and, after preaching only one day, was chosen by the electors *nemine contradicente*. "Thus," says he, "I was brought, by the gracious providence of God, to that place which had the chiefest of my labours, and yielded me the greatest fruits of comfort; and I noted the mercy of God in this, that I never went to any place in my life which I had before desired, or thought of, much less sought, till the sudden invitation did surprise me."

His attachment to Kidderminster remained through all the changes of his future life. Speaking of it many years after he had left it, he says, with much feeling and beauty,

"But among all, none did so much abound
With fruitful mercies, as that barren ground,
Where I did make my best and longest stay,
And bore the heat and burden of the day.
Mercies grew thicker there than summer flowers,
They over-numbered my days and hours.
There was my dearest flock and special charge,
Our hearts with mutual love Thou didst enlarge:
'Twas there thy mercy did my labours bless,
With the most great and wonderful success."^h

His removal to Kidderminster took place in 1640. His previous ministry had been spent, he tells us, under the infirmities already noticed, which made him live and preach in the constant prospect of death. This was attended with incalculable benefit to himself and others; it gave much of that earnestness and unction to his preaching for which it was so eminently distinguished, and without which no one will ever preach with much success.

^s All these documents are still preserved among the Baxter MSS. in the library at Red Cross-street.

^h Poetical Fragments, p. 34.

His afflictions greatly weakened his temptations, excited great contempt of the world, taught him the inestimable value of time, and "stirred up his sluggish heart to speak to sinners with some compassion, as a dying man to dying men."

With these feelings he began his labours in the place which his name has immortalised. He continued in it about two years at first, till the civil wars drove him away; and after his return, at the distance of several years, he remained about fourteen more. During all this time he never occupied the vicarage house, though authorised to do so by an order of parliament; but allowed the old vicar to live in it without molestation. He found the place like a piece of dry and barren earth, overrun with ignorance and vice; but by the blessing of God on his labours, it ultimately became rich in all the fruits of righteousness. Opposition and ill-usage, to a considerable extent, he had to encounter at the beginning; but, by patient continuance in well-doing, he overcame all their prejudices, and produced universal love and veneration. At one time the ignorant rabble raged against him for preaching, as they supposed, that God hated all infants; because he had taught the doctrine of original sin. At another time they actually sought his life, and probably would have taken it, had they found him at the moment of their rage; because, by order of parliament, the churchwardens attempted to take down a crucifix which was in the church-yard. His character was slandered by a false report of a drunken beggar, which all who disliked him and his fidelity chose to believe and to propagate; but none of these things moved him, or diminished the ardour of his zeal to do good to the unthankful and the unholy.

The nature and success of Baxter's ministry at Kidderminster will be noticed with more propriety when we come to the period of his second residence. In the mean time, we must advert to the civil commotions in which the country was involved, and which, more or less, implicated all who were placed in public situations. To understand the nature of those commotions, and the part which Baxter took in them, it will be necessary to advert to the state of religion in the country at large; without a knowledge of which, it is impossible to form a correct opinion of the disastrous circumstances which produced so much misery, and have occasioned so much misrepresentation.

It has often been alleged, that the civil convulsions of the country were chiefly promoted by the Puritanical sticklers for presby-

terianism and independency ; who, instigated by hatred of the episcopal hierarchy, were determined to accomplish its overthrow. Nothing can be more erroneous, as the following account, drawn up by Baxter many years afterwards, with great candour and clearness, fully shows. It gives a most melancholy view of the wretched condition of religion in England, before and at the commencement of the wars, and very naturally accounts for the turn which affairs took during their progress, by which the whole ecclesiastical system was finally reduced to ruin. It shows that the number of Nonconformists at the commencement of the civil troubles was so very small, that they could have excited no disturbance, had they even wished to do it; and that the chief cause of their increase was the injurious treatment they experienced from the bishops and their officers.

“Where I was bred, before 1640, which was in divers places, I knew not one presbyterian clergyman or layman, and but three or four nonconforming ministers. Till Mr. Ball wrote in favour of the liturgy, and against Canne, Allen, &c., and till Mr. Burton published his ‘Protestation Protested,’ I never thought what presbytery or independency was, nor ever spake with a man who seemed to know it. In the place where I first lived, and the country about, the people were of two sorts. The generality seemed to mind nothing seriously, but the body and the world : they went to church, and could answer the parson in responses, and thence to dinner, and then to play. They never prayed in their families ; but some of them, on going to bed, would say over the creed and the Lord’s prayer, and some of them the Hail Mary. They read not the Scriptures, nor any good book or catechism : few of them indeed could read, or had, a Bible. They were of two ranks ; the greater part were good husbands, as they called them, and minded nothing but their business or interest in the world : the rest were drunkards. Most were swearers, though they were not all equally gross ; both sorts seemed utter strangers to any more of religion than I have named, though some hated it more than others.

“The other sort were such as had their consciences awakened to some regard for God and their everlasting state, and, according to the various measures of their understanding, did speak and live as serious in the christian faith, and would inquire what was duty, and what was sin, and how to please God and make sure of salvation ; and make this their business and interest, as the rest did the world. They read the Scriptures, and

such books as 'The Practice of Piety,' 'Dent's Plain Man's Pathway,' and 'Dod on the Commandments,' &c. They used to pray in their families, and alone; some with the book, and some without. They would not swear, nor curse, nor take God's name lightly. They would go to the next parish church to hear a sermon when they had none at their own; and would read the Scriptures on the Lord's day, when others were playing. There were, where I lived, about the number of two or three families in twenty, which, by the rest, were called Puritans, and derided as hypocrites and precisians, that would take on them to be holy; yet hardly one, if any, of them ever scrupled conformity; and they were godly, conformable ministers whom they went from home to hear. These ministers being the ablest preachers, and men of serious piety, were also the objects of vulgar obloquy, as Puritans and precisians.

"This being the condition of the vulgar where I was, when I came into the acquaintance of many persons of honour, and power, and reputed learning, I found the same seriousness in religion as in some few before described, and the same daily scorn of that sort of men in others, but differently clothed; for these would talk more bitterly, but yet with a greater show of reason, against the other, than the ignorant country people did. They would, also, sometimes talk of certain opinions in religion, and some of them would use part of the common prayer in their houses; others of them would swear, though seldom, and these small oaths, and lived soberly and civilly. But serious talk of God or godliness, or that which tended to search and reform the heart and life, and prepare for the life to come, they would at least be very averse to hear, if not deride as puritanical.

"This being the fundamental division, some of those who were called Puritans and hypocrites, for not being hypocrites, but serious in the religion they professed, would sometimes get together; and, as drunkards and sporters would meet to drink and play, they would, in some very few places where there were many of them, meet after sermon on the Lord's days, to repeat the sermon, and sing a psalm, and pray. For this, and for going from their own parish churches, they were first envied by the readers and dry teachers, whom they sometimes went from, and next prosecuted by apparitors, officials, archdeacons, commissaries, chancellors, and other episcopal instruments. In former times there had been divers presbyterian Nonconformists, who earnestly pleaded for parish discipline:

to subdue whom, divers canons were made, which served the turn against these meetings of the conformable Puritans, and against going from their own parish churches, though the old Presbyterians were dead, and very few succeeded them. About as many Nonconformists as counties were left; and those few stuck most at subscription and ceremonies, which were the hinderance of their ministry, and but few of them studied, or understood, the Presbyterian or Independent, disciplinary causes.

“But when these conformable Puritans were thus prosecuted, it bred in them hard thoughts of bishops and their courts, as enemies to serious piety, and persecutors of that which they should promote. Suffering induced this opinion and aversion; and the ungodly rabble rejoiced at their troubles, and applauded the bishops for it, and were everywhere ready to set the apparitors on them, or to ask them, ‘Are you holier and wiser than the bishops?’ So that by this time the Puritans took the bishops to be captains; and the chancellors, archdeacons, commissaries, officials, and apparitors, their officers, and the enemies of serious godliness; and the vicious rabble to be as their army to suppress true conscientious obedience to God, and care of men’s salvation. The censured clergy and officers, on the other hand, took the censurers to be schismatics, and enemies to the church, unfit to be endured, and fit to be prosecuted with reproach and punishment; so that the said Puritans took it to be but the common enmity that, since Cain’s days, hath been in the world, between the serpent’s and the woman’s seed. When the persons of bishops, chancellors, officials, apparitors, &c., were come under such repute, it is easy to believe what would be said against their office. And the more the bishops thought to cure this by punishment, the more they increased the opinion that they were persecuting enemies of godliness, and the captains of the profane.

“When such sinful beginnings had prepared men, the civil contentions arising, those called Puritans, were mostly against that side to which they saw the bishops and their neighbours enemies. And they were for their punishment the more, because it seemed desirable to reform the bishops, and restore the liberty of those whom they prosecuted for the manner of their serving God. Yet they desired, wherever I was, to have lived peaceably at home; but the drunkards and rabble that formerly hated them, when they saw the war beginning, grew enraged: for if a man did but pray and sing a psalm in his house, they would cry,

‘Down with the Roundheads!’ (a word then new made for them,) and put them in fear of sudden violence. Afterwards they brought the King’s soldiers to plunder them of their goods, which made them fain to run into holes to hide their persons: and when their goods were gone, and their lives in continual danger, they were forced to fly for food and shelter. To go among those that hated them, they durst not, when they could not dwell among such at home. And thus thousands ran into the parliament’s garisons, and, having nothing there to live upon, became soldiers.”¹

The circumstances which led to an open rupture between the king and his parliament, Baxter regarded as attaching blame to both parties. The people who adhered to the Parliament, he alleges, were indiscreet and clamorous, and, in some instances, proceeded to open acts of violence. Some members of the House themselves were imprudent, and carried things too high. Among these he reckoned Lord Brook and Sir Henry Vane as leaders. To these causes must be added the want of confidence in the King which was generally felt; and which arose partly from the offence they had given him, which they feared he rather dissembled than forgave; and partly from indications of His Majesty’s insincerity, which they early began to discover.

On the part of the King the war was hastened by the calling up of the northern army; by the imposing of a guard upon the House of Commons; by his entering it in a passion to seize the five members; by the conduct of Lord Digby, and other cavaliers; and, above all, by the Irish massacre and rebellion, the blame of which was charged on the King and his advisers.

In a state of great exasperation, Charles left London, and erected his standard at Nottingham. The parliament assembled an army under the Earl of Essex, and thus both sides prepared to settle, by force of arms, what they could not determine in council. It is no part of the design of this work to describe the progress of this fearful contest; but a view of the rank and character of the parties which were engaged in it, may enable the reader to understand its bearings on religion.

A great part of the nobility forsook the Parliament and joined the King, particularly after the battle of Edge-Hill. Many members of the House of Commons, and a great number of the knights and men of family in the several counties, had been with him from the beginning. The tenantry of the aristocracy, also,

¹ Baxter’s True History of Councils Enlarged, pp. 91—93.

and a great body of the common people, who may be said to be constitutionally loyal, were for the monarch. He had thus the two ends of the chain, but wanted the middle and connecting links. The parliament was supported by the inferior gentlemen in the country, and by the body of merchants, freeholders, and tradesmen, in all the principal towns and manufacturing districts. Among these persons, religion had much greater influence than it had either on the highest or the lowest ranks. Whatever power the love of political liberty exercised, it was the apprehension of danger to religion, which chiefly roused them and filled the army of the parliament. The body of the persons who were called Puritans, and precisians; and who discovered by their conduct that they were in earnest on the subject of religion, adhered to the cause of the parliament. On the other hand, the gentry, who were not so precise—who scrupled not at an oath; who loved gaming, plays, and drinking; and the ministers and people, who were for the King's book, and for dancing and recreations on the Lord's day; who went to church to hear common prayer, and relished a sermon which lashed the Puritans—these for the most part opposed the parliament.

The difference between the two parties was very strongly marked, it arose from the opposite characters which they sustained, and accounts for many of the events which occurred. "There is somewhat," says Baxter, "in the nature of all worldly men which makes them earnestly desirous of riches and honours in the world. They that value these things most will seek them; and they that seek them are more likely to find them than those that despise them. He who takes the world and preferment for his interest, will estimate and choose all means accordingly; and, where the world predominates, gain goes for godliness, and serious religion, which would mortify their sin, is their greatest enemy. Yet, conscience must be quieted, and reputation preserved; which cannot be done without some religion. Therefore, such a religion is necessary to them, as is consistent with a worldly mind: which outside formality, lip service, and hypocrisy, are; but seriousness, sincerity, and spirituality, are not.

"On the other side, there is that in the new nature of a believer, which inclineth him to things above, and causeth him to look at worldly grandeur and riches as things more dangerous than desirable. He is dead to the world, and the world to him, by the cross of Christ. No wonder, therefore, if few such at-

tain to greatness, or ever arrive at much preferment on earth. They are more fearful of displeasing God than all the world, and cannot stretch their consciences, or turn aside when the interest or will of man requireth. As before, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit ; so it was here. The rabble of the great and little vulgar did everywhere hate those that reproved their sin, and condemned them by a holy life. This ignorant rabble, hearing also that the bishops were against the Puritans, were the more emboldened against them. They cried up the bishops on this account, and because they loved that mode of worship which they found most consistent with their ignorance and carelessness. Thus, the interests of the bishops, and of the profane people of England, seemed to be twisted together."

The majority of the Nonconformists and serious people were opposed to the prelates, and those who espoused their side ; because the high-church party derided and abused them ; because so many scandalous and incompetent men were among the conforming clergy ; because the piety and talents of the Nonconformist ministers, many of whom had been silenced, were more distinguished than those of the other party ; because they liked a scriptural mode of worship better than the liturgy, though they did not deem it unlawful ; because the bishops' courts made fasting and prayer more perilous than swearing and drunkenness ; because they regarded the bishops as supporters of the book of sports, and discouraged afternoon lectures even by conforming ministers ; because when they saw bowing at the altar and other innovations introduced, they knew not where they would end ; and, because they saw that the bishops approved of ship money and other encroachments on their civil rights.

These were the true and principal reasons why so great a number of those persons who were counted most religious fell in with the parliament ; and why the generality of the serious, diligent preachers joined it ; not taking arms themselves, but supporting it by their influence and their presence. The King's party, indeed, alleged that the preachers stirred up the war ; but this is far from correct. It is true, they discovered their dislike to many corruptions in church and state ; and were glad that the parliament attempted a reformation of them. But it was conforming ministers who did even this ; for the bishops had ejected most of the nonconforming ministers long before. Those who made up the Westminster assembly, and who were

the honour of the parliamentary party through the land, were almost all such as had till then conformed.

Names of contempt and reproach, as might be expected, were plentifully used on both sides at the beginning and during the continuance of this unnatural war. Rebels and roundheads were the common appellations bestowed on the parliamentary party, in addition to Puritan and formalist.^{*} Malignants, cavaliers, dam-mes, were the designations used or retaliated by the other.¹

Reasons, many and various, were assigned for the lawfulness of the war by both parties; and men generally adopted that side to which their interests or their feelings chiefly inclined. Those who opposed the war on the part of the Commons, were of different sentiments. Some thought *no king* might be resisted; others that *our king* might not be resisted, because we had sworn allegiance and submission to him; and a third party, which granted that he might be resisted in some cases, contended that a sufficient case had not been made out. They maintained that the law gave the king the power of the militia, which the parliament sought to wrest from him; that the commons began the war by permitting tumults to deprive the members of their liberty, and to insult the king; that the members of parliament are themselves subjects, and bound by their oath of allegiance; that it is not lawful for subjects to defend religion or reformation against their sovereign by force; that it is contrary to the doctrine of Protestants, the practice of the ancient Christians, and the injunctions of Scripture, to resist the higher powers; that the King was falsely accused as if he were about to destroy liberty, religion, and parliaments; that the allegations of Papists respecting the rebellious tendency of Protestantism were supported by this war; that it proceeded from impatience and distrust of God; and that religion is best promoted by patient sufferings.

^{*} The term *Roundhead* was bestowed either because the Puritans usually wore short hair, and the royal party long; or because some say, the Queen, at Strafford's trial, asked, in reference to Prynne, who that *round-headed* man was, who spoke so strongly. The device on the standard of Colonel Cook, a parliamentary officer, was a man in armour cutting off the corner of a square cap with a sword. His motto was *Muto quadratu rotundis*.

¹ Fuller's derivation of *Malignant* is in his usual witty style; "The deduction thereof being disputable; whether from bad fire, or bad fuel, *malus ignis*, or *malum lignum*: but this is sure, betwixt both, the name made a great combustion."

Some of these reasons are plausible, and others have considerable force ; they are partly derived from the constitution of England, and partly from the nature and obligations of religion. To all of them the writers on the side of the parliament replied at great length ; and justified the resistance of the people to the arbitrary measures of government, on other and unanswerable grounds. Instead of stating these at length, I shall here give the reflections of Baxter, which embrace the strength of them, in his own words.

“ For my own part, I freely confess that I was not judicious enough in politics and law to decide this controversy. Being astonished at the Irish massacre, and persuaded fully both of the parliament’s good endeavours for reformation, and of their *real danger*, my judgment of the *main cause*, much swayed my judgment in the matter of the wars ; and the arguments *à fine, et à natura, et necessitate*, which common wits are capable of discerning, did too far incline my judgment in the cause of the war, before I well understood the arguments from our particular laws. The consideration of the quality of the persons also, that sided for each cause, did greatly work with me, and more than it should have done. I verily thought that if that which a judge in court saith is law, must go for law to the subject, as to the decision of that cause, though the king send his broad seal against it ; then that which the parliament saith *is law*, is law to the subject about the dangers of the commonwealth, whatever it be in itself.

“ I make no doubt that both parties were to blame, as it commonly falleth out in most wars and contentions ; and I will not be he that will justify either of them. I doubt not but the headiness and rashness of the younger inexperienced sort of religious people, made many parliament men and ministers overgo themselves to keep pace with those Hotspurs. No doubt but much indiscretion appeared, and worse than indiscretion in the tumultuous petitioners ; and much sin was committed in the dishonouring of the king, and in the uncivil language against the bishops and liturgy of the church. But these things came chiefly from the sectarian, separating spirit, which blew the coals among foolish apprentices. And as the sectaries increased, so the insolence increased. One or two in the House, and five or six ministers that came from Holland, and a few relicts of Brownists that were scattered in the city, did drive on other

and sowed the seeds which afterward spread over all the land."^m

"But I then thought, whoever was faulty, the people's liberties and safety should not be forfeited. I thought that all the subjects were not guilty of all the faults of king or parliament when they defended them: yea, that if both their causes had been bad as against each other; yet that the subjects should adhere to that party which most secured the welfare of the nation, and might defend the land under their conduct without owning all their cause. And herein I was then so zealous, that I thought it was a great sin for men that were able to defend their country, to be neutrals. And I have been tempted since to think that I was a more competent judge upon the place, when all things were before our eyes, than I am in the review of those days and actions so many years after, when distance disad vantageth the apprehension."ⁿ

It is evident from these statements, that Baxter was a decided friend to the parliamentary cause. The reasons which influenced his judgment were those which probably guided the determination of the great body of persons who espoused that side, in the momentous controversy which then divided the country. Many of those who were incapable of judging in the numerous political questions and altercations, which the grand subject involved, were well enough qualified to form an opinion respecting the substantial merits of the difference between the king and the people. The love of religion, and the desire of liberty, were the great inspiring principles. The resistance which they met with only increased their vigour, and thus in-

^m It is very singular that Baxter should attribute so much evil to the dissenting brethren of the Westminster assembly, and the sectaries of whom they were the reputed leaders, especially after his own account of the former state of things which we have given. The civil wars produced or occasioned the sects, not the sects the wars. The long parliament had taken some of its strongest measures before the five Independent ministers returned to England from Holland. A good while must have elapsed after their return before their influence could extend far; and without violent and unreasonable opposition to their fair and moderate request for a toleration, their influence at no time would have been great. Compared with many of their opponents, both their language and their temper were moderate; and it might be easy to show that the exaggerated lamentations and insulting abuse of their adversaries were calculated to produce, and actually did produce, a worse effect on the country than anything done by the Independents either in or out of parliament. On this subject further particulars will be furnished in a subsequent part of this work.

ⁿ Life, part i. p. 39.

secured their success. Though they were guilty of occasional evils, and produced temporary confusion, the great objects which they contemplated were never lost sight of, and the result of the struggle was in a high degree glorious.

We have already glanced at the trouble Baxter experienced at Kidderminster, from the ignorant rabble, which disliked his preaching and his strictness. Towards the end of 1642, the heat of the parties became so great that he was exposed to considerable danger. The king's declarations were read in the market-place, and a country gentleman, who officiated on the occasion, stopped at sight of Baxter, and called out "There goes a traitor." The commission of array was set on foot, which increased the rage of the rioters. "Down with the round-heads," became the watch-word; and knocking down every person whose hair was short and his dress respectable immediately followed. In consequence of these things, Baxter was advised to withdraw for a short time from the scene of his labours. The county of Worcester was devoted to the king; so that no one who was known to be for the parliament could then be of service.

CHAPTER III.

1642—1646.

Baxter goes to Gloucester—Returns to Kidderminster—Visits Alcester—Battle of Edghill—Residence in Coventry—Battle of Naseby—State of the Parliamentary Army—Consults the Ministers about going into it—Becomes Chaplain to Colonel Whalley's regiment—Opinions of the Soldiers—Disputes with them—Battle of Langport—Wicked Report of an Occurrence at this place—The Army retires to Bridgewater and Bristol—Becomes ill—Various Occurrences in the Army—Chief Impediments to his Success in it—Cromwell—Harrison—Berry—Advised by the Ministers to continue in it—Goes to London on account of his Health—Joins the Army in Worcestershire—Attacked with violent Bleeding—Leaves the Army—Entertained by Lady Rous—Remarks on his Views of the Army, and conduct in it.

THE immediate cause of Baxter's withdrawal from Kidderminster was a violent attack on his life, and on that of the churchwarden, by a mob, excited by a parliamentary order for defacing images of the Trinity in churches, and removing crucifixes; to which they considered Baxter a party, though the execution of the order had not been attempted. This brutal outrage shows the ignorant and degraded state of the people. On leaving Kidderminster, he went to Gloucester, where he found the people civil and religious, as different from those of the former place as if they had lived under another government. Here he remained for a month, during which many political pamphlets were published on both sides. Here, also, he first witnessed the contentions between the ministers and the Baptists, and other sects, which then frequently took place in the country. A public arena was chosen; judges, or moderators, were appointed; champions on each side bade defiance: while the public were called to witness the religious tournament, and to applaud the victor, Truth was generally claimed by both parties; but if the justice of the cause depended on the spirit and weapons of the champions, in most instances she would have disclaimed both. About a dozen young men, in Gloucester, of considerable parts, had been re-baptised, and laboured, as was very natural, to draw

others after them. The minister of the place, Mr. Winnel, being hot and impatient, excited rather than calmed them. He wrote a book against them, which produced little effect on the Baptists, and led the people of the country to blame him for his violence and asperity. This was the commencement, Baxter says, of much evil at Gloucester.

When he had remained in it about a month, his friends at Kidderminster wished him to return, which he accordingly did ; but, after continuing a short time, he found the state of matters so little improved, the fury of the rabble and of the king's soldiers being still great, that he was under the necessity of withdrawing again. The war was now in active operation in that part of the country ; the main army of the king, commanded by Prince Rupert, and that of the parliament, under the Earl of Essex, occupying the county of Worcester. After noticing some petty skirmishes, he gives the following account of the battle of Edghill, and his subsequent proceedings :

" Upon the Lord's day, October 23, 1642, I preached at Alcester for my reverend friend, Mr. Samuel Clark. As I was preaching, the people heard the cannon play, and perceived that the armies were engaged. When the sermon was done, in the afternoon, the report was more audible, which made us all long to hear of the success. About sun-setting, many troops fled through the town, and told us that all was lost on the parliament's side ; and that the carriages were taken, and the waggons plundered, before they came away. The townsmen sent a messenger to Stratford-on-Avon, to know the truth. About four o'clock in the morning he returned, and told us that Prince Rupert wholly routed the left wing of the Earl of Essex's army ; but while his men were plundering the waggons, the main body and the right wing routed the rest of the king's army ; took his standard, but lost it again ; killed General, the Earl of Lindsay, and took his son prisoner : that few persons of quality, on the side of the parliament, were lost, and no nobleman but Lord St. John, eldest son to the Earl of Bolingbroke : that the loss of the left wing happened through the treachery of Sir Faithful Fortescue, major to Lord Fielding's regiment of horse, who turned to the king when he should have charged : and that the victory was obtained principally by Colonel Hollis's regiment of London red-coats, and the Earl of Essex's own regiment and life guard, where Sir Philip Stapleton, Sir Arthur Haselrigge, and Colonel Urry, did much.

"Next morning, being desirous to see the field, I went to Edghill, and found the Earl of Essex, with the remaining part of his army, keeping the ground, and the king's army facing them upon the hill about a mile off. There were about a thousand dead bodies in the field between them; and many I suppose were buried before. Neither of the armies moving towards each other, the king's army presently drew off towards Banbury, and then to Oxford. The Earl of Essex's went back to provide for the wounded, and refresh themselves at Warwick Castle, belonging to Lord Brook."

"For myself, I knew not what course to take. To live at home, I was uneasy; but especially now, when soldiers on one side or other would be frequently among us, and we must still be at the mercy of every furious beast that would make a prey of us. I had neither money nor friends: I knew not who would receive me in any place of safety; nor had I any thing to satisfy them for my diet and entertainment. Hereupon I was persuaded, by one that was with me, to go to Coventry, where an old acquaintance, Mr. Simon King, was minister; so thither I went, with a purpose to stay there till one side or other had got the victory, and the war was ended: for so wise in matters of war was I, and all the country beside, that we commonly supposed that a very few days or weeks, by one other battle, would end the wars. Here I stayed at Mr. King's a month; but the war was then as far from being likely to end as before.

"While I was thinking what course to take in this necessity, the committee and governor of the city desired me to stay with them, and lodge in the governor's house, and preach to the soldiers. The offer suited well with my necessities; but I resolved that I would not be chaplain to a regiment, nor take a commission: yet, if the mere preaching of a sermon once or twice a week to the garrison would satisfy them, I would accept of the offer, till I could go home again. Here, accordingly, I lived in the governor's house, followed my studies as quietly as in a time of peace, for about a year; preaching once a week to the soldiers, and once, on the Lord's day, to the people; taking nothing from either but my diet." °

° Baxter's account of this battle is substantially the same with Clarendon's, though the latter endeavours to show that the victory was rather on the side of the king than of the parliament. The consequences which followed, however, afford convincing proof that the advantages were on the side of the parliament.

° Life, part i. pp. 43, 44.

At the end of this period, the war, so far from being terminated, had spread almost over the whole country. In most of the counties there were garrisons and troops belonging to both parties, which caused conflicts in every quarter. There were few parishes in which blood, at some time or other, was not shed; so general and determined was the hostility of the parties to each other. Baxter removed from Coventry to Shropshire for about two months; during which time, he was near some of the skirmishes which then almost daily took place. Having got his father relieved from prison at Lillshull, he returned to Coventry, and spent another year in his old employment, studying the Scriptures and preaching to the army.

In his audience in this place, he mentions that there were many godly and judicious persons. Among these were, Sir Richard Skeffington, Colonel Godfrey Bosville, Mr. Mackworth, and Mr. George Abbot, known by his Paraphrase on the Book of Job. There were also about thirty worthy ministers, who had fled to Coventry for safety, from the soldiers and popular fury, though they never meddled in the wars: Mr. Richard Vines, Mr. Anthony Burgess, Mr. Burdall, Mr. Brumskill, Dr. Bryan, Dr. Grew, Mr. Stephens, Mr. Cradock, Mr. Morton of Bewdley, Mr. Diamond, old Mr. Overton, and many more.

At Coventry, Baxter took the covenant himself, and gave it to another, of which he afterwards bitterly repented. He also publicly defended it against a production of Sir Francis Nether-sol's. He then supposed that it was only intended as a test for garrisons and soldiers, and did not anticipate that it would afterwards be made a test for the magistracy and ministry throughout the land; though he acknowledges he might have foreseen this, had he attended to its tenor. Here, also, he openly declared himself for the parliament; for which, in his 'Penitent Confessions,'^p he assigns thirty-two reasons; with which it is unnecessary here to trouble the reader.

"The garrison of Coventry," he says, "consisted half of citizens, and half of countrymen. The latter were such as had been forced from their own dwellings, and were the most religious men of the parts round about. One or two persons who came among us from New England, of Sir Henry Vane's party, and one Anabaptist tailor, had almost troubled all the garrison, by infecting the honest soldiers with their opinions. But they

^p Penitent Confessions, p. 23.

found not the success in Coventry which they had done in Cromwell's army. In public I was fain to preach over all the controversies against the Anabaptists first, and then against the separatists. In private, some of my Worcester neighbours, and many of the foot soldiers, were able to baffle both separatists, Anabaptists, and Antinomians, and so kept all the garrison sound. On this, the Anabaptists sent to Bedford, for one Benjamin Cox, an old minister of their persuasion, and no contemptible scholar, the son of a bishop; and he and I had first a dispute by word of mouth, and afterwards in writing. In conclusion, about a dozen poor townsmen were carried away; but the soldiers, and the rest of the city, were kept sound from all infection of sectaries and dividers."^a Mr. Cox was desired to depart the first time; but coming down again and refusing to leave the city, the committee imprisoned him. Some ascribed this to Baxter; but he declares that instead of using his influence to put him in, he employed it to get him out.^r Be this as it may, a Baptist church was then planted in Coventry, which has subsisted ever since. Imprisoning heretics will never check or destroy heresy; and preaching controversies, is not the most useful method either of converting unbelievers or establishing saints.

The detail which Baxter gives in his own life of the subsequent progress of the civil war, which so long fearfully distracted the country, is too extended and minute to admit of being fully inserted in this place. Many of the scenes which he notices, are better described by others who witnessed them, and with whose description the generality of readers are now well acquainted. More dependence also can be placed on his statements than on his reasonings; on his record of what he saw, than on his hearsay reports. But as he himself acted with the parliamentary army for a considerable time, the account which he gives of what fell under his own observation, and of his personal conduct, is frequently important and interesting, and may always be received with the greatest confidence. To these things, I shall, therefore, confine my narrative. He thus describes the circumstances which led to his joining the army, his employment whilst in it, and some of the events which happened during his connexion with it.

"Naseby being not far from Coventry, where I was, and the noise of the victory being loud in our ears, and I having two or

^a *Life*, part i. p. 46.

^r Baxter on 'Infant Baptism,' Preface.

three who had been my intimate friends in Cromwell's army, whom I had not seen for above two years, I was desirous of seeing whether they were dead or alive; so to Naseby Field I went two days after the fight, and thence by the army's quarters before Leicester, to seek my acquaintance.* When I found them, I staid with them a night; and understood from them the state of the army much better than ever I had done before. We that lived quietly in Coventry kept to our old principles, and thought all others had done so too. Except a very few inconsiderable persons, we were unfeignedly for king and parliament; we believed that the war was only to save the parliament and kingdom from papists and delinquents, and to remove the dividers, that the king might again return to his parliament; and that no changes might be made in religion, but by the laws which had his free consent. We took the true happiness of king and people, church and state, to be our end, and so we understood the covenant, engaging both against Papists and schismatics; and when the Court News-book told the world of the swarms of Anabaptists in our armies, we thought it had been a mere lie, because it was not so with us, nor in any of the garrisons or county forces about us. But when I came to the army, among Cromwell's soldiers, I found a new face of things which I never dreamt of; I heard the plotting heads very hot upon that which intimated their intention to subvert both church and state. Independency and Anabaptistery were more prevalent; Antinomianism and Arminianism were equally distributed; and Thomas Moor's followers (a weaver of Wisbitch and Lynn, of excellent

* The best account which I have met with of the battle of Naseby, is in Sprigge's '*Anglia Rediviva; England's Recovery; or, the History of the Army under the conduct of Sir Thomas Fairfax, &c. 1647.*' Sprigge was General Fairfax's chaplain, and personally acquainted with the scenes and transactions which he describes. The book is now very scarce; but those who think the ministers of the army were mere fanatics, would do well to consult this work. As it comprehends the very period during which Baxter was in the army, it deserves to be compared with his account of the transactions which then took place. Sprigge's means of information must have been superior to Baxter's, as he was immediately connected with the general himself; yet I am not aware of any important difference between them in the statements of facts; though they do not entirely agree, as is noticed in a subsequent page, in their views of the character of the army. I should suppose that Baxter did not occupy any very conspicuous place in the army, as his name is never mentioned by Sprigge. Clement Walker calls Sprigge's '*Anglia,*' the '*Legend, or Romance, of this Army,*' and insinuates that it was the production of Nath. Fieunes, second son to Lord Say; but this is probably one of the legends of that mendacious writer.

parts) had made some shifts to join these two extremes together.

“Abundance of the common troopers and many of the officers, I found to be honest; sober, orthodox men; others were tractable, ready to hear the truth, and of upright intentions. But a few proud, self-conceited, hot-headed sectaries had got into the highest places, and were Cromwell’s chief favourites; and by their very heat and activity, bore down the rest, or carried them along with them. These were the soul of the army, though much fewer in number than the rest, being indeed not one to twenty in it; their strength being in the General’s, in Whalley’s and in Rich’s regiments of horse, and among the new-placed officers in many of the rest.

“I perceived that they took the king for a tyrant and an enemy, and really intended absolutely to master him, or to ruin him. They thought if they might fight against him, they might also kill or conquer him; and if they might conquer, they were never more to trust him further than he was in their power. They thought it folly to irritate him either by war or contradiction in parliament, if so be they must needs take him for their king, and trust him with their lives when they had thus displeased him. ‘What, were the lords of England,’ said they, ‘but William the Conqueror’s colonels; or the barons, but his majors; or the knights, but his captains!’ They plainly showed that they thought God’s providence would cast the trust of religion and the kingdom upon them as conquerers; they made nothing of all the most wise and godly in the armies and garrisons, that were not of their way. *Per fas aut nefas*, By law or without it, they were resolved to take down, not only bishops, and liturgy, and ceremonies, but all who did withstand them. They were far from thinking of a moderate episcopacy, or of any healing method between the episcopalians and the presbyterians; they most honoured the separatists, anabaptists, and antinomians; but Cromwell and his council took on them to join themselves to no party, but to be for the liberty of all. Two sorts, I perceived, they did so commonly and bitterly speak against, that it was done in mere design, to make them odious to the soldiers, and to all the land; and these were the Scots, and with them all presbyterians, but especially the ministers; whom they called priests, and priestbyters, dryvines, and the dissemblymen, and such like. The committees of the several counties, and all the soldiers that were under them, that were not of their

mind and way, were the other objects of their displeasure. Some orthodox captains of the army partly acquainted me with all this, and I heard much of it from the mouths of the leading sectaries themselves. This struck me to the very heart, and made me fear that England was lost by those that it had taken for its chief friends.

“Upon this I began to blame other ministers and myself. I saw that it was the ministers that had lost all, by forsaking the army, and betaking themselves to an easier and quieter way of life. When the Earl of Essex went out first, each regiment had an able preacher; but at Edghill fight, almost all of them went home; and as the sectaries increased, they were the more averse to go into the army. It is true, I believe now, that they had little invitation; and it is true, that they could look for little welcome, and great contempt and opposition, beside all other difficulties and dangers; but it is as true, that their worth and labour, in a patient, self-denying way, would probably have preserved most of the army, and have defeated the contrivances of the sectaries, saved the king, the parliament, and the land. And if it had brought reproach upon themselves from the malicious, who called them *Military Levites*, the good which they had done would have wiped off that blot, much better than the contrary course would have done.

“I reprehended myself also, who had before rejected an invitation from Cromwell, when he lay at Cambridge with that famous troop with which he began his army. His officers purposed to make their troop a gathered church, and they all subscribed an invitation to me to be their pastor, and sent it me to Coventry. I sent them a denial, reproving their attempt, and told them wherein my judgment was against the lawfulness and convenience of their way, and so I heard no more from them; but afterwards meeting Cromwell at Leicester, he expostulated with me for denying them. These very men that then invited me to be their pastor, were the men that afterwards headed much of the army, and some of them were the forwardest in all our changes; which made me wish that I had gone among them, however it had been interpreted; for then all the fire was in one spark.

“When I had informed myself, to my sorrow, of the state of the army, Captain Evanson (one of my orthodox informers) desired me yet to come to their regiment, which was the most religious, most valiant, and most successful of all the

army ; but in as much danger as any one whatsoever. I was unwilling to leave my studies, and friends, and quietness, at Coventry, to go into an army so contrary to my judgment ; but I thought the public good commanded me, and so I gave him some encouragement. Whereupon he told his colonel (Whalley), who also was orthodox in religion, but engaged by kindred and interest to Cromwell ; who invited me to be chaplain to his regiment. I told him I would take but a day's time to deliberate, and would send him an answer or else come to him.

“As soon as I came home to Coventry, I called together an assembly of ministers ; Dr. Bryan, Dr. Grew, and many others. I told them the sad news of the corruption of the army, and that I thought all we had valued was likely to be endangered by them ; seeing this army having first conquered at York, and now at Naseby, and having left the king no visible army but Goring's, the fate of the whole kingdom was likely to follow the disposition and interest of the conquerors. We had sworn to be true to the king and his heirs in the oath of allegiance. All our soldiers here think that the parliament is faithful to the king, and have no other purpose themselves. If the king and parliament, church and state, be ruined by those men, and we look on and do nothing to hinder it, how are we true to our allegiance and to the covenant, which bindeth us to defend the king, and to be against schism, as well as against Popery and profaneness ? For my part, said I, I know that my body is so weak, that it is likely to hazard my life to be among them ; I expect their fury should do little less than rid me out of the way ; and I know one man cannot do much among them : but yet, if your judgment take it to be my duty, I will venture my life ; perhaps some other minister may be drawn in, and then some more of the evil may be prevented.

“The ministers finding my own judgment for it, and being moved with the cause, did unanimously give their judgment for my going. Hereupon, I went straight to the committee, and told them that I had an invitation to the army, and desired their consent to go. They consulted awhile, and then left it wholly to the governor, saying, that if he consented they should not hinder me. It fell out that Colonel Barker, the governor, was just then to be turned out, as a member of parliament, by the self-denying vote. And one of his companions (Colonel Willoughby) was to be colonel and governor in his place. Hereupon Colonel Barker was content, in his discontent, that I

should go out with him, that he might be missed the more; and so gave me his consent.

"I then sent word to Colonel Whalley that, to-morrow God willing, I would come to him. As soon as this was done, the elected governor was much displeased; and the soldiers were so much offended with the committee for consenting to my going, that the committee all met again in the night, and sent for me, and told me I must not go. I told them that, by their consent, I had promised, and therefore must go. They told me that the soldiers were ready to mutiny against them, and they could not satisfy them, and therefore I must stay. I told them that I would not have promised, if they had not consented, though, being no soldier or chaplain to the garrison, but only preaching to them, I took myself to be a free man, and I could not break my word, when I had promised by their consent. They seemed to deny their consent, and said they only referred me to the governor. In a word, they were so angry with me, that I was fain to tell them all the truth of my motives and design, what a case I perceived the army to be in, and that I was resolved to do my best against it. I knew not, till afterwards, that Colonel William Purefoy, a parliament-man, one of the chief of them, was a confidant of Cromwell's; and as soon as I had spoken what I did of the army, magisterially he answereth me, 'Let me hear no more of that: if Nol Cromwell should hear any soldier but speak such a word, he would cleave his crown: you do them wrong. It is not so.' I told him what he would not hear, he should not hear from me: but I would perform my word though he seemed to deny his. And so I parted with those that had been my very great friends, in some displeasure. The soldiers, however, threatened to stop the gates and keep me in; but, being honest, understanding men, I quickly satisfied the leaders of them by a private intimation of my reasons and resolutions, and some of them accompanied me on my way.

"As soon as I came to the army, Oliver Cromwell coolly bade me welcome, and never spake one word to me more while I was there; nor once, all that time, vouchsafed me an opportunity to come to the head-quarters, where the councils and meetings of the officers were; so that most of my design was thereby frustrated. His secretary gave out that there was a reformer come to the army to undeceive them, and to save church and state, with some such other jeers; by which I perceived that

all I had said the night before to the committee, had come to Cromwell before me, I believe by Colonel Purefoy's means : but Colonel Whalley welcomed me, and was the worse thought of for it by the rest of the cabal.

"Here I set myself, from day to day, to find out the corruptions of the soldiers, and to discourse and dispute them out of their mistakes, both religious and political. My life among them was a daily contending against seducers, and gently arguing with the more tractable ; but another kind of warfare I had than theirs.

"I found that many honest men, of weak judgments and little acquaintance with such matters, had been seduced into a disputing vein, and made it too much of their religion to talk for this opinion and for that ; sometimes for state democracy, and sometimes for church democracy ; sometimes against forms of prayer, and sometimes against infant baptism, which yet some of them did maintain ; sometimes against set times of prayer, and against the tying of ourselves to any duty before the Spirit move us ; and sometimes about free-grace and free-will, and all the points of Antinomianism and Arminianism. So that I was almost always, when I had opportunity, disputing with one or other of them ; sometimes for our civil government, and sometimes for church order and government ; sometimes for infant baptism, and oft against Antinomianism, and the contrary extreme. [But their most frequent and vehement disputes were for liberty of conscience, as they called it ; that is, that the civil magistrate had nothing to do to determine any thing in matters of religion, by constraint or restraint ; but every man might not only hold, but preach and do, in matters of religion, what he pleased : that the civil magistrate hath nothing to do but with civil things, to keep the peace, protect the church's liberties, &c.¹

¹ It is very interesting to find that, amidst all the heresies which infected the army, of which Baxter speaks so strongly, the heresy, as it was then deemed, of religious liberty, so extensively prevailed. It is a pleasing feature in the character of the army, that it contended more vehemently for this than for any other point of doctrine or form of religion. The fanatical Baptists and Independents of the parliamentary forces, maintained, two hundred years ago, the doctrine to which the enlightened parliament of George the Fourth, in the years 1828 and 1829, was brought to submit ; not by practised politicians, or spiritual lords, but by a man accustomed from his earliest youth to the use of arms, and the arbitrary command of an army. Among soldiers, religious freedom was first fiercely contended for ; and by a soldier its

"I found that one-half almost, of the religious party among them, were such as were either orthodox, or but very slightly touched with heterodoxy; and almost another half were honest men, that stepped further into the contending way than they could well get out of again, but who, with competent help, might be recovered. There were a few fiery, self-conceited men among them, who kindled the rest, and made all the noise and bustle, and carried about the army as they pleased: for the greatest part of the common soldiers, especially of the foot, were ignorant men, of little religion; abundance of them were such as had been taken prisoners, or turned out of garrisons under the king, and had been soldiers in his army. These would do any thing to please their officers, and were ready instruments for the seducers, especially in their great work, which was to cry down the covenant, to villify all parish ministers, but especially the Scots and Presbyterians; for the most of the soldiers that I spoke with, never took the covenant, because it tied them to defend the king's person, and to extirpate heresy and schism.

"When I perceived that it was a few, then, who bore the bell, and did all the hurt among them, I acquainted myself with those men, and would be oft disputing with them, in the hearing of the rest. I found that they were men who had been in London, hatched up among the old separatists, and had made it all the matter of their study and religion to rail against ministers, parish churches, and Presbyterians; and who had little other knowledge, or discourse of any thing about the heart, or heaven. They were fierce with pride and self-conceitedness, and had gotten a very great conquest over their charity, both to the Episcopalians and Presbyterians: whereas many of those honest soldiers who were tainted but with some doubts about liberty of conscience or Independency, were men who would discourse of the points of sanctification and christian experience very seriously. I so far prevailed in opening the folly of these revilers and self-conceited men, as that some of them became the laughing-stock of the soldiers before I left them; and when they preached, for great preachers they were, their weakness exposed them to contempt. A great part of the mischief was done among the soldiers by pamphlets, which were abundant triumphs have been completed. I regret that I cannot place Baxter in the front ranks of its friends.

dantly dispersed, such as Overton, Martin Mar-Priest, and more of his;" and some of J. Lilburn's, who was one of the preaching officers; and divers against the king, and against the ministry, and for liberty of conscience, &c. The soldiers being usually dispersed in quarters, they had such books to read, when they had none to contradict them.

"But there was yet a more dangerous party than these among the soldiers, who took the direct jesuitical way. They first most vehemently declaimed against the doctrine of election, and for the power of free-will, and all other points which are controverted between the Jesuits and Dominicans, the Arminians and Calvinists. They then as fiercely cried down our present translation of the Scriptures, and debased their authority, though they did not deny them to be divine. They cried down all our ministry, episcopal, presbyterian, and independent, and all our churches. They vilified almost all our ordinary worship; they allowed of no argument from Scripture, but what was brought in its express words; they were vehement against both king and all government, except popular: and against magistrates meddling in matters of religion. All their disputing was with as much fierceness as if they had been ready to draw their swords upon those against whom they disputed. They trusted more to policy, scorn, and power, than to argument. They would bitterly scorn me among their hearers, to prejudice them before they entered into dispute. They avoided me as much as possible; but when we did come to it, they drowned all reason in fierceness, and vehemency, and multitude of words. They greatly strove for places of command; and when any place was due by order to another that was not of their mind, they would be sure to work him out, and be ready to mutiny if they had not their will. I thought they were principled by the Jesuits, and acted all for their interest, and in their way. But the secret spring was out of sight. These were the same men that afterwards were called *Levellers*, who rose up against Crom-

* These pamphlets were imitations of the Martin Mar-Priest's attacks upon the bishops and clergy in the reign of Elizabeth. They partake of the severity, and, indeed, scurrility, of their prototypes, and were calculated to produce very considerable effect. They were mostly anonymous, but have been commonly ascribed to Overton, Lilburn, and persons of that class. An admirable account of Lilburn, with a very correct view of his character, is given in Godwin's *History of the Commonwealth*. Overton, I suspect, was an infidel—a character then rather uncommon. He wrote a pamphlet to prove man's materiality, which made considerable noise at the time.

well, and were surprised at Burford, having then deceived and drawn to them many more. Thompson, the general of the levellers, who was slain then, was no greater a man than one of the corporals of Bethel's troop; the cornet and others being much worse than he.*

"Thus," concludes Baxter, "have I given you a taste of my employment in the army." For such employment he was of all men singularly qualified. Nothing but an extraordinary taste for disputation, could have disposed him to enter on, or have enabled him to continue in, such a service. Making allowance for the colouring, which the state of his mind, and the extraordinary nature of his circumstances, must have produced, it will be granted, that such another army as that of the Parliament, at this period, the world never saw before, or since. Baxter endeavours to account for its peculiar character, from the influence of a few individuals. But, whatever may be ascribed to them as the proximate causes of particular events, it is certain that other and more powerful causes formed the characters of these soldiers, and are necessary to account for the appearance which they presented. Civil and ecclesiastical oppression had goaded many to desperation; the hope and love of liberty inspired that heroic ardour, which nothing could subdue; the detection of many a false pretence, and the discovery of many important errors, by which they had long been abused and deluded, induced suspicions and doubts, and instigated to a licentious freedom of inquiry. Authority had lost all its weight; and truth, stripped of all adventitious ornament and recommendation, seemed clothed with irresistible charms. The period of darkness and the reign of terror were regarded to have passed away; and the dawn of peace, liberty, and religion, all over the world, was supposed to have commenced. Baxter's exertions to stem the progress of these men, however well-meant, were like attempts to check a volcano, by throwing stones into the crater; or to resist the mountain torrent by a wicker embankment. The tempest which had been long collecting at length burst with tremendous fury; but, though, for a time, it scattered dismay and desolation all around, it finally cleared the political and religious atmosphere, and rendered it capable of being breathed by free men and Christians.

As Baxter's account of the army is drawn up under the influ-

* Life, part i. pp. 50—54.

ence of strong feeling, arising probably from the disappointment he experienced in his attempts to cool down their ardour, and reconcile their theological quarrels, it may be proper to present to the reader the character of these soldiers, as drawn by another who was very intimate with them, and whose testimony is entitled to much respect.

“The officers of this army,” says Sprigge, “were such as knew little more of war than our own unhappy wars had taught them, except some few. Indeed, I may say this, they were better Christians than soldiers; wiser in faith than in fighting; and could believe a victory sooner than contrive it; yet were they as wise in soldiery as the little time and experience they had could make them. Many of the officers, with their men, were much engaged in prayer and reading the Scriptures; an exercise that soldiers, till of late, have used but little; and thus they went on and prospered. Men conquer better as they are saints than soldiers; and in the counties where they came, they left something of God as well as of Cæsar behind them; something of piety as well as pay.

“The army was, what by example and justice, kept in good order, both in respect of itself and of the country; nor was it their pay that pacified them; for, had they not had more civility than money, things had not been so fairly managed. There were many of them differing in opinion, yet not in action or business; they all agreed to preserve the kingdom; they prospered more in their amity than uniformity. Whatever their opinions were, they plundered none with them, they betrayed none with them, nor disobeyed the state with them; and they were more visibly pious and peaceable in their opinions than those we call more orthodox.”^y

This is the testimony of one whom Baxter would perhaps have called a sectary; but he was chaplain to the good orthodox Presbyterian, General Fairfax, and could not, therefore, have been very wild. Besides, his whole account is characterised by sobriety, and accounts better for the conduct and success of the army, than some parts of Baxter's description. It is a duty, while recording events, and describing characters as they really existed, to embrace every fair opportunity of vindicating the brave and, I must call them, enlightened men, who fought the battle of England's liberties, and to whose memories a large debt of gratitude still remains undischarged.

^y Sprigge's '*Anglia Rediviva*,' pp. 324, 325.

"As soon as I came to the army," Baxter proceeds, "it marched speedily down into the west, because the king had no army left there but the Lord Goring's, and it would not suffer the fugitives of Naseby-fight to come thither to strengthen them. We came quickly down to Somerton, when Goring was at Langport; which lying upon the river, Massey was sent to keep him in on the further side, while Fairfax attended him on this side, with his army. One day they faced each other, and did nothing; the next day they came to their ground again. Betwixt the two armies was a narrow lane, which went between some meadows in a bottom, and a small brook crossed the lane with a narrow bridge. Goring planted two or three small pieces at the head of the lane to keep the passage, and there placed his best horse; so that none could come to them, but over that narrow bridge, and up that steep lane, upon the mouth of those pieces. After many hours facing each other, Fairfax's great ordnance affrighting, more than hurting, Goring's men, and some musqueteers being sent to drive them from under the hedges, at last Cromwell bid Whalley send three of his troops to charge the enemy, and he sent three of the General's own regiment to second them; all being of Cromwell's own regiment. Whalley sent Major Bethel, Captain Evanson, and Captain Grove, to charge; Major Desborough, with another troop or two, came after; as they could go but one or two abreast over the bridge. By the time Bethel and Evanson, with their troops were got up to the top of the lane, they met with a select party of Goring's best horse, and charged them at sword's point, whilst you would count three or four hundred, and then put them to retreat. In the flight they pursued them too far to the main body; for the dust was so great, being in the very hottest time of summer, that they who were in it could scarce see each other; but I, who stood over them upon the brow of the hill, saw all. When they saw themselves upon the face of Goring's army, they fled back in haste, and by the time they came to the lane again, Captain Grove's troop was ready to relieve them, and Desborough behind him. They then rallied again, and the five or six troops together marched towards all Goring's army; but before they came to the front, I could discern the rear begin to run, and so beginning in the rear, they all fled before they endured any charge; nor was there a blow struck that day, but by Bethel's and Evanson's troops, on that side, and a few musqueteers in the hedges. Goring's army fled to Bridgewater; and very few of

them were either killed or taken in the fight or the pursuit. I happened to be next to Major Harrison as soon as the flight began, and heard him with a loud voice break forth into the praises of God with fluent expressions, as if he had been in a rapture.”*

It was while at Langport, that a remarkable circumstance took place, which continued for a long time to be privately circulated to the great prejudice of Baxter’s character. Will the reader believe that he was actually charged with killing a man in cold blood with his own hand ! At last it was publicly laid to his charge by Major Jennings himself, in the form of an affidavit, and published by Vernon, in the preface to his life of Dr. Heylin. The following is a copy of this extraordinary document, with Baxter’s answer to it :

“ Mr. Baxter may be pleased to call to mind,” says that inveterate enemy of the Nonconformists, “ what was done to one Major Jennings the last war, in that fight that was between Lyndsel and Langford, in the county of Salop ; where the king’s party having unfortunately the worst of the day, the poor man was stripped almost naked, and left for dead in the field. Mr. Baxter, and one Lieutenant Hurdman, taking their walk among the wounded and dead bodies, perceived some life left in the Major, and Hurdman run him through the body in cold blood. Mr. Baxter all the while looking on, and taking off, with his own hand, the king’s picture from about his neck, told him, as he was swimming in his gore, that he was a popish rogue, and that was his crucifix. This picture was kept by Mr. Baxter for many years, till it was got from him, but not without much difficulty, by one Mr. Somerfield, who then lived with Sir Thomas Rouse. He generously restored it to the poor man, now alive at Wick, near Pershore, in Worcestershire, although, at the fight, supposed to be dead ; being, after the wounds given him, dragged up and down the field by the merciless soldiers. Mr.

* Major-General Harrison was the son of a grazier at Nantwich, in Cheshire, and bred an attorney, but quitted that profession in the beginning of the civil war. He was a man of courage and of great volubility, and was of singular use to Cromwell in subduing the Presbyterians. He was one of those who pleaded for a legal trial of Charles I., whom he undertook to bring from Hurst Castle, for that purpose. He is said to have amused Fairfax with long prayers, for which he had an admirable talent, at the time of the king’s execution. He was one of the ten regicides, as they were called, who were executed in October, 1660, and died exulting in the cause for which he suffered. — *Granger’s Biog. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 63.

Baxter approved of the inhumanity by feeding his eyes with so bloody and so barbarous a spectacle.

"I, Thomas Jennings, subscribe to the truth of this narrative, and have hereunto put my hand and seal; this second day of March, 1682."^a

In reply to this extraordinary charge, Baxter says :

"I do not think Major Jennings knowingly made this lie ; but was directed by somebody's report, and my sending him the medal. I do solemnly protest, that to my knowledge, I never saw Major Jennings ; that I never saw a man wound, hurt, strip or touch him ; that I never spake a word to him, much less any word here affirmed ; that I neither took the picture from about his neck, nor saw who did it ; that I was not in the field when it was done ; that I walked not among any wounded or dead, nor heard of any killed, but of one man ; and that the picture was never got from me with difficulty ; but that this is the truth,—The parliament had a few men in Langford House, and the king at Lyndsel, about a mile and a half asunder, who used oft to skirmish and dare each other in the fields between. My innocent father being prisoner at Lyndsel ; and I, being at Langford, resolved not to go thence till he was delivered ; I saw the soldiers go out, as they oft did, and in another field discerned them to meet and fight. I knew not that they had seen Jennings ; but, being in the house, a soldier showed a small medal of gilt silver, bigger than a shilling, and told us that he wounded Jennings, and took his coat, and took that medal from about his neck ; I bought it of him for eighteen-pence, no one offering more. Some years after, the first time that I heard where he was, I freely desired Mr. Somerfield to give it him from me, who had never seen him ; supposing it was a mark of honour which might be useful to him. And now these lies are all the thanks that ever I had."^b

Such is Baxter's full and satisfactory explanation of one of the most improbable and wicked calumnies that ever was propagated against a man of God. It is a curious illustration of the state of the times, that such a base story could find reporters and believers, not only among the ignorant and the profligate, but even among the respectable part of the clergy. It was believed and circulated not merely by such persons as Vernon, and Long, and Lestrangle ; but by Dr. Boreman, of Trinity College, Cam-

^a Baxter's True Hist. of Councils, pp. 1—6.

^b Ibid.

bridge; and Dr. Allestry, of Oxford. The latter, however, much to his credit, wrote him a letter of apology. But we must now return to the account of the army.

“Goring immediately fled with his army further westward, to Exeter; but Fairfax stayed to besiege Bridgewater; and after two days it was taken by storm, in which Colonel Hammond’s service was much magnified. Mr. Peters, having come to the army from London but a day before, went presently back with the news of Goring’s rout: when an hundred pounds reward was voted to himself for bringing the news, and to Major Bethel for his service; but no reward was given to Captain Evanson, because he was no sectary. Bethel alone had all the glory and applause from Cromwell and that party.

“From Bridgewater the army went back towards Bristol; where Prince Rupert was taking Nunny Castle and Bath in the way. At Bristol they continued the siege about a month. After the first three days, I fell sick of a fever, the plague being round about my quarters. As soon as I felt my disease, I rode six or seven miles back into the country, and the next morning, with much ado, I got to Bath. Here Dr. Venner was my careful physician: and when I was near death, far from all my acquaintance, it pleased God to restore me; and on the fourteenth day the fever ended in a crisis. But it left me so emaciated and weak, that it was long ere I recovered the little strength I had before. I came back to Bristol siege three or four days before the city was taken. The foot, which were to storm the works, would not go on unless the horse, who had no service to do, went with them. So Whalley’s regiment was fain to go on to encourage the foot, and to stand to be shot at before the ordnance, while the foot stormed the forts. Here Major Bethel, who in the last fight had his thumb shot, had a shot in his thigh, of which he died, and was much lamented. The outworks being taken, Prince Rupert yielded up the city, upon terms that he might march away with his soldiers, leaving their ordnance and arms.

“After this, the army marched to Sherborne Castle, the Earl of Bristol’s house: which, after a fortnight’s siege, they took by storm; and that on a side which one would think could never have been that way taken. While they were there, the countrymen, called clubmen, rose near Shaftsbury, and got upon the top of a hill. A party was sent out against them, who marched

up the hill, and routed them ; though some of the valiantest men were slain in the front.

“ When Sherborne Castle was taken, part of the army went back and took in a small garrison by Salisbury, called Langford house, and so marched to Winchester Castle, and took that after a week’s siege, or little more. From thence Cromwell went, with a good party, to besiege Basing-house, the Marquis of Winchester’s, which had frustrated great sieges heretofore. Here Colonel Hammond was taken prisoner into the house, afterwards the house was taken by storm, and he saved the Marquis and others ; and much riches were taken by the soldiers.^c

“ In the mean time the rest of the army marched down again towards the Lord Goring, and Cromwell came after them. When we followed Lord Goring westward, we found that, above all other armies of the king, his soldiers were most hated by the people, for their incredible profaneness, and their unmerciful plundering, many of them being foreigners. A sober gentleman, whom I quartered with at South Pederton, in Somersetshire, averred to me, that, when with him, a company of them pricked their fingers, and let the blood run into the cup, and drank a health to the devil in it : and no place could I come into, but their horrid impiety and outrages made them odious.

“ The army marched down by Hunnington to Exeter ; where I continued near three weeks among them at the siege, and then Whalley’s regiment, with the General’s, Fleetwood’s, and others, being sent back, I returned with them and left the siege ; which continued till the city was taken. The army following Goring into Cornwall, there forced him to lay down arms, his men going away beyond sea, or elsewhere, without their arms : and at last, Pendennis Castle, and all the garrisons there, were taken.

“ In the mean time, Whalley was to command the return of the party of horse, to keep in the garrison of Oxford till the army could come to besiege it : and so in the extreme winter, he quartered about six weeks in Buckinghamshire : and then was sent to lay siege to Banbury Castle, where Sir William Compton was governor, who had wearied out one long siege before. There I was with them above two months, till the castle was taken ; and then he was sent to lay siege to Worcester, with the

^c Life, part 1. pp. 54, 55.

help of the Northampton, and Warwick, and Newport Pagnles soldiers, who had assisted him at Banbury. At Worcester, he lay in siege eleven weeks : and at the same time, the army being come up from the west, lay in siege at Oxford.

“By this time, Colonel Whalley, though Cromwell’s kinsman, and commander of the trusted regiment, grew odious among the sectarian commanders at the head quarters. For my sake he was called a Presbyterian, though neither he nor I were of that judgment in several points ; Major Salloway not omitting to use his industry in the matter to that end. When he had brought the city to a necessity of present yielding, two or three days before it yielded, Colonel Rainsborough was sent from Oxford, which had yielded, with some regiments of foot to command in chief ; partly that he might be governor there, and not Whalley, when the city was surrendered. So when it was yielded, Rainsborough was governor, to head and gratify the sectaries, and settle city and county in their way : but the committee of the county were for Whalley, and lived in distaste with Rainsborough, and the sectaries prospered there no further than Worcester city itself, a place which deserved such a judgment ; but all the country was free from their infection,

“All this while, as I had friendly converse with the sober part, so I was still employed with the rest as before, in preaching, conference, and disputing against their confounding errors ; and in all places where we went, the sectarian soldiers much infected the counties, by their pamphlets and converse, The people admiring the conquering army, were ready to receive whatsoever they commended to them ; and it was the way of the faction to represent what they said, as the sense of the army, and to make the people believe that whatever opinion they vented, which one in forty of the army owned not, was the army’s opinion. When we quartered at Agmondesham, in Buckinghamshire, some sectaries of Chesham had set up a public meeting for conference, to propagate their opinions through all the country ; and this in the church, by the encouragement of an ignorant sectarian lecturer, one Bramble, whom they had got in, while Dr. Cook, the pastor, and Mr. Richardson, his curate, durst not contradict them. When this public talking-day came, Bethel’s troopers, with other sectarian soldiers, must be there to confirm the Chesham men, and make men believe that the army was for them. I thought it my duty to be there also, and took divers sober officers with me, to let them see that more of

the army were against them than for them. I took the reading pew, and Pitchford's cornet and troopers took the gallery. And there I found a crowded congregation of poor well-meaning people, who came in the simplicity of their hearts to be deceived. Then did the leader of the Chesham men begin, and afterwards Pitchford's soldiers set in, and I alone disputed against them from morning until almost night ; for I knew their trick, that if I had but gone out first, they would have prated what boasting words they listed when I was gone, and made the people believe that they had baffled me, or got the best ; therefore, I stayed it out till they first rose and went away. The abundance of nonsense which they uttered that day, may partly be seen in Mr. Edward's 'Gangræna;' for I had wrote a letter of it to a friend in London, so that and another were put into Mr. Edward's book, without my name.^d But some of the sober people of Agmondesham, gave me abundance of thanks for that day's work, which they said would never be there forgotten ; I heard also that the sectaries were so discouraged that they never met there any more. I am sure I had much thanks from Dr. Cook, and Mr. Richardson, who, being obnoxious to their displeasure for being for the king, durst not open their mouths themselves. After the conference, I talked with the lecturer, Mr. Bramble, and found him little wiser than the rest.

"The chief impediments to the success of my endeavours, I found, were only two : the discountenance of Cromwell, and the chief officers of his mind, which kept me a stranger from their meetings and councils ; and my incapacity of speaking to many, as soldiers' quarters are scattered far from one another, and I could be but in one place at once. So that one troop at a time, ordinarily, and some few more extraordinary, was all that I could speak to. The most of the service I did beyond Whalley's regiment was, by the help of Capt. Lawrence, with some of the General's regiment, and sometimes I had converse with Major Harrison and a few others ; but I found that if the army had only had ministers enough, who would have done such little as I did, all their plot might have been broken, and king, parliament, and religion, might have been preserved. I, therefore, sent abroad to get some more ministers among them, but I could get none. Saltmarsh and Dell were the two great preachers at the

^d This letter appears in the third part of that precious collection of absurdity, calumny, and lying. It is to be regretted that Baxter should have contributed any thing to such a farrago of nonsense and wickedness.

head quarters ; but honest and judicious Mr. Edward Bowles kept still with the General.* At last I got Mr. Cook, of Foxhull, to come to assist me ; and the soberer part of the officers and soldiers of Whalley's regiment were willing to remunerate him out of their own pay. A month or two he stayed and assisted me ; but was quickly weary, and left them again. He was a very worthy, humble, laborious man, unwearied in preaching, but weary when he had not opportunity to preach, and weary of the spirits he had to deal with.

“ All this while, though I came not near Cromwell, his designs were visible, and I saw him continually acting his part. The Lord General suffered him to govern and do all, and to choose almost all the officers of the army. He first made Ireton commissary-general ; and when any troop or company was to be disposed of, or any considerable officer's place was void, he was sure to put a sectary in the place : and when the brunt of the war was over, he looked not so much at their valour as their opinions ; so that, by degrees, he had headed the greatest part of the army with anabaptists, antinomians, seekers, or separatists, at best. All these he led together by the point of liberty of conscience, which was the common interest in which they did unite. Yet all the sober party were carried on by his profession, that he only promoted the universal interest of the godly, without any distinction or partiality at all ; but still, when a place fell void, it was twenty to one a sectary had it ; and if a godly man, of any other mind or temper, had a mind to leave the army, he would, secretly or openly, further it. Yet did he not openly profess what opinion he was of himself : but the most that he said for any was for Anabaptism and Antinomianism, which he usually seemed to own. Harrison, who was then great with him, was for the same opinions. He would not dispute with me at all ; but he would, in good discourse, very fluently pour out himself in the extolling of free grace, which was savoury to those that had right principles, though he had some misunderstandings of free grace himself. He was a man of excellent natural parts for affection and oratory, but not well seen in the principles of his religion ; of a sanguine complexion,

* Mr. Bowles left the army in January, 1645, for his charge at York, and was succeeded by Dell, as chaplain to the General. He and Saltmarsh were both inclined to Antinomianism. The latter was a complete mystic ; though perhaps both went further afterwards, than when they were about Fairfax, who seems to have been a moderate, sober-minded man.—*Sprigge's Anglia*, p. 166.

naturally of such vivacity, hilarity, and alacrity, as another man hath when he hath drunken a cup too much; but naturally, also, so far from humble thoughts of himself, that pride was his ruin.

"All the two years that I was in the army, even my old bosom friend, who had lived in my house and been dearest to me, James Berry, then captain, after colonel and major-general, then lord of the Upper House, who had formerly invited me to Cromwell's old troop, did never once invite me to the army at first, nor invite me to his quarters after, nor ever once came to visit me, or even saw me, save twice or thrice that we met accidentally. So potent is the interest of ourselves and our opinions with us, against all other bonds whatever. He that forsaketh himself in forsaking his own opinions, may well be expected to forsake his friend, who adhereth to the way which he forsaketh; and that change which maketh him think he was himself an ignorant, misguided man before, must needs make him think his friend to be still ignorant and misguided, and value him accordingly. He was a man, I verily think, before the wars, of great sincerity; of very good natural parts, especially mathematical and mechanical; affectionate in religion, and while conversant with humbling providences, doctrines, and company, he carried himself as a very great enemy to pride: but when Cromwell made him his favourite, and his extraordinary valour was crowned with extraordinary success, and when he had been awhile most conversant with those, who, in religion, thought the old Puritan ministers were dull, self-conceited men, of a lower form, and that new light had declared I know not what to be a higher attainment, his mind, his aim, his talk and all were altered accordingly. And as ministers of the old way were lower, and sectaries much higher, in his esteem than formerly; so he was much higher in his own esteem when he thought he had attained much higher, than he was before, when he sat with his fellows in the common form. Being never well studied in the body of divinity, but taking his light among the sectaries, before the light which longer and patient studies of divinity should have possessed him with, he lived after as honestly as could be expected in one that taketh error for truth, and evil to be good.

"After this, he was president of the agitators, a major-general and lord, a principal person in the changes, and the chief executioner in pulling down Richard Cromwell; and then one of the governing council of state. All this was promoted by

the misunderstanding of Providence; for he verily thought that God, by their victories, had so called them to look after the government of the land, and so entrusted them with the welfare of all his people here, that they were responsible for it, and might not in conscience stand still while any thing was done which they thought was against that interest which they judged to be the interest of the people of God.

“As he was the chief in pulling down, he was one of the first that fell: for Sir Arthur Haselrigge taking Portsmouth, his regiment of horse, sent to block it up, went most of them to Sir Arthur. And when the army was melted to nothing, and the king ready to come in, the council of state imprisoned him, because he would not promise to live peaceably; and afterwards he (being one of the four whom General Monk had the worst thoughts of) was closely confined in Scarborough Castle; but, being released, he became a gardener, and lived in a safer state than in all his greatness.^f

“When Worcester siege was over, having seen, with joy, Kidderminster, and my friends there once again, the country being now cleared, my old flock expected that I should return to them, and settle in peace among them. I accordingly went to Coventry, and called the ministers again together, who voted me into the army. I told them, that the forsaking of the army, by the old ministers, and the neglect of supplying their places by others, had undone us; that I had laboured among them with as much success as could be expected in the narrow sphere of my capacity: but that was little to all the army; that the active sectaries were the smallest part of the army among the common soldiers, but that Cromwell had lately put so many of them into superior command, and their industry was so much greater than others, they were like to have their will; that whatever obedience they pretended, I doubted not but they would pull down all that stood in their way, in state and church, both king, parliament, and ministers, and

^f I am inclined to think that Baxter has expressed a more unfavourable opinion of Berry than he deserved. He probably found it inexpedient or even dangerous, to countenance Baxter's zeal in endeavouring to reform the army and obstruct the design of its leaders; to avoid quarrelling with an inoffensive and well-meaning but, as he would regard him, a wrong-headed man, he kept out of his way. Berry was a man of talents and energy; one of the men who was formed by the times; who lived in the tempest and the earthquake, and sunk into obscurity in the calm. I have noticed him in the *Memoirs of Owen*, p. 279, 2d edit.

set up themselves. I told them that for the little that I had done, I had ventured my life, and weakened my body (weak before), but that the day, which I expected, was yet to come; and that the greatest service with the greatest hazard was yet before. The wars being now ended, I was confident the leaders would shortly show their purpose, and set up for themselves: and when the day came, all that were true to king, parliament, and religion, ought to appear, if there were any hope, by contradicting them, or drawing off the soldiers from them, as it was all the service that was yet possible to be done. I was likely to do no great matter in such an attempt; but there being so many in the army of my mind, I knew not what might be till the day should discover it: and though I knew it was the greatest hazard of my life, my judgment was for staying among them till the crisis, if their judgment did concur. Whereupon they all voted me to go and leave Kidderminster yet longer, which accordingly I did.

“From Worcester I went to London to Sir Theodore Mayern, about my health: he sent me to Tunbridge Wells, and after some stay there to my benefit, I went back to London, and so to my quarters in Worcestershire, where the regiment was. My quarters fell out to be at Sir Thomas Rous’s, at Rous-Lench, where I had never been before. The Lady Rous was a godly, grave, understanding woman, and entertained me not as a soldier, but a friend. From thence I went into Leicestershire, Staffordshire, and at last into Derbyshire. One advantage of this moving life was, that I had opportunity to preach in many counties and parishes; and whatever came of it afterward, I know not; but at the time, they commonly seemed to be much affected.

“I came to Major Swallow’s quarters, at Sir John Cook’s house, at Melbourn, on the edge of Derbyshire, beyond Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in a cold and snowy season: and the cold, together with other things coincident, set my nose on bleeding. When I had bled about a quart or two, I opened four veins, but that did no good. I used divers other remedies, for several days, to little purpose: at last I gave myself a purge, which stopped it. This so much weakened me, and altered my complexion, that my acquaintances who came to visit me, scarcely knew me. Coming after so long weakness, and frequent loss of blood before, it made the physicians conclude me *deplorate*, supposing I could never escape a dropsy.

“Thus God unavoidably prevented all the effect of my purposes in my last and chiefest opposition of the army; and took me off the very time when my attempt should have begun. My purpose was to have done my best, first to take off that regiment which I was with, and then, with Captain Lawrence, to have tried upon the General’s, in which two were Cromwell’s chief confidants; and then to have joined with others of the same mind; for the other regiments were much less corrupted. But the determination of God against it was most observable: for the very time that I was bleeding, the council of war sat at Nottingham, where, as I have credibly heard, they first began to open their purpose and act their part; and, presently after, they entered into their engagement at Triploe Heath. As I perceived it was the will of God to permit them to go on, so I afterwards found that this great affliction was a mercy to myself; for they were so strong, and active, that I had been likely to have had small success in the attempt, and to have lost my life among them in their fury. And thus I was finally separated from the army.

“When I had staid at Melbourn, in my chamber, three weeks, being among strangers, and not knowing how to get home, I went to Mr. Nowell’s house, at Kirby-Mallory, in Leicestershire, where, with great kindness, I was entertained three weeks. By that time, the tidings of my weakness came to the Lady Rous, in Worcestershire, who sent her servant to seek me out; and when he returned, and told her I was afar off, and he could not find me, she sent him again to find me, and bring me thither, if I were able to travel. So, in great weakness, thither I made shift to get, where I was entertained with the greatest care and tenderness, while I continued the use of means for my recovery: and when I had been there a quarter of a year, I returned to Kidderminster.”^s

Thus terminated Baxter’s connexion with the army. In reviewing his account of it, we cannot help admiring the disinterestedness of the motives by which he appears to have been influenced, and the self-denial which he exercised. He entered the army by the advice of his friends, and with the sincere intention of doing good; but with greater confidence in the effects to be produced by his labours than the circumstances warranted. These high-minded soldiers, accustomed to dispute as well as to fight,

^s Life, part 1. pp. 55—59.

and who were no less confident of victory in the polemic arena than of triumph in the field of battle, were not to be put down by the controversial powers of Baxter, great as those powers were. To his metaphysical distinctions, they opposed their personal feelings and convictions, which were produced by a very different process, and not to be altered by any refinements of disquisition. When he contended against the justice of their cause, to his arguments they opposed their success; and often must he have lost in their estimation as a politician, what he had gained by his talents and piety as a divine. Movement, and dispersion, which were death to him, were life to them. It kept up their spirits and their excitement, by giving them fresh opportunities of exercising their gifts, both of the sword and of the tongue. Much as the leaders of the army respected religion, they had too much discernment to encourage the influx of many such ministers as Baxter. Cromwell and his officers had no objection to an occasional theological contest among the soldiers, or, even to engage in one themselves. It relieved the tug of war: it operated as a diversisement from other subjects on which their minds would have been less profitably employed; while it often excited that very ardour of soul, on which the success of the army of the Commonwealth mainly depended.

I am not sure that even the ministers themselves were not pleased, in this manner to be rid of Baxter. It is remarkable, that while they warmly approved of his going into the army and remaining with it, few of them were disposed to follow his example. This could not arise from the apprehension of personal danger, for they could have little to fear of this nature. In fact, they must generally have been safer with the army than in the towns to which they sometimes resorted for protection. While associating with Baxter, they must have remarked the fearless character of his mind, his recklessness of danger, and his regardlessness of consequences. His love of disputation, his qualifications as a debater, and his devotedness to what he regarded as the cause of his Master, all fitted him for such a field as the army presented. The very qualities, however, which fitted him for the camp, rendered him less desirable as a companion in the retired and secluded walks of life. A company of ministers, shut up in a provincial town with Baxter for twelve months, probably found him a troublesome friend. The restless activity of his mind could not, in such circumstances, find scope or em-

ployment. By advising him, then, to follow his own convictions, and join the army, they at once did homage to his talents, and gratified his love of employment; while, by remaining in retirement and safety themselves, they showed either their love of ease, or that they had little confidence in the wisdom or success of Baxter's attempt to save his country, and deliver his king, by ministerial influence over the soldiers.

Whatever weight may be due to these reasonings, it is evident that, in the army, Baxter was neither an idle nor an unconcerned spectator. He laboured indefatigably, and persevered amidst all discouragements. He failed in his main object; but he succeeded in repressing evil, and in encouraging much that was good. He acquired considerable additions to his stock of experience, and his knowledge of men, and has left us some important information respecting the characters and events of this period.

During the latter part of the time which he spent in the army, and chiefly when laid aside by severe illness, he wrote, though they were not then published, his 'Aphorisms of Justification,' and his 'Saint's Rest.' The last work chiefly occupied his thoughts and his pen, though the other appeared first. His disputes with the antinomian soldiers led to his 'Aphorisms,' while his labours and afflictions produced his meditations on 'The Saint's Everlasting Rest.' A work begun and finished in these circumstances might be supposed to betray traces of haste and crudeness; but of this, such is far from being the case. It discovers the maturity and elevation of mind to which he had even then risen; and had he never written more, it would have stamped his character as one of the most devotional, and most eloquent men of his own, or of any other age.

CHAPTER IV.

1646—1656.

The Religious Parties of the Period—The Westminster Assembly—Character of the Erastians—Episcopallians—Presbyterians—Independents—Baptists—State of Religion in these Parties—Minor Sects—Vanists—Seekers—Ranters—Quakers—Behmenists—Review of this period.

HAVING, in the preceding chapter, given a view of the civil and military affairs with which Baxter was connected, from the commencement of his ministry till the time of his leaving the army, we must now attend to the religious state of the nation, which was no less full of distraction, and of which he has left a very particular account. If this part of our narrative should carry us into the period of the commonwealth, it will save future repetition, as most of the sects which then swarmed, had either commenced their existence during the civil wars, or naturally sprung out of the excitement and turbulence which those wars produced.

While Baxter lived in Coventry, the celebrated Westminster Assembly was convened by order of parliament. He was not himself a member of that body; but he was well acquainted with its chief transactions, and with the leading men of the several parties which composed it: and, as he has given his opinion of them at considerable length, it may be proper here to introduce it.

“This Synod was not a convocation, according to the diocesan way of government; nor was it called by the votes of the ministers, according to the presbyterian way: for the parliament, not intending to call an assembly which should pretend to a divine right to make obligatory laws or canons, but an ecclesiastical council, to be advisers to itself, thought it best knew who were fittest to give advice, and therefore chose them all itself. Two were to be chosen from each county, though some counties had but one, that it might seem impartial, and give each party liberty to speak. Over and above this number, it chose many of the most learned, episcopal divines; as, Archbishop Usher, Dr. Holdsworth, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Wincop, Bishops Westfield

and Prideaux, and many more ; but they would not come, because the king declared himself against it. Dr. Featley, and a few more of that party, however, came ; but at last he was charged with sending intelligence to the king, for which he was imprisoned. The divines there congregated, were men of eminent learning, godliness, ministerial abilities, and fidelity : and being not worthy to be one of them myself, I may the more freely speak the truth, even in the face of malice and envy ; that, as far as I am able to judge by the information of all history of that kind, and by any other evidences left us, the Christian world, since the days of the apostles, had never a synod of more excellent divines than this and the synod of Dort.

“ Yet, highly as I honour the men, I am not of their mind in every part of the government which they would have set up. Some words in their Catechism, I wish had been more clear : and, above all, I wish that the parliament, and their more skillful hand, had done more than was done to heal our breaches, and had hit upon the right way, either to unite with the Episcopalians and Independents, or, at least, had pitched on the terms that are fit for universal concord, and left all to come in upon those terms that would.” *

This account of the Westminster Assembly is, doubtless, more impartial than the character which has been given of it, either by Clarendon or Milton. Both these writers were under the influence, though in different ways, of strong prejudices against it. The former, by his monarchical and episcopal predilections ; the latter, by his republicanism. Clarendon hated presbyterianism, with all the cordiality of a cavalier, who regarded it as a religion unfit for a gentleman, and as synonymous with all that is vulgar, hypocritical, and base. Milton abhorred it on account of its intolerant spirit, and the narrow-minded bigotry of many of its adherents ; as well as for private reasons. The Assembly was, in the estimation of both, the personification of all that should be detested by enlightened and high-born men ; they hated and reviled it accordingly. Baxter knew the members better than Clarendon or Milton did, and was better qualified to judge their motives and appreciate their doings. As he was not one of them, he had no temptation to speak in their favour ; and from his well-known love of truth, had he known any thing to their prejudice, he would not have concealed it. The persons who composed the Assembly, were generally men of approved

* Life, part I. p. 93.

christian character and abilities, and several of them distinguished for learning. But both the men and their doings have been too highly extolled by some, and too much undervalued by others.^b

^b Lord Clarendon's account of the Assembly is as follows :—" And now the parliament showed what consultation they meant to have with godly and learned divines, and what reformation they intended, by appointing the knights and burgesses to bring in the names of such divines for the several counties, as they thought fit to constitute an assembly for the framing a new model for the government of the church, which was done accordingly; those who were true sons of the church, not so much as endeavouring the nomination of sober and learned men, abhorring such a reformation as began with the invasion and suppression of the church's rights, in a synod as well known as Magna Charta: and if any well-affected member, not enough considering the scandal and the consequence of that violation, did name an orthodox and well-reputed divine to assist in that assembly, it was argument enough against him, that he was nominated by a person in whom they had no confidence; and they only had reputation enough to commend to this consultation those who were known to desire the utter demolishing of the whole fabric of the church: so that of about one hundred and twenty of which that assembly was to consist, though by the recommendation of two or three members of the Commons, whom they were not willing to displease, and by the authority of the Lords, who added a small number to those named by the House of Commons, a few very reverend and worthy men were inserted; yet, of the whole number there were not above twenty who were not declared and avowed enemies to the doctrine or discipline of the church of England; some of them infamous in their lives and conversations, and most of them of very mean parts in learning, if not of scandalous ignorance; and of no other reputation than of malice to the church of England. So that that convention hath not since produced any thing that might not then reasonably have been expected from it."—*Hist. of the Rebellion*, vol. i. pp. 530, 531. Edit. 1720.

The charges contained in the latter part of this paragraph, are utterly unfounded. The members of the Assembly were, in general, respectable for their talents and learning; and all of them were highly respectable in point of character. It is equally untrue that all, or even any considerable number of them, were enemies to the church of England.

The passage in which Milton attacks the Assembly, is written with his usual force, or, as I ought rather to say, acrimony, when he was excited by opposition.

" And if the state were in this plight, religion was not in much better; to reform which, a certain number of divines were called, neither chosen by any rule or custom ecclesiastical, nor eminent for either piety or knowledge above others left out; only as each member of parliament, in his private fancy, thought fit, so elected one by one. The most part of them were such as had preached and cried down, with great show of zeal, the avarice and pluralities of bishops and prelates; that, one cure of souls was a full employment for one spiritual pastor, how able soever, if not a charge rather above human strength. Yet these conscientious men (ere any part of the work was done for which they came together, and that on the public salary) wanted not boldness, to the ignominy and scandal of their pastor-like profession, and especially of their boasted reformation, to seize into their hands, or not unwillingly to accept, (besides one, sometimes two or more, of the best livings) collegiate masterhips in the University, rich lectures in the city; setting sail to all winds that might blow gain into their covetous bosoms: by which means these great rebukers of non-residence, among so many distant cures, were not ashamed to be seen so

It seems very doubtful whether the parliament wished that the Assembly should unite in a form of church government to be imposed on the country. It was called, to engage the attention of the Puritans, and to please the sects which were invited to send members to it. The leading politicians of the period, were too wise to suppose that men, so widely different in sentiment as

quickly pluralists and non-residents themselves, to a fearful condemnation, doubtless, by their own mouths. And yet the main doctrine for which they took such pay, and insisted upon with more vehemence than Gospel, was but to tell us, in effect, that their doctrine was worth nothing, and the spiritual power of their ministry less available than bodily compulsion; persuading the magistrate to use it as a stronger means to subdue and bring in conscience, than evangelical persuasion: distrusting the virtue of their own spiritual weapons which were given them, if they might be rightly called, with full warrant of sufficiency to pull down all thoughts and imaginations that exalt themselves against God. But while they taught compulsion without conviction, which, long before, they complained of as executed unchristianly against themselves, their contents are clear to have been no better than antichristian; setting up a spiritual tyranny by a secular power, to the advancing of their own authority above the magistrate, whom they would have made their executioner to punish church delinquencies, whereof civil laws have no cognisance.

"And well did their disciples manifest themselves to be no better principled than their teachers; trusted with committeeships and other gainful offices, upon their commendations for zealous and (as they hesitated not to term them) godly men, but executing their places like children of the devil, unfaithfully, unjustly, unmercifully, and, where not corruptly, stupidly. So that between them, the teachers, and these, the disciples, there hath not been a more ignominious and mortal wound to faith, to piety, to the work of reformation, nor more cause of blaspheming given to the enemies of God and truth, since the first preaching of the reformation."

This passage belongs to Milton's 'Fragment of a History of England,' first published in 1670; but from which the quotation was expunged. It was first printed by itself, in 1681; and afterwards appeared in the edition of his works published in 1738. It should be remembered, that Milton did not assail the Assembly till after some of them had denounced his work on the 'Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce;' which led to his being brought before the House of Lords for that publication. Nothing arose from this occurrence injurious to Milton; but he never forgave the Presbyterian clergy the offence, and revenges himself on the Assembly in the above tirade. It deserves to be noticed, that his work on 'Divorce' is dedicated to this very Assembly, as well as to the Long Parliament; both of which he afterwards so severely denounces. In that dedication, he speaks of them as a "select assembly"—"of so much piety and wisdom"—"a learned and memorable synod," in which "piety, learning, and prudence, were housed." This dedication was written *two* years after the Assembly had met, and when its character must have been well known. When he published his 'Tetrachordon,' in defence of the former work, he leaves out the Assembly in the dedication, and addresses it to the parliament only. In the 'Colasterion,' he attacks the anonymous member of the Assembly, who had assailed him, with the utmost scurrility; and, from that time, never failed to abuse the Presbyterians and the Assembly. It is painful to detract from the fair fame of Milton; but even he is not entitled to vilify the character of a large and respectable body of men, to avenge his private quarrel.

those who were chosen to sit in this convocation, would ever agree in the divine right and universal obligation of any ecclesiastical system ; and, that they did not wish them to agree, seems probable, from the fact, that in general, when there appeared an approach towards the completion of their ecclesiastical code, new difficulties or questions were always proposed to them, which occasioned protracted debates and increasing differences. The Assembly at last broke up without finishing its work.^c

A short account of the several leading parties in the country, or which were represented in the Assembly, will justify these remarks, and throw light on the life of Baxter, as well as on the state of the period. Baxter himself shall furnish the chief part of the information ; because he tells us what he liked and disliked in the Erastian, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, and the Independent parties.

The Erastian party, in the Assembly, was composed chiefly of lawyers, and other secular persons ; who understood the nature of civil government better than the nature, forms, and ends of the church of Christ ; and of those offices appointed by him for purposes purely spiritual. The leading laymen among them, were Selden and Whitelocke, both lawyers, and men of profound learning and talents. Lightfoot and Coleman were distinguished as much among the divines for rabbinical knowledge, as the two former were among the men of their own profession.

"The Erastians," says Baxter, "I thought, were in the right, in asserting more fully than others, the magistrates' power in matters of religion ; that all coercion, by mulcts or force, should only be in their hands ; that no such power belongs to the pastors or people of the church ; and that the pastoral power is only persuasive, or exercised on volunteers." But he disliked in them, "that they made too light of the power of the ministry, church, and excommunication ; that they made church communion more common to the impenitent, than Christ would have it ; that they made the church too like the world, by breaking down the hedge of spiritual discipline, and laying it almost common with the wilderness ; and that they misunderstood and injured their brethren, affirming that they claimed as from God a *coercive power* over the bodies and consciences of men."^d The

^c Bailie's Letter, and Journals passim ; Memoirs of Owen, pp. 53, 54, 400, 2d edition.

^d Life, part ii. p. 139. The following amusing account of the origin and pro-

tendency and design of the system would certainly convert the church into the world, and the world into the church.

"The Episcopal party," he says, "seemed to have reason on their side in this, that in the primitive church there were apostles, evangelists, and others, who were general unfixed officers, not tied to any particular charge; but who had some superiority over fixed bishops or pastors. And as to fixed bishops of particular churches, that were superior in degree to presbyters, though I saw nothing at all in Scripture for them; yet I saw that the reception of them was so very early, and so very general, I thought it most improbable that it was contrary to the mind of the apostles.

"I utterly disliked their extirpation of the true discipline of Christ, not only as they omitted or corrupted it, but as their principles and church state had made it impracticable. They thus altered the nature of churches, and the ancient nature of bishops and presbyters. They set up secular courts, vexed honest Christians, countenanced ungodly teachers, opposed faithful ministers, and promoted the increase of ignorance and profaneness."^e

No supporters of such views were in the Assembly; but not a few of the members were partial to a limited episcopacy, such as that for which Baxter himself pleaded. Indeed, a number of them would not take the covenant when it came from Scotland, till it was explained that the episcopacy which they were called to disown, was only the hierarchy of England.^f Among these were, Gataker, Burgess, Arrowsmith, and several other persons of some note. In the parliament there was a large proportion of persons of this description, who were much more disposed to

gress of Erastianism, is from the pen of Mr. George Gillespie, one of the Scots commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, who wrote a volume against it under the title of 'Aarou's Rod Blossoming.'—"The father of it is the old serpent; its mother is the enmity of our nature against the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the midwife who brought this unhappy brood into the light of the world, was Thomas Erastus, doctor of medicine, at Heidelberg. The Erastian error being born, the breasts which gave it suck, were profaneness and self; its strong food when advanced in growth, was arbitrary government; and its careful tutor was Arminianism."—Book i. chap. 2. The book from which this curious extract is taken, is written with considerable ability, and contains unanswerable arguments in proof that the New Testament furnishes a form of church government, which Christians are bound to adopt. It deserves to be read as an antidote to the plausible but fallacious reasonings of the 'Irenicum,' of Bishop Stillingfleet.

^e Life, part ii. p. 140.

^f Neal, iii., p. 56.

acknowledge a limited episcopacy than to submit to the divine right of Presbytery.

The great body of the Assembly, and of the Nonconformists, were Presbyterians, attached from principle to the platform of Geneva, and exceedingly desirous, in alliance with Scotland, of establishing Presbyterian uniformity throughout the kingdom. The leaders of this party in the Assembly were, Calamy, Twiss, Whyte, Palmer, Marshall, and the Scottish commissioners. And in the House of Commons, Hollis, Glyn, Maynard, Clement Walker, and William Prynne. They were supported by Essex, Manchester, and Northumberland, among the peers; and by the body of the clergy of London, the mass of the religious professors in the metropolis, and some distinguished persons in the army. To this class of professors Baxter was more attached than to any other, though it is evident, that while he eulogized its virtues, he was not blind to its faults.

"As for the Presbyterians," he says, "I found that the office of preaching presbyters, was allowed by all who deserved the name of Christians; that this office did participate, subserviently to Christ, in the *prophetical*, or teaching; the *priestly*, or worshipping; and the *governing* power; and that Scripture, antiquity, and the nature of church government, clearly show that all presbyters were church governors, as well as church teachers. To deny this, were to destroy the office and to endeavour to destroy the churches. I saw, also, in Scripture, antiquity, and reason, that the association of pastors and churches for agreement, and their synods in cases of necessity, are a plain duty: and that their ordinary stated synods are usually very convenient. I saw, too, that in England the persons who were called Presbyterians were eminent for learning, sobriety, and piety: and the pastors so called were those who went through the work of the ministry, in diligent, serious preaching to the people, and edifying men's souls and keeping up religion in the land."^a

The following are the things in this body to which he objected: "I disliked their order of lay-elders, who had no ordination, or power to preach, or to administer sacraments: for though I grant that lay-elders, or the chief of the people, were often employed to express the people's consent, and preserve their liberties; yet these were no church officers at all, nor had any charge of private oversight of the flocks.

"I disliked, also, the course of some of the more rigid of them,

^a Life, part ii., p. 140.

who drew too near the way of prelacy, by grasping at a kind of secular power ; not using it themselves, but binding the magistrates to confiscate or imprison men, merely because they were excommunicated ; and so corrupting the true discipline of the church, and turning the communion of saints into the communion of the multitude, who must keep in the church against their wills for fear of being undone in the world. Whereas, a man whose conscience cannot feel a just excommunication unless it be backed with confiscation or imprisonment, is no fitter to be a member of a Christian church, than a corpse is to be a member of a corporation. It is true they claim not this power as *jure divino* ; but no more do the prelates, though the writ *de excommunicato capiendo* is the life of all their censures. Both parties too much debase the magistrate, by making him their mere executioner ; whereas he ought to be the judge wherever he is the executioner, and ought to try the case at his own bar, before he be obliged to punish any delinquent. They also corrupt the discipline of Christ, by mixing it with secular force. They reproach the keys, or ministerial power, as if it were a leaden sword, and not worth a straw, unless the magistrate's sword enforce it. What, then, did the primitive church for three hundred years ? Worst of all, they corrupt the church, by forcing in the rabble of the unfit and unwilling ; and thereby tempt many godly Christians to schisms and dangerous separations. Till magistrates keep the sword themselves, and learn to deny it to every angry clergyman who would do his own work by it, and leavethem to their own weapons—the word and spiritual keys—and, *valeant quantum valere possunt*, the church will never have unity and peace.

“ I disliked, also, some of the Presbyterians, that they were not tender enough to dissenting brethren ; but too much against liberty, as others were too much for it ; and thought by votes and numbers to do that which love and reason should have done.”^a

While the reader must admire the candour of these remarks, as they bear on the party, with which Baxter was more identified than any other, he will no less cordially approve his enlightened views of the distinction between civil and ecclesiastical power. Had they been always thus viewed and distinguished, how many evils would have been prevented both in the church and in the world ! The governments of the earth would have been saved

^a Life, part ii., pp. 142, 143.

a vast portion of the perplexity and trouble which they have experienced in the management of their affairs ; and the church would have been preserved from much of that secularity which has attached to it, as well as from infinite suffering and sorrow. Unfortunately, Baxter was not always consistent with himself on these important points. The concluding sentence of this very extract shows, that while he was a friend of liberty, he was afraid of too much of it. He never would have been himself a persecutor ; but he would not have objected to the exercise of a certain measure of coercion or restraint by others, in support of what he might have considered the good of the individuals themselves, or of what the interests of the community required.

Baxter was less friendly to the Independents than to any other of the leading parties of his times. For this, various reasons may be assigned. His principles and dispositions induced in him a greater attachment to ministerial or priestly power, than accorded with the principles of that body. The influence of some of its more active and learned ministers, and the support which they derived from some of the public characters whose exertions were directed to the overthrow of civil and religious despotism, and the establishment of general liberty, were greater than Baxter was disposed to approve. Above all, as he considered the great master-spirits of that agitating period, to be either really, or, for political reasons, professedly, attached to the polity of the Independents, he regarded the whole body with jealousy and dislike. I will not deny that he had some ground for part of the feeling which he entertained ; though I think he was mistaken in various particulars. The following account of the Independents, considering Baxter's opinions, is honourable both to the writer and to the body to which it refers.

“ Most of them were zealous, and very many learned, discreet, and godly men ; fit to be very serviceable in the church. In the search of Scripture and antiquity, I found, that, in the beginning, a governed church, and a stated worshipping church, were all one, and not two several things ; and that, though there might be other by-meetings in places like our chapels or private houses, for such as age or persecution hindered to come to the more solemn meetings, yet churches then were no bigger, in respect of number, than our parishes now. These were societies of Christians united for personal communion, and not only for communion by meetings of officers and delegates in synods, as

many churches in association be. I saw, if once we go beyond the bounds of personal communion, as the end of particular churches, in the definition, we may make a church of a nation, or of ten nations, or what we please, which shall have none of the nature and ends of the primitive, particular churches. I saw also a commendable care of serious holiness and discipline in most of the Independent churches; and I found that some episcopal men, as Bishop Usher himself, did hold that every bishop was independent, as to synods, and that synods were not proper governors of the particular bishops, but only for their concord.”¹

In this passage, Baxter grants almost every thing for which the Independents have contended. It is rather surprising, considering his acuteness, that he did not perceive the inferences which ought to be drawn from the premises. If primitive churches were possessed of separate and independent authority, and consisted only of those who appeared to be Christians; and if going beyond personal communion, as the great object of Christian association leaves every thing vague and indefinite, it seems very clear on which side the strength of the argument respecting church government and fellowship lies. In fact, Baxter was more an Independent or congregationalist, both in theory and practice, than he was generally disposed to admit.

We have given the bright side of the picture of this party; we must now look at the dark. “In the Independent way,” he says, “I disliked many things. They made too light of ordination. They also had their office of lay-eldership. They were commonly stricter about the qualification of church members, than Scripture, reason, or the practice of the universal church would allow; not taking a man’s bare profession as credible, and as sufficient evidence of his title to church communion; unless either by a holy life, or the particular narration of the passages of the work of grace, he satisfied the pastors, and all the church, that he was truly holy; whereas every man’s profession is the valid evidence of the thing professed in his heart, unless it be disproved by him that questioneth it, by proving him guilty of heresies or impiety, or sins inconsistent with it. If once you go beyond the evidence of a serious, sober confession, as a credible and sufficient sign of title to church membership, you will never know where to rest. The church’s opinion will be both rule and judge; and men will be let in, or kept out, according to the various latitude of opinions or charity in the several officers or

¹ Life, part I., p. 140.

churches; so that he will be passable in one church, who is intolerable in another; and thus the churches will be heterogeneous and confused.^k There is in all this a little, if not more than a little, spiritual pride of the weaker sort of professors, affecting to be visibly set at a greater distance from the colder professors of Christianity, than God would have them, that so they may be more observable and conspicuous for their holiness in the world; and there is too much uncharitableness in it, when God hath given sincere professors the kernel of his mercies, even grace and glory, and yet they will grudge the cold, hypocritical professors, so small a thing as the outward shell, and visible communion and external ordinances; yea, though such are kept in the church for the sake and service of the sincere.

“I disliked, also, the lamentable tendency of this their way to divisions and subdivisions, and the nourishing of heresies and sects. But above all I disliked, that most of them made the people, by majority of votes, to be church governors, in excommunications, absolutions, &c., which Christ hath made an act of office, and so they governed their governors and themselves. They also too much exploded synods; refusing them as stated, and admitting them but upon some extraordinary occasions. I disliked, also, their over-rigidity against the admission of Christians of other churches to their communion. And their making a minister to be as no minister to any but his own flock, and to act to others but as a private man; with divers others such irregularities and dividing opinions; many of which the moderation of the New England synod hath of late corrected and disowned; and so done very much to heal these breaches.”^l

Such is Baxter's account of the Independents of his times. The number of their ministers who were members of the Westminster Assembly, did not exceed ten or twelve. Of these, Goodwin, Nye, Burroughs, Simpson, and Bridge, were reckoned

^k I am not aware that Independents, either in early or in latter times, required more as the term of religious fellowship than a credible profession; that is, a profession entitled to belief, under all the circumstances in which it is made. As the tendency of human nature is to be lax, rather than rigid, Baxter's account of the rigidity of the body is greatly to its honour. The concluding reflections in the above paragraph, on the motives of the parties, and the defence of impure communion, are unworthy of Baxter. Some of the other things to which he objects, if they existed in the infancy of the body, exist no longer; and, therefore, do not require any comment. The author must refer the reader to the ‘Memoirs of Dr. Owen,’ for a fuller, and, as he considers, a more correct view of Independency, than what is given by Baxter, or than it would be proper to introduce here.

^l Life, part ii., pp. 143, 144.

as the leaders, and by the admission of all parties were among the most distinguished in that body for learning, talents, and address. Baxter, Baillie, Lightfoot, and others, unite in bearing this testimony to them. They threw every possible obstacle in the way of establishing Presbyterian uniformity; and though outvoted by numbers, their resistance and perseverance, aided by the enlightened friends of religious liberty in parliament, among whom must be reckoned Vane, Cromwell, Pym, and Harrison, succeeded in preventing the ascendancy of a party, which, as it was then constituted, had it obtained sufficient power, would have mercilessly persecuted all who opposed its progress or were inimical to its interests.

These were the chief parties in England, when the Westminster Assembly was called, and which may be considered as represented in that body. Little difference existed among them on the leading principles of the Gospel; which, as appears from the confession and catechisms published by the Assembly, they held decidedly in the Calvinistic view of those principles. There were, doubtless, many persons whose religion could not be called in question, who would not have gone so far as some of the expressions in those documents; but considering the Assembly as a tolerably fair representative of the religious community of England at that time, no doubt can be entertained, that Calvinism was then the prevailing doctrinal system, both in the church and out of it.

On other points, especially those of church government and discipline, it is equally clear that they differed widely from each other, and never would agree in any common system. *Jure divino* prelatists, solemn-league-and-covenant presbyterians, latitudinarian Erastians, and tolerating independents, could not possibly coalesce as the friends and supporters of any scheme to which all should be required to submit. On leading points of ecclesiastical polity they were the antipodes of each other. Compromise was out of the question; submission to one another, where conscience was concerned, would have been regarded as sin against God; and even liberty to others, to act according to their own convictions, was considered by some of them too important a right to be admitted, or boon to be conferred. Mean time the cause of civil and religious freedom steadily advanced, and finally gained ascendancy. While the parties differed among themselves, nothing could be enforced by authority; and when the majority decided in favour of the divine right of pres-

byterianism, the civil powers had fallen into hands which took effectual care that it should not be established. The friends of that system, grasping at too much, frustrated their own aim; and lost in the struggle for exclusive authority, their influence in religion, and their importance in politics. In the righteous retribution of Providence, those who had refused to grant political existence to others, finally lost their own.

The account of the leading parties in the nation at this period, would be incomplete without noticing another—the Baptists. This body also attracted the attention of Baxter, and as he distinguished himself in several controversies with its ministers, it is gratifying to find him record the following opinion of its character: “For the Anabaptists themselves, though I have written and said so much against them, as I found that most of them were persons of zeal in religion, so many of them were sober, godly people, who differed from others but in the point of infant baptism, or, at most, in the points of predestination, free-will, and perseverance. And I found in all antiquity, that though infant baptism was held lawful by the church, yet some, with Tertullian and Nazianzen, thought it most convenient to make no haste; and the rest left the time of baptism to every one’s liberty, and forced none to be baptized: insomuch as not only Constantine, Theodosius, and such others as were converted at the years of discretion, but Augustine, and many such as were the children of Christian parents (one or both), did defer their baptism much longer than I think they should have done. So that, in the primitive church, some were baptized in infancy, and some in ripe age, and some a little before their death; and none were forced, but all left free; and the only penalty of their delay was, that so long, they were without the privileges of the church, and were numbered but with the catechumens or expectants.”^m I believe there were no Baptists in the Assembly, though they had existed long before, were then in considerable number in the country, and could rank among themselves many excellent, and a few learned persons.

Having thus exhibited Baxter’s particular views of the great leading parties which then constituted the religious world, the following summing up, by himself, is particularly worthy of attention:—“Among all these parties, I found that some were naturally of mild, calm, and gentle dispositions; and some of sour, forward, passionate, peevish, or furious natures. Some were young,

^m Life, part ii. pp. 140, 141.

raw, and inexperienced, and these were like young fruit; sour and harsh; addicted to pride of their own opinions, to self-conceitedness, turbulency, censoriousness, and temerity; and to engage themselves for a cause and party before they understood the matter. They were led by those teachers and books that had once won their highest esteem, judging of sermons and persons by their fervency more than by the soundness of the matter and the cause. Some I found, on the other side, to be ancient and experienced Christians, that had tried the spirits, and seen what was of God, and what of man, and noted the events of both in the world. These were like ripe fruit, mellow and sweet; 'first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; who, being makers of peace, did sow the fruits of righteousness in peace.'

"But I found not all these alike in all the disagreeing parties, though some of both sorts were in every party. The Erastian party was mostly composed of lawyers, and other secular persons. The Diocesan party consisted of some grave, learned, godly bishops, and some sober, godly people of their mind; and, withal, of almost all the carnal politicians, temporizers, profane, and haters of godliness, in the land, and all the rabble of the ignorant, ungodly vulgar. Whether this came to pass from any thing in the nature of their diocesan government, or from their accommodating the ungodly sort by the formal way of their public worship, or from their heading and pleasing them by running down the stricter sort of people whom they hated; or all these together; and also because the worst and most do always fall in with the party that is uppermost, I leave to the judgment of the considerate reader. The Presbyterian party consisted of grave, orthodox, godly ministers, together with the hopefulest of the students and young ministers, and the soberest, godly, ancient Christians, who were equally averse to persecution and to schism; and of those young ones who were educated and ruled by these; as, also, of the soberest sort of the well-meaning vulgar who liked a godly life, though they had no great knowledge of it. This party was most desirous of peace.

"The Independent party had many very godly ministers and people, but with them many young, injudicious persons; inclined much to novelties and separations, and abounding more in zeal than knowledge; usually doing more for subdivisions than the

few sober persons among them could do for unity and peace ; too much mistaking the terms of church communion, and the difference between the regenerate (invisible), and the congregated (or visible) church.

“The Anabaptist party consisted of some (but fewer) sober, peaceable persons, and orthodox in other points ; but, withal, of abundance of young, transported zealots, and a medley of opinionists, who all hasted directly to enthusiasm and subdivisions, and by the temptation of prosperity and success in arms, and the policy of some commanders, were led into rebellions and hot endeavours against the ministry, and other scandalous crimes ; and brought forth the horrid sects of Ranters, Seekers, and Quakers, in the land.”^a

In this description of parties we observe some of the marked peculiarities of Baxter. He was obviously disposed to do justice to all, and ready to acknowledge true religion wherever he found it ; but a little more zeal in some particulars, than was suited to his taste, was enough to induce him to speak more strongly of the parties than the case justified : besides, he was influenced not only by what he witnessed himself, but by what he heard from others. While he was acute and candid, he was credulous ; more disposed to listen to vague and injurious reports than a man of his piety and experience ought to have been : but, after all, the picture that he draws of the parties which left the church is, on the whole, advantageous to them. It is evident that he considered there was a large preponderance of genuine religion among each ; which far more than outweighed all the dross and alloy belonging to them. They who imagine there was nothing but sectarian zeal, guided and excited by political frenzy, entirely mistake the true state of things. There was much real religion in the parties which professed it, though mixed up with a great deal of what tended to injure it, or occasion misconception of its nature.

Baxter was so fully convinced of the prevalence of true religion among the persons composing the leading parties, that he made it much of the business of his life to convince them, that they differed less from each other than they themselves supposed, and to induce them to act together in Christian fellowship. “I thought it my duty,” he says, “to labour to bring them all to a concordant practice of so much as they were agreed in ; to set all that together which was true and good

^a Life, part ii. pp. 144—146.

among them all, and to reject the rest; and especially to labour to revive Christian charity, which faction and disputes had lamentably extinguished.”^o This object he prosecuted in the most indefatigable manner, by conversation, preaching, writing, and disputing; and though he often complains of disappointment, and deplores the divisions of the period, his success in uniting all parties in the town of Kidderminster, was complete; and his influence over the serious people of the county at large, very considerable.

Having given, chiefly in Baxter’s words, an account of the leading religious parties of the period, I consider this the best place to introduce his remarks on the minor sects; some of which had but an ephemeral existence, while others have increased, extended, and still remain. I feel it to be my duty to record his statements, many of which are very curious, though I fear they are not always sufficiently free from the influence of that prejudice and credulity to which I have just adverted.

The variety of religious sects which sprung up during the period of which we are now treating, has been a fruitful topic of reproach and exultation to infidels and worldly ecclesiastics. The former of these classes glory in the fanaticism of the sects, as a proof of the absurdity of all religion whatever; the others refer to it as a beacon to warn men of the danger of departing from established faith and forms. Infidels forget, however, that sects, and enthusiastic ones too, are not confined to Christians. The elegant mythology of Greece and Rome presented, in the deities of a thousand groves and streams, any thing but a unity of opinion or worship; while the conduct of the worthies of those elegant superstitions, so far from indicating the influence of a sober rationality, exhibited “all monstrous, all prodigious things.” Nor were the haunts of philosophy in ancient, or the schools of philosophy in modern times, more free from sects and schisms, and from fierce and angry contentions. Ecclesiastics should remember that unity is the boast of the Romish church, and division her reproach of Protestantism. Not that she is entitled to the claim of unity, or to fling the reproach of discord at others. She has her sects and her quarrels too. It is not to the discredit of the reformation that it gave rise to a diversity of opinion and practice among the reformers themselves, and afforded an opportunity for the manifestation of errors and improprieties which they all deplored. The excitement produced by that

^o *Life*, part i. p. 144.

glorious event was not likely to spend all its force on the minds which were capable of bearing it without injury ; it was necessarily extended to others, whose passions or imaginations were more powerful than their understandings. On such men, the pure fire which burned on the Protestant altar became wild fire ; not warming by its genial heat, or consuming evil by its steady flame, but scorching, and vagrant ; destroying in its fury both friends and foes.

It cannot be matter of surprise that the civil commotions of England, which were but the bursting forth of a volcano, that had long been burning in secret, should be attended with similar effects. The convulsion which overturned the throne, overwhelmed the church, and nearly destroyed the constitution, was a shock which even the most powerful minds could scarcely sustain. It was natural to regard it as the crisis of religion as well as of politics, and to contemplate in it the approach or commencement of a new and splendid era. Politicians, astrologers, lawyers, physicians, and philosophers, as well as theologians, felt its power. Few comparatively of any class, could "sit on a hill apart," and contemplate, with calm serenity, the whirlwind and the storm which were then raging ; still fewer were capable of directing them, or of reducing the conflicting elements to order and harmony ; and of those who made the attempt, not a few perished in it, or only exposed themselves to the insult and mockery which their inebile temerity justly deserved.

Religion, from its infinitely greater importance than all other things, necessarily wrought most powerfully in these circumstances on those who were concerned for its interests. The zeal of such persons, was not always in proportion to the strength or the correctness of their judgment. It was not too fervent, had it been sufficiently enlightened ; but being, in many instances, in the inverse ratio of knowledge and prudence, it produced all sorts of wild and eccentric movements. We deplore that this should have been the case ; but it is foolish to be surprised, or to sneer, at it. Circumstances produced sects in religion as they produced parties in politics : they formed heresies in the church as they created false theories in the state. If fanatics and heresiarchs abounded, so did quack doctors, and political empyrics. Spiritual nostrums were not more numerous or discordant than astrological conundrums, and philosophical dreams and visions. Let Baxter's account of the following sects be read under the influence of these remarks, and nothing will appear either unaccountable or extraordinary.

"In these times," referring particularly to the period of the Rump Parliament, "sprang up five sects, at least, whose doctrines were almost the same, but they fell into several shapes and names: the Vanists; the Seekers; the Ranters; the Quakers; the Behmenists." Of each of these, we are furnished with a short account.

"The Vanists, for I know not by what other name to make them known, were Sir Harry Vane's disciples; and first sprang up under him in New England, when he was governor there. Their notions were then raw and undigested, and their party quickly confounded by God's providence; as you may see in a little book of Mr. Thomas Weld's, of the rise and fall of Antinomianism and Familism in New England.^p Sir Harry Vane being governor, and found to be the secret promoter and life of the cause, was fain to steal away by night, and take shipping for England, before his year of government was at an end.

"When he came over into England, he proved an instrument of greater calamity to a people more sinful and more prepared for God's judgments. Being chosen a parliament man, he was very active at first for the bringing of delinquents to punishment. He was the principal person who drove on the parliament to go too high, and act too vehemently against the king: and being of very ready parts, and very great subtilty, and unwearied industry, he laboured, not without success, to win others in parliament, city, and country, to his way. When the Earl of Strafford was accused, he got a paper out of his father's cabinet (who was secretary of state) which was the chief means of his condemnation. To most of our changes, he was that *within* the House, which Cromwell was *without*. His great zeal to drive all into war, and to cherish the sectaries, especially in the army, made him, above all men, to be valued by that party.

"His unhappiness lay in this, that his doctrines were so cloudily formed and expressed, that few could understand them, and therefore he had but few true disciples. The Lord Brook was slain before he had brought him to maturity: Mr. Sterry was thought to be of his mind, as he was his intimate friend; but was so famous for obscurity in preaching, being, said Sir Benjamin Rudiard, too high for this world, and too low for the

^p I have not inserted all that Baxter says about New England. The foolish story about Mrs. Dyer is a proof only of the malevolence or folly of the inventors. Weld's book is the production of a weak, prejudiced man, and entitled to little respect as authority.

other, that he thereby proved almost barren also ; and *vanity* and *sterility* were never more happily conjoined. ^a Mr. Sprigge is the chief of his more open disciples ; and too well known by a book of his sermons.^r

“ This obscurity was imputed by some, to his not understanding himself ; but, by others, to design, because he could speak plainly when he listed. The two courses, in which he had most success, and spake most plainly, were his ‘ Earnest Plea for Universal Liberty of Conscience, and against the Magistrates intermeddling with Religion ; ’ and his teaching his followers to revile the ministry, calling them, ordinarily, blackcoats, priests, and other names which then savoured of reproach ; and those gentlemen that adhered to the ministry, they said, were priest-ridden.

“ When Cromwell had served himself by him, as his surest friend, as long as he could, and gone as far with him as their

^a Baxter's opinion of Sterry underwent a great change after this punning passage was written. He thus speaks of him in his ‘ Catholic Theology : ’ “ It is long since I heard of the name and fame of Mr. Peter Sterry. His common fame was, that his preaching was such as few, or none, could understand, which increased my desire to have heard him, of which I still missed, though I often attempted it. But now since his death, while my book is in the press, a posthumous tract of his cometh forth, of Free Will : upon perusal of which, I found in him the same notions as in Sir Harry Vane ; but all handled with much more strength of parts, and rapture of highest devotion, and greater candour toward all others, than I expected. His preface is a most excellent persuasive to universal charity. Love was never more extolled than throughout this book. Doubtless, his head was strong, his wit admirably pregnant, his searching studies hard and sublime, and, I think, his heart replenished with holy love to God, and great charity, moderation, and peaceableness towards men : insomuch, that I heartily repent that I so far believed fame as to think somewhat hardlier of him and his few adherents, than I now think they deserve.” — *Cath. Theol.* part iii. p. 107.

While this passage does great credit to the candour and honesty of Baxter, it shows us with what caution we ought to receive his opinions of the sectaries of the Commonwealth. Sterry has, like many of the men of that period, been most unrighteously abused. He was mystical ; but so were Fenelon, Madam Guion, Henry More, and many others, whose talents and piety have never been questioned. His works prove that he was no fool, and his conduct shows that he was not a knave. He was a man of a highly poetical mind, which soared far above the turbulent atmosphere by which he was surrounded, and most of the creatures who floated in it. His work on the Will, to which Baxter refers, is written with ability, though some parts of it are not very intelligible.

^r The book of Sermons by Sprigge, to which Baxter refers, is, I suppose, his ‘ Testimony to an approaching Glory ; being an Account of certain Discourses lately delivered in Pancras, Soperlane, London.’ 12mo. 1649. The worst which can be said of these discourses is, that they are somewhat mystical ; otherwise they are creditable both to the piety and talents of their author.

way lay together (Vane being for a fanatic democracy, and Cromwell for monarchy), at last, there was no remedy but they must part; and when Cromwell cast out the Rump, he called Vane a juggler, and Martin a whoremonger, to excuse his usage of the rest.

When Vane was thus laid by, he wrote his book, called 'The Retired Man's Meditations,' wherein the best part of his opinions are so expressed as will make but few men his disciples. His 'Healing Question' is more plainly written.

"When Cromwell was dead, he got Sir Arthur Haselrigge to be his close adherent on civil accounts, procured the Rump to be set up again, with a council of state, and got the power much into his own hands. When he was in the height of this power, he set upon the forming of a new commonwealth, and, with some of his adherents, drew up the model, which was for popular government; but so that men of his confidence must be the people.

"Of my own displeasing him, this is the true account. It grieved me to see a poor kingdom tossed up and down in unquietness, the ministers made odious, and ready to be cast out, a reformation trodden underfoot, and parliament and piety made a scorn, while scarce any doubted but he was the principal spring of all. Therefore, being writing against the Papists, and coming to vindicate our religion against them, when they impute to us the blood of the king, I fully proved that the Protestants, and particularly the Presbyterians, abhorred it, and suffered greatly for opposing it; and that it was the act of Cromwell's army, and the sectaries, among which I named the Vanists as one sort. I showed that the Friars and Jesuits were the deceivers, and, under several vizors, were dispersed among the people. Mr. Nye having told me that Vane was long in Italy, I said it was considerable how much of his doctrine he had brought from Italy; whereas it appeared that he was only in France, and Helvetia, upon the borders of Italy. By mistake, it was printed *from* Italy. I had ordered the printer to correct it 'towards Italy;' but, though the copy was corrected, the impression was not. Hereupon Sir Henry Vane, being exceedingly provoked, threatened me to many, and spake against me in the House; and one Stubbs (that had been whipped in the Convocation House at Oxford) wrote for him a bitter book against me. He from a Vanist, afterwards turned a Conformist: since that, he turned physician; and was drowned in a small puddle, or brook, as he was riding, near Bath."

* Henry Stubbs, according to Anthony Wood, was "the most noted person

"I confess my writing was a means to lessen his reputation, and make men take him for what Cromwell, who better knew him, called him, a juggler. I only wish I had done so much in time; but the whole land rang of his anger and my danger; and all expected my present ruin by him; but to show him that I was not about recanting, as his agents would have persuaded me, I wrote also against his 'Healing Question,' in a preface before my 'Holy Commonwealth;' and the speedy turn of affairs did tie his hands from executing his wrath upon me.

"Upon the king's coming in, he was questioned, along with others, by the Parliament, but seemed to have his life secured; but being brought to the bar, he spake so boldly in justifying the Parliament's cause, and what he had done, that it exasperated the king, and made him resolve upon his death. When he came to Tower Hill to die, and would have spoken to the people, he began so resolutely as caused the officers to sound the trumpets and beat the drums, and hinder him from speaking. No man could die with greater appearance of gallant resolution and fearlessness than he did, though before supposed a timorous man; insomuch that the manner of his death procured him more applause than all the actions of his life. And when he was dead, his intended speech was printed, and afterwards his opinions more plainly expressed by his friend than himself.

of his age." He was the son of a minister, and a protégé of Sir Henry Vane's, by whose aid he was educated at Oxford; where, through the influence of Owen, he was made one of the Keepers of the Bodleian Library. He possessed very considerable parts and learning. After passing through various changes, he became a physician, and finally settled down into regular connexion with the church. He wrote many pamphlets on all subjects. The book to which Baxter refers is, 'A Vindication of that Prudent and Honourable Knight, Sir Henry Vane, from the Lies and Calumnies of Mr. Richard Baxter, Minister of Kidderminster, in a Letter to the said Mr. Richard Baxter.' 1659. It was honourable to Stubbs to defend his friend and patron; but he ought to have treated Baxter with more courtesy. The story of his being whipped in the convocation, is probably entitled to little more attention than the whipping of Milton. The manner of his death proves nothing respecting his former life or character, and was perhaps owing to no fault of his, though Wood's account is written with his characteristic spleen, and evidently intended to insinuate that he was intoxicated. "He being at Bath attending several of his patients living in and near Warwick, then there, was sent for to come to another at Bristol in very hot weather: to which place, therefore, going a by-way, at ten of the clock in the night, on the twelfth day of July, in sixteen hundred and seventy-six (his head being then intoxicated with bibbing, but more with talking and snuffing of powder), was drowned passing through a shallow river, wherein, as 'tis supposed, his horse stumbled; two miles distant from Bath."—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 1082.

“When he was condemned, some of his friends desired me to come to him, that I might see how far he was from Popery, and in how excellent a temper (thinking I would have asked him forgiveness for doing him wrong); I told them that if he had desired it, I would have gone to him; but seeing he did not, I supposed he would take it for an injury; as my conference was not likely to be such as would be pleasing to a dying man: for though I never called him a Papist, yet I still supposed he had done the Papists so much service, and this poor nation and religion so much wrong, that we and our posterity are likely to have cause and time enough to lament it. So much of Sir Henry Vane and his adherents.¹

“The second sect which then rose up was that called Seekers. These taught that our Scripture was uncertain; that present miracles are necessary to faith; that our ministry is null and without authority, and our worship and ordinances unnecessary or vain; the true church, ministry, Scripture, and ordinances, being lost, for which they are now seeking. I quickly found that the Papists principally hatched and actuated this sect, and that a considerable number that were of this profession, were some Papists and some infidels. However, they closed with the Vanists, and sheltered themselves under them, as if they had been the very same.

“The third sect were the Ranters. These also made it their business, as the former, to set up the light of nature, in men, under the name of Christ, and to dishonour and cry down the church, the Scripture, the present ministry, and our worship and ordinances. They called men to hearken to Christ within them; but withal, they enjoined a cursed doctrine of libertinism, which brought them all to abominable filthiness of life. They taught, as the Familists, that God regardeth not the actions of the outward man, but of the heart; and that to the pure, all things are pure (even things forbidden): and so, as allowed by God, they spake most hideous words of blasphemy, and many of them committed whoredoms commonly.

¹ While I have extracted the greater part of Baxter's character of Sir Henry Vane, I cannot help expressing my decided opinion that it is, in various particulars, incorrect. Baxter did not understand him, and, therefore, could not do him justice. He was brave, sagacious, and disinterested; the ardent and enlightened friend of civil and religious liberty; distinguished in life by the decision of his piety, and in death (though basely murdered in violation of all faith and justice) by his calm yet heroic behaviour. The man who was feared by Cromwell, hated by Charles, and praised by Milton, could not have been a silly fanatic, or an unprincipled knave.

“There could never a sect arise in the world that was a louder warning to professors of religion to be humble, fearful, and watchful; never could the world be told more loudly, whither the spiritual pride of ungrounded novices in religion tendeth; and whither professors of strictness in religion, may be carried in the stream of sects and factions. I have seen myself, letters written from Abingdon, where, among both soldiers and people, this contagion did then prevail, full of horrid oaths, curses, and blasphemy, not fit to be repeated by the tongue or pen of man; and these all uttered as the effect of knowledge, and a part of their religion, in a fanatic strain, and fathered on the Spirit of God. But the horrid villanies of this sect, did not only speedily extinguish it, but also as much as ever any thing did, to disgrace all sectaries, and to restore the credit of the ministry, and of the sober, unanimous Christians; so that the devil and the Jesuits quickly found that this way served not their turn, and therefore they suddenly took another.

“And that was the fourth sect, the Quakers, who were but the Ranters, turned from horrid profaneness and blasphemy, to a life of extreme austerity, on the other side. Their doctrines were mostly the same with the Ranters; they made the light which every man hath within him to be his sufficient rule, and, consequently, the Scripture and ministry were set light by. They spake much for the dwelling and working of the Spirit in us, but little of justification, and the pardon of sin, and our reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. They pretend their dependence on the Spirit’s conduct, against set times of prayer, and against sacraments, and against their due esteem of Scripture and ministry. They will not have the Scripture called the Word of God; their principal zeal lieth in railing at the ministers as hirelings, deceivers, false prophets, &c.; and in refusing to swear before a magistrate, or to put off their hat to any, or to say *you* instead of *thou* or *thee*, which are their words to all. At first they did use to fall into tremblings, and sometimes vomitings, in their meetings, and pretended to be violently acted on by the Spirit; but now that is ceased. They only meet, and he that pretendeth to be moved by the Spirit speaketh; and sometimes they say nothing, but sit an hour or more in silence, and then depart. One while divers of them went naked through several chief towns and cities of the land, as a prophetical act: some of them have famished and drowned themselves in melancholy; and others, undertaken, by the power of the Spirit, to raise the dead.

Their chief leader, James Nayler, acted the part of Christ, at Bristol, according to much of the history of the Gospel; and was long laid in Bridewell for it, and his tongue bored, as a blasphemer, by the Parliament.^u Many Franciscan friars, and other Papists, have been proved to be disguised speakers in their assemblies, and to be among them; and it is like are the very soul of all these horrible delusions. But of late one William Penn is become their leader, and would reform the sect, and set up a kind of ministry among them.^x

"The fifth sect are the Behmenists, whose opinions go much towards the way of the former, for the sufficiency of the light of nature, the salvation of heathens, as well as Christians, and a dependence on revelations, &c. But they are fewer in number, and seem to have attained to greater meekness, and conquest of passion, than any of the rest. Their doctrine is to be seen in Jacob Behmen's books, by those that have nothing else to do than to bestow a great deal of time to understand him that was not willing to be easily understood, and to know that his bombastic words signify nothing more than before was easily known by common familiar terms.^y

* In the first volume of 'Burton's Diary,' lately edited by Mr. Towill Rutt, there is a curious account of the debate in parliament respecting Nayler. It lasted ten or eleven days. A horrible sentence was pronounced and inflicted; but he made a very narrow escape for his life, as several of the members were for passing sentence of death upon him. Burton was a witness of the execution of the sentence, and bears testimony to the fortitude with which Nayler bore it. The Protector, greatly to his honour, interested himself on Nayler's behalf. The conduct of the House of Commons was as unconstitutional as its sentence was brutal and unmerited.

x Baxter's account of the Quakers, like his representations of the other sects to which he was opposed, must be received with some abatement, and with due allowance for the exaggerations to which various parts of the conduct of some of the early Friends naturally gave rise. They wished to carry reformation further than most of the parties of the period approved; they were powerfully influenced by the doctrine of impressions, for which they so strenuously contended; their zeal was roused to the very utmost by the opposition which they experienced; and which, operating on some peculiarly-excited minds, produced, at least, temporary insanity. This was probably the case with James Nayler, and a few others, whose conduct the Friends would now be far from approving; and whose severe and unmerited sufferings reflect indelible disgrace on the parties who inflicted them. The heroic and persevering conduct of the Quakers in withstanding the interferences of government with the rights of conscience, by which they finally secured those peculiar privileges they so richly deserve to enjoy, entitles them to the veneration of all the friends of civil and religious freedom; and more than compensates for those irregularities and extravagancies which marked the early period of their history.

y The writings of Jacob Behmen are probably better known now and more

"The chief of the Behmenists, in England, are Dr. Pordage and his family, who live together in community, and pretend to hold visible and sensible communion with angels, whom they sometimes see, and sometimes smell. Mr. Fowler, of Reading, accused him, before the committee, for preaching against imputed righteousness, and various other things, especially for familiarity with devils, and conjuration. The doctor wrote a book to vindicate himself, in which he professeth to have sensible communion with angels, and to know, by sights and smells, good spirits from bad. He saith, that indeed one month his house was molested with evil spirits, which was occasioned by one Everard, whom he taketh to be a conjurer, who staid so long with him, as desiring to be of their communion. In this time, a fiery dragon, so big as to fill a very great room, conflicted with him, visibly, many hours; one appeared to him in his chamber, in the likeness of Everard, with boots, spurs, &c.; and an impression was made on the brick wall of his chimney, of a coach drawn with tigers and lions, which could not be got out till it was hewed out with pickaxes: and another on his glass window, which yet remaineth, &c. Whether these things be true or false, I know not.*

"Among these, fall in many other sect-makers, as Dr. Gell, of London, known partly by a printed volume, in folio; † and one

admired than they were in the days of Baxter. William Law and John Wesley both contributed, especially the first, to gain some credit for them in England. Jacob was a very harmless enthusiast, or rather madman, whose dreams and visions bewildered himself, and the revelation of them bewildered others. That he should have found admirers in such a period of excitement as that which England experienced during the Commonwealth, cannot be matter of surprise, when we find that he obtained followers in the quiet reign of the Georges. Those who do not choose to misspend their time in the examination of his mystical conundrums, will find enough of the same in the works of Law; or may amuse themselves by looking at a small life of Behmen, by his devoted admirer, Francis Okely, formerly of St. John's College, Cambridge. 1780.

* It is surprising Baxter should not have perceived that Dr. Pordage was fitter for occupying a place in Bedlam, than to rank as the head or leader of a sect. If madmen are to be reckoned sect-makers, we might reckon sects without number, in all ages and places. Granger says of him, very justly, "He was far gone in one of the most incurable kinds of madness, the frenzy of enthusiasm;" yet was he a doctor in philosophy, medicine, and theology!

† Dr. Gell, of whom Baxter speaks, appears to have been a very singular man. He published two folio volumes on the Scriptures: the one in 1659; the other appeared after his death, in 1676. He was rector of St. Mary, Aldermanbury. His works are a curious mass of learning, occasional original, interpretation of the Scriptures, and mystical speculation, often of a very peculiar nature. But men of a similar cast of mind have appeared in every age.

Mr. Parker, who got in with the Earl of Pembroke, and wrote a book against the 'Assembly's Confession,' in which he taketh up most of the Popish doctrines, and riseth up against them with papal pride and contempt, but owneth not the pope himself. Yet he headeth his body of doctrine with the Spirit, as the Papists do with the pope.^b To these also must be added Dr. Gibbon, who goeth about with his scheme to proselyte men, whom I have more cause to know than some of the rest.^c

"All these, with subtile diligence, promote most of the papal cause, and get in with the religious sort, either upon pretence of austerity, mortification, angelical communion, or clearer light; but none of them yet owneth the name of a Papist; but what they are, indeed, and who sendeth them, and what is their work, though I strongly conjecture, I will not assert, because I am not fully certain: let time discover them."^d

^b Parker's book on the Assembly's Catechism, I once had in my possession. He appears to have been a concealed Papist; and, partly on Popish, and partly on Arminian principles, attacks the doctrines of the Westminster Confession. But it is quite a mass of confusion.

^c The person to whom Baxter here refers, was Dr. Nicholas Gibbon, who, after the Restoration, became rector of Corfe Castle. He was a busy, forward royalist. The following curious account of his intercourse with Baxter, which is given in another part of his life, explains the allusion here made to him. It is probable that Baxter knew enough of him; but he was more a man of intrigue than the maker of a sect.

"While I lodged at Lord Broghill's, a certain person was importunate to speak with me, Dr. Nic. Gibbon, who, shutting the doors on us, that there might be no witnesses, drew forth a scheme of theology, and told me how long a journey he had once taken towards me, and engaged me patiently to hear him open to me his scheme, which he said was the very thing that I had been long groping after; and contained the only terms and method to resolve all doubts whatever in divinity, and unite all Christians through the world: and there was none of them printed but what he kept himself, and he communicated them only to such as were prepared, which he thought I was. 1. Searching; 2. Impartial; and, 3. A lover of method. I thauked him, and heard him above an hour in silence; and, after two or three days' talk with him, I found all his frame, the contrivance of a very strong head-piece, was secretly and cunningly fitted to usher in a Socinian Popery, or a mixture of Popery and half-Socinianism. Bishop Usher had before occasionally spoken of him in my hearing as a Socinian, which caused me to hear him with suspicion; but I heard none suspect him of Popery, though I found that it was that which was the end of his design. This juggler hath this twenty years, and more, gone up and down thus secretly, and also thrust himself into places of public debate (as when the bishops and divines disputed before the king at the Isle of Wight, &c.); and when we were lately offering our proposals for concord to the king, he thrust in among us: till I was fain, plainly, to detect him before some of the Lords, which enraged him; and he denied the words which, in secret, he had spoken to me. Many men of parts and learning are perverted by him."—*Life*, part ii. pp. 205, 206.

^d *Life*, part i. p. 74—78,

After this account of the several sects and their leaders, it will be proper to quote a portion of the general reflections which Baxter makes upon them. "These are they," he says, "who have been most addicted to church divisions, and separations, and sidings, and parties, and have refused all terms of concord and unity : who, though many of them weak and raw, were yet prone to be puffed up with high thoughts of themselves, and to overvalue their little degrees of knowledge and parts, which set them not above the pity of understanding men. They have been set upon those courses which tend to advance them above the common people in the observation of the world, and to set them at a further distance from others than God alloweth, and all this under the pretence of the purity of the church. In prosecution of their ends, there are few of the Anabaptists that have not been the opposers and troublers of the faithful ministers of God in the land, and the troublers of their people, and hinderers of their success ; strengthening the hands of the profane. The sectaries, especially the Anabaptists, Seekers, and Quakers, chose out the most able, zealous ministers, to be the marks of their reproach and obloquy, and all because they stood in the way of their designs, and hindered them in the propagating their opinions. They set against the same men as the drunkards and swearers set against, and much after the same manner, reviling them, and raising up false reports of them, and doing all that they could to make them odious, and at last attempting to pull them all down ; only they did it more profanely than the profane, in that they said, Let the Lord be glorified, let the Gospel be propagated ; and abused and profaned Scripture, and the name of God, by prefixing him to their faction and miscarriages. Yea, though they thought themselves the most understanding and conscientious people of the land, yet did the gang of them seldom stick at any thing which seemed to promote their cause ; but whatever their faction in the army did, they pleaded for and approved it. If they pulled down the parliament, imprisoned the godly, faithful members, and killed the king ; if they cast out the Rump, if they chose a little parliament of their own ; if they set up Cromwell ; if they raised up his son, and pulled him down again ; if they sought to obtrude agreements on the people ; if they one week set up a council of state, and if another week the Rump were restored ; if they sought to take down tithes and parish ministers, to the utter confusion of religion in the land : in all these

the Anabaptists, and many of the Independents in the three kingdoms, followed them, and even their pastors were ready to lead them to consent.

“I know the same accusations are laid by some in ignorance and malice, against many that are guilty of no such things, and, therefore, some will be offended with me, and say I imitate such reproaches; but shall none be reprovèd because some are slandered? Shall hypocrites be free from conviction and condemnation, because wicked men call the godly hypocrites? Wo to the man that hath not a faithful reprovèr! but a thousand woes will be to him that hateth reprovèr! Wo to them that had rather sin were credited and kept in honour, than their party dishonoured; and wo to the land where the reputation of men doth keep sin in reputation! The Scripture itself will not spare a Noah, a Lot, a David, an Hezekiah, a Josiah, a Peter; but will open and shame their sin to all generations. Yet, alas! the hearts of many, who it is to be hoped are truly religious, will rise against him that shall tell them of the misdoings of those of their opinion, and call them to repentance. The poor church of Christ, the sober, sound religious part, are like Christ, that was crucified between two thieves. The profane and formal persecutors, on one hand, and the fanatic, dividing sectaries on the other, have in all ages been grinding the spiritual seed, as the corn is ground between the millstones. And though their sins have ruined themselves and us, and silenced so many hundred ministers, and scattered the flocks, and made us the hatred and scorn of the ungodly world, and a by-word, and desolation in the earth, yet there are few of them who lament their sin, but justify themselves and their misdoings; and the penitent malefactor is unknown to us. And seeing posterity must know what they have done, to the shame of our land and of our sacred profession, let them know thus much more, also, to their own shame, that all the calamities which have befallen us by our divisions were long foreseen by many: and they were told and warned of them year after year. They were told that a house divided against itself could not stand; and that the course they took would bring them to shame, and turn a hopeful reformation into a scorn, and make the land of their nativity a place of calamity and wo: but the warning signified nothing to them; these ductile professors blindly followed a few self-conceited teachers to this misery, and no warning or means could ever stop them.”^e

^e Life, part 1. pp. 102, 103.

Such is the curious account which Baxter gives of the extraordinary state of religion, and of religious parties, during this singular period of England's history. His opportunities to become acquainted with the state of things, were very considerable, and his veracity unquestionable. Yet I cannot help thinking that a worse opinion may be formed of the state of religion from what he has said, than the real circumstances will justify. The language of many would lead us to suppose that during what Milton calls ironically "the year of sects and schisms," those sects and schisms were almost innumerable. The uncouth designations employed to describe them, by such persons as Edwards, Vicars, Pagitt, and Featley, have furnished many a joke, and led to many an exaggerated description. But when the matter comes to be examined, a great deal of this mist, in which the period is enveloped, is cleared away. Baxter's own account, which discovers no disposition to conceal or extenuate, shows, that beside the leading religious parties, which were composed mostly of respectable persons, there were only five other sects that he could describe. Even these so ran into one another that he could not accurately discriminate them. With the exception of the Quakers, none of the rest is entitled to be spoken of as a distinct or separate sect. All the others appear to have consisted of a small number of floating individuals, who had no defined religious system, and who enjoyed an existence and influence of the most ephemeral nature. Most of the leaders were harmless and inoffensive in their lives; men whose hearts were better than their understandings; and who were, in some cases, rendered mischievous, chiefly by the treatment which they experienced.¹

These sects and heresies are often represented as hatched and spawned during the Commonwealth, and constituting its disgrace; they are also alleged to stamp the character of that much-misrepresented period of our history. It should be remembered, however, that when liberty runs riot, it is generally when it has been preceded by oppression and tyranny. Persecution and restraint have often been the real parents of those opinions, which are sometimes truly extravagant, and at other

¹ "Old Ephraim Pagitt," as he calls himself, describes, in his 'Heresiography,' between forty and fifty different sects; but the whole of these may be reduced to a very few, as he makes many foolish distinctions. For instance, he has *Anabaptists*, and *Plunged Anabaptists*; *Separatists*, and *Semi-separatists*. He has *Brownists*, *Barrowists*, *Ainsworthians*, *Robinsonians*, who were all men of one party. He has *Familists*, *Castalian Familists*, *Fumilists of the Mountains*, and *Familists of the Vallies*! Such is a specimen of the wisdom and the multiplying power of Old Ephraim Pagitt.

times only regarded as such by the dominant party; which liberty has not created but only brought to light. That the sudden bursting of the bonds of civil and ecclesiastical slavery should be attended with some temporary evils, is only what might be expected. Who thinks of blaming the emancipated captive, for a few freaks and a little wildness, when first breathing the air of heaven? These are but indications of powerful emotion, which, when familiar with his new circumstances, will subside into a delightful calm. The strong representations of gross immoralities alleged to be practised by some of the members of the sects referred to, will go but a little way with those who know how the primitive believers were misrepresented, and what treatment the reformers experienced. Charges of this kind have been commonly preferred against the followers of new sects, they therefore always require to be very fully authenticated before they are believed.

Baxter's notion that most of these sects were either projected or instigated by Papists, seems not sustained by any satisfactory evidence. He was full of alarms on this subject; and from what he knew of the deceitful nature of Popery, he was prepared to give it credit for any mystery of iniquity. That the priests and Jesuits were disposed to aggravate rather than mitigate the evils which then existed, cannot be doubted. But the leaders of the religious parties of the Commonwealth, were not the tools with which they could safely work.

If we look around on the state of parties at present, we shall perhaps be convinced that sects and schisms are more numerous than even in the time of the Commonwealth, and not a few of them quite as extravagant. What, then! Is this a proof that we have no religion, or of the evil and danger of religious freedom? No, certainly. But, let an attempt be made to hinder exertion, and put down sects, and we should find all the alleged evils of fanaticism and schism, aggravated and multiplied a thousandfold.

The divisions of the Christian church are undoubtedly much to be deplored. They present a most unseemly appearance to the world, of that religion which may be said to be "one and indivisible." They imply much imperfection on the part of its professors, occasion great stumbling to unbelievers, and impair the energy and resources which might be advantageously employed in assailing the common enemy. The causes of these divisions are to be sought in the ignorance, the weakness, and

the prejudices of Christians ; in indolent submission to authority on one part, and the love of influence on another ; in the power of early habits and associations ; and, above all, in the influence of a worldly spirit, which warps and governs the mind in a thousand ways.

While the evil of this state of things is freely admitted, it is possible to exaggerate both the extent of the divisions which exist, and the injuries which result from them. There is more oneness of mind among real Christians than a superficial observer might suppose. Baxter was quite correct in maintaining that they differ more about words than things. In their views of leading doctrines, in the experience of their influence, in the practical effects of Christianity, and in their expectations of its future glory, there is a substantial agreement among them.

In the wise and gracious administration of God, even these imperfections are overruled, and rendered productive of important good. They afford opportunity for the exercise of the Christian virtues of forbearance, patience, and love ; they put the tempers and profession of men to the test ; and they often excite a spirit of emulation, which, though not unmixed with evil, is the means of extensive benefit to others. It is worthy of observation that all attempts to produce uniformity, have either been defeated ; or have occasioned fresh divisions. Under the appearance of outward unity, the greatest diversity of opinion generally prevails. And genuine religion flourishes most amidst what is commonly denounced as the contentions of rival sects. The soil whose rankness sends forth an abundant crop of weeds, will produce, if cultivated, a still more luxuriant harvest of corn. If the times of Baxter were fruitful of sects, and some of them wild and monstrous, they were still more fruitful in the number of genuine, holy, and devoted Christians. It was not an age of fanaticism only, but of pure and undefiled religion.

CHAPTER V.

1646—1660.

Baxter resumes his Labours at Kidderminster—His account of Public Affairs till the Death of Charles I.—His conduct while in Kidderminster towards Parliament—Towards the Royal Party—His Ministry at Kidderminster—His Employments—His Success—His Advantages—Remarks on the style of his preaching—His public and private exertions—Their lasting effects.

IN the fourth chapter, a full account is given of the views and conduct of Baxter while he was connected with the victorious army of the Commonwealth. His exertions to promote its spiritual interests, were indefatigable and disinterested. With the most patriotic principles and aims, he devoted himself to counteract, what he considered the factious and sectarian dispositions of the soldiers and their leaders; while he experienced nothing but sorrow and disappointment as the fruit of his labours. His bodily health, always feeble and broken, at length sunk under the pressure of his circumstances, and he was compelled reluctantly to retire from the stormy atmosphere of a camp to the calmer region of a pastoral cure.

The preceding chapter details the origin, character, and influence, of the principal and the minor religious parties which made a figure during the civil wars, or enjoyed an ephemeral notoriety during the Commonwealth. To all that concerned both the civil and religious interests of his country, Baxter was powerfully alive. He had the soul of a patriot as well as of a Christian; and often was he ready to weep tears of blood over the civil confusion and the religious distractions of his country. Yet were these halcyon days, in regard to the enjoyment of religious privileges, compared with those which preceded and followed them.

After various digressions he thus resumes his personal narrative: "I have related how after my bleeding a gallon of blood by the nose, that I was left weak at Sir Thomas Rous's house, at Rous-Lench, where I was taken up with daily medicines to prevent a dropsy; and being conscious that my time had not been improved

to the service of God as I desired it had been, I put up many an earnest prayer, that God would restore me, and use me more successfully in his work. Blessed be that mercy which heard my groans in the day of my distress; which wrought my deliverance when men and means failed, and gave me opportunity to celebrate his praise.

“Whilst I continued there, weak and unable to preach, the people of Kidderminster had again renewed their articles against their old vicar and his curate. Upon trial of the cause, the committee sequestered the place, but put no one into it; and placed the profits in the hands of divers of the inhabitants, to pay a preacher till it were disposed of. These persons sent to me and desired me to take it, in case I were again enabled to preach; which I flatly refused, and told them I would take only the lecture which, by the vicar’s own consent and bond, I held before. Hereupon they sought Mr. Brumskill and others to accept the place, but could not meet with any one to their minds: they, therefore, chose Mr. Richard Serjeant to officiate, reserving the vicarage for some one that was fitter.

“When I was able, after about five months’ confinement, to go abroad, I went to Kidderminster, where I found only Mr. Serjeant in possession; and the people again vehemently urged me to take the vicarage. This I declined; but got the magistrates and burgesses together into the townhall, and told them, that though I had been offered many hundred pounds per annum elsewhere, I was willing to continue with them in my old lecturer’s place, which I had before the wars, expecting they would make the maintenance a hundred pounds a year, and a house; and if they would promise to submit to that doctrine of Christ, which as his minister I should deliver to them, I would not leave them. That this maintenance should neither come out of their own purses, nor any more of it out of the tithes, save the sixty pounds which the vicar had before bound himself to pay, I undertook to procure an augmentation for Milton (a chapel in the parish) of forty pounds per annum. This I afterwards did; and so the sixty pounds and that forty pounds were to be my part, and the rest I should have nothing to do with. The covenant was drawn up between us in articles, and subscribed; in which I disclaimed the vicarage and pastoral charge of the parish, and only undertook the lecture.

“Thus the sequestration continued in the hands of the townsmen, as aforesaid, who gathered the tithes and paid me (not a

hundred as they promised) but eighty pounds per annum, or ninety at most, and house-rent for a few rooms at the top of another man's house, which was all I had at Kidderminster. The rest they gave to Mr. Serjeant, and about forty pounds per annum to the old vicar; six pounds per annum to the king and lord for rents, and a few other charges.

"Beside this ignorant vicar, there was a chapel in the parish, where was an old curate as ignorant as he, that had long lived upon ten pounds a year and the fees of celebrating unlawful marriages. He was also a drunkard and a railer, and the scorn of the country. I knew not how to keep him from reading, though I judged it a sin to tolerate him in any sacred office. I got an augmentation for the place, and an honest preacher to instruct them, and let this scandalous fellow keep his former stipend of ten pounds for nothing; yet could never keep him from forcing himself upon the people to read, nor from celebrating unlawful marriages, till a little before death did call him to his account. I have examined him about the familiar points of religion, and he could not say half so much to me as I have heard a child say.

"These two in this parish were not all: in one of the next parishes called 'The Rock,' there were two chapels, where the poor ignorant curate of one got his living by cutting faggots, and the other by making ropes. Their abilities being answerable to their studies and employments."^s

Such were the circumstances in which Baxter resumed his labours in Kidderminster. He was the man of the people's choice, and enjoyed his right to the vicarage of the parish, had he been disposed to avail himself of it by the sequestration of the parliamentary commissioners. It is true he had no legal episcopal title; and of this his enemies took advantage another day; but it is very certain he had no hand in ejecting the former incompetent incumbent, or in forcing himself upon the people as his successor. The appointment of the existing Government therefore, or of a body acting under its sanction, was sufficient authority to justify his taking possession of the cure, and to support his complaint of unjust treatment when subsequently refused liberty to preach in the parish by Bishop Morley. That money was not Baxter's object, is evident from the nature of his engagement; and from his afterwards offering to continue his labours *gratis*, if he might only be permitted to

^s Life, part i. pp. 79, 80.

preach and live among the people, no doubt can be entertained of his disinterested love to the work of Christ.

Before proceeding to state the nature and results of his ministry in the place where he was honoured by God to effect so much good, it will be proper, for the sake of connecting the public events of the times, to advert to some important occurrences which took place immediately after he left the army, and during the earlier period of his second residence in Kidderminster. Leaving, for a little, the narrative of his personal affairs, he thus proceeds :

“I must now look back to the course and affairs of the king; who, after the siege of Oxford, having no army left, and knowing that the Scots had more loyalty and stability in their principles than the sectaries, resolved to cast himself upon them, and so escaped to their army in the North. The Scots were very much troubled at this honour that was cast upon them, for they knew not what to do with the king. To send him back to the English parliament, seemed unfaithfulness, when he had cast himself upon them; to keep him, they knew would divide the kingdoms, and draw a war upon themselves from England; which they knew they were now unable to sustain. They kept him, therefore, awhile among them with honourable entertainment, till the parliament sent for him; and they saw that the sectaries and the army were glad of it, as an occasion to make them odious, and to invade their land. Thus the terror of the conquering army made them deliver him to the parliament’s commissioners upon two conditions: 1. That they should promise to preserve his person in safety and honour, according to the duty which they owed him by their allegiance. 2. That they should presently pay the Scots army one half what was due to them for their service, which had been long unpaid.^b

“Hereupon the king being delivered to the parliament, they

^b The treaty for the payment of the Scottish arrears, and that for the delivering up of the king, were quite distinct in themselves, though they proceeded together. Baxter is also mistaken when he says, the king was given up on the two conditions, which he specifies. He was delivered up without any conditions. The objects of the English Parliament, and of the Scottish Parliament, were the same; the covenant and the propositions. The king’s life could not be supposed to be in danger, but from such a concussion of party, and such an ascendancy of persons totally different from those with whom the negotiation was going on, as would have rendered all conditions nugatory. In fact, the life of the king, at this time, was safer among the English than among the Scots; some of whom had conceived the idea of bringing him to the scaffold for his obstinate refusal to agree to the terms of the covenant.—*Brodie*, iv. 74; *Godwin*, li. 257.

appointed Colonel Richard Greaves, Major-General Richard Brown, with others, to be his attendants, and desired him to abide awhile at Holmby House, in Northamptonshire. While he was here, the army was hatching their conspiracy; and, on the sudden, one Cornet Joyce, with a party of soldiers, fetched away the king, notwithstanding the parliament's order for his security. This was done as if it had been against Cromwell's will, and without any order or consent of theirs; but so far was Joyce from losing his head for such a treason, that it proved the means of his preferment;¹ and so far was Cromwell and his soldiers from returning the king in safety, that they detained him among them and kept him with them, till they came to Hampton Court, and there they lodged him under the guard of Colonel Whalley, the army quartering all about him. While he was here, the mutable hypocrites^k pretended an extraordinary care of the king's honour, liberty, safety, and conscience. They blamed the austerity of the parliament, who had denied him the attendance of his own chaplains; and of his friends in whom he took most pleasure. They gave liberty to his friends and chaplains to come to him; and pretended that they would save him from the incivilities of the parliament and the Presbyterians.

"Whether this was while they tried what terms they could make with him for themselves, or while they acted any other part, it is certain that the king's old adherents began to extol the army, and to speak against the Presbyterians more distastefully than before. When the parliament offered the king propositions for concord, which Vane's faction made as high and unreasonable as they could, that they might come to nothing,¹ the army, forsooth, offered him proposals of their own, which the king liked better: but which of them to treat with he did not

¹ Charles was well pleased to accompany Joyce, and afterwards refused to return at the command of Fairfax. He was, in fact, glad to be out of the hands of the Presbyterians.—*Godwin*, ii. p. 320. The great object of seizing the king, was to prevent a coalition between him and the Presbyterian party.

^k It was the mutable hypocrisy of Charles, rather than of Cromwell, that frustrated every amicable arrangement. Had he been but steady to any one scheme of moderate policy, he would have lost neither his throne nor his life. His scheme, on all occasions, was to make the best bargain he could, till he got his enemies into his hands, when it was his determination to destroy them. Unfortunately for him they discovered this, and acted accordingly.

¹ The defeat of an adjustment between Charles and his Parliament, at this time, was owing to Hollis, and not to Vane and his party. See Brodie's 'History of the British Empire,' vol. iv. pp. 96, 100.

know. At last, on the sudden, the judgment of the army changed, and they began to cry for justice against the king; and, with vile hypocrisy, to publish their repentance, and cry God's mercy for their kindness to the king, and confess that they were under a temptation: but in all this, Cromwell and Ireton, and the rest of the council of war, appeared not. The instruments of all this work, must be the common soldiers. Two of the most violent sectaries in each regiment are chosen by them, by the name of agitators,^m to represent the rest in these great affairs. All these together made a council, of which Colonel James Berry was the president, that they might be used, ruled, and dissolved, at pleasure. No man that knew them, will doubt whether this was done by Cromwell's and Ireton's direction. This council of agitators take not only the parliament's work upon themselves, but much more; they draw up a paper called 'The Agreement of the People,' as the model or form of a new commonwealth. They have their own printer, and publish abundance of wild pamphlets, as changeable as the moon. The thing contrived, was an heretical democracy. When Cromwell had awhile permitted them thus to play themselves, partly to please them, and confirm them to him, and chiefly to use them in his demolishing work; at last he seemed to be so much for order and government, as to blame them for their disorder, presumption, and headiness, as if they had done it without his consent. This emboldened the parliament not to censure them as rebels, but to rebuke them, and prohibit them, and claim their own superiority; and while the parliament and the agitators were contending, a letter was secretly sent to Colonel Whalley to intimate that the agitators had a design suddenly to surprise and murder the king. Some thought that this was sent from a real friend; but most thought it was contrived by Cromwell to frighten the king out of the land, or into some desperate course which might give them advantage against him. Colonel Whalley showed the letter to the king, which put him into much fear of such ill-governed hands; so that he secretly got horses, and slipped away towards the sea with two of his confidants only. On coming to the sea, near Southampton, they were disappointed of the vessel which they expected to trans-

^m The original name of these persons was *adjutors*, a branch of the same word with *adjutant*, and altogether different from *agitator*, to which it was afterwards converted. Brodie ascribes the conduct of the soldiers, on this occasion, to the intrigues of Hollis, and the Presbyterian party, rather than to the policy of Cromwell, according to Baxter.—*Hist.* iv. 86, 87.

port them ; and so were fain to pass over into the Isle of Wight, and his majesty was committed to the trust of Colonel Robert Hammond, who was governor of a castle there. For a day or two all were amazed to think what had become of the king ; and then a letter from the king to the house, acquainted them that he was fain to flee thither from the cruelty of the agitators, who, as he was informed, thought to murder him ; and urging them to treat about ending all these troubles. But here Cromwell had the king in a pinfold, and was more secure of him than before."

" When at the Isle of Wight, the parliament sent him some propositions, to be consented to in order to his restoration. The king granted many of them ; and some he granted not. The Scottish commissioners thought the conditions more dishonourable to the king than was consistent with their covenant and duty, and protested against them ; for which the parliament blamed them as hinderers of the desired peace. The chief thing which the king stuck at, was the utter abolishing of episcopacy and the alienating of the bishops' and the dean and chapter lands. Hereupon, with the commissioners, certain divines were sent down, to satisfy the king, viz.: Mr. Stephen Marshall, Mr. Richard Vines, Dr. Lazarus Seaman, &c., who were met by many of the King's divines, Archbishop Usher, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Sheldon, &c. The debates here being in writing, were published, and each party thought they had the better. The parliamentary divines came off with great honour.

" They seem to me, however, not to have taken the course which should have settled these distracted churches. Instead of disputing against all episcopacy, they should have changed diocesan prelacy into such an episcopacy as the conscience of the king might have admitted, and as was agreeable to that which the church had in the two or three first ages. I confess Mr. Vines wrote to me, as their excuse in this and other matters of the Assembly, that the parliament tied them up from treating or disputing of any thing at all, but what they appointed or

* There is no evidence whatever that the king's flight from Hampton Court was owing to any secret plot of Cromwell's, or to any fear of being murdered, entertained by his majesty. He was probably advised to it by Cromwell, who was then afraid of the proceedings of the army ; but it was a plan of the king's own, intended to create increased confusion and distraction among his opponents, which he expected to be able to turn to his own advantage. Milton, in his 'Second Defence of the People of England,' vindicates Cromwell from the charge of advising the flight of Charles, or being a party to it. I have not observed the story of the secret letter adverted to by any other writer than Baxter.

proposed to them : but I think plain dealing with such leaders had been best ; and to have told them, this is our judgment, and, in the matters of God and his church, we will serve you according to our judgment, or not at all. Though, indeed, as they were not of one mind among themselves, this could not be expected.*

“ Archbishop Usher there took the right course, who offered the king his *reduction* of episcopacy to the form of presbytery. He told me himself, that, formerly, the king had refused it, but, at the Isle of Wight, he accepted it ; and as he would not when *others* would, so *others* would not when *he* would. So also, when Charles II. came in, we tendered Usher’s scheme of union to him ; but then he would not. Thus the true, moderate, healing terms are always rejected by those that stand on the higher ground, though accepted by them that are lower and cannot have what they will : from whence it is easy to perceive whether prosperity or adversity, the highest or the lowest, be ordinarily the greater hinderer of the church’s unity and peace. I know, that if the divines and parliament had agreed for a moderate episcopacy with the king, some Presbyterians of Scotland would have been against it, and many Independents of England ; and the army would have made it the matter of odious accusations and clamours : but all this ought not to have deterred foreseeing, judicious men, from those healing counsels which must close our wounds whenever they are closed.”

“ The king, sending his final answers, the parliament had a long debate upon them, whether to acquiesce in them as a sufficient ground for peace. Many members spake for resting in them, and, among others, Mr. Prynne went over all the king’s concessions in a speech of divers hours long, with marvellous

* A full and impartial account of the negotiations held at the Isle of Wight, is given by Neal, iii. pp. 422, 443, edit. 1822. The treaty failed from the obstinacy of the king, acting by the advice of his episcopal counsellors, who were either incapable of giving suitable advice in difficult circumstances, or not aware of the peril to which they were exposing their royal master, who foolishly imagined he could save himself at any time by closing either with the Parliament or the army. It would probably have been better had there been no divines on either side.

† If any thing is calculated to expose the folly and danger of state interference with religion, it is the fact, that the peace of three kingdoms and the fate of the king were made to depend, in a great measure, on the establishment of an exclusive form of church government. There were, doubtless, other things at the root of the misunderstanding, but the main ostensible reason of the failure of the treaty, was the demand on the one part, and the refusal on the other, to abolish episcopacy, and establish presbytery in its place.

memory, and showed the satisfactoriness of them all. So that the house voted that the king's concessions were a sufficient ground for a personal treaty with him; and suddenly gave a concluding answer, and sent for him up. But at such a crisis it was time for the army to bestir themselves. Without any more ado, Cromwell and his confidants sent Colonel Pride with a party of soldiers to the house, and set a guard upon the door: one part of the house, who were for them, they let in; another part they turned away, and told them that they must not come there; and the third part they imprisoned. To so much rebellion, perfidiousness, perjury, and impudence, can error, selfishness, and pride of great successes, transport men of the highest pretences to religion.⁹

"For the true understanding of all this, it must be remembered, that though in the beginning of the parliament there was scarce a noted, gross sectary known, but Lord Brook, in the House of Peers, and young Sir Harry Vane, in the House of Commons; yet, by degrees, the number increased in the lower house. Major Salloway and some few others, Sir Henry Vane had made his own adherents: many more were carried part of the way to Independency and liberty of religions; and many that minded not any side in religion, did think that it was not policy ever to trust a conquered king, and therefore were wholly for a parliamentary government. Of these, some would have lords and commons, or a mixture of aristocracy and democracy; others would have commons and democracy alone; and some thought that they ought to judge the king for all the blood that had been shed. Thus, when the two parts of the house were ejected and imprisoned, the third part, composed of the Vanists, the Independents, and other sects, with the democratical party, was left by Cromwell to do his business under the name of the Parliament of England; which, by the people in scorn, was commonly called the Rump of the Parliament. The secluded and imprisoned members published a writing, called their Vindication; and some of them would afterwards have thrust into the House, but the guard of soldiers kept them

⁹ The account which Mrs. Hutchinson gives of this affair, is very different from Baxter's. She imputes the whole blame of acceding to the terms proposed by the king, the army's interference with Parliament, and the consequent ruin of the king, to the conduct of the Presbyterian leaders, who, instigated by hatred of the Independents and other sects, consented to measures which would have reinstated Charles without any adequate security to his subjects: by which they would all eventually have been destroyed.—*Memoirs of Col. Hutchinson*, 297—300. Whitelock and Ludlow agree with Mrs. Hutchinson's

out, and the Rump were called the *honest men*. And these are the men that henceforward we have to do with in the progress of our history as called The Parliament.*

"As the Lords were disaffected to these proceedings, so were the Rump and soldiers to the Lords ; so that they passed a vote, supposing that the army would stand by them, to establish the government without a king and House of Lords ; and thus the Lords were dissolved, and these Commons sat and did all alone. Being deluded by Cromwell, and verily thinking that he would be for democracy, which they called a commonwealth, they gratified him in his designs, and themselves in their disloyal distrusts and fears. They accordingly called a high court of justice to be erected, and sent for the king from the Isle of Wight. Colonel Hammond delivered him, and to Westminster Hall he came, and refusing to own the court and their power to try him, Cook, as attorney, having pleaded against him, Bradshaw, as president and judge, recited the charge, and condemned him." Before his own gate at Whitehall, they erected a scaffold ; and, in the presence of a full assembly of people, beheaded him. In all this appeared the severity of God, the mutability and uncertainty of worldly things, the fruits of a sinful nation's provocations, the infamous effects of error, pride, and selfishness, prepared by Satan, to be charged hereafter upon reformation and godliness, to the unspeakable injury of the Christian name and Protestant cause, the rejoicing and advantage of the Papists, the hardening of thousands against the means of their own salvation, and the confusion of the actors when their day should come.

* Through the whole of these statements, Baxter ascribes a great deal too much to the craft of Cromwell, and the intrigues of the sectaries. Allowing that they often compensated their lack of power by superior address and rapidity of movement, it should not be forgotten that self-preservation is the first law of man ; and that, as the sectaries were in danger of being crushed between two powerful parties, the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians, they naturally exerted themselves to prevent the ascendancy of either. Had there been more integrity in the one class, and more moderation in the other, Cromwell and his party would have had a less difficult part to play : as things were, they probably accomplished much less by previous intrigue and plotting, than by taking advantage of unforeseen occurrences.

* The reader who thinks of Bradshaw only as a regicide and a ruffian, would do well to consult the character given of him by Milton, in his 'Defence of the People of England.' An admirable translation of the passage will be found in 'Symmons' Life of Milton,' pp. 220—222. Bradshaw escaped to America, and there ended his days in peace. Cook expiated his political offence on the scaffold, and died with all that lofty heroism which distinguished men who felt that they suffered not for personal guilt, but for the crime of the people of England.

"The Lord General Fairfax all this while stood by, and, with high resentment, saw his lieutenant do all this by tumultuous soldiers, tricked and overpowered by him ; neither being sufficiently upon his guard to defeat the intrigues of such an actor ; nor having resolution enough to lay down the glory of all his conquests, and forsake him. At the King's death, he was in wonderful perplexities, and when Mr. Calamy and some ministers were sent for to resolve him, and would have further persuaded him to rescue the King, his troubles so confounded him, that his servants durst let no man speak to him : and Cromwell kept him, as it was said, in praying and consulting till the stroke was given, and it was too late to make resistance. But not long after, when war was determined against Scotland, he laid down his commission, and never had to do with the army more ; and Cromwell become General in his stead.¹

"If you ask, What did the ministers all this while ? I answer, they preached and prayed against disloyalty ; they drew up a writing to the Lord General, declaring their abhorrence of all violence against the person of the King, and urging him and his army to take heed of such an unlawful act. They presented it to the General when they saw the King in danger ; but pride prevailed against their counsels."²

Some difference of opinion may exist in regard to the correctness of all the statements and reasonings of the preceding extracts. One thing, however, is very apparent,—the devoted royalty of Baxter. While he acted with the army of the Parliament, and advocated the cause which he considered it had undertaken, he was indignant at its conduct, when it assumed the sovereign power, and threatened the life of the king. In the treatment which Charles experienced, Baxter seems to forget every thing, but the sufferings which he endured and the unconstitutional conduct of his adversaries. The death of that ill-fated monarch, he regarded less as the result of his own obstinacy and duplicity, of which all parties were furnished with indubitable proofs, or as the just retribution of Heaven for these and many other evils of himself and his family, than as illustrations of the bad principles and wicked conduct of sectaries and

¹ There seems something very absurd in the idea that Fairfax was ignorant of what all the country knew, that the death of the king was determined ; and that he was hoaxed by Cromwell and Harrison till it was accomplished. Brodie examines the story with his usual diligence and acuteness.—*Hist. of the Brit. Emp.* iv. p. 213—216.

² Life, part i. pp. 60—64.

agitators. He denounces the hypocrisy and perfidy of Cromwell and his party, and represents them as systematically pursuing the destruction of the king. They are justly liable to the charge of dissimulation. But it should not be forgotten that it attaches to the royal party and to its head, in a far greater degree. The struggle which was at first for freedom on the one side, and for absolute power on the other, became, at last, a struggle for life, on both sides. The final catastrophe, therefore, deeply as it is to be lamented, became inevitable. The Presbyterians would have restored the king, at different periods of the contest, if he would have abolished episcopacy, and established presbyterian uniformity in its stead. They were prevented from doing so, partly by the scheming of Charles, and partly by the opposition of the army. The Independents would have restored him, could they have obtained any security for themselves, and the freedom of their religion. They could not trust the king for the one, or the Presbyterians for the other. Charles played with and deceived all parties, till at length he fell a sacrifice to his own obstinacy and insincerity.

The full discussion of the difficult and complicated subject to which the preceding paragraphs relate would be foreign, from the nature and design of this work ; which is intended rather as a record of the opinions and testimony of Baxter, than of my own sentiments. On many points, we are now capable of forming more correct views than any individual could, in the times of Baxter. We are less under the influence of prejudice ; we have more accurate information ; and are, therefore, capable of looking at all the transactions with more impartiality. I beg to refer the reader, who wishes for full and enlightened views on all the events of the civil wars and the Commonwealth, to the work of Brodie, which I have often referred to in the notes. It is distinguished by laborious research, great acuteness, and most praiseworthy impartiality. If that work is not at hand, the 'History of the Commonwealth,' by Godwin, will amply supply its place. It also is entitled to the praise of discrimination and impartiality. Equity requires I should state, that both these writers differ considerably from Baxter in their views of the principles and conduct of the several parties who figured in the distracted period of which they treat.

Baxter himself, while these tremendous scenes were transacting, lived remote from the parties principally engaged in them. He could only speak and reason according to the reports which

reached him, the probability or improbability of which he usually determined by the personal knowledge which he had of those to whom they related. Though deeply concerned in all that affected his country's weal, he was now better employed than in contending with the turmoils of a camp, or in sounding and exposing the policy of courts.

During the early part of his second residence at Kidderminster, several other circumstances are recorded by Baxter worthy of being mentioned, both as illustrating his own character and the state of the period. He opposed the solemn league and covenant, though he had formerly taken it at Coventry, and, therefore, did not please the Presbyterians : he opposed the engagement, and thus incurred the displeasure of the Independents. Careful only to stand well with his own conscience, it was matter of indifference to him who were his friends or who were his foes.

"For my own part," he says, "though I kept the town and parish of Kidderminster from taking the covenant, seeing how it might become a snare to their consciences ; yea, and most of Worcestershire beside, by keeping the ministers from offering it in any of the congregations to the people, except in Worcester city, where I had no great interest, and knew not what they did ; yet I could not judge it seemly for him that believed there is a God, to play fast and loose with a dreadful oath, as if the bonds of national and personal vows were as easily shaken off as Sampson's cords.

"I therefore spake and preached against the engagement, and dissuaded men from taking it. The first hour that I heard of it, being in company with some gentlemen of Worcestershire, I presently wrote down above twenty queries against it, intending as many more almost against the obligation, as those were about the sense and circumstances. One that was present got the copy of them, and, shortly after, I met with them verbatim, as his own, in a book of Mr. Henry Hall's, who was long imprisoned for writing against Cromwell." ^u

That Baxter was the friend of the parliamentary cause notwithstanding, cannot be doubted ; and that he was grateful for the protection which he enjoyed under the existing government, is equally unquestionable ; yet he was adverse to the measures pursued in opposition to Charles II., whose right to the throne he fully believed, and carried his conscientious opposition to the commonwealth-government so far, that it might have been at-

^u Life, part i. p. 64.

tended with serious consequences to himself. He was, in fact, a royalist in principles and constitution ; and a friend to the parties who opposed the king, from necessity, and not from choice.

“When the soldiers were going against the king and the Scots, I wrote letters to some of them, to tell them of their sin ; and desired them at last to begin to know themselves. They were the same men who had boasted so much of love to all the godly, and pleaded for tender dealing with them, and condemned those that persecuted them or restrained their liberty, who were now ready to imbrue their swords in the blood of such as they acknowledged to be godly ; and all because they dared not be as perjured or disloyal as they were. Some of them were startled at these letters, and thought me an uncharitable censurer, who would say that they could kill the godly, even when they were on the march to do it : for how bad soever they spake of the cavaliers (and not without too much desert as to their morals), they confessed, that abundance of the Scots were godly men. Afterwards, however, those that I wrote to better understood me.

“At the same time, the Rump, or Commonwealth, which so much abhorred persecution, and were for liberty of conscience, made an order that all ministers should keep certain days of humiliation, to fast and pray for their success in Scotland : and that we should keep days of thanksgiving for their victories ; and this upon pain of sequestration ! So that we all expected to be turned out ; but they did not execute it upon any, save one, in our parts. For myself, instead of praying and preaching for them, when any of the committee or soldiers were my hearers, I laboured to help them to understand, what a crime it was to force men to pray for the success of those who were violating their covenant and loyalty, and going, in such a cause, to kill their brethren :—what it was to force men to give God thanks for all their bloodshed, and to make God’s ministers and ordinances vile, and serviceable to such crimes, by forcing men to run to God on such errands of blood and ruin :—and what it is to be such hypocrites as to persecute and cast out those that preach the Gospel, while they pretend the advancement of the Gospel, and the liberty of tender consciences, and leave neither tenderness nor honesty in the world, when the guides of the flocks and preachers of the Gospel shall be noted to swallow down such heinous sins.*

* Only one opinion can be entertained respecting the fearless honesty of Baxter, but the wisdom as well as the prudence of his behaviour may be

"My own hearers were all satisfied with my doctrine, but the committee-men looked sour, yet let me alone. The soldiers said, I was so like Love,⁷ that I would not be right till I was shorter by the head. Yet none of them ever meddled with me, farther than by the tongue; nor was I ever by any of them in those times forbidden or hindered to preach one sermon, except only one assize sermon, which the high sheriff had desired me to preach, and afterwards sent me word to forbear, as from the committee; which told Mr. Moor, the Independent preacher at the college, that they desired me to forbear, and not to preach before the judges, because I preached against the state. But afterwards they excused it, as done merely in kindness to me, to keep me from running myself into danger and trouble."⁸

Notwithstanding his conduct towards the leaders and soldiers of the Commonwealth, various circumstances show that Baxter was by no means disposed to promote the interests of the royal cause. After detailing the affairs of Cromwell and the army in Scotland, and the march of Charles with the royal army into England, he says:—

"The greater part of the army passed close by Kidderminster, and the rest through it. Colonel Graves sent two or three messages to me, as from the king, to come to him; and after, when he was at Worcester, some others were sent: but I was at that time under so great an affliction of sore eyes, that I was scarcely able to see the light, and unfit to stir out of doors. Being not much doubtful of the issue which followed, I thought, if I had been able, it would have been no service at all to the king, it being so little, on such a sudden, that I could add to his assistance.

"When the king had stayed a few days at Worcester, Cromwell came with his army to the east side of the city, and after very justly questioned. To take the side of the Parliament as he had done, and now to oppose the existing Government so publicly, while prosecuting the object of the original contest, was rather extraordinary. It is a great proof of the moderation of that Government, that it let him pass without molestation.

⁷ The Presbyterian minister who was executed by Cromwell, for corresponding with the King. It is probable he was put to death rather as an example and a warning to others, than on account of any great criminality in his own conduct. Much influence was used to obtain his life, but all in vain. He was certainly a martyr to Presbyterian loyalty. "He died," says Baxter, "neither timorously nor proudly in any desperate bravado; but with as great alacrity and fearless quietness and freedom of speech, as if he had but gone to bed, and had been as little concerned as the standers by." *Life*, part i. p. 67.

⁸ *Life*, part i. pp. 66, 67:

that, made a bridge of boats over the Severn, to hinder them from foraging on the other side ; but because so great an army could not long endure to be pent up, the king resolved to charge Cromwell's men. At first, the Scottish foot charged very gallantly, some chief persons among the horse, the Marquis of Hamilton, late Earl of Limerick, being slain : but, at last, the hope of security so near their backs, encouraged the king's army to retreat into the city, and Cromwell's soldiers followed them so close at the heels, that Major Swallow, of Whalley's regiment, first, and others after him, entered Sidbury gate with them ; and so the whole army fled through the city, quite away, many being trodden down and slain in the streets ; so that the king was fain to fly with them northward. The Lord Wilmot, the Earl of Lauderdale, and many others of his lords and commanders, fled with him. Kidderminster being but eleven miles from Worcester, the flying army passed some of them through the town, and some by it. I had nearly gone to bed when the noise of the flying horses acquainted us with the overthrow ; and a piece of one of Cromwell's troops, that guarded Bewdley bridge, having tidings of it, came into our streets, and stood in the open market-place, before my door, to surprise those that passed by. So, when many hundreds of the flying army came together, and the thirty troopers cried *stand*, and fired at them, they either hastened away, or cried quarter, not knowing in the dark what number it was that charged them. Thus as many were taken there, as so few men could lay hold on : and, till midnight, the bullets flying towards my door and windows, and the sorrowful fugitives hastening by for their lives, did tell me the calamitousness of war.

"The king, parted at last from most of his lords, went to Boscobel, by the White Ladies, where he was hid in an oak, in a manner sufficiently declared to the world ; and thence to Mosely, and so, with Mrs. Lane, away as a traveller, and escaped all the searchers' hands, till he came safe beyond sea, as is published at large by divers."^a

This brief notice of public affairs, and of Baxter's conduct in relation to them, to the period when the Commonwealth and Cromwell reigned triumphant, sufficiently prepares us for the interesting account given by him of his labours and success in Kidderminster. Perhaps no part of these memoirs is so important as this. It presents an admirable view of the man of

^a Life, part i. pp. 110, 111.

God, abundant in labours, patient in tribulation, persevering in the exercise of faithfulness, benevolence, and long-suffering, and crowned with extraordinary success. Without ascribing too much to the agent, or expressing unqualified approbation of all the means employed, it is impossible not to perceive the adaptation of the instrument to the work, or to doubt that the divine blessing rested upon the measures pursued. The sovereignty of God operates not independently of human means and instrumentality, but in connexion with them; and it will rarely if ever be found, that suitably qualified agents pursue, in a right spirit and with Christian zeal, the good of men, without being rewarded by a corresponding measure of success. The circumstances in which Baxter found Kidderminster when he first went to it, as well as the difficulties and troubles which he had to encounter during the two years he then resided in it, have been already stated. Ignorance, immorality, and opposition to the Gospel, prevailed among all classes. His doctrine was unpalatable, his manner of life and hostility to vice and irreligion, in every form, still more so. His politics, favouring as they did the cause of the Parliament, and of church reform, increased the dislike, and produced personal violence. The conduct of the common people, influenced by all these things, was so outrageous, that he was finally compelled to leave them. This state of things must be connected with his account of the wonderful change in the character of the place, which he was honoured to effect.

After a long account of some remarkable deliverances, and of his bodily weakness, with which it is marvellous that he should have been able to struggle, he thus proceeds:—

“I shall next record to the praise of my Redeemer, the comfortable employment and success which he vouchsafed me during my abode at Kidderminster, under all these weaknesses. And, 1st. I will mention my employment. 2. My successes. And, 3. Those advantages by which, under God, they were procured.

“Before the wars, I preached twice each Lord’s day; but after the war, but once, and once every Thursday, beside occasional sermons. Every Thursday evening, my neighbours who were most desirous, and had opportunity, met at my house, and there one of them repeated the sermon; afterwards they proposed what doubts any of them had about the sermon, or any other case of conscience; and I resolved their doubts. Last of

all, I caused sometimes one and sometimes another of them to pray, to exercise them ; and sometimes I prayed with them myself : which, beside singing a psalm, was all they did. Once a week, also, some of the younger sort, who were not fit to pray in so great an assembly, met among a few more privately, where they spent three hours in prayer together. Every Saturday night, they met at some of their houses, to repeat the sermon of the former Lord's day, and to pray and prepare themselves for the following day. Once in a few weeks, we had a day of humiliation on one occasion or other. Every religious woman that was safely delivered, instead of the old feastings and gossipings, if she was able, did keep a day of thanksgiving with some of her neighbours, with them praising God, and singing psalms, and soberly feasting together. Two days every week, my assistant and myself took fourteen families between us, for private catechising and conference ; he going through the parish, and the town coming to me. I first heard them recite the words of the catechism, and then examined them about the sense ; and, lastly, urged them, with all possible engaging reason and vehemency, to answerable affection and practice. If any of them were stalled through ignorance or bashfulness, I forbore to press them any further to answers, but made them hearers, and either examined others, or turned all into instruction and exhortation. I spent about an hour with each family, and admitted no others to be present ; lest bashfulness should make it burthensome, or any should talk of the weaknesses of others : so that all the afternoons on Mondays and Tuesdays I spent in this way, after I had begun it, (for it was many years before I did attempt it,) and my assistant spent the morning of the same day in the same employment. Before that, I only catechised them in the church, and conferred occasionally with an individual.

“ Beside all this, I was forced, five or six years, by the people's necessity, to practise physic. A common pleurisy happening one year, and no physician being near, I was forced to advise them to save their lives ; and I could not afterwards avoid the importunity of the town and country round about. Because I never once took a penny of any one, I was crowded with patients ; so that almost twenty would be at my door at once : and though God, by more success than I expected, so long encouraged me, yet, at last, I could endure it no longer ; partly because it hindered my other studies, and partly because the

very fear of miscuring and doing any one harm, did make it an intolerable burden to me. So that, after some years' practice, I procured a godly diligent physician to come and live in the town, and bound myself, by promise, to practise no more, unless in consultation with him, in case of any seeming necessity ; and so with that answer I turned them all off, and never meddled with it again.

“ But all these my labours (except my private conference with the families), even preaching and preparing for it, were but my recreation, and, as it were, the work of my spare hours ; for my writings were my chief daily labour ; which yet went the more slowly on, that I never one hour had an amanuensis to dictate to, and especially because my weakness took up so much of my time. All the pains that my infirmities ever brought upon me, were never half so grievous an affliction as the unavoidable loss of time which they occasioned. I could not bear, through the weakness of my stomach, to rise before seven o'clock in the morning, and afterwards not till much later ; and some infirmities I laboured under, made it above an hour before I could be dressed. An hour, I must of necessity have to walk before dinner, and another before supper ; and after supper I could seldom study : all which, beside times of family duties, and prayer, and eating, &c., left me but little time to study : which hath been the greatest external personal affliction of all my life.

“ Every first Wednesday in the month was our monthly-meeting for parish discipline ; and every first Thursday of the month, was the ministers' meeting for discipline and disputation. In those disputations it fell to my lot to be almost constant moderator ; and for every such day, I usually prepared a written determination ; all which I mention as my mercies and delights, and not as my burdens. Every Thursday, besides, I had the company of divers godly ministers at my house, after the lecture, with whom I spent that afternoon in the truest recreation, till my neighbours came to meet for their exercise of repetition and prayer.

“ For ever blessed be the God of my mercies, who brought me from the grave, and gave me, after wars and sickness, fourteen years' liberty in such sweet employment ! How strange that, in times of usurpation, I had all this mercy and happy freedom ; when under our rightful king and governor, I, and many hundreds more, are silenced and laid by as broken vessels, and suspected and vilified as scarce to be tolerated to live privately and

quietly in the land ! How mysterious, that God should make days of licentiousness and disorder under an usurper so great a mercy to me, and many a thousand more, who under the lawful governors which they desired, and in the days when order is said to be restored, do sit in obscurity and unprofitable silence, or lie in prisons ; while all of us are accounted as the scum and sweepings, or offscourings of the earth.^b

“ I have mentioned my secret and acceptable employment ; let me, to the praise of my gracious Lord, acquaint you with some of my success ; and I will not suppress it, though I fore-know that the malignant will impute the mention of it to pride and ostentation. For it is the sacrifice of thanksgiving which I owe to my most gracious God, which I will not deny him, for fear of being censured as proud ; lest I prove myself proud, indeed, while I cannot undergo the imputation of pride in the performance of my thanks for such undeserved mercies.

“ My public preaching met with an attentive, diligent auditory. Having broke over the brunt of the opposition of the rabble before the wars, I found them afterwards tractable and unprejudiced. Before I entered into the ministry, God blessed my private conference to the conversion of some, who remain firm and eminent in holiness to this day : but then, and in the beginning of my ministry, I was wont to number them as jewels ; but since then I could not keep any number of them. The congregation was usually full, so that we were fain to build five galleries after my coming thither ; the church itself being very capacious, and the most commodious and convenient that ever I was in. Our private meetings, also, were full. On the Lord’s days there was no disorder to be seen in the streets ; but you might hear a hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons as you passed through them. In a word, when I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on his name, and when I came away, there were some streets where there was not one poor family in

^b Baxter’s ‘ Reformed Pastor’ may be considered as a full illustration of the practice which he here describes as his own, connected with the principles by which it is recommended and enforced. Of that work I shall have occasion to speak in another place ; it is only necessary to remark, at present, the consistency between the views which Baxter maintained with so much ardour, and the conduct which he himself pursued. Those who regard his views of the ministry as impracticable, have only to remember that Baxter, diseased, emaciated, and in deaths oft, exemplified the conduct which he so admirably describes.

the side that did not so ; and that did not, by professing serious godliness, give us hopes of their sincerity. And in those families which were the worst, being inns and alehouses, usually some persons in each house did seem to be religious.

“ Though our administration of the Lord’s Supper was so ordered as displeased many, and the far greater part kept away, we had six hundred that were communicants ; of whom there were not twelve that I had not good hopes of as to their sincerity ; those few who consented to our communion, and yet lived scandalously, were excommunicated afterwards. I hope there were also many who had the fear of God, that came not to our communion in the sacrament, some of them being kept off by husbands, by parents, by masters, and some dissuaded by men that differed from us. Those many that kept away, yet took it patiently, and did not revile us as doing them wrong : and those unruly young men who were excommunicated, bore it patiently as to their outward behaviour, though their hearts were full of bitterness.

“ When I set upon personal conference with each family, and catechising them, there were very few families in all the town that refused to come ; and those few were beggars at the town’s ends, who were so ignorant, that they were ashamed it should be manifest. Few families went from me without some tears, or seemingly serious promises for a godly life. Yet many ignorant and ungodly persons there were still among us : but most of them were in the parish, and not in the town, and in those parts of the parish which were farthest from the town. And whereas one part of the parish was improprieate, and paid tithes to laymen, and the other part maintained the church, a brook dividing them, it fell out that almost all that side of the parish which paid tithes to the church, were godly, honest people, and did it willingly, without contestation, and most of the bad people of the parish lived on the other side. Some of the poor men did competently understand the body of divinity, and were able to judge in difficult controversies. Some of them were so able in prayer, that very few ministers did match them in order and fulness, and apt expressions, and holy oratory, with fervency. Abundance of them were able to pray very laudably with their families, or with others. The temper of their minds, and the innocency of their lives, were much more laudable than their parts. The professors of serious godliness were generally of very humble minds and carriage ; of meek and quiet behaviour

unto others ; and of blamelessness and innocency in their conversation.

“ God was pleased also to give me abundant encouragement in the lectures I preached about in other places ; as at Worcester, Cleobury, &c., but especially at Dudley and Sheffnal. At the former of which, being the first place that ever I preached in, the poor nailers, and other labourers, would not only crowd the church as full as ever I saw any in London, but also hang upon the windows and the leads without.

“ In my poor endeavours with my brethren in the ministry, my labours were not lost ; our disputations proved not unprofitable. Our meetings were never contentious, but always comfortable ; we took great delight in the company of each other ; so that I know that the remembrance of those days is pleasant both to them and me. When discouragements had long kept me from motioning a way of church order and discipline, which all might agree in, that we might neither have churches ungoverned, nor fall into divisions among ourselves, at the first mentioning of it, I found a readier consent than I could have expected, and all went on without any great obstructing difficulties. When I attempted also to bring them all conjointly to the work of catechising and instructing every family by itself, I found a ready consent in most, and performance in many.

“ I must here, then, to the praise of my dear Redeemer, set up this pillar of remembrance, even to his praise who hath employed me so many years in so comfortable a work, with such encouraging success. O what am I, a worthless worm, not only wanting academical honours, but much of that furniture which is needful to so high a work, that God should thus abundantly encourage me, when the reverend instructors of my youth did labour fifty years together in one place, and could scarcely say they had converted one or two in their parishes ! And the greater was the mercy, because I was naturally of a discouraged spirit ; so that if I had preached one year, and seen no fruits of it, I should hardly have forborne running away, like Jonah ; but should have thought that God called me not to that place.

“ Having related my comfortable success in this place, I shall next tell you by what and how many advantages this was effected, under that grace which worketh by means, though with a free diversity. I do it chiefly for their sakes who would know the means of other men’s experiments in managing ignorant and sinful parishes.

“ One advantage was, that I came to a people who never had any awakening ministry before, but a few formal cold sermons from the curate ; for if they had been hardened under a powerful ministry, and been sermon proof, I should have expected less.

“ I was then, also, in the vigour of my spirits, and had naturally a familiar moving voice, (which is a great matter with the common hearers), and doing all in bodily weakness as a dying man, my soul was the more easily brought to seriousness, and to preach as a dying man to dying men. For drowsy formality and customariness doth but stupify the hearers, and rock them asleep. It must be serious preaching, which will make men serious in hearing and obeying it.

“ Another advantage was, that most of the bitter enemies of godliness in the town, who rose in tumults against me before, in their hatred of Puritans, had gone out into the wars, into the king's armies, and were quickly killed, and few of them ever returned again ; and so there were few to make any great opposition to godliness.

“ The change that was made in the public affairs also by the success of the wars, which, however it was done, and though much corrupted by the usurpers, was such as removed many and great impediments to men's salvation. Before, the rabble had boldness enough to make serious godliness a common scorn, and call them all Puritans and Precisians who cared not little for God, and heaven, and their souls, as they did ; especially if a man was not fully satisfied with their undisciplined, disordered churches, or lay-chancellor's excommunications, &c. Then, no name was bad enough for him ; and the bishops' articles inquiring after such, and their courts, and the high-commission grievously afflicting those who did but fast and pray together, or go from an ignorant, drunken reader, to hear a godly, able preacher at the next parish, kept religion among the vulgar under either continual reproach or terror ; encouraging the rabble to despise and revile it, and discouraging those that else would own it. Experience telleth us that it is a lamentable impediment to men's conversion when it is a ' way everywhere spoken against,' and persecuted by superiors, which they must embrace ; and when at their first approaches, they must go through such dangers and obloquy as is fitter for confirmed Christians to be exercised with, than unconverted sinners or young beginners. Though Cromwell gave liberty to all sects among us, and did not set up any party alone by force, yet this much gave abundant

advantage to the Gospel, removing the prejudices and the terrors which hindered it;^c especially considering that godliness had countenance, and reputation also, as well as liberty. Whereas before, if it did not appear in all the fetters and formalities of the times, it was the common way to shame and ruin. Hearing sermons abroad, when there were none or worse at home; fasting and praying together; the strict observation of the Lord's day, and such-like, went under the dangerous name of Puritanism, as much as opposing bishops and ceremonies.

"I know you may now meet with men who confidently affirm that all religion was then trodden down, and heresy and schism were the only piety; but I give warning to all ages by the experience of this incredible age, that they take heed how they believe any, whoever they be, while they are speaking for the interest of their factions and opinions, against those that were their real or supposed adversaries.^d

"For my part I bless God, who gave me even under an usurper whom I opposed, such liberty and advantage to preach his Gospel with success, as I cannot have under a king to whom I have sworn and performed true subjection and obedience; yea, such as no age, since the Gospel came into this land, did before possess, as far as I can learn from history. I shall add this much more for the sake of posterity, that as much as I have said and written against licentiousness in religion, and for the magistrates' power in it; and though I think that land most happy whose rulers use their authority for Christ, as well as for the civil peace; yet, in comparison of the rest of the world, I shall think that land happy which hath but bare liberty to be as good as the people are willing to be. And if countenance and maintenance be but added to liberty, and tolerated errors and sects be but forced to keep the peace, and not to oppose the substantial of Christianity, I shall not hereafter much fear such toleration, nor despair that truth will bear down its adversaries.^e

"Another advantage which I found, was the acceptance of

^c Could the reader wish for a stronger testimony in favour of universal liberty than this? Religion prospered more under the Usurper than under the legitimate sovereign.

^d It is important to connect this statement with Baxter's account given in the preceding chapter of the sects and heresies of the period. They are not at variance with each other. But to answer certain purposes, it is not uncommon to quote the worst representation of the case and to omit the other.

^e Here the good sense and Christian feelings of Baxter, evidently get the better of all his theoretical notions of civil government and the magistrates' power in religion.

my person among the people. Though, to win estimation and love to ourselves only, be an end that none but proud men and hypoerites intend, yet it is most certain that the gratefulness of the person doth ingratiate the message, and greatly prepareth the people to receive the truth. Had they taken me to be ignorant, erroneous, scandalous, worldly, self-seeking, or such-like, I could have expected small success among them.

“Another advantage which I had, was the zeal and diligence of the godly people of the place. They thirsted after the salvation of their neighbours, and were in private my assistants, and being dispersed through the town, were ready in almost all companies to repress seducing words, and to justify godliness, convince, reprove, and exhort men according to their needs; as also to teach them how to pray; and to help them to sanctify the Lord’s day. For those people who had none in their families who could pray, or repeat the sermons, went to their next neighbour’s house who could do it, and joined with them; so that some of the houses of the ablest men in each street, were filled with them that could do nothing, or little, in their own.

“Their holy, humble, blameless lives were also a great advantage to me. The malicious people could not say, Your professors here are as proud and covetous as any; but the blameless lives of godly people did shame opposers, and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and many were won by their good conversation.

“Our unity and concord were a great advantage to us; and our freedom from those sects and heresies, with which many other places were infected. We had no private church, and though we had private meetings we had not pastor against pastor, or church against church, or sect against sect, or Christian against Christian.

“Our private meetings were a marvellous help to the propagating of godliness, for thereby, truths that slipped away, were recalled, and the seriousness of the people’s minds renewed, and good desires cherished. Their knowledge, also, was much increased by them, and the younger sort learned to pray by frequently hearing others. I had also the opportunity of knowing their case; for if any were touched and awakened in public, I should frequently see them drop into our private meetings. Idle meetings and loss of time were greatly prevented; and so far were we from being by this in danger of schism, or divisions, that it was the principal means to prevent them: for

here I was usually present with them, answering their doubts, silencing objections, and moderating them in all.

“Another thing which advantaged us, was some public disputations which we had with gainsayers, which very much confirmed the people. The Quakers would fain have got entertainment, and set up a meeting in the town, and frequently railed at me in the congregation; but when I had once given them leave to meet in the church for a dispute, and, before the people, had opened their deceits and shame, none would entertain them more, nor did they get one proselyte among us.

“Another advantage, was the great honesty and diligence of my assistants. Another was the presence and countenance of honest justices of peace, who ordinarily were godly men, and always such as would be thought so, and were ready to use their authority to suppress sin and promote goodness.

“Another help to my success, was the small relief which my low estate enabled me to afford the poor; though the place was reckoned at near two hundred pounds per annum, there came but ninety pounds, and sometimes only eighty pounds to me. Beside which, some years I had sixty, or eighty pounds a year of the booksellers for my books: which little dispersed among them, much reconciled them to the doctrine that I taught. I took the aptest of their children from the school, and sent divers of them to the universities; where for eight pounds a year, or ten, at most, by the help of my friends, I maintained them. Some of these are honest, able ministers, now cast out with their brethren; but, two or three, having no other way to live, turned great Conformists, and are preachers now. In giving the little I had, I did not inquire whether they were good or bad, if they asked relief; for the bad had souls and bodies that needed charity most. And this truth I will speak to the encouragement of the charitable, that what little money I have now by me, I got it almost all, I scarce know how, at that time when I gave most, and since I have had less opportunity of giving, I have had less increase.

“Another furtherance of my work, was the books which I wrote, and gave away among them. Of some small books I gave each family one, which came to about eight hundred; and of the bigger, I gave fewer: and every family that was poor, and had not a Bible, I gave a Bible to. I had found myself the benefit of reading to be so great, that I could not but think it would be profitable to others.

“It was a great advantage to me, that my neighbours were of such a trade, as allowed them time enough to read or talk of holy things. For the town liveth upon the weaving of Kidderminster stuffs; and, as they stand in their looms, the men can set a book before them, or edify one another; whereas, ploughmen, and many others, are so wearied, or continually employed, either in the labours, or the cares of their callings, that it is a great impediment to their salvation. Freeholders and tradesmen are the strength of religion and civility in the land; and gentlemen, and beggars, and servile tenants, are the strength of iniquity. Though among these sorts, there are some also that are good and just, as among the other there are many bad. And their constant converse and traffic with London, doth much promote civility and piety among tradesmen.

“I found also that my *single life* afforded me much advantage: for I could the easier take my people for my children, and think all that I had too little for them, in that I had no children of my own to tempt me to another way of using it. Being discharged from most of family cares, and keeping but one servant, I had the greater vacancy and liberty for the labours of my calling.

“God made use of my practice of physic among them also as a very great advantage to my ministry; for they that cared not for their souls, did love their lives, and care for their bodies; and, by this, they were made almost as observant, as a tenant is of his landlord. Sometimes I could see before me in the church, a very considerable part of the congregation, whose lives God had made me a means to save, or to recover their health; and doing it for nothing so obliged them, that they would readily hear me.

“It was a great advantage to me, that there were at last few that were bad, but some of their own relations were converted: many children did God work upon, at fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen years of age; and this did marvellously reconcile the minds of the parents and elder sort to godliness. They that would not hear me, would hear their own children. They that before could have talked against godliness, would not hear it spoken against, when it was their children’s case. Many who would not be brought to it themselves, were proud that they had understanding, religious children; and we had some old persons of eighty years of age, who are, I hope, in heaven, and

the conversion of their own children, was the chief means to overcome their prejudice, and old customs, and conceits,

"Another great help to my success at last, was the formerly described work of personal conference with every family apart, with catechising and instructing them. That which was spoken to them personally, and which put them sometimes upon answers, awakened their attention, and was easier applied than public preaching, and seemed to do much more upon them.

"The exercise of church discipline was no small furtherance of the people's good: for I found plainly, that without it, I could not have kept the religious sort from separation and divisions.^f There is something generally in their dispositions, which inclineth them to dissociate from open ungodly sinners, as men of another nature and society; and if they had not seen me do something reasonable for a regular separation of the notorious, obstinate sinners from the rest, they would irregularly have withdrawn themselves. It had not been in my power with bare words to satisfy them, when they saw we had liberty to do what we would. And so, for fear of discipline, all the parish kept off except about six hundred, when there were in all above sixteen hundred at an age to be communicants. Yet

^f The entire want of discipline which has always characterised the Established Church, is one of its greatest blots. There is no separation whatever between the precious and the vile. The purity of Christian fellowship, or the distinction between the church and the world, can neither, therefore, be understood nor practised. On this subject, Baxter says, referring to the rise of the Puritans:—"There was scarcely any such a thing as church government or discipline known in the land, but only the harassing of those who dissented from them. In all my life, I never lived in the parish where one person was publicly admonished, or brought to public penitence, or excommunicated, though there were never so many obstinate drunkards, whoremongers, or vilest offenders. Only I have known now and then one for getting a bastard, that went to the bishop's court and paid his fees; and I heard of two or three in all the country, in all my life, that stood in a white sheet an hour in the church; but the ancient discipline of the church was unknown. And, indeed, it was made by them impossible, when one man that lived at a distance from them, and knew not one of many hundreds of the flock, did take upon him the sole jurisdiction, and executed it not by himself, but by a lay chancellor, excluding the pastors of the several congregations, who were but to join with the churchwardens and the apparitors in presenting men, and bringing them into their courts; and an impossible task must needs be unperformed. And so the controversy, as to the letter and outside, was, *Who shall be the governors of all the particular churches?* But to the sense and inside of it, it was, *Whether there should be any effectual church government, or not?* Whereupon, those that pleaded for discipline, were called by the new name of the disciplinarians; as if it had been a kind of heresy to desire discipline in the church."—*Reformed Pastor, Works*, vol. xiv. p. 145.

because it was their own doing, and they knew they might come in when they would, they were quiet in their separation ; for we took them for the Separatists. Those that scrupled our gesture at the sacrament, I openly told that they should have it in their own. Yet did I baptise all their children, but made them first, as I would have done by strangers, give me privately, or publicly if they had rather, an account of their faith ; and if any father was a scandalous sinner, I made him confess his sin openly, with seeming penitence, before I would baptise his child. If he refused it, I forbore till the mother came to present it ; for I rarely, if ever, found both father and mother so destitute of knowledge and faith, as in a church sense to be incapable hereof.^s

“ Another advantage which I found to my success, was, by ordering my doctrine to them in a suitableness to the main end, and yet so as might suit their dispositions and diseases. The things which I daily opened to them, and with greatest importunity laboured to imprint upon their minds, were the great

^s Baxter appears to have maintained a most vigilant and effective discipline in his congregation. Of his fidelity to individuals, many proofs remain in the pointed letters which he wrote to them. The following is a specimen, from the Baxter MSS. in Redcross Street Library, which I select chiefly on account of its brevity. It shows how much of Congregationalism was in Baxter's system of church polity.

“ George Nichols,

“ Because you shall have no pretence to say that we deal hardly with you, I shall not meddle with that which is commonly called excommunication against you. But because you have disclaimed your membership, and denied to express repentance of it, even in private, which you should have done in public, I shall this day acquaint the church of your sin and separation, (in which you have broken your covenant to God and us,) and that you are no more a member of this church or of my pastoral charge. I shall do no more, but shall leave the rest to God, who will do more, only I shall desire the church to pray for your repentance and forgiveness ; and, therefore, desire you this day to be there and join with us in those prayers. And then, except you openly lament your sin, you shall be troubled with my admonitions no more. From this time forward I have done with you, till either God correct you, or I and my warnings and labours be brought in as a witness against you to your confusion.

“ Your compassionate Friend,

“ RICHARD BAXTER.

“ Jan. 28, 1658.”

The answer to this, is on the same sheet in another hand.

“ Sir,

“ Except Pearshall, your Constable, will come to church, and there acknowledge that he has done me wrong in saying I was drunk, I shall not appear there. So I rest,

“ Your Servant,

“ GEORGE NICHOLS.”

fundamental principles of Christianity contained in their baptismal covenant, even a right knowledge and belief of, and subjection and love to, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; love to all men, and concord with the church and one another. I did so daily inculcate the knowledge of God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, love and obedience to God, unity with the church catholic, and love to men and the hope of life eternal, that these were the matter of their daily cogitations and discourses, and, indeed, their religion.

“Yet, I did usually put in something in my sermon, which was above their own discovery, and which they had not known before; and this I did that they might be kept humble, and still perceive their ignorance, and be willing to keep in a learning state. For when preachers tell their people of no more than they know, and do not show that they excel them in knowledge, and scarcely overtop them in abilities, the people will be tempted to turn preachers themselves, and think that they have learned all that the ministers can teach them, and are as wise as they. They will be apt to condemn their teachers, and wrangle with all their doctrines, and set their wits against them, and hear them as censurers, and not as disciples, to their own undoing, and to the disturbance of the church; and thus they will easily draw disciples after them. The bare authority of the clergy will not serve the turn, without overtopping ministerial abilities. I did this, also, to increase their knowledge, and to make religion pleasant to them, by a daily addition to their former light, and to draw them on with desire and delight. But these things which they did not know before, were not unprofitable controversies which tended not to edification, or novelties in doctrine contrary to the universal church; but either such points as tended to illustrate the great doctrines before mentioned, or usually about the right methodizing of them. The opening of the true and profitable method of the creed, or doctrine of faith; the Lord’s Prayer, or matter of our desires; and the ten commandments, or the law of practice.

“Another thing that helped me, was, my not meddling with tithes or worldly business, whereby I had my whole time, except what sickness deprived me of, for my duty, and my mind more free from entanglements than else it would have been; and, also, I escaped the offending of the people, and contending by any law-suits with them. Three or four of my neighbours managed all those kind of businesses, of whom I never took ac-

count ; and if any one refused to pay his tithes, if he was poor, I ordered them to forgive it him. After that, I was constrained to let the tithes be gathered, as by my title, to save the gatherers from lawsuits. But if the parties were able, I ordered them to seek it by the magistrate, with the damage, and give both my part and the damages to the poor ; for I resolved to have none of it myself that was recovered by law, and yet I could not tolerate the sacrilege and fraud of covetous men. When they knew that this was the rule I went by, none of them that were able would do the poor so great a kindness as to deny the payment of their tithes. In my own family, I had the help of my father and stepmother, and the benefit of a godly, understanding, faithful servant, an ancient woman, near sixty years' old, who eased me of all care, and laid out all my money for housekeeping ; so that I never had one hour's trouble about it, nor ever took one day's account of her for fourteen years together, as being certain of her fidelity, providence, and skill.

“ Finally, it much furthered my success, that I staid still in this one place, near two years before the wars, and above fourteen years after ; for he that removeth oft from place to place, may sow good seed in many places, but is not likely to see much fruit in any, unless some other skilful hand shall follow him to water it. It was a great advantage to me to have almost all the religious people of the place, of my own instructing and informing ; and that they were not formed into erroneous and factious principles before ; and that I staid to see them grow up to some confirmedness and maturity.

“ Our successes were enlarged beyond our own congregations, by the lectures kept up round about. To divers of them I went as oft as I was able ; and the neighbouring ministers, oftener than I ; especially Mr. Oasland, of Bewdley, who, having a strong body, a zealous spirit, and an earnest utterance, went up and down preaching from place to place, with great acceptance and success. But this business, also, we contrived to be universally and orderly managed. For, beside the fixed lectures set up on week days, in several places, we studied how to have them extend to every place in the county that had need. For when the parliament purged the ministry, they cast out the grosser sort of insufficient and scandalous ones, such as gross drunkards and the like ; and also some few civil men that had assisted in the wars against the parliament, or set up bowing to altars, or such innovations ; but they had left in nearly one half the minis-

ters, that were not good enough to do much service, or bad enough to be cast out as utterly intolerable. There were many poor, weak preachers who had no great skill in divinity, or zeal for godliness ; but preached weakly that which is true, and lived in no gross, notorious sin. These men were not cast out, but yet their people greatly needed help ; for their dark, sleepy preaching did but little good. We, therefore, resolved that some of the abler ministers should often voluntarily help them ; but all the care was how to do it without offending them.

“ It fell out seasonably that the Londoners of that county, at their yearly feast, collected about thirty pounds, and sent it me by that worthy man, Mr. Thomas Stanley, of Bread-street, to set up a lecture for that year. We, therefore, covered all our designs under the name of the Londoners’ Lecture, which took off the offence. We chose four worthy men, Mr. Andrew Tristram, Mr. Henry Oasland, Mr. Thomas Baldwin, and Mr. Joseph Treble, who undertook to go, each man his day, once a month, which was every Lord’s day among the four, and to preach at those places which had most need twice on the Lord’s day. To avoid all ill consequences and offence, they were sometimes to go to abler men’s congregations ; and wherever they came, to say something always to draw the people to the honour and special regard of their own pastors, that, how weak soever they were, they might see that we came not to draw away the people’s hearts from them, but to strengthen their hands, and help them in their work.

“ This lecture did a great deal of good ; and though the Londoners gave their money but that one year, when it was once set on foot, we continued it voluntarily, till the ministers were turned out and all these works went down together.

“ So much of the way and helps of those successes, which I mention, because many have inquired after them, as willing, with their own flocks, to take that course which other men have by experience found to be effectual.”^a

I have thus given an abridged but faithful statement of Baxter’s labours and success, during the most important period of his public ministry, and of the principal means which promoted that success. In few instances have the ministers of Christ been honoured to be so extensively useful to the souls of their hearers ; and where eminent success has occurred we have not

^a Life, part i., pp. 83—96.

always been sufficiently informed of the means by which it has been promoted. The secret of his success, Baxter has disclosed to us in the most faithful and interesting manner. While we admire the grace of God which so abundantly rested upon his labours, we cannot but notice at the same time, the extraordinary suitableness and adaptation, both of the instrument himself, and of the means which he employed in the work he was honoured to accomplish. To a few points in the preceding statement, I hope I shall be forgiven for turning the attention of the Christian minister.

Abstracting all the temporary and local circumstances to which Baxter adverts as favourable to his success, the simplicity and intense ardour of his preaching demand our notice. It was admirably adapted to instruct the ignorant, to rouse the careless, and to build up the faithful. He sought out acceptable words, but he had neither time nor taste for making what are called fine sermons; he studied point, not brilliancy. His object was not to dazzle, but to convince; not to excite admiration of himself, but to procure the reception of his message. He never aimed at drawing attention to the preacher, but always at fixing it at home, or guiding it to Christ. He never "courted a grin," when he might have "wooed a soul;" or played with the fancy, when he should have been dissecting the heart. His subjects were always the most important which can engage the attention of man,—the creed, the commandments, and the Lord's prayer; or, according to his own simple definition of them—the things to be believed, the things to be done, and the things to be desired. These were the leading, indeed, the only topics of his ministry. Into these he entered with all the intense ardour of his acute and deeply impressible mind. He never spoke like a man who was indifferent whether his audience felt what he said, or considered him in earnest on the subject. His eye, his action, his every word, were expressive of deep and impassioned earnestness, that his hearers might be saved. His was eloquence of the highest order; not the eloquence of nicely-selected words—or the felicitous combination of terms and phrases—or the music of exquisitely-balanced periods, (though these properties are frequently to be found in Baxter's discourses): but the eloquence of the most important truths, vividly apprehended, and energetically delivered. It was the eloquence of a soul burning with ardent devotion to God, and inspired with the deepest compassion for men; on whom the powers of the worlds

of darkness, and of light, exercised their mighty influence; and spoke through his utterances, all that was tremendous in warning, and all that was delightful in invitation and love. He was condescending to the ignorant, faithful to the self-righteous and careless, tender to the timid and afflicted; in a word, as a preacher, he became all things to all men, if by any means he might save some. It was impossible that such a man should labour in vain.

Another thing which strikes us in the ministerial conduct of Baxter, was his careful avoidance of everything which might prejudice his hearers against him, and his diligent cultivation of whatever was likely to gain their favour, or secure their impartial attention. No one could be less of a man-pleaser than he was; for, apart from promoting the object of his ministry, he was regardless of human frown or favour. But he considered nothing unimportant, which either stood in the way of his success, or was likely to promote it. His conduct, in regard to his tithes; his remaining unmarried; his practising physic; his liberality to the poor; his distribution of books, &c., were all intended to be subservient to his great work. The gaining of souls to Christ was the only object for which he lived. Hence, amidst the seeming variety of his pursuits and engagements, there was a perfect harmony of design. His ruling and controlling principle, was the love of his Master, producing the desire of a full and faithful discharge of his duty as his approved minister. This was the centre around which every thing moved, and by which every thing in his circumstances and character was attracted or repelled. This gave unity to all his plans, and constituted the moral force of all his actions. It gave enlightened energy to his zeal, exquisite tenderness to his persuasions, warmth and fervency to his admonitions. It poured over all his public and private ministrations that holy unction, which diffused its fragrance, spreading its bland and refreshing influences all around.

A third point worthy of observation in his ministry, is, that it was not limited to the pulpit, or considered as discharged in the parlour. The blow which he aimed at the mass in public, was followed by successive strokes addressed to the individuals in private. The congregation was not permitted to forget, during the week, what they had been taught on the sabbath. The man who would have been lost in the crowd, or who might have sheltered himself under the exceptions which belong to a general

address, was singled out, convicted, and shut up to the faith, or left to bear the stings of an instructed and alarmed conscience. The young were interested, and led on; the wavering were admonished, and established; the strong were taught to minister to the weak; and the prayers of many a holy band, at once, strengthened the hands of their minister, and "girded each other for the race divine." This was truly making full proof of his ministry, and promoting in his congregation the grand objects and aims of the fellowship of Christianity.

When we thus connect the public talents, and private character of Baxter; the energy and point of his pulpit addresses with the assiduousness, the perseverance, and the variety, of his other labours; his devotion to God, his disinterested love to men; what he was as a *pastor*, with all that he was as a *preacher*; we cease to wonder at the effects which he produced. No place could long resist such a train and style of aggression. All people must feel the force of such a moral warfare as that which he waged. There are few individuals, who could escape without being wounded, or conquered, by such an assailant. In comparison with him, how few are there even among the faithful ministers of Christ, who can think of themselves, or their labours with satisfaction! Yet, was there nothing in Baxter, but what the grace and power of God can do for others. There was something in his exertions, almost super-human; yet he seemed to accomplish all with a considerable degree of ease and comfort to himself. He never seems to have been hustled, but he was always busy; and thus he found time for all he had to do, while he employed that time in the most profitable manner. We have only to find an increase of such ministers in the church of Christ, and who will employ the same kind of means, in order to the accomplishment, in any place, of effects that will not shrink from a comparison with Kidderminster itself in all its glory.

The effects of Baxter's labours, in Kidderminster, were lasting, as well as extensive. He frequently refers to his beloved flock, long after he had left them, in terms of the warmest affection. Many of them continued to adorn the doctrine of God, their Saviour, till they finished their mortal course; and, doubtless, now constitute their pastor's crown of rejoicing in the presence of their Redeemer. Nor did the effects of his exertions expire with that generation. Mr. Fawcett, who abridged the '*Saint's Rest*,' in 1759, says, "that the religious spirit thus

happily introduced by Baxter, is yet to be traced, in the town, and neighbourhood in some degree."¹ He represents the professors of that place, as "possessing an unusual degree of candour, and friendship, for each other." Thus evincing, "that Kidderminster had not totally lost the amiable spirit it had imbibed more than a century before."

When the Gospel was removed from the Church, it was carried to the Meeting; though at what time a separate congregation was regularly established, cannot now be satisfactorily ascertained. Baxter was not friendly to an entire separation from the church, and carried his opposition to it so far, as seriously to offend some of his old congregation, who could not endure the teaching of his successors. A separation accordingly took place, which laid the foundation of a large dissenting congregation.

On Baxter's removal from Kidderminster, he recommended to the people to be guided by Mr. Serjeant, then minister of Stone, who had formerly assisted him; and Mr. Thomas Baldwin, who had acted as schoolmaster in Kidderminster, and was both a good scholar and possessed of respectable ministerial qualifications. Mr. Baldwin was minister of the parish of Chaddesly till the Bartholomew ejection: he then removed to Kidderminster, and settled with the Nonconformists who left the church. His ministry was repeatedly interrupted; but he died in Kidderminster, in 1693. After his death, Mr. White, the vicar of the parish, preached and published his funeral sermon; in which he speaks in the highest terms of his piety, his talents, and his moderation. He was, in all respects, worthy to be the successor of Baxter. The sermon is honourable alike to the preacher and to the deceased.^k

He was succeeded by Mr. Francis Spilbury, son of the Rev. John Spilbury, the ejected minister of Bromsgrove, and nephew to Dr. Hall, Bishop of Bristol. He was ordained in the year 1693, and after a useful ministry of thirty-four years, died in 1727. His uncle, the Bishop, who was also Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, and Margaret Professor, used to visit him, and reside in his family, where he was attended by his clergy, while his nephew preached in the meeting. He was succeeded by the Rev. Matthew Bradshaw, who married his daughter. He was a man of similar sentiments and spirit, and laboured in the congregation till the year 1745, when he was suc-

¹ Preface.

^j Dedication.

^k Life, part iii. p. 92; Noncon. Mem. iii. pp. 389, 390; White's Sermon.

ceeded by Benjamin Fawcett, a favourite pupil of Dr. Doddridge, and who abridged several of Baxter's works. His death took place in 1780.¹ After that event a division occurred, which led to the erection of another meeting, of which the Rev. Robert Gentleman, who edited Orton's Exposition of the Old Testament, became the first minister.

In the original congregation, Mr. Barrett became the successor of Fawcett; he was a man of respectable talents. He was followed by Mr. Steill, now of Wigan, in Lancashire; on whose removal, Mr. Thomas Helmore, educated at Gosport, was ordained to the pastoral office in 1810. He was followed by Mr. Joseph John Freeman, now a missionary in Madagascar; whose place has been supplied by Dr. James Ross, formerly a missionary at Karass, in Russian 'Tartary.'^m

¹ Many particulars respecting these parties may be seen in Mr. Hanbury's "Enlarged Diary, &c., of Mr. Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster." See also, "Orton's Letters to Dissenting Ministers;" in the second volume of which there is a short memoir of Mr. Fawcett.

^m The pulpit in which Baxter preached is still preserved. About forty years ago it was sold, together with the pewing of the parish church, for a trifling sum. A gentleman, anxious to preserve it from destruction, bought it from the first purchaser for five pounds, and placed it in the vestry of the new meeting. It is rather a handsome production of its kind. It is of an octagon form. The pannels have long carved flowers on them, which are painted different colours, and some of the gilding still remains. There is a large sounding-board surmounted by a crown upon a cushion. Around the top is inscribed, "And call upon his name, declare his works among the people." (Psalm cv.) It was not built for Baxter, but appears to have been the gift of Alice Dawkx, in the year 1621.

CHAPTER VI.

1648—1660.

The Commonwealth—Cromwell's treatment of his Parliaments—The Triers—Committee of Fundamentals—Principles on which Baxter acted towards Cromwell—Preaches before him—Interviews with him—Admission of the Benefits of Cromwell's Government—Character of Cromwell—Remarks on that character—Richard's Succession and Retirement—The Restoration—Baxter goes to London—Preaches before Parliament—Preaches before the Lord Mayor—The King's Arrival in London—Reception by the London Ministers—Notices of various labours of Baxter during his second residence in Kidderminster—Numerous Works written during this period—Extensive Correspondence—Concluding Observations.

HAVING, in the preceding chapter, given a full view of the manner in which Baxter acted in his ministerial capacity, during the period of his second residence in Kidderminster, comprehending fourteen years of the most active and interesting period of his life, we shall now collect some of his views respecting the political events and characters of the Commonwealth, and notice certain parts of his conduct in relation to the parties in power.

To give a full detail of the rapidly-shifting scenes which then passed along the stage, or of the principles and conduct of all the actors, is impracticable; but a view of the times of Baxter would be imperfect, without some notice of them; I can only make a selection, and that selection shall be chiefly in Baxter's own words.

His former connexion with the army of the Commonwealth, had furnished him with opportunities of knowing the characters of not a few of the leading men, in many respects favourable to his forming a correct judgment of their characters, and of the principles by which they were actuated; while his conscientious fidelity led him to speak, both to them and of them, so plainly as to leave no ambiguity whatever as to the estimate which he formed.

Every thing relative to Oliver Cromwell still possesses consi-

derable interest ; and as Baxter has said a good deal respecting him, it would be unjustifiable in these memoirs, to omit the substance of the information which he has furnished. The following account quite harmonises with other documents which record the transactions of the times. Having given a narrative of the final defeat of the royal army, of the flight of Charles II. to France, and of the policy pursued toward Scotland, he thus describes the measures of the crafty Protector, in the treatment of his parliaments.

“ Cromwell having thus far seemed to be a servant to the parliament, and to work for his masters, the Rump, or Commonwealth, did next begin to show whom he served, and take that impediment also out of the way. To this end, he first did by them as he did by the Presbyterians, make them odious by hard speeches against them throughout his army ; as if they intended to perpetuate themselves, and would not be accountable for the money of the Commonwealth, &c. He also treated privately with many of them, to appoint a time when they would dissolve themselves, so that another free parliament might be chosen. But they perceived the danger, and were rather for filling up their number by new elections, which he was utterly against.

“ His greatest advantage to strengthen himself against them by the sectaries, was their owning the public ministry and its maintenance ; for though Vane and his party set themselves to make the ministers odious, and to take them down by reproachful titles, still the greater part of the House did carry it for a sober ministry and competent maintenance. When the Quakers and others openly reproached the ministry, and the soldiers favoured them, I drew up a petition for the ministry, got many thousand hands to it in Worcestershire, and Mr. Thomas Foley and Colonel John Bridges presented it. The House gave it a kind and promising answer, which increased the sectaries' displeasure against the House. When a certain Quaker wrote a reviling censure of this petition, I wrote a defence of it, and caused one of them to be given to each parliament-man at the door ; but within one day after this they were dissolved.¹ For Cromwell, impatient of any more delay, suddenly took Harrison and some soldiers with him, as if God had impelled him, and, as in a rapture, went into the House and reprimanded the members for their faults. Pointing to Vane, he

¹ These were published under the title of ‘ The Worcestershire Petition,’ and the ‘ Defence of it ;’ an account of which will be found in another place.

called him a juggler; and to Henry Martin, called him whore-master;^m and having two such to instance in, took it for granted that they were all unfit to continue in the government of the Commonwealth, and out he turned them. So ended the government of the Rump. No sort of people expressed any great offence that they were cast out, though almost all, save the sectaries and the army, did take him to be a traitor who did it.

"The young Commonwealth being already headless, you might think that nothing was left to stand between Cromwell and the crown. For a governor there must be, and who should be thought fitter? But yet there was another pageant to be played, which had a double end: first, to make the necessity of his government undeniable: and, secondly, to put his own soldiers, at last, out of love with democracy; or, at least, to make those hateful who adhered to it. A parliament must be called, but the ungodly people are not to be trusted with the choice; therefore the soldiers, as more religious, must be the choosers; and two out of a county are chosen by the officers, upon the advice of their sectarian friends in the country. This was called in contempt, *the Little Parliament*.ⁿ

"Harrison became the head of the sectaries, and Cromwell now began to design the heading of a soberer party, who were for learning and a ministry; but yet to be the equal protector of all. Hereupon, in the little sectarian parliament, it was put to the vote, whether all the parish ministers in England should

^m A very curious account of this facetious, but, I fear, profligate commoner, is given in 'Aubrey's Miscellanies,' vol. ii. pp. 434—437. A sarcasm of Charles the First, upon Martin, is there alleged to have cost the king the loss of the county of Berks. He was one of the king's judges, and is said to have owed his life to the wit of Lord Faulkland, and his own profligacy. "Gentlemen," said his Lordship, "you talk of making a sacrifice. By the old law, all sacrifices were required to be without spot or blemish; and now you are going to make this old rotten rascal a sacrifice!" The joke took, and saved Henry's life.

ⁿ One of the best and fullest views which we have of Cromwell's parliaments has been recently furnished in 'Burton's Diary,' edited by Mr. Towill Rutt. It shows us more of the working of the Protector's system than any former publication had done. Certainly, some of the members were not the best qualified of all men to be legislators, if we may judge from many of their opinions and expressions, as they here appear. They meddled with various matters, which they had much better have let alone; though it is clear that even Old Noll, with all his power and sternness, could not make them do what he pleased. Scobell's acts of these parliaments shows, however, that some of their enactments were both wise and salutary.

at once be put down; and it was but accidentally carried in the negative by two voices.* It was taken for granted, that the tithes and universities would, at the next opportunity, be voted down; and so Cromwell must be their saviour, or they must perish; when he had purposely cast them into the pit, that they might be beholden to him to pull them out. But his game was so grossly played, that it made him the more loathed by men of understanding and sincerity. So Sir Charles Wolsley, and some others, took their time, and put it to the vote, whether the House, as incapable of serving the Commonwealth, should go and deliver up their power to Cromwell, from whom they had received it; which was carried in the affirmative. So away they went, and solemnly resigned their power to him; and now, who but Cromwell and his army?†

“The intelligent sort, by this time, did fully see that Crom-

* This statement is incorrect: no such question as the abolition of the ministry having been discussed in that parliament. “On the 15th of July, 1653, the question was proposed whether the *maintenance of ministers by tithes* should be continued after the third day of November next: and the question being put, that that question be now put, it passed in the negative. The votes 68, yeas 43.”—*Journals of the House of Commons*. This, I have no doubt, is the affair to which Baxter refers. The reader will easily distinguish between the abolition of tithes, and the abolition of the ministry. The following extract from a report of the committee on tithes, appointed by this parliament, will show what were the real sentiments entertained by them on that subject. I am much deceived if they will not be thought enlightened even at the present time. “Resolved, that it be presented to the Parliament that all such as are or shall be approved for public preachers of the Gospel in the public meeting places, shall have and enjoy the maintenance already settled by law; and such other encouragement as the Parliament hath already appointed, or hereafter shall appoint: and that where any scruple payment of tithes, the three next justices of the peace, or two of them, shall upon complaint call the parties before them; and, by the oaths of lawful witnesses, shall duly apportion the value of the said tithes, to be paid either in money or land by them, to be set out according to the said value, to be held and enjoyed by him that was to have had the said tithes: and in case such apporportioned value be not duly paid, or enjoyed according to the order of the said justices, the tithes shall be paid in kind, and shall be recovered in any court of record. Upon hearing and considering what hath been offered to this committee touching propriety in tithes of incumbents, rectors, possessors of donatives, or propriate tithes, it is the opinion of this committee, and resolved to be reported so to the Parliament, the said persons have a legal propriety in tithes.”—*Journal*, Dec. 2, 1653. There is no evidence that the parliament ever intended to put down the universities, or to alienate the lands which belonged to them, from the purpose to which they were originally destined.

† Cromwell, in his opening speech at the meeting of the ensuing parliament, solemnly declared that he knew nothing of this act of dissolution, till the speaker and the members came and put it into his hands. It is strange if he was ignorant of it, and equally strange, if he had a hand in it, that he should in public declare his ignorance.—*Harris's Life of Cromwell*, p. 334.

well's design was, by causing and permitting destruction to hang over us, to necessitate the nation, whether it would or not, to take him for its governor, that he might be its protector. Being resolved that we should be saved by him or perish, he made more use of the wild-headed sectaries than barely to fight for him. They now served him as much by their heresies, their enmity to learning and the ministry, and their pernicious demands which tended to confusion, as they had done before by their valour in the field. He could now conjure up at pleasure some terrible apparition of agitators, levellers, or such-like, who, as they affrighted the king from Hampton Court, affrighted the people to fly to him for refuge; that the hand that wounded them, might heal them. Now he exclaimed against the giddiness of these unruly men, and earnestly pleaded for order, and government, and must needs become the patron of the ministry; yet, so as to secure all others their liberty."^a So much for the address and policy of this extraordinary man.

One great object of Cromwell's government was the purification of the ministry. For this purpose, after the Westminster Assembly was dissolved, he appointed a body of Triers, consisting, partly of ministers, partly of laymen, who examined all who were able to come to London; but other cases they referred to a committee of ministers in the counties in which they lived. As strange accounts have been given of this body, and as Baxter himself disapproved of their constitution and proceedings, it may be well to hear his account of them.

"Because this assembly of Triers is most heartily accused, and reproached by some men, I shall speak the truth of them, and, I suppose, my word will be rather taken, because most of them took me for one of their boldest adversaries, as to their opinions, and because I was known to disown their power; in-somuch, that I refused to try any under them upon their reference, except very few, whose importunity and necessity moved me, they being such, as for their episcopal judgment, or some such cause, the Triers were likely to have rejected. The truth is, that though their authority was mild, and though some few who were over-busy, and over-rigid Independents among them, were too severe against all that were Arminians, and too particular in inquiring after evidences of sanctification in those whom

^a Life, part i. pp. 69—71.

they examined, and somewhat too lax in their admission of unlearned and erroneous men, who favoured Antinomianism or Anabaptism; yet to give them their due, they did abundance of good to the church. They saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers; that sort of men, who intended no more in the ministry, than to say a sermon, as readers say their common prayers, and to patch up a few good words together, to talk the people asleep on Sunday, and all the rest of the week go with them to the alehouse, and harden them in their sin: and that sort of ministers, who either preached against a holy life, or preached as men that never were acquainted with it. All those who used the ministry but as a common trade to live by, and were never likely to convert a soul, they usually rejected, and in their stead they admitted persons of any denomination who were able, serious, preachers, and lived a godly life. So that though many of them were somewhat partial to the Independents, Separatists, Fifth-Monarchy men, and Anabaptists, and against the Prelatists and Arminians, so great was the benefit above the hurt which they brought to the church, that many thousands of souls blessed God for the faithful ministers whom they let in, and grieved when the Prelatists afterward cast them out again.”^r

Whatever objections of a technical nature might be brought against Cromwell's Triers, after this impartial testimony to the general character of their proceedings, no person acquainted with the principles of the Gospel, and with what ought to constitute the character of its ministers, will object to the ejection of openly ignorant and ungodly teachers, and the substitution in their place of those who feared God, and were likely to care for the souls of men. It is evident, the Triers were not mere partisans, as they neither ejected men on account of their sentiments respecting church government, nor supplied their places by persons of one profession. They may have caused occasional hardship and suffering, but it seems very clear from Baxter, that they were guided by sound principles, and prosecuted through good report and through bad report, the best interests of religion.

Reference to the Triers leads me to notice Baxter's connexion with the committee appointed to digest and report respecting the fundamentals of religion, as the basis of a system of

^r Life, part i. p. 72.

toleration, or religious liberty, to be adopted by the Parliament of the Commonwealth. He has given a long and curious account of the proceedings of this committee, and of his own conduct in it, the substance of which I have given in another place.* Baxter was appointed one of them by Lord Broghill, at the suggestion of Archbishop Usher. He came late, and after certain points had been determined, which they refused to alter. His interference, however, probably checked their proceedings, and contributed to defeat the object which some of them had in view. Not that he understood religious liberty better than the others, but he excelled them all in finding out objections to whatever was proposed; though his own scheme would not have greatly improved what was determined by the majority. The most important result of this meeting to Baxter, was its being the means of introducing him to Archbishop Usher, with whom he appears to have had much friendly intercourse, and with whose views of church government he nearly agreed. Usher was one of the most amiable of men, and the most moderate of bishops; whose enlightened sentiments and suggestions, had they been attended to, would have preserved the country from many of the evils which befell it.

The peculiar circumstances of the country, and the political management of Cromwell, naturally induced a great diversity of opinion among religious people, as to the nature and extent of the submission which they were called to render to the existing government. Some, regarding it as a usurpation, and influenced considerably by the doctrine of divine right, opposed and reviled it. Others regarded what appeared to be the arrangements of Providence, as the will of God that they should submit to, asking no questions for conscience' sake. A third and numerous body, in theory disputed the claims of Cromwell and his party, but in practice quietly submitted to the laws which they enacted. Baxter in this, as in many other matters, pursued a course of his own.

"I did seasonably and moderately, by preaching and printing, condemn the usurpation, and the deceit which was the means to bring it to pass. I did in open conference declare Cromwell and his adherents to be guilty of treason and rebellion, aggravated by perfidiousness and hypocrisy.[†] But yet I did not think

* Life, part ii. pp. 197—206. Owen's Memoirs, pp. 113—116.

† Baxter changed his mind respecting his conduct to Cromwell at a subsequent period. In his 'Penitent Confessions,' written in 1691, he says: "I

it my duty to rave against him in the pulpit, or to do this so unseasonably and imprudently as might irritate him to mischief. And the rather because, as he kept up his approbation of a godly life in general, and of all that was good, except that which the interest of his sinful cause engaged him to be against ; so I perceived that it was his design to do good in the main, and to promote the Gospel and the interests of godliness, more than any had done before him ; except in those particulars which were against his own interest. The principal means that henceforward he trusted to for his establishment, was doing good, that the people might love him, or at least be willing to have his government for that good, who were against it as it was usurpation.^a I made no question but that when the rightful governor should be restored, the people who had adhered to him, being so extremely irritated, would cast out multitudes of the ministers, and undo the good which the usurper had done, because he did it, and would bring abundance of calamity upon the land. Some men thought it a very hard question, whether they should rather wish the continuance of a usurper who did good, or the restitution of a rightful governor whose followers would do hurt. For my part I thought my duty was clear, to disown the usurper's sin what good soever he would do ; and to perform all my engagements to a rightful governor, leaving the issue of all to God ; but yet to commend the good which a

am in great doubt how far I did well or ill in my opposition to Cromwell and his army at last. I am satisfied that it was my duty to disown, and as I said, to oppose their rebellion and other sins. But there were many honest, pious men among them. And when God chooseth the executioner of justice as he pleaseth, I am oft in doubt whether I should not have been more passive and silent than I was ; though not as Jeremiah to Nebuchadnezzar, to persuade men to submit, yet to have forborne some sharp public preaching and writing against them,—when they set themselves too late to promote piety to ingratiate their usurpation. To disturb possessors needeth a clear call, when for what end soever they do that good, which men of better title will destroy." pp. 24, 25. From a letter of his to one of the judges among his MSS, it appears he brought himself into difficulty by preaching against Cromwell. How he got out of it, or what was the extent of his danger, does not clearly appear. Cromwell's usual moderation probably induced him to drop proceedings.

^a I think it by no means evident that Cromwell's sole motives in repressing evil and doing good, were the establishment and consolidation of his own power ; or that he stuck at nothing, when it was necessary to accomplish his own interest. That he was ambitious in the latter part of his life, is certain ; and that he had also learnt the royal art of dissimulation, is undoubted : but that there was a great preponderance of good in his character, and of just and liberal views of policy, can no longer be matter of doubt to those who have studied his history.

usurper doth, and to do every lawful thing which might provoke him to do more ; and to approve of no evil which is done by any, whether a usurper or a lawful governor." *

With Baxter, to hold certain sentiments, and to act upon them in the face of every danger to which they might expose him, were the same thing. The following anecdote of his personal intercourse with Cromwell, illustrates the preceding statement and the character of Cromwell, and shows how faithfully he acted according to his sentiments and convictions.

"At this time Lord Broghill and the Earl of Warwick brought me to preach before Cromwell, the protector ; which was the only time that ever I preached to him, save once long before, when he was an inferior man, amongst other auditors. I knew not which way to provoke him better to his duty than by preaching on 1 Cor. i. 10, against the divisions and distractions of the church, and showing how mischievous a thing it was for politicians to maintain such divisions for their own ends, that they might fish in troubled waters, and keep the church by its divisions in a state of weakness lest it should be able to offend them ; and showing the necessity and means of union. My

* Life, part i. p. 71.

† Robert Rich, the second Earl of Warwick, was at an early period of his life the patron and friend of the persecuted Puritans. He took an active part in the prosecution of Strafford and Laud ; and was made by the Long Parliament, in opposition to the will of Charles, admiral of the fleet, and afterwards lord high admiral of England. He enjoyed a large portion of the confidence of Cromwell, and was one of the few old nobility who sat in his upper house. Clarendon praises his "pleasant and companionable wit and conversation ;" and speaks of "his great authority and credence it with the Puritans," which he represents as acquired "by making his house the rendezvous of all the silenced ministers, and spending a good part of his estate upon them, and by being present at their devotions, and making himself merry with them and at them, which they dispensed with." He intimates that "thus he became the head of that party, and got the style of a godly man ;" though "he was of universal jollity, and used great license in his words and actions."—*Hist.* vol. ii. p. 210. This I believe to be one of those cases in which Clarendon's politics completely corrupted his historical integrity. Dr. Owen's opinion of Warwick's piety, may be seen in his dedication to him of his 'Salus Electorum,' Owen's Works, v. p. 207. Godwin's view of his character is highly advantageous to his talents and respectability as a man, and conveys no impression of his immorality, which is strongly implied in Clarendon's account, Commonwealth, i. p. 192. It is not at all likely that a profligate man should have enjoyed the full confidence of the Puritans. His grandson married the Protector's favourite daughter, Lady Frances. He died before Cromwell, in 1658, and his funeral sermon was preached by Calamy, who makes honourable mention of his religious dispositions and habits.

plainness I heard was displeasing to him and his courtiers ; but they put it up.

"A little while after, Cromwell sent to speak with me, and when I came, in the presence of only three of his chief men,* he began a long and tedious speech to me of God's providence in the change of the government, and how God had owned it, and what great things had been done at home and abroad, in the peace with Spain and Holland, &c. When he had wearied us all with speaking thus slowly about an hour, I told him it was too great condescension to acquaint me so fully with all these matters, which were above me ; but I told him that we took our ancient monarchy to be a blessing, and not an evil to the land ; and humbly craved his patience that I might ask him how England had ever forfeited that blessing, and unto whom that forfeiture was made ? I was fain to speak of the form of government only, for it had lately been made treason, by law, to speak for the person of the king.

"Upon that question, he was awakened into some passion, and then told me it was no forfeiture, but God had changed it as pleased him ; and then he let fly at the parliament, which thwarted him ; and especially by name at four or five of those members who were my chief acquaintances, whom I presumed to defend against his passion : and thus four or five hours were spent.

"A few days after he sent for me again, to hear my judgment about liberty of conscience, which he pretended to be most zealous for, before almost all his privy council ; where, after another slow tedious speech of his, I told him a little of my judgment. And when two of his company had spun out a great deal more of the time in such-like tedious, but more ignorant speeches, some four or five hours being spent, I told him, that if he would be at the labour to read it, I could tell him more of my mind in writing in two sheets, than in that way of speaking in many days ; and that I had a paper on the subject by me, written for a friend, which, if he would peruse, and allow for the change of the person, he would know my sense. He received the paper afterwards, but I scarcely believe that he ever read it ; for I saw that what he learned must be from himself ; being more

* Lord Broghill, Lambert, and Thurlow, were the individuals present on this occasion. Lambert fell asleep during Cromwell's speech.—*Baxter's Penitent Confessions*, p. 25.

disposed to speak many hours, than to hear one ; and little heeding what another said, when he had spoken himself.”*

This characteristic account of Cromwell’s conversation and speeches, very much corresponds with the accounts given by other contemporaries, both friends and enemies. It was natural for such a man to attach quite as much importance to his own opinions as to those of his friends ; and, comparing him with the generality of the persons by whom he was surrounded, there were certainly very few more capable of forming an enlightened opinion than himself. It is probable that he sent for Baxter on the present occasion, to sound him about his own views and those of the party with which he acted. It is very certain he understood the doctrine of religious liberty much better than Baxter did ; and acted upon it both towards Episcopalians and Presbyterians in a different way from what those bodies did when in possession of power.

Whatever personal displeasure Cromwell might have felt at the conduct and plain dealing of Baxter, on this and other occasions, it is much to his honour that he had greatness of mind enough not to resent it. Had Baxter used the same freedom with the royal successors of Cromwell which he used with him, he would most probably have lost his head. He narrowly enough escaped as it was, though most conscientious in respecting their authority, and rendering obedience to their laws. Baxter had the candour to acknowledge how much the country was obliged to Oliver.

“ When Cromwell was made lord protector, he had the policy not to detect and exasperate the ministers and others who consented not to his government. Having seen what a stir the engagement had before made, he let men live quietly without putting any oaths of fidelity upon them, except members of his parliaments ; these he would not allow to enter the House till they had sworn fidelity to him. The sectarian party, in his army and elsewhere, he chiefly trusted to and pleased, till, by the people’s submission and quietness, he thought himself well settled ; and then he began to undermine them, and, by degrees, to work them out. Though he had so often spoken for the Anabaptists before, he now found them so heady, and so much against any settled government, and so set upon the promoting of their way and party, that he not only began to blame their

* Life, part i. p. 205.

unruliness, but also to design to settle himself in the people's favour by suppressing them. In Ireland they were grown so high, that the soldiers were many of them re-baptised as the way to preferment; and those who opposed them, they crushed with much uncharitable fierceness. To suppress these, he sent thither his son Henry Cromwell, who so discountenanced the Anabaptists, as yet to deal civilly with them; repressing their insolencies, but not abusing them; promoting the work of the Gospel, and setting up good and sober ministers; and dealing civilly with the Royalists, and obliging all, so that he was generally beloved and well spoken of: and Major-General Ludlow, who headed the Anabaptists in Ireland,^b was fain to draw in his head." ^c

This statement reflects great honour on the sagacity and dextrous management of Cromwell. He was surrounded by a very strange sort of people, most of whom thought themselves well qualified to govern the country, and, indeed, to rule the world. He knew that great mischief would result from pursuing violent measures against such persons; and, therefore, like a skilful tactician, he gradually deprived them of power, or placed them in such circumstances that they could do little harm to themselves or to others. The greatest injury that could have been done to the country, would have been to place his own power in the hands of any of the dominant factions. Confusion worse confounded must have resulted from it. This appeared as soon as the Protector was removed. Yet, the discrimination and wise policy of Cromwell in presiding over the turbulent elements of the Commonwealth, are thought by many to deserve no better names than cant, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.

To narrate the various transactions of a civil and religious nature which belong to the administration of Cromwell, is no part of the design of this work. Enough has been said to afford an idea of the state of things, and of the part which

^b Ludlow was not a Baptist, so far as I can ascertain, though the form of expression employed by Baxter might lead us to suppose it. He was a high-minded publican soldier. A man of Roman rather than Christian virtue; stern, uncompromising, and courageous; who hated Cromwell as heartily as Charles; and would as readily have sat in judgment on the one as a traitor, as he passed sentence on the other as a tyrant. He died, after an exile of thirty years, in Switzerland, to which he retired at the Restoration. His Memoirs of himself possess very considerable interest; but their accuracy cannot always be depended on, as they were written long after many of the events which they describe.

Life, part i. p. 74.

Baxter acted under it. The following character of Cromwell is well drawn, though it may not be correct in every particular.

"I come now to the end of Cromwell's reign, who died of a fever before he was aware. He escaped the attempts of many, who thought to have dispatched him sooner, but could not escape the stroke of God when his appointed time was come.

"Never man was highlier extolled, and never man was baselier reported of, and reviled, than this man. No mere man was better and worse spoken of than he, according as men's interests led their judgments. The soldiers and sectaries most highly magnified him, till he began to seek the crown and the establishment of his family; and then there were so many who would be half-kings themselves, that a king did seem intolerable to them. The Royalists abhorred him as a most perfidious hypocrite; and the Presbyterians thought him little better, in his management of public matters.

"If, after so many others, I may speak my opinion of him, I think that having been a prodigal in his youth, and afterwards changed to a zealous religionist, he meant honestly in the main, and was pious and conscientious in the chief course of his life, till prosperity and success corrupted him.^d At his first entrance into the wars, being but a captain of horse, he took special care to get religious men into his troop. These were of greater understanding than common soldiers, and therefore were more apprehensive of the importance and consequence of the war; and, making not money, but that which they took for the public felicity, to be their end, they were the more engaged to be valiant; for he that maketh money his end, doth esteem his life above his pay, and therefore is likely enough to save it by flight when danger comes, if possibly he can. But he that maketh the felicity of church and state his end, esteemeth it above his life, and therefore will the sooner lay down his life for it. Men of parts and understanding know how to manage their business. They know that flying is the surest way to death, and that standing to it is the likeliest way to escape; there being many that usually fall in flight, for one that falls in valiant fighting.

"These things, it is probable, Cromwell understood; and that

^d There is no evidence that Cromwell was a profligate man in early life; and to the last he maintained the greatest regard for justice, morality, and the public interests of religion.

none could be engaged, such valiant men as the religious. Yet, I conjecture, that, at his first choosing such men into his troop, it was the very esteem and love of religious men that principally moved him; and the avoiding of those disorders, mutinies, plunderings, and grievances of the country, which debauched men in armies are commonly guilty of. By this means he indeed sped better than he expected. Aires, Desborough, Berry, Evanson, and the rest of that troop, did prove so valiant, that, as far as I could learn, they never once ran away before an enemy. Hereupon he got a commission to take some care of the associated counties, where he formed this troop into a double regiment of fourteen troops; and all these as full of religious men as he could get. These having more than ordinary wit and resolution, had more than ordinary success; first in Lincolnshire, and afterward in the Earl of Manchester's army at York fight. With their successes, the hearts both of captains and soldiers secretly rose both in pride and expectation: and the familiarity of many honest, erroneous men, as Anabaptists, Antinomians, &c. withal, began quickly to corrupt their judgments. Hereupon Cromwell's general religious zeal gave way to the power of that ambition which increased as his successes increased. Both piety and ambition concurred in countenancing all whom he thought godly, of what sect soever; piety pleaded for them as godly, and charity as men; and ambition secretly told him what use he might make of them. He meant well in all this at the beginning, and thought he did all for the safety of the godly, and the public good; but not without an eye to himself.

"When success had broken down all considerable opposition, he was then in the face of his strongest temptations, which conquered him when he had conquered others. He thought that he had hitherto done well, both as to the *end* and *means*; that God, by the wonderful blessing of his providence, had owned his endeavours, and that it was none but God who had made him great. He thought, that if the war was lawful, the victory was lawful; and that if it were lawful to fight against the king, and conquer him, it was lawful to use him as a conquered enemy, and a foolish thing to trust him when they had so provoked him. He thought that the heart of the king was deep, that he had resolved upon revenge, and that if he were once king, he would easily, at one time or other, accomplish it; that it was a dishonest thing of the parliament to set men to

fight for them against the king, and then to lay their heads upon the block, and be at his mercy; and that if this must be their case, it was better to flatter or please him than to fight against him.^e

“He saw that the Scots and the Presbyterians in the parliament, did, by the covenant and the oath of allegiance, find themselves bound to the person and family of the king; and that there was no hope of changing their minds in this. Hereupon he joined with that party in the parliament who were for the cutting off the king and trusting him no more; and consequently he joined with them in raising the Independents to make a faction in the Synod at Westminster, and in the city; in strengthening the sectaries in the army, city, and country; and in rendering the Scots and ministers as odious as he could, to disable them from hindering the change of government.^f

“In the doing of all this, which distrust and ambition persuaded him was well done, he thought it lawful to use his wits, to choose each instrument and suit each means, unto its end; and accordingly he modelled the army, and disbanded all other garrisons, forces, and committees, which were likely to have hindered his design. As he went on, though he had not resolved into what form the new Commonwealth should be moulded, he thought it but reasonable that he should be the chief person who had been chief in their deliverance; for the Lord Fairfax, he knew, had but the name. At last, as he thought it lawful to cut off the king, because he thought he was lawfully conquered, so he thought it lawful to fight against the Scots that would set him up, and to pull down the Presbyterian majority in the parliament, which would else, by restoring the king, undo all which had cost them so much blood and treasure. He accordingly conquered Scotland, and pulled down the parliament: being the easier persuaded that all this was lawful, because he had a secret bias and eye towards his own exaltation. For he and his officers thought, that when the king was gone, a government there must be, and that no man was so fit for it as he himself; yea, they thought that God had called them by suc-

^e The conduct of Charles fully justified this view of his character; and much more than the ambition of Cromwell contributed to his unhappy fate.

^f What is here, and afterwards, ascribed entirely to Cromwell's ambition, more properly belongs to the desire of personal preservation, and regard for the safety of the country. The ruling passion of Cromwell was zeal for what he regarded as the cause of God and his country. The circumstances made the man, much more than the man the circumstances.

cesses to govern and take care of the Commonwealth, and of the interest of all his people in the land ; and that if they stood by and suffered the parliament to do that which they thought was dangerous, it would be required at their hands, whom they thought God had made the guardians of the land.

“ Having thus forced his conscience to justify all his cause, cutting off the king, setting up himself and his adherents, putting down the parliament, and the Scots ; he thought that the end being good and necessary, the necessary means could not be bad. He accordingly gave his interest and cause leave to tell him, how far sects should be tolerated and commended, and how far not ; how far the ministry should be owned and supported, and how far not ; yea, and how far professions, promises, and vows, should be kept or broken ; and therefore the covenant he could not away with, nor the ministers, further than they yielded to his ends, or did not openly resist them.

“ He seemed exceedingly open-hearted, by a familiar, rustic, affected carriage, especially to his soldiers, in sporting with them ; but he thought secrecy a virtue, and dissimulation no vice ; and simulation, that is, in plain English, a lie, or perfidiousness, to be a tolerable fault in a case of necessity : being of the same opinion with the Lord Bacon, who was not so precise as learned—‘ that the best composition and temperature is to have openness in fame and opinion, secrecy in habit, dissimulation in seasonable use, and a power to feign if there be no remedy.’ He therefore kept fair with all, saving his open or irreconcilable enemies. He carried it with such dissimulation, that Anabaptists, Independents, and Antinomians, did all think he was one of them ; but he never endeavoured to persuade the Presbyterians that he was one of them ; but only that he would do them justice, and preserve them, and that he honoured their worth and piety : for he knew that they were not so easily deceived.⁵ In a word, he did as our prelates have done, begin low, and rise higher in his resolutions as his condition rose. The promises which he made in his lower condition, he used as the interest of his higher following condition did

⁵ Cromwell could not profess to be a Presbyterian, without renouncing the leading principle of his life and government—religious liberty. It was not the difficulty of deceiving them, therefore (for they had often been outwitted by him), which kept him aloof from them, but his opposition to their narrow and exclusive spirit.

require, and kept up as much honesty and godliness in the main as his cause and interest would allow. But there they left him, and his name standeth as a monitory pillar to posterity, to tell them the instability of man in strong temptations if God leave him to himself; what great success and victories can do to lift up a mind that once seemed humble; what pride can do to make men selfish, corrupt the judgment, justify the greatest errors and sins, and set against the clearest truth and duty; what bloodshed and enormities of life, an erring, deluded judgment may execute. An erroneous sectary, or a proud self-seeker, is oftener God's instrument than an humble, lamb-like, innocent saint."^b

In this lengthened description of Cromwell, and of the principles which chiefly directed his various movements, it is impossible not to recognise the broad features of the Protector's character. They were too strongly marked to be mistaken by such a man as Baxter, however cautiously Cromwell endeavoured to conceal them. The process, too, which Baxter describes as that by which Oliver finally arrived, not only at the pinnacle of earthly power and glory, but by which he justified to his own mind the measures that conducted him to it, is very probably that which actually took place. Yet, I cannot help thinking that Baxter ascribes too much to Cromwell's selfishness and love of personal aggrandisement; and that he uses too strong language about the violence done to his conscience, to reconcile him to the means which he employed. Many things which he did, it is impossible to justify; but even these, though they cannot be defended, admit of some apology, when his circumstances are considered; and when due allowance is made for human infirmity, and for the influence of those mistaken principles, by which it is evident both he and many of the men of his party were influenced. Baxter seems not to do sufficient justice to the real influence of religion on the character of Cromwell; without which, it is not possible to account for many parts of his conduct. His opposition to Presbyterianism, his friendship for the sectaries, and his antimonarchical principles and actions, were unpardonable offences in the estimation of Baxter. Scarcely any degree of personal excellence or public virtue could compensate, in his opinion, for these enormous evils. It should be remembered, however, that if Crom-

^b Life, part i. pp. 98—100.

well had great faults, he had also splendid virtues ; which, in any other character than a usurper's, would have been emblazoned by friends, and eulogised by enemies.¹

Whatever may be said or thought of the personal religion of Cromwell, the influence of his measures and government on the state of religion in the country, was highly favourable. I have quoted the strong language of Baxter, respecting the sects and the divisions of the period, and the pointed censures which he pronounces on many of the leading men. It is right I should quote what he says about the improved state of religion during the Commonwealth. What a contrast does the following picture present, to the dismal representation of the condition of religion during the early days of Baxter, which have been given in the first part of this work !

“ I do not believe that ever England had so able and faithful a ministry since it was a nation, as it hath at this day ; and I fear that few nations on earth, if any, have the like. Sure I am the change is so great within these twelve years, that it is one of the greatest joys that ever I had in the world to behold it. O, how many congregations are now plainly and frequently taught, that lived then in great obscurity ! How many able, faithful men are there now in a county in comparison of what were then ! How graciously hath God prospered the studies of many young men that were little children in the beginning of the late troubles ; so that they now cloud the most of their 'seniors ! How many miles would I have gone twenty years ago, and less, to have heard one of those ancient reverend divines, whose con-

¹ Among the Baxter MSS. is a letter from John Howe to Richard Vines, in which his circumstances, as chaplain in the Protector's family, are described as so uncomfortable, that he was determined to leave it. This letter conveys a stronger reflection on the character of Cromwell than any thing I have met with. “ My call hither was to a work I thought very considerable ; the setting-up the worship and discipline of Christ in this family, wherein I was to be joined with another, called in upon the same account. But I now see the designed work here hopelessly laid aside. We affect here to live in so loose a way, that a man cannot fix upon any certain charge, to carry towards them as a minister of Christ should : so that it were as hopeful a course to preach in a market, or any other assembly met by chance, as here. The affected disorderliness of this family, as to the matters of God's worship, whence arises my despair of doing good in it, I desire as much as possible to conceal ; and therefore resolve to others to insist upon the low condition of the place I left, as the reason of my removal, if I do remove. To you I state the case more fully, but desire you to be very sparing in making it known, as it is here represented.”—*Baxter MSS.* There are several letters from Howe to Baxter among these MSS. It is curious to find Howe speaking of himself as a “ raw youth, bashful, pusillanimous, and solicitous about the flesh.”

gregations are now grown thin, and their parts esteemed mean by reason of the notable improvements of their juniors !

“ I hope I shall rejoice in God while I have a being, for the common change in other parts that I have lived to see ; that so many hundred faithful men are so hard at work for the saving of souls, ‘ frementibus licet et frendentibus inimicis ;’ and that more are springing up apace. I know there are some men whose parts I reverence, who, being in point of government of another mind from them, will be offended at my very mention of this happy alteration ; but I must profess if I were absolutely prelatical, if I knew my heart, I could not choose for all that but rejoice. What, not rejoice at the prosperity of the church, because men differ in opinion about its order ! Should I shut my eyes against the mercies of the Lord ? The souls of men are not so contemptible to me, that I should envy them the bread of life, because it is broken to them by a hand that had not the prelatical approbation. O that every congregation were thus supplied ! but all cannot be done at once. They had a long time to settle a corrupted ministry ; and when the ignorant and scandalous are cast out, we cannot create abilities in others for their supply ; we must stay the time of their preparation and growth ; and then if England drive not away the Gospel by their abuse, even by their wilful unreformedness and hatred of the light, they are likely to be the happiest nation under heaven. For, as for all the sects and heresies that are creeping in daily and troubling us, I doubt not but the free Gospel, managed by an able, self-denying ministry, will effectually disperse and shame them all.”^k

Cromwell being dead, his son Richard, by his will and testament, and by the army, was quietly settled in his place. “ He interred his father with great pomp and solemnity. He called a parliament, and that without any such restraints as his father had used. The members took the oath of fidelity or allegiance to him at the door of the house, before they entered. And all men wondered to see every thing so quiet in so dangerous a time. Many sober men that called his father no better than a traitorous hypocrite, did begin to think that they owed him subjection ; which I confess was the case with myself.

“ The army set up Richard Cromwell, it seemed, upon trial, resolving to use him as he behaved himself : for though they

^k Reformed Pastor, published in 1658.—Works, vol. xiv. pp. 152, 153.

swore fidelity to him, they meant to keep it no longer than he pleased them. When they saw that he began to favour the sober people of the land, to honour parliaments, and to respect the ministers, whom they called Presbyterians, they presently resolved to make him know his masters, and that it was *they*, and not *he*, who were called by God to be the chief protectors of the interest of the nation. He was not so formidable to them as his father had been, and therefore every one boldly spurned at him. The fifth monarchy-men followed Sir Henry Vane, and raised a great, violent, and clamorous party against him, among the sectaries in the city: Rogers, Feake, and such-like firebrands, preached them into fury, and blew the coals; but Dr. Owen and his assistants did the main work.¹

“The Wallingford-house party, consisting of the active officers of the army, determined that Richard’s parliament must be dissolved; and then he quickly fell himself. Though he never abated their liberties, or their greatness, he did not sufficiently befriend them. Though Colonel Ingolsby, and some others, would have stuck to the protector, and have ventured to surprise the leaders of the faction, and the parliament would have been true to him; Berry’s regiment of horse, and some others, were ready to begin the fray against him. As he sought not the government, he was resolved it should cost no blood to keep him in it; but if they would venture for their parts to new confusions, he would venture his part by retiring to privacy. And so to satisfy these proud, distracted tyrants, who thought they did but pull down tyranny, he resigned the government, by a writing under his hand, and left them to govern as they pleased.

“His good brother-in-law, Fleetwood, and his uncle, Desborough, were so intoxicated as to be the leaders of the conspiracy; and when they had pulled him down, they set up a few of themselves under the name of a Council of State. So mad were they with pride, as to think the nation would stand by and reverence them, and obediently wait upon them in their drunken giddiness; and that their faction in the army was made by God an invincible terror to all that did but hear their names. The core of the business also was, that Oliver had once made Fleetwood believe, that he should be his successor, and had drawn

¹ For an account of Owen’s conduct in this affair, see ‘Memoirs of Owen,’ pp. 213—215, second edition.

an instrument to that purpose ; but his last will disappointed him. And then the sectaries flattered him, saying, that a truly godly man, who had commanded them in the wars, was to be preferred before such a one as they censured to have no true godliness."^m

Richard Cromwell rose to the Protectorate without effort, and fell from it without much regret on his own part, and with none on the part of the country. The formidable difficulties, which had tried the genius and courage of the father, and had greatly accumulated before his death, soon overwhelmed the son. His talents, though not despicable, were not of the first order ; and never having been bred a soldier, he was little qualified for managing the daring spirits by which he was surrounded. He was a lover of peace and a friend of religion, and had he quietly succeeded to a well-established throne, would have filled it with honour to himself, and advantage to his country. But it was a difficult affair to occupy the seat of a protector, and to maintain claims which were still regarded as those of a usurper. Surrounded by cabals of enemies, misled by the advice of injudicious friends, and terrified by the prospect of new civil convulsions, he had the wisdom to descend from the seat of power, without a struggle, which would only have been attended with a useless effusion of blood, and followed with certain defeat. "I have no doubt," says Baxter, "that God permitted all this for good ; and that, as it was the treason of a military faction to set up Oliver, and destroy the king, so it was their duty to have set up the present king instead of Richard. Thus God made them the means, to their own destruction, contrary to their intentions, to restore the monarchy and family which they had ruined. But all this is no thanks to them ; but that which, with a good intention, had been a duty, as done by them, was as barbarous perfidiousness as most history ever did declare. That they should so suddenly, so scornfully, and proudly pull down him whom they had so lately set up themselves, and sworn allegiance to ; that they should do this without being able to tell themselves why they did it ; that they should do it, while a parliament was sitting which had so many wise and religious members, and accomplish it, not only without

^m Life, part i. pp. 100, 101. There are letters from Baxter to Sir James Nethersole, and Colonel Harley, about the affairs of the country during "Richard's usurpation, when men were raised to some vain hopes."—*Baxter MSS.*

the parliament's advice, but in spite of it, and force him to dissolve it first ; that they should so proudly despise, not merely the parliament, but all the ministers of London and of the land ; yea, and act against the judgments of most of their own party (the Independents), is altogether very wonderful."^a

While the praise or blame of pulling down Richard is thus studiously ascribed, by Baxter, to a faction, consisting neither of the Presbyterians nor of the Independents, it is very evident, from his own statements afterwards, that the Presbyterians were more deeply concerned, both in the overthrow of the Commonwealth, and in the restoration of the monarchy, and in all the plotting, or, as he would have called it in others, the perfidiousness which these things involved, than he was disposed to admit. That party threw every possible difficulty in the way of the Commonwealth administration, because they were not of sufficient importance under it ; and did all they could to bring back the king, whom they could not doubt would reward their fidelity, and comprehend them in the new establishment. They were taken effectually in their own snare, and were more severely punished and disappointed than any other.

Shortly after this, when Sir George Booth's rising failed, "Major-General Monk, in Scotland, with his army, grew so sensible of the insolence of Vane and Lambert, and the fanatics in England and Ireland, who set up and pulled down governments as boldly as if they were making a lord of a May game, and were grasping all the power into their own hands ; that he presently secured the Anabaptists of his army, and agreed with the rest to resist those usurpers, who would have made England the scorn of all the world. At first, when he drew near to England, he declared for a free Commonwealth. When he came in, Lambert marched against him, but his soldiers forsaking him, and Sir Arthur Haselrigge getting Portsmouth, and Colonel Morley strengthening him, and Major-General Berry's regiment which went to block it up, revolting to them, the clouds rose everywhere at once, and Lambert could make no resistance ; so that instead of fighting, they were fain to treat. While Monk held them treating, his reputation increased, and theirs abated ; their hearts failed them, their soldiers fell off ; and General Monk consulted with his friends what to do. Many counties sent letters of thanks and

^a Life, part i. p. 101.

encouragement to him. Mr. Thomas Bampfield was sent by the gentlemen of the West, and other counties did the like ; so that Monk came on, but still declared for a Commonwealth, against monarchy ; till at last, when he saw all ripened there-to, he declared for the king. The chief men, as far as I can learn, who turned his resolution to bring in the king, were Mr. Clarges,* and Sir William Morris, his kinsman ; the petitions and affections of the city of London, principally moved by Mr. Calamy and Mr. Ash, two ancient leading able ministers ; with Dr. Bates, Dr. Manton, Dr. Jacomb, and other ministers of London who concurred. These were encouraged by the Earl of Manchester, the Lord Hollis, the late Earl of Anglesey, and many of the then council of state. The members of the old parliament, who had formerly been ejected, being recalled, dissolved themselves, and appointed the convening of a parliament which might recall the king. When General Monk first came into England, most men rejoiced, in hope to be delivered from the usurpation of the fanatics, Anabaptists, Seekers, &c. I was myself so much affected with the strange providence of God, that I procured the ministers to agree upon a public thanksgiving to God. I think all the victories which that army obtained, were not more wonderful than their fall was, when pride and error had prepared them for it. It seemed wonderful to me, that an army which had got so many great and marvellous victories, which thought themselves unconquerable, and talked of nothing but dominion at home, and marching up to the walls of Rome, should all be broken, brought into subjection, and finally disbanded, without one blow stricken, or one drop of blood shed ! And that by so small a power as Monk's army in the beginning was. So eminent was the hand of God in all this change."†

Among all the dissemblers and hypocrites of a period abounding in the display of these qualities, Monk occupies a distinguished place. He is eulogised by Clarendon, and commended by Hume ; and for his successful management in duping the army and the parliament, and restoring the exiled monarch on

* Clarges was originally an apothecary, but acting as physician to Monk's army, became M.D. He was afterwards created Sir Thomas Clarges, by Charles, for his services at the restoration. He was the son of a blacksmith, and brother to *Nan Clarges*, better known by that appellation than by her future title, the Duchess of Albemarle, a situation which she neither deserved, nor was qualified to fill.

† Life, part i. p. 214.

his own terms, he was rewarded with a dukedom.^a Baxter had an interview with Monk after he came to London ; which laid the foundation of a charge preferred against him by L'Estrange, in the ninety-sixth number of 'The Observer,' that he had endeavoured to influence Monk not to bring back the king. In reply to which, Baxter says :

"Dr. Mantou (and whether any other, I remember not) went once with me to General Monk, to congratulate him ; but with the request, that he would take care that debauchery and contempt of religion might not be let loose, upon any men's pretence of being for the king, as it already began with some to be. But there was not one word by me spoken (or by any one, to my remembrance) against his calling back the king ; but as to me, it is a mere fiction. And the king was so sensible of the same that I said, that he sent over a proclamation against such men, as while they called themselves the king's party, did live in debauchery and profaneness ; which proclamation so rejoiced them that were after Nonconformists, that they read it publicly in the churches."^r Baxter's denial is entitled to the greatest confidence, as his conduct at the time of the restoration shows how heartily he rejoiced in it. But it is impossible not to marvel at the simplicity which gave Charles credit for wishing to put down debauchery and profaneness.

"As for myself," he says, "I came to London April the 13th, 1660, where I was no sooner arrived, but I was accosted by the Earl of Lauderdale, who was just then released from his tedious confinement in Windsor Castle, by the restored parliament, who having heard from some of the sectarian party, that my judgment was, that our obligations to Richard Cromwell were not dissolved, nor could be, till another parliament, or a fuller renunciation of the government, took a great deal of pains with me, to satisfy me in that point."^s And for quieting people's

^a "Monk no more intended or designed the king's restoration when he came into England, or first came to London, than his horse did ; but shortly after finding himself at a loss, that he was *purposely* made odious to the city, and that he was a lost man, by the parliament, and that the generality of the city and country were for the restoring the king, he had no way to save himself but to close with the city."—*Aubrey*, ii. p. 455. The grand object and aim of Monk in all he did was his own aggrandisement.

^r Calamy's Continuation, vol. iv. p. 911.

^s It is evident from what Baxter himself says, that he was apprised at an early period of the attempt which was likely to be made to bring back the king. The unnatural union of the Cavaliers and the Presbyterians to effect this object, appears to have met with his approbation. A letter of his to Major

minds, which were in no small commotion through clandestine rumours, he, by means of Sir Robert Murray, and the Countess of Balcarras, then in France, procured several letters to be written from thence, full of high eulogiums on the king, and assurances of his firmness in the Protestant religion, which he got translated and published. Among others, one was sent to me from Monsieur Gaches, a famous, pious preacher at Charenton ; wherein, after a high strain of compliment to myself, he gave a pompous character of the king, and assured me, that during his exile, he never forebore the public profession of the Protestant religion, no, not even in those places where it seemed prejudicial to his affairs. That he was present at divine worship in the French churches, at Rouen and Rochelle, though not at Charenton, during his stay at Paris ; and earnestly pressed me to use my utmost interest, that the king might be restored by means of the Presbyterians.

“ When I was in London, the new parliament being called, they presently appointed a day of fasting and prayer for themselves. The House of Commons chose Mr. Calamy, Dr. Gauden, and myself, to preach and pray with them, at St. Margaret's, Westminster. In that sermon, I uttered some passages which were afterwards matter of some discourse. Speaking of our differences, and the way to heal them, I told them that, whether we should be loyal to our king was none of our differences. In that, we were all agreed ; it being as impossible that a man should be true to the Protestant principles and not be loyal ; as it was impossible to be true to the Papist principles, and to be loyal. And for the concord now wished in matters of church government, I told them it was easy for moderate men to come to a fair agreement, and that the late reverend Primate of Ireland and myself had agreed in half an hour. I remember not the very words, but you may read them in the sermon, which was printed by order of the House of Commons.¹ The next

Beake was intercepted, but being written with caution, nothing could be made of it. He assigns no reason for leaving Kidderminster, and coming to London at this time ; but I have no doubt it was to be present to aid and assist his Presbyterian brethren as circumstances might require. Sir Ralph Clare informed him of some things that were going on, and that if the restoration took place, a very moderate episcopacy would satisfy that party. This led Baxter to propose terms of union to Dr. Hammond, in consequence of which a correspondence took place, but which, like all such schemes, came to nothing.—*Life*, part ii. pp. 207—214.

¹ This sermon was preached on the 30th of April, 1660, and is printed in vol. xvii. of his Works. The subject is Repentance, the text Ezek. xxxvi. 31. He

morning after this day of fasting, the parliament unanimously voted home the king; doing that which former actions had but prepared for.

"The city of London, about that time, was to keep a day of solemn thanksgiving for General Monk's success; and the lord-mayor and alderman desired me to preach before them at St. Paul's church; wherein I so endeavoured to show the value of that mercy, as to show also, how sin and men's abuse might turn it into matter of calamity, and what should be right bounds and qualifications of that joy. The moderate were pleased with it; the fanatics were offended with me for keeping such a thanksgiving; and the diocesan party thought I did suppress their joy. The words may be seen in the sermon ordered to be printed."

"When the king was sent for by the parliament, certain divines, with others, were also sent by the parliament and city to him into Holland: viz. Mr. Calamy, Dr. Manton, Mr. Bowles, and divers others; and some went voluntarily; to whom his majesty gave such encouraging promises of peace, as raised some of them to high expectations.* And when he came in, as he passed through the city towards Westminster, the London ministers in their places attended him with acclamations,†

dedicates it to the House of Commons, and speaks of the honour which he considered it, to conclude by preaching and prayer, the service which immediately preceded the vote of the House to recall his majesty. It is distinguished by his usual plainness and fidelity, and contains some eloquent passages. Few such sermons, I fear, have been preached in that house since then. His advice and requests to them as legislators were both sound and moderate.

* This sermon was preached on the 10th of May, 1660, and appears in vol. xvii. of his Works, under the title of "Right Rejoicing," founded on Luke x. 20. There is much admirable personal address in this discourse, and the allusions to political matters are brief and moderate.

† Charles duped the Presbyterian ministers by causing them to be placed within hearing of his secret devotions. The base hypocrisy of this man is a thousand times more revolting than any thing of the kind which belonged to Cromwell, and yet in Charles it is passed over with little reprobation.

‡ A very amusing account, if it were not for the melancholy issue, is given by Aubrey, of the intoxication of the people in the prospect of the king's return. On its being intimated by Monk, that there should be a free parliament, "Immediately a loud holla and shout was given, all the bells in the city ringing, and the whole city looked as if it had been in a flame by the bonfires, which were prodigiously great and frequent, and ran like a train over the city. They made little gibbets and roasted rumpes of mutton, yaye I sawe some very good rumpes of beef. Health to King Charles II. was dranke in the streets, by the bonfires, even on their knees. This humour ran by the next night to Salisbury, where was the like joy; so to Chalke, where they made a great bonfire on the top of the hill; from thence to Blandford and Shaftesbury, and so to the Laud's End. Well! a free parlia-

and by the hands of old Mr. Arthur Jackson, presented him with a richly-adorned Bible, which he received, and told them, it should be the rule of his actions."²

Thus terminated the rule of the Commonwealth and the dynasty of the Cromwells, and recommenced the reign of the legitimate Stuarts. Baxter's narrative notices some of the causes and instruments of the extraordinary revolution which now took place, with a rapidity and unexpectedness that appear like magical rather than real events. But the true causes were more deeply seated than his account would lead us to suppose. Neither the conduct of the fanatical sectaries, nor the weakness of Richard, at all explains the downfall of the Commonwealth, and the restoration of the royal family. That family had always a powerful and influential party in the country, consisting of the old nobility and their retainers; the church had never entirely lost its hold of a considerable body of the population; Presbyterianism was too rigid a system to suit the temper and genius of the multitude; the ambition of Cromwell had lost him the affection of his republican associates, and destroyed the confidence and respect of the Independents and minor sects. Tired of the versatility and duplicity of a man, who was great, but never dignified; feared, but not loved or respected; and possessed by a blind attachment to the exiled monarchy, it required only the favourable opportunity of the old Protector's death, and the concurrence of a few other circumstances, to produce the marvellous change which occurred.

Charles began by playing the hypocrite with those who had been deceived with their eyes open; but he soon threw off the vizard, to their terrible dismay. Nothing more strikingly illustrates the strength of attachment to monarchy, which seems to be inherent

ment was chosen, and Sir Harbottle Grimston was chosen Speaker. The first thing he put to the question was, Whether Charles Stuart should be sent for, or no? Yea, yea, *nem. con.* Sir Thomas Greenhill was then in town, and posted away to Brussels, found the king at dinner, little dreaming of so good news, rises presently from dinner, had his coach immediately made ready, and that night got out of the King of Spain's dominions, into the Prince of Orange's country. Now, as the morn grows lighter and lighter, and more glorious till it is perfect day, so it was with the joy of the people. Maypoles, which in the hypocritical times 'twas — to set up, now were set up in every cross way; and at the Strand near Drury Lane, was set up the most prodigious one for height, that, perhaps, ever was seen; they were fain, I remember, to have the seaman's art to elevate it. The juvenile and rustic folks at that time had so much of desire of this kind, that I think there have been very few set up since."—*Aubrey's Miscel.* vol. ii. pp. 454, 456.

² Life, part i. pp. 214—218.

in the English character, than the facts which have been briefly glanced at. All that the people, the religious and well-informed people, had suffered from the cruel oppressions of the Stuart family was forgotten; not because Cromwell had used them worse (for they had enjoyed great quietness and security under his administration), but because there was no royal blood in his veins, and the absence of the port and high bearing of a monarch by divine right. The impatience to recall the exiled family, the readiness to be duped by the oaths and promises of a profligate prince, who had learned nothing from his banishment but the vices of the people among whom he sojourned, are evidences of infatuation of the most extraordinary kind; which show that the people of England had not yet been sufficiently disciplined and prepared for the enjoyment of freedom.

The leading instruments in effecting the restoration, may be entitled to respect for their royalty, but deserve little credit for their patriotism, their disinterestedness, or their wisdom. The hypocrisy and dissimulation of Monk, the murmuring of the Royalists, and the infatuation of the Presbyterian ministers, were all part of the machinery by which Providence accomplished its purposes. While we mark the hand of God, and adore the justice of his Providence in punishing a nation's sins, the parties who were instrumental in this punishment, and the principles which actuated them, have no claim to our gratitude or respect.

Baxter's conduct during the several changes which have been noticed, does credit to his conscientiousness rather than to his wisdom. He acted with the Parliament, but maintained the rights of the King; he enjoyed the benefits of the Protectorate, but spoke and reasoned against the Protector; he hailed the return of Charles, but doubted whether he was freed from allegiance to Richard. The craft and duplicity of Cromwell, he detected and exposed; but the gross dissimulation and heartless indifference of Charles to every thing except his own gratification, it was long before he could be persuaded to believe. Abstract principles and refined distinctions, in these as in some other matters, influenced his judgment more than plain matters of fact. Speculations, *de jure* and *de facto*, often occupied and distracted his mind, and fettered his conduct, while another man would have formed his opinions on a few obvious principles and facts, and have done both as a subject and a Christian all that circumstances and the Scriptures required.

Before taking our leave of Kidderminster, to which place

Baxter never returned with a view to fixed residence or ministerial labour after the restoration, a few facts remain to be stated, to complete the view of his life and exertions during this important and active period.

The statement of his labours contained in the preceding chapter, by no means includes all that he did during this busy interval of his life. In fact, he tells us that the labours of the pulpit and the congregation were but his recreation; and that his chief labour was bestowed on his writings. A bare enumeration of these, of which a full account will be given in a subsequent part of this work, would justify this declaration, strong as it may appear to be. It is, indeed, marvellous, that a man who would seem to have been wholly engaged with preaching in public and in private; and who was no less marked for the number and variety of his bodily infirmities, than for the multiplicity of his ministerial avocations, and who seemed to have lived only in the atmosphere of a printing-office; should, under all these disadvantages, have produced volumes with the ease that other men issue tracts.

During the fourteen years of his second residence at Kidderminster, he found time partly to write and publish his *Aphorisms*, and *Saint's Rest*. He wrote and published, beside other things, his works on *Infant Baptism*—*On Peace of Conscience*—*On Perseverance*—*On Christian Concord*—*His Apology*—*His Confession of Faith*—*His Unreasonableness of Infidelity*—*His Reformed Pastor*—*His Disputations on right to the Sacraments*—*Those on Church Government*—*And on Justification*—*His Safe Religion*—*His Call to the Unconverted*—*On the Crucifying of the World*—*On Saving Faith*—*On Confirmation*—*On Sound Conversion*—*On Universal Concord*—*His Key for Catholics*—*His Christian Religion*—*His Holy Commonwealth*—*His Treatise on Death*—*And, On Self-denial, &c., &c.*

When it is reflected on that many of these books are considerable quarto volumes, and that they make a large proportion of his practical works now republished, beside including several of his controversial pieces, I must leave the reader to form his own opinion of the indefatigable application and untiring zeal of this extraordinary man. The reading displayed in them, the correspondence to which they frequently led, and the diversity of subjects which they embrace, illustrate at once the indefatigable diligence of Baxter, and the extraordinary versatility of his mind.

He also found time, during this period, to propose and to

prosecute several schemes of union and concord among various classes of Christians, which led to an extensive correspondence, and to long personal conferences, which must have consumed no small portion of his strength and leisure. Beside other plans that occupied much of his attention, and which produced discussion and correspondence, he gives an account of three several schemes of union with the Independents; all of which failed, owing to the difficulties encumbering the subject, but which he laboured to remove. One of these schemes had brought on a long correspondence and several interviews with Dr. Owen. But the Diocesans, as he calls them, the Presbyterians, and the Baptists, also engaged his attention with a view to union, as well as the Independents, and with the same success.

One of his most useful employments, about the period of the king's return, was a negotiation respecting the propagation of the Gospel among the American Indians. During the Commonwealth, a collection by order of Government, had been made in every parish in England, to assist Mr. Elliot (celebrated as the apostle of the Indians) and some others in this most benevolent undertaking. The contributions were laid out partly in stock, and partly in land, to the amount of seven or eight hundred pounds per annum, and were vested in a corporate body, to be employed on behalf of the Indians. After the king's return, Colonel Beddingfield, from whom the land had been purchased at its proper value, seized it again; on the unjust pretext, that all that was done in Cromwell's time, was null and void in law, and that the corporation formed, had no longer any legal existence. The corporation, of which Mr. Ashurst was treasurer, consisted of excellent persons. They were exceedingly grieved that the object for which the money had been raised, should thus be entirely and iniquitously defeated. Baxter being requested to meet them, and to assist by his counsel and influence, which he readily did, was employed to procure if possible a new charter of corporation from the king. This, chiefly through the influence of the Lord Chancellor, he happily obtained. His lordship also, in a suit in chancery, respecting the property, decided against the claims of Beddingfield. Mr. Ashurst and Baxter had the nomination of the new members; the Hon. Robert Boyle, at their recommendation, was made president or governor; Mr. Ashurst was reappointed as treasurer;

and the whole matter put into a state of excellent and efficient operation,

This affair brought Baxter into intimate correspondence with Elliot, Norton, Governor Endicott of Massachusetts, and some other excellent men who were engaged in the good work, or otherwise interested in the religious affairs of New England. The correspondence with Elliot continued during a considerable portion of the remainder of both their lives. That distinguished man was honoured to lead many poor savages of the American woods to the knowledge of God; and, to accomplish a translation of the entire Scriptures into their language, one of the most difficult for a foreigner to acquire. It is highly gratifying to observe how fully Baxter entered into these missionary labours; and that at a period when the subject of missions was little understood, he not only regarded it as a great work, in which Christians are required to engage, but co-operated with those who were engaged in it to the utmost of his power. I cannot resist introducing an extract from one of his letters to Elliot, though written after the period to which this chapter properly belongs.

“Though our sins have separated us from the people of our love and care, and deprived us of all public liberty of preaching the Gospel of our Lord, I greatly rejoice in the liberty, help, and success, which Christ hath so long vouchsafed you in his work. There is no man on earth, whose work I think more honourable and comfortable than yours: to propagate the Gospel and kingdom of Christ into those dark parts of the world, is a better work than our devouring and hating one another. There are many here, who would be ambitious of being your fellow labourers, but that they are informed you have access to no greater number of the Indians than you yourself, and your present assistants, are able to instruct. An honourable gentleman, Mr. Robert Boyle, the governor of the corporation for your work, a man of great learning and worth, and of a very public, universal mind, did mention to me a public collection in all our churches, for the maintaining of such ministers as are willing to go hence to you, partly while they are learning the Indian language, and partly while they labour in the work, as also to transport them. But I find those backward that I have spoken to about it, partly suspecting it a design of such as would be rid of them; partly fearing that when the money is gathered, the work may be frustrated by the alie-

nation of it; partly because they think there will be nothing considerable gathered, because the people that are unwillingly divorced from their teachers, will give nothing to send them further from them, and those that are willingly separated from them, will give nothing to those they no more respect; but specially, because they think, on the aforesaid grounds, that there is no work for them to do if they were with you. There are many here, I conjecture, who would be glad to go anywhere, to the Persians, Tartarians, Indians, or any unbelieving nation, to propagate the Gospel, if they thought they would be serviceable; but the difficulty of their languages is their greatest discouragement. The universal character that you speak of, many have talked of, and one hath printed his essay; and his way is only by numerical figures, making such and such figures to stand for the words of the same signification in all tongues, but nobody regards it. I shall communicate your motion here about the Hebrew, but we are not of such large and public minds as you imagine; every one looks to his own concernment, and some to the things of Christ that are near them at their own doors. But if there be one Timothy that naturally careth for the state of the churches, we have no man, of a multitude more, like-minded; but all seek their own things. We had one Dury here, that hath above thirty years laboured for the reconciling of the churches, but few have regarded him, and now he is glad to escape from us into other countries. Good men who are wholly devoted to God, and by long experience are acquainted with the interest of Christ, are ready to think all others should be like them, but there is no hope of bringing any more than here and there an experienced, holy, self-denying person, to get so far above their personal concernments, and narrowness of mind, and so wholly to devote themselves to God. The industry of the Jesuits and friars, and their successes in Congo, Japan, China, &c., shame us all save you; but yet, for their personal labours in the work of the Gospel, here are many that would be willing to lay out, where they have liberty and a call, though scarce any that will do more in furthering great and public works. I should be glad to learn from you how far your Indian tongue extendeth: how large or populous the country is that useth it, if it be known; and whether it reach only to a few scattered neighbours, who cannot themselves convey their knowledge far, because of other languages. We very much rejoice in your happy work, the translation of the Bible, and bless

God that strengthened you to finish it. If any thing of mine may be honoured to contribute, in the least measure, to your blessed work, I shall have great cause to be thankful to God, and wholly submit the alteration and use of it to your wisdom. Methinks the Assemblies' Catechism should be, next the holy Scriptures, most worthy of your labours."^a

This admirable letter shows how deeply Baxter entered into the philanthropic views which were then so rare, but which have since been so generally adopted by Christians. How would his noble spirit have exulted had he lived to witness, even with all their imperfections, the extended exertions of modern times. How ardently would he have supported every scheme of sending the Scriptures, or the knowledge of salvation, to the destitute parts of the world! If there is joy in heaven, over the plans of earth which tend to the furtherance of the Gospel, Baxter, though removed from the scene of labour and of trial, is no doubt exulting in much that is now going forward.

His correspondence during his residence in Kidderminster, must have been exceedingly extensive and laborious; the existing remains of it affording decisive proof of its multifarious character, and of the application which it must have required. He was employed on all occasions of a public nature where the interests of his brethren in the ministry, or the cause of religion among them, required the co-operation or counsel of others. As the agent of the ministers of Worcestershire, he addressed the Provincial Assembly of London in 1654, calling their attention to the state of the Psalmody, and requesting them to adopt measures for its improvement.^b On the other hand, he was requested by Calamy, Whitfield, Jenkyns, Ash, Cooper, Wickens, and Poole, to assist them in an answer which they were preparing to the Independents.^c What aid he afforded does not appear. We cannot doubt his disposition to assist his brethren, though it is not probable he and they would have agreed, either in their mode of defending Presbyterianism or of attacking Independency.

He was consulted by Manton, in 1658, about a scheme for calling a general assembly of the ministers of England, to determine certain matters, and arrange their ecclesiastical affairs.

^a Life, part ii. p. 295. There are many letters which passed between Baxter and Elliot, still preserved among the Baxter MSS. in the Redcross Street Library.

^b Baxter MSS.

^c Ibid.

To this he returned an answer expressive of doubts of its practicability and expediency. He was friendly to such associations; but, from the state of the country at the time, he probably felt that nothing of importance could be effected. Indeed there is no reason to think that Cromwell would have permitted any such general assembly of the Presbyterian clergy to take place in England, when he would not allow them to hold such meetings in Scotland.

Both Lord Lauderdale and Major Robert Beake introduced to Baxter, in 1657, the Rev. James Sharpe, a minister of the church of Scotland, who came to London on the public business of that church, which he afterwards vilely betrayed. He was rewarded for his treachery at a future period, with the archbishoprick of St. Andrews, where at last he lost his life by the hands of a few individuals, who thus chose to avenge their country's wrongs. Of his piety, Lauderdale and Beake speak strongly; and he probably was at this time a very different man from what he had become when he fell before the wiles of a court, and the lure of an archbishop's mitre.^d

Beside all this, Baxter was consulted by great numbers of his brethren in the ministry in various parts of the country, respecting matters in which they were concerned; and by a multitude of private individuals, on cases of conscience, which he was requested to solve. To all these he returned, often, long and minute letters, the manual labour of which must have been very considerable, especially as he kept copies of many of them.^e

^d Baxter MSS. Sharpe was sent to London again immediately before the Restoration, with a view to negotiate the interests of the church of Scotland. He returned after the King was re-established, with a plausible letter signed by Lauderdale, in the name of the King. He was afterwards rewarded for his treachery and apostacy by the Primacy of Scotland. It is impossible to justify his murder; but the poor people of Scotland had been driven to desperation by long-continued oppression.

^e There are some hundreds of these letters among the Redcross Street MSS.; many of them curious, though relating to individuals and subjects which would not now interest the public. Baxter had a long correspondence with Gataker, chiefly on the subjects of infant baptism and original sin. Gataker exceedingly bewails the differences that then subsisted among Christians, and says "they may well be lamented with an ocean of tears." He had a laborious correspondence with Dr. Hill, about predestination, a subject on which Baxter wrote a great deal. Besides what he published on it, there is enough remaining among his unpublished manuscripts to make a volume or two. Many letters also passed between him and Tombes, Poole, Dury, Wadsworth, Bates, and Howe. There are, also, many letters to and from correspondents, both male and female, of the names of Allan and Lambe, who seem to have enjoyed no small portion of his attention. Some of these are printed in his *Life* by Sylvester.

In these active and multifarious labours, Baxter spent fourteen of the happiest and most useful years of his life. Unceasingly engaged in some useful pursuit, his mind found sufficient scope and employment for that energy by which it was eminently distinguished. There were many evils then, indeed, as well as at other times, which he greatly deplored; but there was so great a preponderance of good when compared with the period which preceded, and with that which followed it, that often he lamented the prosperous days he had enjoyed during the usurpation, when they had passed away. Instead, therefore, of having to record his various plans of benevolence, and rejoicing over the success attending them, we must henceforth hear chiefly of his fruitless struggles for peace, and for liberty to preach the Gospel; of the disappointment which followed negotiations; of the anguish experienced from the restriction of his ministry; of confiscations, imprisonment, and being unceasingly harassed for conscience' sake.

CHAPTER VII.

1660—1662.

The Restoration—Views of the Nonconformists—Conduct of the Court towards them—Baxter's desire of Agreement—Interview with the King—Baxter's Speech—The Ministers requested to draw up their Proposals—Meet at Sion College for this purpose—Present their paper to the King—Many Ministers ejected already—The King's Declaration—Baxter's objections to it—Presented to the Chancellor in the form of a Petition—Meeting with his Majesty to hear the Declaration—Declaration altered—Baxter, Calamy, and Reynolds, offered Bishopricks—Baxter declines—Private interview with the King—The Savoy Conference—Debates about the mode of proceeding—Baxter draws up the Reformed Liturgy—Petition to the Bishops—No disposition to agreement on their part—Answer to their former papers—Personal debate—Character of the leading parties on both sides—Issue of the Conference.

CHARLES II. was received with general acclamation ; which can only be accounted for from that love of change which is characteristic of nations as well as of individuals ; from the sickening influence of Cromwell's ambition, and the imbecility of his son ; from the disgust felt by many at the fanaticism of the times ; together with that love of monarchy—its pomp and circumstance—which constitutes a distinguishing feature in the character of Englishmen. That Charles deceived the people by his professions, is clear ; but they might easily have obtained such a knowledge of his principles, habits, and sentiments, had they been disposed to make what inquiry the nature of the case seemed to demand, as might have prevented the deception from taking effect. They imagined that the sufferings endured by the royal family would cure, or at least moderate, that hereditary love of arbitrary power, and attachment to Popery, which had caused most of those sufferings ; that Charles was perhaps too much a man of the world, to make the costly sacrifices for a religious party which his father had made ; and that they might easily form such an agreement with him as should effectually limit his power, and secure their rights. In all this they dis-

covered their own weakness and simplicity. In fact, Charles returned on his own terms, and was left as unfettered as if he had come in by conquest; saving a few oaths, which he swallowed without scruple, and broke without remorse.^f The bitter effects of this misguided zeal and imprudence, none had greater reason to feel and to deplore than the Presbyterian portion of the Puritans, who were greatly instrumental in promoting the Restoration.

The views of the leading men of their party were, on some points, discordant; but they all agreed in welcoming the exiled monarch, and in anticipating, from the re-establishment of monarchy and the constitution, the enjoyment not only of protection and liberty, (for these they had fully enjoyed under the usurpation,) but of a system of church government modified to meet their views, and by which they should be comprehended in the ecclesiastical establishment of the country.

It was necessary, in the circumstances in which Charles found himself, not to offend these men; the episcopal party also being still weak, found it expedient to treat them with apparent respect. Several of the ministers were accordingly chosen to be king's chaplains.^g Calamy, Reynolds, Ash, and several others, among whom was Baxter, had this honour; and Reynolds, Calamy, Spurstow, and Baxter, each preached once before his majesty. Manchester^h

^f Charles took the covenant three several times; once at the completion of the treaty abroad, again at his landing in Scotland, and a third time when he was crowned at Scone; while it is impossible to believe that he ever had the least serious intention to observe it. Though it is considered that Charles was a Papist, or an infidel, nothing can excuse his want of principle in taking this oath; and as the profligacy of his character could scarcely be unknown to the party which required the oath, it is difficult to excuse their conduct in imposing it, or in being satisfied to be deceived by Charles submitting himself to it.

^g Baxter says, "When I was invited by Lord Broghill, afterwards Earl of Orrery, to meet him at the Lord Chamberlain's, they both persuaded me to accept the place. I desired to know whether it were his majesty's desire, or only the effect of their favourable request to him. They told me that it was his majesty's own desire, and that he would take it as an acceptable furtherance of his service. Thereupon I took the oath from the Lord Chamberlain." The date of his certificate is June 26, 1660.—*Life*, part ii. p. 229. Dr. Peirce, the decided adversary of Baxter, thought proper to dispute whether he was king's chaplain, when he published the sermon preached before his majesty, and annexed that title to his name. The certificate, however, speaks for itself.

^h Edward, Earl of Manchester, was a nobleman of many great and amiable qualities. He was a zealous and able friend of liberty. During the civil commotions he was one of the avowed patriots in the House of Peers, and the only member of that house who was accused, by Charles, of high treason, along with the five members of the House of Commons. He took an active

and Broghill were the noblemen who chiefly managed these affairs at the time. In conversation with them, Baxter mentioned the importance, and what he regarded as the facility, of an agreement between the Episcopalians and the moderate Presbyterians; and the happy consequences to the civil and religious interests of the country which would result from such a union. The effect of this conversation he has recorded.

"Lord Broghill¹ was pleased to come to me, and told me, that he had proposed to the king a conference for an agreement, and that the king took it very well, and was resolved to further it. About the same time, the Earl of Manchester signified as much to Mr. Calamy; so that Mr. Calamy, Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Ash, and myself, went to the Earl of Manchester, then lord chamberlain; and after consulting about the business with him, he determined on a day to bring us to the king. Mr. Calamy advised that all of us who were the king's chaplains might be called to the consultation; so that we four might not seem to take too much upon us without others. So, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Manton, and Dr. Spurstow, &c., went with us to the king; who, with the Lord Chancellor, and the Earl of St. Alban's, came to us in the Lord Chamberlain's lodgings.

"We exercised more boldness, at first, than afterwards would have been borne. When some of the rest had congratulated his majesty's happy Restoration, and declared the large hope which

part in the wars on the side of the Parliament, and was one of the leaders of the Presbyterian party. After the battle of Newbury, he was suspected of favouring the king's interest. He was a decided friend of the Restoration, and was immediately after it appointed chamberlain of the household. It is evident, from various circumstances, that he was a real friend of the Non-conformists, and bore to Baxter, in particular, a very cordial attachment. An occurrence once happened at his table, when Baxter was dining with him, which gave the good man great concern, and in which his lordship, as soon as apprised of it, acted with great propriety and kindness.—*Life*, part ii. p. 289.

¹ Roger Boyle, Baron of Broghill, was a native of Ireland, third son of the first Earl of Cork, and brother to the Honourable Robert Boyle. He took an active part in the civil wars, on the parliamentary side. He was regarded, by all parties, as a man of very considerable ability and address. He enjoyed a large share of the Protector's favour and confidence; was president of his council for Scotland, and one of the lords of his upper house. He favoured the Restoration, however, and was created Earl of Orrery on the 5th of September, 1660. He was also nominated, the same year, Lord President of Munster, for life. His lordship died in the year 1679. There seems to have been a considerable intimacy between him and Baxter. It was in his lordship's house Baxter became acquainted with Archbishop Usher. He dedicates one of his works to him, and often refers to him in his life, generally calling him by his first title, Lord Broghill.

they had of a cordial union among all dissenters by his means I presumed to speak to him of the concerns of religion, and how far we were from desiring the continuance of any factions or parties in the church, and how much a happy union would conduce to the good of the land, and to his majesty's satisfaction. I assured him that though there were turbulent, fanatic persons in his dominions, those whose peace we humbly craved of him were no such persons; but such as longed after concord, and were truly loyal to him, and desired no more than to live under him a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. But that as there were differences between them and their brethren, about some ceremonies or discipline of the church, we humbly craved his majesty's favour for the ending of those differences; it being easy for him to interpose, that so the people might not be deprived of their faithful pastors, and ignorant, scandalous, unworthy ones obtruded on them.

"I presumed to tell him, that the people we spoke for were such as were contented with an interest in heaven, and the liberty and advantages of the Gospel to promote it; and that if these were taken from them, and they were deprived of their faithful pastors, and liberty of worshipping God, they would take themselves as undone in this world, whatever else they should enjoy: that thus the hearts of his most faithful subjects, who hoped for his help, would even be broken; and that we doubted not but his majesty desired to govern a people made happy by him, and not a broken-hearted people. I presumed to tell him, that the late usurpers so well understood their own interest, that to promote it, they had found the way of doing good to be the most effectual means; and had placed and encouraged many thousand faithful ministers in the church, even such as detested their usurpation; and that so far had they attained their ends hereby, that it was the principal means of their interest in the people; wherefore, I humbly craved his majesty, that as he was our lawful king, in whom all his people were prepared to centre, so he would be pleased to undertake this blessed work of promoting their holiness and concord; and that he would never suffer himself to be tempted to undo the good which Cromwell, or any other, had done, because they were usurpers that did it; or discountenance a faithful ministry, because his enemies had set them up; but that he would rather outgo them in doing good, and opposing and rejecting the ignorant and ungodly, of what opinion or party soever; that the people whose cause we recom-

mended to him, had their eyes on him as the officer of God, to defend them in the possession of the helps of their salvation ; which if he were pleased to vouchsafe them, their estates and lives would cheerfully be offered to his service.

“ I humbly besought him that he would never suffer his subjects to be tempted to have favourable thoughts of the late usurpers, by seeing the vice indulged which they suppressed ; or the godly ministers or people discountenanced whom they encouraged ; and that all his enemies’ conduct could not teach him a more effectual way to restore the reputation and honour of the usurpers than to do worse than they, and destroy the good which they had done. And, again, I humbly craved that no misrepresentations might cause him to believe, that because some fanatics have been factious and disloyal, therefore the religious people in his dominions, who are most careful of their souls, are such, though some of them may be dissatisfied about some forms and ceremonies in God’s worship, which others use : and that none of them might go under so ill a character with him, by misreports behind their backs, till it were proved of them personally, or they had answered for themselves : for we, that better knew them than those that were likely to be their accusers, did confidently testify to his majesty, on their behalf, that they are resolved enemies of sedition, rebellion, disobedience, and divisions, which the world should see, and their adversaries be convinced of, if his majesty’s wisdom and clemency did but remove those occasions of scruple in some points of discipline and worship.

“ I, further, humbly craved, that the freedom and plainness of these expressions to his majesty might be pardoned, as being extorted by the present necessity, and encouraged by our revived hopes. I told him also, that it was not for Presbyterians, or any party, as such, that we were speaking, but for the religious part of his subjects in general, than whom no prince on earth had better. I also represented to him how considerable a part of that kingdom he would find them to be ; and of what great advantage their union would be to his majesty, to the people, and to the bishops themselves, and how easily it might be procured—by making only things necessary to be the terms of union—by the true exercise of church discipline against sin,—and by not casting out the faithful ministers that must exercise it, and obtruding unworthy men upon the people : and how easy it was to avoid the violating of men’s solemn vows and covenants,

without hurt to any others. And finally, I requested that we might be heard speak for ourselves, when any accusations were brought against us.”^k

In this long address, we cannot but admire the good sense and honesty of Baxter, who could thus fully and delicately instruct his majesty in his duty, and in the true interests of his government and the country. Happy would it have been for Charles, had he listened to such counsels; but from his well-known character, we can have little doubt that he was at this time laughing at the simplicity of the venerable men who were pleading before him the rights of God and their fellow subjects. A better illustration of casting pearls before swine, could not easily be found than what this address presents. It was quite appropriate to plead with Charles, his solemn promises, to remind him of his engagements, to place before him the circumstances and expectations of his subjects, and to urge upon him the encouragement of some, and the protection of all religious people. But to talk to such a man of discountenancing sin, and promoting godliness, or to entertain any expectation that he would pay the least attention to such things, shows that the parties thus addressing him were better Christians than politicians. Policy required, however, that he should treat them decently for a time; and hence he deceived them by an appearance of candour and kindness, and by promises never intended to be fulfilled.

“The king,” says Baxter, “gave us not only a free audience, but as gracious an answer as we could expect; professing his gladness to hear our inclinations to agreement, and his resolution to do his part to bring us together; and that it must not be by bringing one party over to the other, but by abating somewhat on both sides, and meeting in the midway; and that if it were not accomplished, it should be owing to ourselves and not to him. Nay, that he was resolved to see it brought to pass, and that he would draw us together himself, with some inore to that purpose. Insomuch that old Mr. Ash burst out into tears of joy, and could not forbear expressing what gladness this promise of his majesty had put into his heart.”^l

Whether Charles himself really wished, at this time, to effect some kind of union between the parties, but was diverted from it by the high-church men who were about him, it is difficult to

^k Life, part ii. pp. 230, 231.

^l Ibid. p. 231.

say. The probability is, he would have cared nothing about it if he could have quieted both classes, at least for a time, and thus got himself firmly established on the throne. He, no doubt, bore the Puritans a deadly grudge, for having, as he conceived, destroyed his father, and driven himself into exile. But there were those around him who hated them quite as heartily, and who were determined, if possible, to make their yoke heavier than before. To these men there is full evidence that all the obnoxious measures which led to the act of uniformity, and to the unmerited sufferings which arose from it, properly belong.

Had there been a disposition to promote peace and union, one of two courses might have been pursued; either of which would have accomplished the objects, or at least, have prevented an open rupture. The adoption of such a liturgy and form of church government as the moderate men of both parties might approve: this was most ardently desired by Baxter and many of those with whom he acted; and was not by any means impracticable. Or failing that, to waive enforcing uniformity of worship and ecclesiastical order upon the then-incumbents of different sentiments on these points, while they lived, and which they were entitled to expect from the king's declaration at Breda. The court had this measure entirely in its own power. On this plan a prospective act of uniformity might have been passed, which would have gradually effected the favourite object, without inflicting tremendous suffering on conscientious men, and an incurable wound on the church itself. Every principle of integrity and good policy ought to have secured the interests of the Nonconformists; though I doubt whether the interests of religion in the nation would ultimately have been so effectually promoted, as by the course pursued. The hardest, the most unjust, the most oppressive measure that could be adopted, was the rigorous enforcement of episcopacy and the liturgy, with all their concomitants, on pious and conscientious men. For this, whoever was the party chiefly concerned in it, no apology can be found. It was an unnecessary and a cruel act of despotism.

"Either at this time or shortly after, the king required us to draw up and offer him such proposals as we thought meet, in order to agreement about church government, for that was the main difference; if that were agreed upon, there would be little danger of differing in the rest: and he desired us to set down the most that we could yield to.

"We told him, that we were but few men, and had no com-

mission from any of our brethren to express their minds ; and therefore desired that his majesty would give us leave to acquaint our brethren in the country with it, and take them with us. The king answered, this would be too tedious, and make too much noise ; and therefore we should do what we could ourselves only, with those of the city we could take with us. And when we then professed that we presumed not to give the sense of others, or oblige them ; and that what we did must signify but the minds of so many as were present ; he answered, that it should signify no more, and that he did not intend to call an assembly of the other party, but would bring a few, such as he thought meet ; and that if he thought good to advise with a few of each side, for his own satisfaction, none had cause to be offended at it.

“ We also craved that, at the same time, when we offered our concessions to the king, the brethren on the other side might bring in theirs, containing also the uttermost that they could abate and yield to us for concord, that seeing both together, we might see what probability of success we had. And the king promised that it should be so.

“ We hereupon departed, and appointed to meet from day to day at Sion College, and to consult there openly with any of our brethren that would please to join us, that none might say they were excluded. Some city ministers came among us, and some came not ; and divers country ministers, who were in the city, came also to us ; as Dr. Worth, since a bishop in Ireland, Mr. Fulwood, since archdeacon of Totness ; but Mr. Matthew Newcomen was most constant in assisting us.

“ In these debates, we found the great inconvenience of too many actors, though there cannot be too many consenters to what is well done : for that which seemed the most convenient expression to one, seemed inconvenient to another ; and we who all agreed in matter, had much ado to agree in words. But after about two or three weeks’ time, we drew up a paper of proposals, which, with Archbishop Usher’s form of government, called his reduction, we should offer to the king. Mr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds drew up the most of them ; Dr. Worth and Dr. Reynolds drew up what was against the ceremonies ; the abstract which was laid before the king I drew up.”^m

It is evident that both caution and good sense mark all these

^m Life, part ii. pp. 231, 232.

proceedings. Nothing could be fairer, if something was to be conceded by both parties, than that each should state what it was ready to give up or to modify; it would then have been seen at once, whether the parties were likely to agree on any common basis. The Nonconformists, it is clear, were not backward to offer concessions; and had they been met with a conciliatory spirit by the church party, matters would not have proceeded to the extremity which they did. As some of their papers, even those against ceremonies, were drawn up by Reynolds and Worth, who both afterwards conformed, and were made bishops, their proposals must have been very reasonable.

The paper referred to by Baxter, drawn up in the most respectful manner, and containing very moderate propositions, was laid before his majesty. It embraced the leading points of difference relating to church government, the liturgy, and ceremonies, on which such extended controversies had been maintained. Usher's scheme of a reduced episcopacy (a kind of presbyterian episcopate, in which the bishop is regarded rather as the permanent moderator in the synods or councils of his brethren, the *primus inter pares*, than as clothed with independent authority, and exclusive rights and privileges) was the basis of their proposition on this head. They agreed on the lawfulness of a liturgy, but objected to its rigorous enforcement, and to several parts of the Book of Common Prayer which required amendment. They also pointed out the various ceremonies in divine service at which they were offended; such as the use of the surplice, the sign of the cross at baptism, bowing at the name of Jesus, and kneeling at the altar. All these particulars and requests they humbly laid at his majesty's feet. They also presented Usher's own model as drawn up in 1641.

"When we went," says Baxter, "with these foresaid papers to the king, and expected there to meet the divines of the other party, according to promise, with their proposals also, containing the lowest terms which they would yield to for peace; we saw not a man of them, nor any papers from them of that nature, no, not to this day; but it was not fit for us to expostulate or complain. His majesty very graciously renewed his professions, I must not call them promises, that he would bring us together, and see that the bishops should come down and yield on their part; and when he heard our papers read, he seemed well pleased with them, and told us, he was glad that

we were for a liturgy and yielded to the essence of episcopacy, and, therefore, he doubted not of our agreement; with much more, which we thought meet to recite in our following addresses, by way of gratitude, and for other reasons easy to be conjectured.

"Yet was not Bishop Usher's model the same in all points that we could wish; but it was the best that we could have the least hope, I say not to obtain, but acceptably to make them any offers of; for had we proposed any thing below archbishops and bishops, we should but have suddenly furnished them with plausible reasons for the rejecting of all further attempts of concord, or any other favour from them.

"Before this time, by the king's return, many hundred worthy ministers were displaced, and cast out of their charges; because they were in sequestrations where others had by the parliament been cast out. Our earnest desires had been, that all such should be cast out as were in any benefice belonging formerly to a man that was not grossly insufficient or debauched; but that all who succeeded such as these scandalous ones, should hold their places.

"These wishes being vain, and all the old ones restored, the king promised that the places where any of the old ones were dead, should be confirmed to the possessors: but many others got the broad seal for them, and the matter was not great; for we were all of us to be endured but a little longer. However, we agreed to offer five requests to the king, which he received."^a

These requests related to a speedy answer from himself to their proposals about agreement, to a suspension of proceedings upon the act of conformity till such agreement were come to or refused, and some other matters arising out of the unsettled state of affairs in the church. While they waited for the promised condescension of the episcopal divines, they received nothing but a paper expressive of bitter opposition to their proposals. They felt that they were treated unworthily, and therefore the brethren requested Baxter to answer it. He did so; but it was never used, as there seemed no probability of its having any good effect. In his life, however, we are furnished with both documents at large.^o

A short time after this, the ministers were informed that the king would communicate his intentions in the form of a

^a Life, part ii. p. 241.

^o Ibid. pp. 242—258.

declaration, to which they would be at liberty to furnish their exceptions. This was accordingly done on the 4th of September, 1660. This paper, which is very long, is full of pretensions to zeal for righteousness, peace, and union; unfair in its assumptions, and unkind in its insinuations; and expresses nothing explicitly but the determination of the court to uphold things as they were. It however intimated his majesty's approbation of the principles and conduct of the Presbyterian ministers who waited upon him at Breda; renews the declaration made there in favour of liberty of conscience; promises that none should be molested for differing from the forms of episcopacy; waives enforcing the sign of the cross at baptism, kneeling at the sacrament, the use of the surplice, the subscription of canonical obedience and re-ordination, where these were conscientiously objected to. It renews the promise to appoint a meeting to review the Liturgy; engages to make some alterations respecting the extent of some of the dioceses, if necessary, and to modify the authority of the bishops, if requisite; and that some other matters of reformation should be attended to.^p As far as the feelings and wishes of the Presbyterian party on the great leading points of church government and discipline were concerned, it was *vox et pretereā nihil*.^q

"When we received this copy of the declaration," says Baxter, "we saw that it would not serve to heal our differences; we therefore told the Lord Chancellor, with whom we were to do all our business, that our endeavours, as to concord, would all be frustrated, if much were not altered in the declaration. I pass over all our conferences with him, both now and at other times. In conclusion, we were requested to draw up our thoughts of it in writing, which the brethren imposed on me to do. My judgment was, that all the fruit of this our treaty, beside a little reprimand from intended ejection, would be but the satisfying our consciences and posterity that we had done our duty, and that it was not our fault that we came not to the desired concord or coalition; and therefore, seeing we had no considerable higher hopes, we should speak as plainly as honesty and conscience did require us. But when Mr. Calamy and Dr.

^p This declaration was drawn up by Lord Clarendon; but the evasive claims which render it, in a great measure, nugatory, were inserted by the secret advisers of the king. Sheldon, Hinchman, and Morley, were deeply engaged in the whole affair.—*Secret History of Charles II.*, vol. i. p. 93.

^q Life, part ii. p. 259, 265.

Reynolds had read my paper, they were troubled at the plainness of it, and thought it never would be endured, and therefore desired some alteration; especially that I might leave out the prediction of the evils which would follow our non-agreement, which the court would interpret as a threatening: and the mentioning the aggravations of covenant-breaking and perjury. I gave them my reasons for letting it stand as it was. To bring me more effectually to their mind, they told the Earl of Manchester, with whom, as our sure friend, we still consulted, and through whom the court used to communicate to us what it desired. He called the Earl of Anglesey^r and the Lord Hollis^s to the consultations as our friends. And these three lords, with Mr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds, perused all the writing; and all, with earnestness, persuaded me to the said alterations. I confess, I thought those two points material which they excepted against, and would not have had them left out, and thereby made them think me too plain and unpleasing, as never used to the language or converse of a court. But it was not my unskilfulness in a more pleasing language, but my reason and conscience upon foresight of the issue which were the cause. When they told me, however, it would not so much as be re-

^r The Earl of Anglesey was one of the most respectable of those noblemen who were understood to be attached to the Nonconformists. He was a native of Ireland, and son of Lord Mount Norris. He was at first supposed to favour the royal cause, but afterwards joined that of the parliament, and went to Ireland in its service. Though he had taken no part in the events which led immediately to the death of the king, his lordship did not increase his reputation by sitting as one of the commissioners on the trial of the regicides. He was made an earl for his important services in promoting the restoration, and rose to some of the highest offices in the state during the reign of Charles II. He was a man of very considerable learning, and indefatigable in business; but he seems to have been more attentive to his interests than to his consistency, or to what was due to the religious party by which he was held in estimation.—*Biog. Brit.* vol. i. pp. 192—200; *Athen. Ox.* vol. iv. pp. 181—186.

^s Denzil, Lord Hollis, second son of the first Earl of Clare, was one of the most distinguished of the popular leaders in the reign of Charles I. He was courageous, patriotic, honourable, and disinterested in all his conduct. He appears to have taken a decided part against Charles I. (with whom he had lived upon terms of intimate friendship) purely from the love of his country. He was the principal leader of the Presbyterian party, which placed the greatest confidence in him; he was consequently disliked by Cromwell and the Independents, both of whom he opposed. Even Clarendon acknowledges that he deserved the high reputation which he enjoyed, "being of more accomplished parts than any of the Presbyterian leaders." It does not appear, however, that he espoused the Presbyterian interest so warmly after the restoration as he had done before.

ceived, and that I must go with it myself, for nobody else would, I yielded to the alterations.”^t

“A little before this petition was agreed on, the bishops’ party appointed, at our request, a meeting with some of us, to try how near we could come, in preparation for what was to be resolved on. Dr. Morley, Dr. Hinchman, and Dr. Cosins, met Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, and myself; and after a few roving discourses we parted, without bringing them to any particular concessions or abatement, only their general talk was, from the beginning, as if they would do any thing for peace which was fit to be done. They being then newly elected, but not consecrated to their several bishopricks, we called them, *My Lords*, which Dr. Morley once returned, saying, ‘We may call you also, I suppose, by the same name.’ By which I perceived they had some purpose to try that way with us.”^u

The petition, as altered, was finally agreed to. It expresses the disappointment which the ministers experienced, both from the contents and the omissions of the declaration; the pain which was caused by some of the insinuations contained in it; the distinction which they had always contended for between the episcopal form of church government, and the episcopacy established in England; and presents a very plain view of that modified system of government and discipline which would satisfy themselves, and, they believed, the great body of serious persons of their persuasion throughout the country. “But on being delivered to the Lord Chancellor, it was so ungrateful, that we were never called to present it to the king; but, instead of that, it was offered us, that we should make such alterations in the declaration as were necessary to attain its ends; with these cautions, that we put in nothing but what we judged of flat necessity; and that we alter not the preface or language of it: for it was to be the king’s declaration, and what he spake as expressing his own sense was nothing to us. If we thought he imposed any thing intolerable upon us, we had leave to express our desires for the altering of it. Whereupon we agreed to offer another paper of alterations, letting all the rest of the declaration alone; but withal, by word, to tell those we offered it to, which was the Lord Chancellor, that this was not the model of church government which we at first offered, nor which we thought most expedient for the healing of the church;

^t Life, part ii. p. 266.

^u Ibid. 274.

but seeing that cannot be obtained, we shall humbly submit, and thankfully acknowledge his majesty's condescension, if we may obtain what now we offer, and shall faithfully endeavour to improve it to the church's peace, to the utmost of our power."^x

Another paper of alterations was accordingly made out and sent in. "After all this, a day was appointed for his majesty to peruse the declaration, as it was drawn up by the Lord Chancellor,^y and to allow what he liked, and alter the rest, upon the hearing of what both sides should say. He accordingly came to the Lord Chancellor's house, and with him the Dukes of Albemarle and Ormond,^z as I remember; the Earl of Manchester, the Earl of Anglesey, the Lord Hollis, &c.; and Dr. Sheldon, then bishop of London, Dr. Morley, then bishop of Worcester, Dr. Hinchman, then bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Cosins, bishop of Durham, Dr. Gauden, afterwards bishop of Exeter and Worcester, Dr. Barwick, afterwards dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Hacket, bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, with divers others, among whom Dr. Gunning was most notable. On the other part stood Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, Mr. Ash, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Manton, Dr. Spurstow, myself, and who else I remember not. The business of the day was not to dispute, but as the Lord Chancellor read over the declaration, each party was to speak to what it disliked, and the king to determine how it should be, as he liked himself. While the Lord Chancellor read over the preface, there was no interruption, only he thought it best himself to blot out those words about the declaration in Scotland for the covenant,—

^x *Life*, part ii. pp. 274—276.

^y Hyde, earl of Clarendon, now lord chancellor, was in various respects a considerable man. He possessed a large portion of that kind of loyalty which made him regard the glory of his country chiefly as it contributed to the glory of the king. He was narrow-minded, and the subject of prejudices of the most violent kind, especially against the friends of liberty and the Nonconformists. It does not appear that his lordship particularly disliked Baxter; on the contrary, he seems to have done him, occasionally, some little kindness; but to Clarendon, and one or two of the bishops, a large portion of the sufferings and disappointment of the Nonconformists, after the Restoration, is mainly to be attributed. He could be merry with them, however, sometimes. He told Baxter, after the Savoy conference, that had he been but as fat as Dr. Manton, they had done very well. Baxter readily replied, that if his lordship would teach him the art of growing fat, he should find him quite ready to learn.—*Life*, part ii. p. 3.

^z The Duke of Ormond was lord steward of the household, and was a man of great integrity and benevolence. He had always been a royalist, but was much respected by all parties. I am not aware that he took much part in the affairs which related to the Nonconformists.

that we did, from the moment it passed our hand, ask God forgiveness for our part in it. The great matter which we stopped at, was the word *consent*, where the bishop is to confirm by the consent of the pastor of that church; and the king would by no means pass the word consent, either there or in the point of ordination or censures, because it gave the ministers a negative voice. We urged him hard with a passage in his father's book of meditations, where he expressly granteth this *consent* of the presbyters;* but it would not prevail. The most that I insisted on was from the end of our endeavours, that we came not hither for a personal agreement only with our brethren of the other way, but to procure such gracious concessions from his majesty as would unite all the soberest people of the land; and we knew that on lower terms it could not be done. Though *consent* be but a little word, it was necessary to a very desirable end; if it were purposed that the parties and divisions should rather continue unhealed, then we had no more to say, there being no remedy: but we were sure that union would not be attained, if no consent were allowed ministers in any part of the government of their flocks; and so they would be only teachers, without any participation in the ruling of the people, whose rectors they were called. When I perceived some offence at what I said, I told them that we had not the judgments of men at our command. We could not, in reason, suppose that our concessions, or any thing we could do, would change the judgments of any great numbers; and therefore we must consider what will unite us, in case their judgments be not changed, else our labour would be to no purpose.

* The passage in the 'Eikon Basilike,' to which Baxter refers, as that in which Charles concedes that the bishops should rule with the consent of the presbyters, is, I apprehend, the following: "Not that I am against the managing of this precedency and authority in one man, by the *joint counsel and consent of many presbyters*: I have offered to restore that, as a fit means to avoid those errors, corruptions, and partialities, which are incident to any one man: also to avoid tyranny, which becomes no Christian, least of all churchmen. Besides, it will be a means to take away that burden and *odium* of affairs which may lie too heavy on one man's shoulders, as indeed I think it formerly did on the bishops' here." (Pp. 153, 154.) This was the opinion of Charles I. in solitude and suffering, and therefore no reason why it should bind Charles II., in full possession of royal power and authority. He, indeed, must have been amused at the quotation of his father's opinions from this book; and Dr. Gauden, the real author of the 'Eikon,' who was now present, must have been not a little mortified by the reference to such a passage. The king, it is said, when the reference was made, said quietly, "All that is in that book is not Gospel;" a remark which meant more than met the ear.—*Bate's Funeral Sermon for Baxter.*

“Bishop Morley told them how great our power was, and what we might do if we were willing. He told the king also that no man had written better of these matters than I had done; and there my five Disputations of Church Government lay, ready to be produced. All this was to intimate as if I now contradicted what I had there written. I told him that I had the best reason to know what I had written, and that I was still of the same mind. A great many words there were about prelacy and re-ordination; Dr. Gunning and Bishop Morley speaking almost all on one side, and Dr. Hinchman and Dr. Cosens sometimes; and Mr. Calamy and myself most on the other side; but I think neither party value the rambling discourses of that day so much as to think them worth recording. Mr. Calamy answered Dr. Gunning from Scripture very well, against the divine right of prelacy as a distinct order. When Dr. Gunning told them that Dr. Hammond had said enough against the Presbyterian cause and ordination, and was yet unanswered, I thought it meet to tell him, that I had answered the substance of his arguments, and said enough, moreover, against the diocesan frame of government; and to prove the validity of the English presbyters’ ordination, which, indeed, was unanswered, though I was very desirous to have seen an answer to it. I said this, because they had got the book by them, and because I thought the unreasonableness of their dealing might be evinced, who force so many hundreds to be re-ordained; and will not any of them answer one book, which is written to prove the validity of that ordination which they would have nullified, though I provoked them purposely in such a presence.

“The most of the time being spent thus in speaking to particulars of the declaration, as it was read, when we came to the end, the Lord Chancellor drew out another paper, and told us that the king had been petitioned also by the Independents and Anabaptists; and though he knew not what to think of it himself, and did not very well like it, yet something he had drawn up which he would read to us, and desire us also to give our advice about it. Thereupon he read, as an addition to the declaration, ‘that others also be permitted to meet for religious worship, so be it they do it not to the disturbance of the peace; and that no justice of peace or officer disturb them.’ When he had read it, he again desired them all to think on it, and give their advice; but all were silent. The Presbyterians all perceived, as soon as they heard it, that it would secure the

liberty of the Papists ; and Dr. Wallis whispered me in the ear, and entreated me to say nothing, for it was an odious business, but to let the bishops speak to it. But the bishops would not speak a word, nor any one of the Presbyterians, and so we were like to have ended in silence. I knew, if we consented to it, it would be charged on us, that we spake for a toleration of Papists and sectaries : yet it might have lengthened out our own. And if we spake against it, all sects and parties would be set against us as the causers of their sufferings, and as a partial people that would have liberty ourselves, but would have no others enjoy it with us. At last, seeing the silence continue, I thought our very silence would be charged on us as consent, if it went on, and therefore I only said this : ' That this reverend brother, Dr. Gunning, even now speaking against the sects, had named the Papists and the Socinians : for our parts, we desired not favour to ourselves alone, and rigorous severity we desired against none. As we humbly thanked his majesty for his indulgence to ourselves, so we distinguished the tolerable parties from the intolerable. For the former, we humbly craved just lenity and favour, but for the latter, such as the two sorts named before by that reverend brother, for our parts, we could not make their toleration our request.' ^b To which his majesty said, there were laws enough against the Papists ; to which I replied, that we understood the question to be, whether those laws should be executed on them or not. And so his majesty broke up the meeting of that day.

" Before the meeting was dissolved, his majesty had all along told what he would have stand in the declaration ; and he named four divines, to determine of any words in the alteration, if there were any difference ; that is, Bishop Morley, Bishop Hinchman, Dr. Reynolds, and Mr. Calamy ; and if they disagreed, that the Earl of Anglesey and the Lord Hollis should decide it. As they went out of the room, I told the Earl of Anglesey, that we had no other business there but the church's peace and welfare, and I would not have been the man that should have done so much against it as he had done that day, for far

^b Baxter's honesty is always evident in every thing he did ; but here his prejudices and imperfect views of religious liberty made him appear in a very disadvantageous light. There is no doubt that the conduct of the court on this occasion was designed to entrap the Nonconformists. If they said yea to the proposition, they would be regarded as the friends of Popery ; if they said nay, they would be considered enemies to the liberties of others, while they were struggling for their own.

more than he was like to get by it. Though called a Presbyterian, he had spoken more for prelacy than we expected; and I think by the consequent that this saying did some good; for when I afterwards found the declaration amended, and asked how it came to pass, he intimated to me that it was his doing.

"When I went out from the meeting, I went dejected, being fully satisfied that the form of government in that declaration would not be satisfactory, nor attain that concord which was our end, because the pastors had no government of the flocks; and I was resolved to meddle no more in the business, but patiently suffer with other dissenters. But two or three days after, meeting the king's declaration cried about the streets, I presently stepped into a house to read it; and seeing the word *consent* put in about confirmation and sacrament, though not as to jurisdiction, and seeing the *pastoral persuasive power* of governing left to all the ministers with the rural dean, and some more amendments, I wondered how it came to pass, but was exceeding glad of it; perceiving that now the terms were, though not such as we desired, such as any sober, honest minister might submit to. I presently resolved to do my best to persuade all, according to my interest and opportunity, to conform according to the terms of this declaration, and cheerfully to promote the concord of the church, and brotherly love, which this concord doth bespeak.

"Having frequent business with the Lord Chancellor about other matters, I was going to him when I met the king's declaration in the street; and I was so much pleased with it, that having told him why I was so earnest to have had it suited to the desired end, I gave him hearty thanks for the addition, and told him that if the liturgy were but altered as the declaration promised, and this settled and continued to us by law, and not reversed, I should take it to be my duty to do my best to procure the full consent of others, and promote our happy concord on these terms; and should rejoice to see the day when factions and parties may all be swallowed up in unity, and contentions turned to brotherly love. At that time he began to offer me a bishoprick, of which more anon."^c

The account which Clarendon gives us of the transactions relating to the declaration, are very different from Baxter's; and as he refers to the conduct of the ministers on this occasion for

^c Life, part ii. pp. 276, 279.

proof of the necessity of a rigorous enforcement of the laws, I shall give his version of it in his own words. This I should not have thought necessary, had not Bishop Heber, in his *Life of Jeremy Taylor*, introduced it as a proof of the "disingenuousness of some of the Presbyterian leaders, and the absurd bigotry of others."^d

"Here," says Clarendon, "I cannot but instance two acts of the Presbyterians, by which, if their humour and spirit were not enough discovered and known, their want of ingenuity and integrity would be manifest; and how impossible it is for men who would not be deceived, to depend on either. When the declaration had been delivered to the ministers, there was a clause in it, in which the king declared 'his own constant practice of the common prayer,' and that he would take it well from those who used it in their churches, that the common people might be again acquainted with the piety, gravity, and devotion of it, and which he thought would facilitate their living in good neighbourhood together, or words to that effect. When they had considered the whole some days, Mr. Calamy, and some other ministers deputed by the rest, came to the Chancellor to re-deliver it into his hands. They acknowledged the king had been very gracious to them in his concessions; though he had not granted all that some of their brethren wished, yet they were contented, only desiring him that he would prevail with the king, that the clause mentioned before might be left out, which, they protested, was moved by them for the king's own end, and that they might show their obedience to him, and resolution to do him service. For they were resolved themselves to do what the king wished; first to reconcile the people, who for near twenty years had not been acquainted with that form, by informing them that it contained much piety and devotion, and might be lawfully used; and then that they would begin to use it themselves, and by degrees accustom the people to it, which they said would have a better effect than if the clause were in the declaration. For they should be thought in their persuasions to comply only with the king's declaration, and to merit from his majesty, and not to be moved from the conscience of the duty, and so they should take that occasion to manifest their zeal to please the king. And they feared there would be other ill consequences from it by the waywardness of

^d Heber's *Life of Taylor*, pp. 101, 341.

the common people, who were to be treated with skill, and would not be prevailed upon all at once. The king was to be present the next morning, to hear the declaration read the last time before both parties, and then the Chancellor told him, in the presence of all the rest, what the ministers had desired, which they again enlarged upon, with the same protestations of their resolutions, in such a manner that his majesty believed they meant honestly, and the clause was left out. But the declaration was no sooner published, than, observing that the people were generally satisfied with it, they sent their emissaries abroad, and many of their letters were intercepted, and particularly a letter from Mr. Calamy, to a leading minister in Somersetshire, whereby he advised and intreated him that he and his friends would continue and persist in the use of *the Directory*, and by no means admit the Common Prayer in their churches; for thus he made no question but that they should prevail further with the king than he had yet consented to in his declaration!

“The other instance was, that as soon as the declaration was printed, the king received a petition in the name of the ministers of London, and many others of the same opinion with them, who had subscribed that petition, amongst whom notice of those who had attended the king in those conferences had their names. They gave his majesty humble thanks for the grace he had vouchsafed to show in his declaration, which they received as an earnest of his future goodness and condescension, in granting all those other concessions, which were absolutely necessary for the liberty of their conscience, and desired, with importunity and ill manners, that the wearing the surplice, and the using the cross in baptism, might be absolutely abolished out of the church, as being scandalous to all men of tender consciences! From these two instances, all men may conclude that nothing but a severe execution of the law can prevail upon that class of men to conform to government.”*

On this account of Clarendon's much might be said to show its inaccuracy and unfairness. It might be inferred from what he says, that the only matter of difference about the declaration, respected the king's use of the Liturgy in his private chapel, and his wish that those who used it might recommend it to others. Whereas I cannot perceive that the ministers

* Life of Lord Clarendon, pp. 75, 76.

objected to this at all, or preferred any request that the clause on this subject should be omitted. Baxter, it is certain, could have been no party to such a demand. The petition drawn up by him for his brethren, at first sight of the declaration, but which was not adopted, contains no reference to any such thing; which it must have done had it been insisted on, as Clarendon asserts. And in fact the declaration, as published, contains the king's request that the ministers would recommend the Prayer-book.

Instead of their being dissatisfied with the king's declaration, as altered in conformity with some of their wishes; it is apparent from Baxter's narrative, how much he and most of his brethren rejoiced in it, and that they considered little more necessary for their satisfaction than the fulfilment of the promises contained in it, and passing it into a law.

The duplicity charged on Calamy is founded on the evidence of letters pretended to be intercepted; the most convenient sort of proof for a prime minister, but the most villanous of all kinds of evidence. The conduct charged is not consistent with the general character of Calamy, with the motives by which it is conceivable he should have been actuated at the time; or with the fact, that subsequent to this discovery of his treachery, a bishoprick was urged upon him, by Clarendon himself.

The reason why the thanks presented by the London ministers for his majesty's declaration, (which abounds with expressions of loyalty and gratitude for his gracious concessions,) were not subscribed by those who had waited upon the king, was not, as Clarendon insinuates, disaffection to him, and disappointment that the declaration was generally acceptable. The ministers of London, it appears, differed among themselves as to the propriety of thanking his majesty for the declaration, on the ground that it implied their approbation of bishops and archbishops, &c.; and old Arthur Jackson, who had presented the Bible to Charles on his entry into London, decidedly opposed their doing so, contrary to the wishes of Baxter and others.

As conclusive evidence how little the authority of Clarendon is worth in this affair, the importunity and ill manners of which he accuses the ministers has no foundation in fact, for the language which he ascribes to them does not occur in the paper to which he refers. He grossly misrepresents the petition which they presented.²

² See Baxter's Life, part ii. pp. 284, 285, where the petition is given at large.

This attempt of Clarendon to throw the blame of the treatment which the Nonconformists experienced upon their unreasonableness and duplicity, is the pitiful shift of a man who must have been haunted by a consciousness of the undeserved injuries which he had been the chief means of inflicting upon others; and who makes an impotent attempt to get rid of the guilt and the odium which attach to his conduct. It is more surprising, however, that such a man as Heber could allege, that the only differences between the parties respected "the form and colour of an ecclesiastical garment, the wording of a prayer, or the injunction of kneeling at the sacrament."⁸ He does not, indeed, justify the conduct of the ruling powers; but he entirely forgets, that the question at issue really was, whether conscience, be it well or ill informed, must submit to the authority of men, or be subject to the authority of God only. The Nonconformists believed certain things to be unlawful in the worship of God; the leaders of the church said, "We admit that they are not of divine authority, but they are enacted by us, we believe them to be good, you must therefore submit to them, or be thrown out." Holding the views which the Nonconformists did, they must have ceased to be Christians, had they not chosen to obey God rather than men. For this conduct, instead of being reproached as narrow-minded and bigoted sectarians who involved the nation in blood and mischief for trifles, they deserve to be held in everlasting remembrance, as sufferers for pure and undefiled religion.

The gratification of Baxter, from the apparent adoption in the declaration of some of the phrases contended for by the ministers, was not destined to be of long continuance. Nothing more was intended by the court than the amusement of the parties, till every thing was sufficiently ripe for the accomplishment of its real intentions. To carry on the same scheme of political deception, it was thought desirable to make some of the leading ministers bishops. Not that they wanted such bishops; but because it was the most effectual method of silencing such men, and destroying their influence with their own party. It succeeded with some, but not with Baxter. He gives the following account of the offers which were made to himself, and of the grounds on which he rejected them.

"A little before the meeting about the king's declaration, Colonel Birch came to me, as from the Lord Chancellor, to per-

⁸ Heber's Life of Taylor, p. 100.

suade me to take the bishoprick of Hereford, for he had bought the bishop's house at Whitburne, and thought to make a better bargain with me than with another, and, therefore, finding that the lord chancellor intended me the offer of one, he desired it might be that. I thought it best to give them no positive denial till I saw the utmost of their intents: and I perceived that Colonel Birch came privately, that a bishoprick might not be publicly refused, and to try whether I would accept it, that else it might not be offered me; for he told me that they would not bear such a repulse. I told him that I was resolved never to be bishop of Hereford, and that I did not think I should ever see cause to take any bishoprick; but I could give no positive answer till I saw the king's resolutions about the way of church government: for if the old diocesan frame continued, he knew we could never accept or own it. After this, not having a flat denial, he came again and again to Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, and myself together, to importune us all to accept the offer, for the bishoprick of Norwich was offered to Dr. Reynolds, and Coventry and Litchfield to Mr. Calamy; but he had no positive answer, but the same from me as before. At last, the day that the king's declaration came out, when I was with the lord chancellor, who did all, he asked me whether I would accept of a bishoprick; I told him that if he had asked me that question the day before, I could easily have answered him that in conscience I could not do it; for though I could live peaceably under whatever government the king should set up, I could not have a hand in executing it. But having, as I was coming to him, seen the king's declaration, and seeing that by it the government is so far altered as it is, I took myself for the church's sake exceedingly beholden to his lordship for those moderations; and my desire to promote the happiness of the church, which that moderation tendeth to, did make me resolve to take that course which tendeth most thereto. Whether to take a bishoprick be the way, I was in doubt, and desired some further time for consideration. But if his lordship would procure us the settlement of the matter of that declaration, by passing it into a law, I promised him to take that way in which I might most serve the public peace.

“Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, and myself, had some speeches together about it; and we all thought that a bishoprick might be accepted according to the description of the declaration, without

any violation of the covenant, or owning the ancient prelacy :^a but all the doubt was whether this declaration would be made a law as was then expected, or whether it were but a temporary means to draw us on till we came up to all the diocesans desired. Mr. Calamy desired that we might all go together, and all refuse or all accept it.

“By this time the rumour of it fled abroad, and the voice of the city made a difference. For though they wished that none of us should be bishops, the said Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Baxter, being known to be for moderate episcopacy, their acceptance would be less scandalous ; but if Mr. Calamy should accept it, who had preached, and written, and done so much against it (which were then at large recited), never Presbyterian would be trusted for his sake. So that the clamour was very loud against his acceptance of it : and Mr. Matthew Newcomen, his brother-in-law, and many more, wrote to me earnestly to dissuade him.

“For my own part, I resolved against it at the first, but not as a thing which I judged unlawful in itself as described in the king’s declaration : but I knew that it would take me off my writing. I looked to have most of the godly ministers cast out ; and what good could be done by ignorant, vile, incapable men ? I feared that this declaration was but for present use, and that shortly it would be revoked or nullified ; and if so, I doubted not but the laws would prescribe such work for bishops, in silencing ministers, and troubling honest Christians for their conscience, and ruling the vicious with greater lenity, as that I had rather have the meanest employment among men. My judgment was also fully resolved against the lawfulness of the old diocesan frame.

“But when Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Calamy asked my thoughts, I told them that, distinguishing between what is simply, and what is by accident, evil, I thought that as episcopacy is described in the king’s declaration, it is lawful when better cannot be had ; but yet scandal might make it unfit for some men more than others. To Mr. Calamy therefore I would give no counsel, but for Dr. Reynolds, I persuaded him to accept it, so be it he would publicly declare that he took it on the terms of the king’s declaration, and would lay it down when he could no

^a It requires a considerable portion of the distinguishing powers of Baxter to understand how the acceptance of a bishoprick, on any such footing as it was likely to be placed, was consistent with the principles of the covenant.

longer exercise it on those terms. Only I left it to his consideration whether it would be better to stay till he saw what they would do with the declaration; and for myself, I was confident I should see cause to refuse it.

“When I came to the lord chancellor the next day save one, he asked me of my resolution, and put me to it so suddenly, that I was forced to delay no longer, but told him that I could not accept it for several reasons. And it was not the least that I thought I could better serve the church without it, if he would but prosecute the establishment of the terms granted; and because I thought it would be ill taken if I refused it upon any but acceptable reasons. But as writing would serve best against misreports hereafter, I the next day put a letter into the lord chancellor’s hand, which he took in good part; in which I concealed most of my reasons, but gave the best, and used more freedom in my further requests than I expected should have any good success.”¹

As this letter contains some of Baxter’s views of the state of things which then existed, and suggests to the lord chancellor measures which, if adopted, he supposed would both advance the interests of the church, and gratify the Nonconformists, I shall present it entire. Whether he had any reasons for believing that the persons whom he mentions would accept of bishoprics, cannot now be ascertained. It has rarely happened that such a situation has been so completely in the power of an individual to accept, whose principles did not stand in the way of his acceding to it, but who honourably declined it for himself, and so ingenuously recommended others.

“MY LORD,

“Your great favour and condescension encourage me to give you more of my sense of the business which your lordship was pleased to propound. I was, till I saw the declaration, much dejected, and resolved against a bishoprick as unlawful; but, finding there more than on October 22d., that his majesty grants us the pastor’s consent, that the rural dean with the whole ministry may exercise as much persuasive pastoral power as I could desire, and that subscription is abated in the universities, &c. Finding such happy concessions in the great point of parochial power and discipline, and in the liturgy and ceremonies, my soul rejoiced in thankfulness to God and his instruments, and my conscience presently told me it was my

¹ *Life*, part ii. pp. 261, 262.

duty to do my best with myself and others, as far as I had interest and opportunity, to suppress all sinful discontents; and having competent materials now put into my hands, without which I could have done nothing, to persuade all my brethren to thankfulness and obedient submission to the government. Being raised to some joyful hopes of seeing the beginning of a happy union, I shall crave your lordship's pardon for presuming what further endeavours will be necessary to accomplish it. 1. If your lordship will endeavour to get the declaration passed into an act. 2. If you will speedily procure a commission to the persons that are equally to be deputed to that work, to review the Common Prayer-book, according to the declaration. 3. If you will further effectually the restoration of able, faithful ministers, who are lately removed, who have, and will have, great interest in the sober part of the people, to a settled station of service in the church. 4. If you will open some way for the ejection of the insufficient, scandalous, and unable. 5. If you will put as many of our persuasion as you can into bishopricks, if it may be, more than three. 6. If you will desire the bishops to place some of them in inferior places of trust, especially rural deaneries, which is a station suitable to us, in that it hath no salary or maintenance, nor coercive power, but that simple, pastoral, persuasive power which we desire. This much will set us all in joint.

"And, for my own part, I hope, by letters this very week, to disperse the seeds of satisfaction into many counties of England.^a My conscience commanding me to make this my very work and business, unless the things granted should be reversed, which God forbid. I must profess to your lordship that I am utterly against accepting of a bishoprick, because I am conscious that it will overmatch my sufficiency, and affright me with the thought of my account for so great an undertaking. Especially, because it will very much disable me from an effectual promoting of the church's peace. As men will question all my argumentations and persuasions, when they see me in the dignity which I plead for, but will take me to speak my conscience impartially, when I am but as one of themselves; so I must profess to your lordship that it will stop my own mouth that I cannot for shamespeak half so freely as now I can and will, if God enable me, for obe-

^a How different is this from Clarendon's representation of the behaviour of the ministers in London towards their brethren in the country!

dience and peace; while I know that the hearers will be thinking I am pleading for myself. I therefore humbly crave

“That your lordship will put some able man of our persuasion into the place which you intend for me, though I now think that Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Calamy may better accept of a bishoprick than I, which I hope your lordship will promote. I shall presume to offer some choice to your consideration: Dr. Francis Roberts, of Wrington, in Somersetshire, known by his works; Mr. Froyzall, of Clun, in Shropshire and Hereford diocese, a man of great worth and good interest; Mr. Daniel Cawdrey,¹ of Billing, in Northamptonshire; Mr. Anthony Burgess, of Sutton Coldfield, in Warwickshire—all known by their printed works; Mr. John Trap, of Gloucestershire; Mr. Ford, of Exeter; Mr. Hughes, of Plymouth; Mr. Bampfild, of Sherborne; Mr. Woodbridge, of Newbury; Dr. Chambers, Dr. Bryan, and Dr. Grew, all of Coventry; Mr. Brinsley, of Yarmouth; Mr. Porter, of Whitchurch in Shropshire; Mr. Gilpin, of Cumberland; Mr. Bowles, of York; Dr. Temple, of Brampton, in Warwickshire: I need name no more.

“Secondly: That you will believe I as thankfully acknowledge your lordship’s favour as if I were by it possessed of a bishoprick: and if your lordship continue in those intentions, I shall thankfully accept it in any other state or relation that may further my service to the church and to his majesty. But I desire, for the fore-mentioned reasons, that it may be no cathedral relation. And whereas the vicar of the parish where I have lived will not resign, but accept me only as his curate, if your lordship would procure him some prebendary, or other place of competent profit, for I dare not mention him to any pastoral charge, or place that requireth preaching, that so he might resign that vicarage to me, without his loss, according to the late act before December; for the sake of that town of Kidderminster, I should take it as a very great favour. But if there be any great inconvenience or difficulties in the way, I can well be content to be his curate. I crave your lordship’s pardon for this trouble, which your own condescension has drawn upon you, and remain,” &c.^m

This letter, which is dated the 1st of November 1660, states clearly Baxter’s approbation of the king’s declaration, and his

¹ It is singular that Baxter should have proposed Cawdrey for a bishoprick. He was one of the most decided, indeed violent, Presbyterians of the times.

^m Life, part ii. pp. 283, 284.

anxious desire that it might be put on the footing of law, and fairly and fully acted upon. The requests which the letter makes, were not unreasonable in themselves, or in reference to the state of parties at the time, though not likely to be all complied with. The letter as a whole, is an admirable specimen of the simplicity, integrity, and disinterestedness of Baxter.

"Mr. Calamy," he says, "blamed me for giving in my denial alone, before we had resolved together what to do. But I told him the truth, that being upon other necessary business with the lord chancellor, he put me to it on the sudden, so that I could not conveniently delay my answer.

"Dr. Reynolds almost as suddenly accepted, saying, that some friend had taken out the *cong   d'elire* for him without his knowledge. He read to me a profession directed to the king, which he had written, where he professed that he took a bishop and a presbyter to differ not *ordine* but *gradu*; that a bishop was but the chief presbyter, and that he was not to ordain or govern but with his presbyters' assistance and consent; that he accepted of the place as described in the king's declaration, and not as it stood before in England; and that he would no longer hold or exercise it than he could do it on these terms. To this sense it was, and he told me that he would offer it the king when he accepted of the place; but whether he did or not I cannot tell. He died in the bishoprick of Norwich, an. 1676.^a

"Mr. Calamy long suspended his answer, so that that bishoprick was long undisposed of; till he saw the issue of all of our treaty, which easily resolved him.^o Dr. Manton was offered the deanery of Rochester, and Dr. Bates, the deanery of Coventry

^a Dr. Reynolds was a person of good learning, respectable talents, and decided piety. It appears that Baxter thought he might, consistently with his principles, accept a bishoprick. Reynolds does not appear to have believed in the *ius divinum* of any form of church government, and therefore he could have no conscientious objections to a bishoprick, and probably thought he might be able to serve the Nonconformists more in that capacity, than had he remained one of themselves. He appears to have managed the see of Norwich with great moderation, though, even there, much suffering was endured; many of the Nonconformists being prosecuted by the bishop's chancellor, though, it is said, greatly against the bishop's will. See Chalmers' 'Life of Reynolds,' prefixed to his works, and the 'Conformist's Plea for the Nonconformist,' part iv. p. 67.

^o It would have been honourable to the character of Dr. Calamy had he refused the bishoprick in a more prompt and decided manner. It is evident that he cast a longing, lingering look towards it, and said *nolo episcopari* with some reluctance. Nothing seems to have prevented his acceptance but the

and Litchfield, which they both after some time refused. And, as I heard, Mr. Edward Bowles was offered the deanery of York, at least, which he refused."

Thus ended the affair of the Presbyterian bishopricks, which did the rejecters more honour than the accepter. Calamy seems to have hesitated; perplexed, it would appear, by opposite views of duty, but little wishing to decline, provided he could have complied without compromising his character and consistency. Baxter's promptitude and decision reflect the greatest credit on his disinterested and upright character. The king's declaration was issued; and the London ministers, glad to receive any thing which seemed to promise protection and encouragement to their labours, met and thanked his majesty for his moderation and goodness, and entreated him still to attend to their requests. It was presented on the 16th of November, 1660, by a number of the ministers, not including Baxter.

"Whether this came to the king's ears, he says (or what else it was that caused it I know not, but presently after the Earl of Lauderdale came to tell me), that I must come the next day to the king, who was pleased to tell me that he sent for me only to signify his favour to me. I told him I feared my plain speeches, October 22d, which I thought the case in hand commanded me to employ, might have been displeasing to him; but he told me that he was not offended at the plainness, freedom, or earnestness of them, but only when he thought I was not in the right; and that for my free speech he took me to be the honestest man. I suppose this favour came from the bishops, who having notice of what last passed, did think that now I might serve their interests." ^p

In his majesty's declaration it was intimated that the liturgy should be reviewed and reformed, and certain alterations adopted, to meet the feelings of the Nonconformists. Baxter frequently importuned the chancellor to carry this engagement into effect. At last Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Calamy were authorised to name the persons on their side to manage the conference; and that

outrage which it would have raised against his consistency, and the remonstrances of his friends. This fact throws a greater shade over his character for decision than any thing else that I know. He possessed highly respectable talents, was the leader of the ministers of London for many years; and must have been a very moderate Presbyterian when he could deliberate so long whether to accept or to reject the proffered bishoprick. Even Baxter seems to think, however, he might have acceded consistently with his sentiments.

^p *Life*, part ii. p. 284.

being done, a commission under the great seal was issued empowering the persons nominated on both sides to meet for this purpose. The individuals chosen, comprehended the archbishop of York with twelve bishops on the one side, and eleven Non-conformist ministers on the other; with a provision of other individuals, to supply the places of any who might not be able to attend.

“A meeting was accordingly appointed, and the Savoy, the bishop of London’s lodgings, named by them for the place. There met us, Dr. Frewen, archbishop of York; Dr. Sheldon, bishop of London; Dr. Morley, bishop of Worcester; Dr. Saunderson, bishop of Lincoln; Dr. Cosins, bishop of Durham; Dr. Hinchman, bishop of Salisbury; Dr. Walton, bishop of Chester; Dr. Lany, bishop of Peterborough; Dr. King, bishop of Rochester; Dr. Stern, bishop of Carlisle; and the constantest man in attendance of them all, Dr. Gauden, bishop of Exeter. On the other side there met, Dr. Reynolds, bishop of Norwich; Mr. Clark, Dr. Spurstow, Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Dr. Jacomb, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Rawlinson, Mr. Case, and myself. The commission being read, the archbishop of York, a peaceable man, spake first, and told us that he knew nothing of the business, but perhaps the bishop of London knew more of the king’s mind in it, and therefore was fitter to speak on it than he. The bishop of London told us, that it was not they, but we that had been the seekers of this conference, and who desired alterations in the liturgy; and therefore they had nothing to say or do, till we brought in all that we had to say against it in writing, and all the additional forms and alterations which we desired. Our brethren were very much against this motion, and urged the king’s commission, which required us to meet together, advise, and consult. They told him that by conference we might perceive, as we went on, what each would yield to, and might more speedily dispatch, and probably obtain, our end; whereas, writing would be a tedious, endless business, and we should not have that familiarity and acquaintance with each other’s minds, which might facilitate our concord. But the bishop of London resolutely insisted on not doing any thing till we brought in all our exceptions, alterations, and additions, at once. In this I confess, above all things else, I was wholly of his mind, and prevailed with my brethren to consent; but, I conjecture, for contrary reasons. For, I suppose, he thought that we should either be altogether by the ears, and be of several

minds among ourselves, at least in our new forms ; or that when our proposals and forms came to be scanned by them, they should find as much matter of exception against ours as we did against theirs ; or that the people of our persuasion would be dissatisfied or divided about it. And indeed our brethren themselves, thought either all, or much of this would come to pass, and our disadvantage would be exceedingly great. But I told them the reasons of my opinion ; that we should quickly agree on our exceptions, and that we should offer none but what we were agreed on among ourselves. I reminded them, that we were engaged to offer new forms, which was the expedient that from the beginning I had aimed at and brought in, as the only way of accommodation, considering that they should be in Scripture words, and that ministers should choose which forms they would. I stated, that verbal disputes would be managed with much more contention ; but, above all, that in no other way could our cause be well understood by our people, or foreigners, or posterity ; but our conference and cause would be misrepresented, and published, as the conference at Hampton Court was, to our prejudice, while none durst contradict it. On this plan what we said for our cause, would come fully and truly to the knowledge of England, and of other nations ; and that if we refused this opportunity of leaving upon record our testimony against corruptions, for a just and moderate reformation, we might never have the like again. So for these reasons, I told the bishops that we accepted of the task which they imposed on us ; yet so as to bring all our exceptions at one time, and all our additions at another time, which they granted.”^a

There is doubtless considerable force in these reasons of Baxter’s for managing the conference in writing rather than by personal discussion. But it is also evident that the Presbyterians were completely taken in the trap prepared for them. The other party were thus left to assume that right was on their side ; the onus of objecting in every case was thrown on the Nonconformists, and the less difficult part of defending long-established usages left to the bishops. As they required to be furnished at once with every thing objected to and required, the probability was, either that the Nonconformists would disagree among themselves, some perhaps going too far, and others stopping short, and thus a satisfactory reason

^a Life, part ii. pp. 305, 306.

for refusing compliance would be furnished. Or, presenting a considerable mass of objection and alteration at once, a sufficient pretence would be afforded for holding them up as unreasonable and captious, and determined to be satisfied with nothing less than an entire revolution of the church. The last probable result was that which took place, and due use was made of it accordingly.

The Nonconformists, after withdrawing from this conference, in which they had only a choice of difficulties to encounter, agreed to divide among themselves the task devolved on them. The selection of exceptions to the Common Prayer-book they distributed among them, and the additions, or new forms, they devolved on Baxter alone. He immediately set himself to the task, and completed, in a fortnight, an entire liturgy; correcting the disorderly arrangement, removing the repetitions, and supplying the defects of the Prayer-book; which he considered its principal faults. He found, at the end of the fortnight, that his brethren had not completed their part of the business; so, to assist them, he also drew up a paper containing the exceptions which occurred to him. This paper and his liturgy were both afterwards printed by himself.* The exceptions and alterations, as presented, are also printed in his life.† Few persons who consider these exceptions, with the proposed amendments, if any tolerable degree of candour be exercised, will be ready to maintain that the former were uncalled for, or that the latter would not be improvements. But where undistinguishing admiration is directed to works of merely human composition, it cannot be expected that any alterations will be regarded, except in the light of captious and unnecessary innovations.

“When the exceptions against the liturgy were finished, the brethren oft read over the reformed liturgy which I offered them. At first they would have had no rubric or directory, but bare prayers, because they thought our commission allowed it not; at last however they yielded to the reasons which I gave them, and resolved to take them in; but first to offer the bishops their exceptions.

“At this time the convocation was chosen; for till now it was deferred. Had it been called when the king came in, the inferior clergy would have been against the diocesan and imposing way: but afterwards many hundreds were turned out, that all

* Life, part ii. p. 308.

† Ibid. 316.

the old sequestered ministers might come in. And the opinion of re-ordination being set afoot, all those ministers that, for twenty years together, while bishops were laid aside, had been ordained without diocesans, were, in many counties, denied any voices in the election of clerks for the convocation. By all which means, and by the scruples of abundance of ministers, who thought it unlawful to have any thing to do in the choosing of such a kind of assembly, the diocesan party wholly carried it in the choice.

"In London the election was appointed to be in Christ's Church, on the second day of May, 1661. The London ministers that were not ejected, proved the majority against the diocesan party; and when I went to have joined with them, they sent to me not to come, as they did also to Mr. Calamy; so, without my knowledge, they chose Mr. Calamy and me for London. But they carried it against the other party but by three voices: and the bishop of London having the power of choosing two out of four, or four out of six, that are chosen by the ministers in a certain circuit, did give us the great benefit of being both left out. So we were excused, and the city of London had no clerk in the convocation.¹ How should I have been then baited, and what a vexatious place should I have had in such a convocation!

"On the fourth day of May, we had a meeting with the bishops, where we gave in our paper of exceptions to them, which they received. The seventh was a meeting at Sion College, of all the London ministers, for the choice of a president and assistants for the next year; where some of the Presbyterians, upon a petty scruple, absenting themselves, the diocesan party carried it, and so got the possession and rule of the college. The eighth, the new parliament and convocation sat down, being constituted of those fitted and devoted to the diocesan interest. On the two-and-twentieth of the month, by order of parliament, the national vow and covenant was burnt in the street, by the hands of the common hangman.

"When the brethren came to examine the reformed liturgy, and had frequently read it over, they passed it at last in the same words that I had written it, save only that they put out a few lines in the administration of the Lord's Supper, where the

¹ This is only one of many proofs of the enmity of Sheldon to the whole Nonconformist party, and of his determination to thwart them every way in his power. Rather than have Calamy and Baxter, he deprived London of its proper representatives in the convocation.

word "offering" was used; and they put out a page of reasons for infant baptism, which I had annexed to that office, thinking it unnecessary. They also put the larger litany into an appendix, as thinking it too long; and Dr. Wallis was desired to draw up the prayer for the king, which is his work, being afterwards somewhat altered by us. We agreed to put before it a short address to the bishops, professing our readiness in debate to yield to the shortening of any thing which should be too long, and to the altering of any thing that should be found amiss.

"As I foresaw what was likely to be the end of our conference, I desired the brethren that we might draw up a plain and earnest petition to the bishops, to yield to such terms of peace and concord as they themselves did confess to be lawful to be yielded to: for though we were equals in the king's commission, yet we are commanded by the Holy Ghost, if it be possible, and as much as in us lieth, to live peaceably with all men. If we were denied, it would satisfy our consciences, and justify us before all the world, much more than if we only disputed for it. However, we might this way have an opportunity to produce our reasons for peace, which else we were not likely to have.

"This motion was accepted, and I was desired to draw up the petition, which I did, and being examined, was, with a word or two of alteration, consented to. When we met with the bishops, to deliver in these papers, I was required to deliver them: and, if it were possible, to get audience for the petition before all the company. I told them, that though we were equals in the present work, and our appointed business was to treat, yet we were conscious of our place and duty, and had drawn up a petition to them, which, though somewhat long, I humbly craved their consent that I might read. Some were against it, and so they would have been generally if they had known what was in it; but at last they yielded to it; but their patience was never so put to it by us as in hearing so long and ungrateful a petition. When I had read it, Dr. Gunning began a long and vehement speech against it: to which, when he came to the end, I replied; but I was interrupted in the midst of my reply, and was fain to bear it, because they had been patient with so much ado so long before. I delivered them the petition when I had read it, and with it, a fair copy of our reformed liturgy, called additional forms and alterations of theirs. They received both, and so we departed."^a

^a Life, part ii. pp. 333, 334.

That there was no disposition on the part of the bishops to yield any thing, is very evident from the whole of their conduct. The commission only extended for three months, a considerable part of which had already expired, either in debating how the business should be managed, or in preparing papers, instead of conferring together in an amicable manner. What follows in Baxter's account of the affair, will show that agreement had neither been contemplated nor intended, from the beginning.

"After all this, when the bishops were to have sent us two papers, one of their concessions, how much they would alter of the liturgy as excepted against, and the other of their acceptance of our offered forms or reasons against them; instead of both these, a good while after, they sent us such a paper as they did before, of their reasonings against all our exceptions, without any abatements or alterations at all that are worth the naming. Our brethren, seeing what they were resolved to bring it to, and how unpeaceably they managed the business, did think best to write them a plain answer to their paper, and not to suppress it, as we had done by the first. This task also they imposed on me. I went out of town, to Dr. Spurstow's house, in Hackney, for retirement; where, in eight days' time, I drew up a reply to their answer to our exceptions. This the brethren read and consented to, only wishing that it had been larger in the latter end, where I had purposely been brief, because I had been too large in the beginning; and because *particulars* may be answered satisfactorily in a few words when the general differences are fully cleared.

"By this time, our commission was almost expired; and therefore our brethren were earnestly desirous of personal debates with them upon the papers put in, to try how much alteration they would yield to. We therefore sent to the bishops to desire it of them; and, at last, they yielded to it, when we had but ten days more to treat.

"When we met them, I delivered the answer to their former papers, the largeness of which I saw displeased them; but they received it. We earnestly pressed them to spend the little time remaining in such pacifying conference as tended to the ends which are mentioned in the king's declaration and commission; and told them, that such disputes which they had called us to by their manner of writing, were not the things which we desired, or thought most conducing to those ends.

"I have reason to think that the generality of the bishops

and doctors present, never knew what we offered them in the reformed liturgy, nor in this reply, nor in any of our papers, save those few which we read openly to them; for they were put up, and carried away; and, I conjecture, scarce any but the writers of their confutations would be at the labour of reading them over. I remember, in the midst of our last disputation, when I drew out the short preface to the last reply, which Mr. Calamy wrote, to enumerate, in the beginning, before their eyes, many of the grossest corruptions, which they stiffly defended, and refused to reform, the company were more ashamed and silent than at any thing else that I had said. By which I perceived that they had never read or heard that very preface which was an epistle to themselves: yea, the chief of them confessed, when they bade me read it, that they knew no such thing. So that, it seems, before they knew what was in them, they resolved to reject our papers, right or wrong, and to deliver them up to their contradictors.

“ When we came to our debates, I first craved of them their animadversions on our additions and alterations of the liturgy, which we had put in long before; and that they would tell us what they allowed or disallowed in them, that we might have the use of them, according to the words in the king’s declaration and commission. But they would not, by any importunity, be intreated at all to debate that, or to give their opinions about those papers. There were no papers that ever we offered them that had the fate of these: though it was there some of them thought to have found recriminating matter of exceptions, we could never prevail with them to say any thing about them, in word or writing. Once, Bishop Morley told us of their length, to which I answered, that we had told them in our preface, that we were ready to abbreviate any thing which on debate should appear too long; but that the paucity of the prayers made the ordinary Lord’s-day prayers far shorter than theirs. And since we had given our exceptions against theirs, if they would neither by word nor writing except against ours, nor give their consent to them, they would not honour their cause or conference. But all would not extort either debates on that subject, or any reprehensions of what we had offered them.

“ When they had cast out that part of our desired conference, our next business was, to desire them, by friendly conference, to go over the particulars which we excepted against, and to tell us how much they would abate, and what

alterations they would yield to. This, Bishop Reynolds oft pressed them to, and so did all the rest of us that spake. But they resolutely insisted on it, that they had nothing to do till we had proved that there was a necessity for alteration, which we had not yet done; and that they were there, ready to answer our proofs. We urged them again and again with the very words of the king's declaration and commission: 'That the ends expressed are for the removal of all exceptions, and occasions of exceptions and differences, from among our good subjects, and for giving satisfaction to tender consciences, and the restoring and continuance of peace and amity in the churches. And the means are, to make such reasonable and necessary alterations, corrections, and amendments therein, as shall be agreed upon to be needful and expedient, for the giving satisfaction to tender consciences, and restoring and continuing peace,' &c. We plainly showed hence, that the king supposeth that *some alterations* must be made; but the bishops insisted on two words *necessary* alterations, and *such as should be agreed on*. We answered them, that the word *necessary* hath reference to the ends expressed; viz., the satisfying tender consciences, and is joined with *expedient*: and that it was strange if, when the king had so long and publicly determined of the end, and called us to consult of the means, we should presume now, at last, to contradict him, and to determine that the end itself is unnecessary; and, consequently, no means necessary thereto. What, then, have we all this while been doing? When they are called to *agree* on such necessary means, if they will take advantage of that word, to agree on nothing, that so all endeavours may be frustrated for want of their agreement, God and the world would judge between us, who it is that frustrateth the king's commission, and the hopes of a divided, bleeding church.

"Thus we continued a long time contending about this point, whether some alterations be supposed by the king's declaration and commission to be made by us; or, whether we were anew to dispute that point? But the bishops would have that to be our task, or none, to prove by disputation, that any alteration was necessary to be made; while they confuted our proofs. We told them, that the end being to satisfy tender consciences, and procure unity, those tender consciences did themselves profess, that without some alterations, and these considerable too, they could not be satisfied; and experience told them, that *peace* and unity could not without them be attained. But still they said

that none was necessary, and they would yield to all that we proved necessary. Here we were left in a very great strait; if we should enter upon a dispute with them, we gave up the end and hope of our endeavours; if we refused it, we knew that they would boast, that when it came to the setting-to, we would not so much as attempt to prove any thing unlawful in the liturgy, nor dare dispute it with them. Mr. Calamy, with some others of our brethren, would have had us refuse the motion of disputing as not tending to fulfil the king's commands. We told the bishops, over and over, that they could not choose but know that before we could end one argument in a dispute, our time would be expired; that it could not possibly tend to any accommodation; and that to keep off from personal conference, till within a few days of the expiration of the commission, and then to resolve to do nothing but wrangle out the time in a dispute, as if we were between jest and earnest in the schools, was too visibly in the sight of all the world, to defeat the king's commission, and the expectation of many thousands, who longed for our unity and peace. But we spoke to the deaf; they had other ends, and were other men, and had the art to suit the means unto their ends. For my part, when I saw that they would do nothing else, I persuaded our brethren to yield to a disputation with them, and let them understand that we were far from fearing it, seeing they would give us no hopes of concord. But, withal, first to profess to them, that the guilt of disappointing his majesty and the kingdom, lay not upon us, who desired to obey the king's commission, but on them. Thus we yielded to spend the little time remaining, in disputing with them, rather than go home and do nothing, and leave them to tell the court when they had so provoked us, that we durst not dispute with them, nor were able to prove our accusations of the liturgy."^x

It was finally agreed that three on each side should be chosen to debate the unlawfulness of the impositions in the Episcopal system. Drs. Pearson, Gunning, and Sparrow, being on the one side; and Baxter, Bates, and Jacomb, on the other. They met accordingly, in the presence of many of the Episcopal party, who attended in considerable numbers; but the Non-conformists, except the three advocates, all absented themselves. The debate itself, which Baxter has recorded at length, was, as

^x Life, part ii. pp. 233—236.

might have been anticipated, exceedingly unsatisfactory; partaking more of the nature of personal altercation than of grave religious argument. The discussion was carried on by ex-tempore writing as well as by occasional speaking; which must have been as wearisome to all parties, as the history of it would now be tedious and unprofitable. As Baxter chiefly maintained the discussion on the side of the Nonconformists, his numerous writings contain a full exposition and defence of his own views and those of his brethren; while the liturgy remains unaltered, and the defences of its correctness and propriety to this day are very numerous. Baxter's account of the principal disputants, and of the part which they respectively took in the discussion, may appropriately close the review of the Savoy conference.

“The bishop of London, Dr. Sheldon, since archbishop of Canterbury, only appeared the first day of each conference, which, beside that before the king, was but twice in all, as I remember, and meddled not at all in any disputations: ʔ but all men supposed that he and Bishop Morley, and next Bishop Hinchman, were the doers and disposers of all such affairs. The archbishop of York (Frewen) spake very little; and came but once or twice in all. Bishop Morley was often there, but not constantly, and with free and fluent words with much earnestness, was the chief speaker of all the bishops, and the greatest interrupter of us: vehemently going on with what he thought serviceable to his end, and bearing down our answers by the said fervour and interruptions. Bishop Cosins was there constantly, and had a great deal of talk with so little logic, natural or artificial, that I perceived no one much moved by any thing he said. But two virtues he showed, though none took him for a magician; one was, that he was excellently well versed in canons, councils, and fathers, which he remembered, when by citing of any passages we tried him. The other was, that as he was of a rustic wit and carriage, so he would endure

ʔ The views of Sheldon in the affair of the Savoy conference, are apparent from one circumstance. When Lord Manchester remarked to the king, that he was afraid the terms of the act of uniformity were too rigid for the ministers to comply with, Sheldon replied, “I am afraid they will.”—*Bate's Funeral Sermon for Baxter*. It is only necessary to look at some passages of Pepys's ‘*Memoirs*,’ to be satisfied that Sheldon was a profane, as well as an unprincipled man; totally unfit for the office which he held.—See particularly vol. ii. p. 342. Burnet says, “He seemed not to have a clear sense of religion, if any at all; and spoke of it most commonly as of an engine of government, and a matter of policy.”—*Own Times*, i. p. 257.

more freedom of discourse with him, and was more affable and familiar than the rest. Bishop Hinchman, since bishop of London, was of the most grave, comely, reverend aspect of any of them; and of a good insight in the fathers and councils. Cosins and he, and Dr. Gunning, being all that showed any considerable skill in them among us; in which they were all three of very laudable understandings, and better than any other of either of the parties that I met with. Bishop Hinchman spake calmly and slowly, and not very often; but was as high in his principles and resolutions as any of them.

"Bishop Sanderson, of Lincoln, was sometimes there, but never spake, that I know of, except a very little; but his great learning and worth are known by his labours, and his aged peevishness not unknown.^a

"Bishop Gauden was our most constant helper: he and Bishop Cosins seldom were absent. And how bitter soever his pen might be, he was the only moderator of all the bishops, except our Bishop Reynolds. He showed no logic, nor meddled in any dispute or point of learning; but he had a calm, fluent, rhetorical tongue; and if all had been of his mind we had been reconciled. But when by many days' conference in the beginning, we had got some moderating concessions from him, and from Bishop Cosins by his means, the rest came in the end, and brake them all.^a

"Bishop Lucy, of St. David's, spake once or twice a few words, calmly; and so did Bishop Nicholson, of Gloucester, and Bishop Griffiths, of St. Asaph's, though not commissioners. King, bishop of Chichester, I never saw there. Bishop Warner, of Rochester, was once or twice. Lany, of Peterborough, was twice or thrice there; and Walton, bishop of Chester, but neither of them spake much.^b

"Among all the bishops, there was none who had so promising a face as Dr. Sterne, bishop of Carlisle. He looked so honestly, gravely, and soberly, that I scarce thought such a face could have deceived me. When I was entreating them not

^a It is said that Bishop Sanderson requested, on his death-bed, that the ejected ministers should be employed again: but of course that was not complied with.—*Baxter's Life*, part ii. p. 363.

^a It is somewhat singular that the author of the 'Eikon Basilike,' should have been so moderate a man in the debates with the Nonconformists. Baxter's description of his calm and fluent tongue, agrees very well with the style of that celebrated book; the controversy about which is now set at rest, and the claims of Gauden fully ascertained.

^b *Life*, part ii. p. 364.

to cast out so many of their brethren through the *nation*, he turned to the rest of the reverend bishops, and said, 'He will not say in the *kingdom*, lest he own a *king*.' This was all I ever heard that worthy prelate say. I told him with grief, that half the charity which became so grave a bishop, might have helped him to a better exposition of the word *nation*.^c

"Bishop Reynolds spake much the first day, for bringing them to abatements and moderation; and afterwards he sat with them, and spake now and then a word for moderation. He was a solid, honest man, but through mildness and excess of timorous reverence for great men, altogether unfit to contend with them.

"Mr. Thorndike spake once a few impertinent, passionate words, confuting the opinion which we had received of him from his first writings, and confirming that which his second and last writings had given us of him. Dr. Earle, Dr. Heylin, and Dr. Barwick, never came. Dr. Hacket, since bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, said nothing to make us know any thing of him. Dr. Sparrow said but little, but that little was with a spirit enough for the imposing dividing cause.

"Dr. Peirce and Dr. Gunning did all their work, beside Bishop Morley's discourses, but with great difference in the manner. Dr. Peirce was their true logician and disputant, without whom, as far as I could discern, we should have had nothing from them, but Dr. Gunning's passionate invectives, mixed with some argumentations. He disputed accurately, soberly, and calmly, being but once in any passion; breeding in us great respect for him, and a persuasion that if he had been independent, he would have been for peace, and that if all had been in his power, it would have gone well. He was the strength and honour of that cause, which we doubted whether he heartily maintained. He was their forwardest and greatest speaker; understanding well what belonged to a disputant; a man of greater study and industry than any of them; well read in fathers and councils, and of a ready tongue; I hear, and believe, of very temperate life also, as to all carnal excesses whatsoever; but so vehement for his high, imposing principles, and so over zealous for Arminianism, and formality, and church pomp; and so very eager and fervent in his discourse, that I conceive his prejudice and passion much perverted his judgment. I am sure, they made him lamentably overrun himself in his dis-

^c *Life*, part ii. p. 281.

courses. Of Dr. Peirce I will say no more, because he hath said so much of me.^d

"On our part, Dr. Bates spake very solidly, judiciously, and pertinently, when he spake. As for myself, the reason why I spake so much was, because it was the desire of my brethren, and I was loath to expose them to the hatred of the bishops; but was willing to take it all upon myself, they themselves having so much wit as to be therein more sparing and cautious than I. I thought also that the day and cause commanded me those two things, which then were objected to me as my crimes, viz., speaking too boldly and too long. I thought it a cause that I could comfortaby suffer for, and should as willingly be a martyr for *charity* as for *faith*."^e

Thus ended the Savoy conference, the last of those attempts to reconcile churchmen and dissenters, in which the court and the authorities in the church took any active part. The issue might have been foreseen at the beginning, from the disposition of the leading Episcopal commissioners, and from the conduct of Sheldon at the very first meeting; beside what was known of the prevailing feelings of the court and the whole royal party. Burnet says, with considerable justice, "The two men that had the chief management of the debate, were the most unfit to heal matters, and the fittest to widen them that could have been found out. Baxter was the opponent, and Gunning was the respondent, who was afterwards advanced, first to Chichester, and then to Ely. He was a man of great reading, and noted for a special subtlety of arguing. All the arts of sophistry were made use of by him on all occasions, in as confident a manner as if they had been sound reasoning. Baxter and he spent some days in much logical arguing, to the diversion of the town, who thought here were a couple of fencers engaged in disputes, that could never be brought to an end, or have any good effect."^f

The affair having thus ended in a kind of farce, and the ministers having totally failed, as they conceived, in the great object of the conference, they drew up a correct account of the whole affair, and presented it to the king in the form of a petition.

^d Jeremy Taylor says in one of his letters, "It is no wonder that Baxter undervalues the geutry of England. You know what spirit he is of, but I suppose he has met with his match: for Mr. Peris (Peirce) hath attacked him; and they are joined in the lists."—*Heber's Life of Taylor*, p. 88.

^e *Life*, part ii. pp. 363, 364.

^f Burnet's *'Own Times'*, vol. i. pp. 283, 284.

It was written by Baxter, and with a few alterations and amendments, was at last laid before his majesty, with a fair copy of all the papers, by Dr. Manton, Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Bates, and Mr. Baxter. It gives a short history of the conference, and its unsuccessful issue, and concludes by praying that the benefits of the king's declaration might be continued to the people, and that the additions promised in it might be bestowed.^g It does not appear that Charles said any thing particular at the winding up of the affair. He parted with the ministers civilly, but with a full determination to pursue such measures, as, to adopt the expression of his grandfather respecting the Puritans, would "drive them out of the kingdom, or do worse." The failure offers one of many illustrations of the folly of attempting to reconcile the principles of this world, with the laws and government of the kingdom of Christ. It is true, in regard to such transactions as the Savoy conference, as well as of other things, "that no man can serve two masters."

After the failure of the negotiation, the great object of the ministers was, if possible, to get parliament to pass the king's declaration into a law, without which it would be of no permanent force or obligation; and for a time, their expectations were encouraged by the lord chancellor. But when it came to the trial, their hopes all failed them; and the conformity imposed, was made ten times more burdensome than it was before. For beside that the convocation had made the Common Prayer-book more grievous than ever, the parliament made a new act of conformity, with a new form of subscription, and a new declaration to be made against the obligation of the covenant. So that the king's declaration not only died before it came into execution, and all hopes, treaties, and petitions, were not only disappointed, but a weight more grievous than a thousand ceremonies was added to the old conformity, with a heavy penalty.^h

^g Life, part ii. pp. 366—368.

^h Although the Episcopal commissioners would concede nothing to the Nonconformists for the sake of peace, they soon after held a meeting by themselves, for the purpose of preparing certain alterations in the 'Book of Common Prayer,' which they agreed to lay before the next convocation. It assembled on the 8th of May, 1661, and agreed to some alterations and additions. They began with the office for the king's birth and return, which was brought in on the 16th of May, being their second session. On the 18th of May, their third session, they proceeded to the office of baptism for those of riper years. By December 20th, the book was completed and subscribed by the members of both houses.

"The principal alterations which were made in this version, were the following. Several lessons in the calendar were changed for others more proper for the days. The prayers upon particular occasions, were disjoined from the liturgy. The prayers for the parliament, that for all conditions of men, and the general thanksgiving, were added; several of the collects were altered; the epistles and gospels were taken out of the last translation of the Bible, they having been read before, according to the old. The office of baptism for those of riper years, the forms of prayer to be used at sea, the form for the martyrdom of King Charles, and that for the king's return, or, as it is now called, the restoration of the royal family, were added. The book did not go to press till some time after it was subscribed, the Act of Uniformity for enacting it into a law taking up a considerable time."—*Nichol's Preface to the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 10. In all these alterations, it is very clear the clergy took special care that no attention should be shown to the feelings or prejudices of the Nonconformists. This writer has forgotten to state that, among the other improvements made by this convocation on the 'Prayer Book,' the story of 'Bell and the Dragon' was added to the lessons taken from the Apocrypha!

CHAPTER VIII.

1661—1665.

Baxter endeavours to gain possession of Kidderminster—The King and Clarendon favourable to it—Defeated by Sir Ralph Clare and Bishop Morley—Conduct of Sir Ralph Clare to the People of Kidderminster—Baxter's spirited Remonstrance—Insurrection of the Fifth Monarchy Men—Baxter's Preaching in London—Obtains a License from the Archbishop of Canterbury—Attempts to negotiate with the Vicar of Kidderminster—Treatment of the People by the Bishop and Clergy—Baxter entirely separated from Kidderminster—Takes leave of the Church—Act of Uniformity—Its Injustice, Impolicy, and Cruelty—Its Injurious Effects—Baxter's Marriage—Declaration of Indulgence—Death and Character of Ash-Nelson—Hardships of the Nonconformists—Death of Archbishop Juxon—Succeeded by Sheldon—Act against Private Meetings—Sufferings of the People—Baxter retires to Acton—Works written or published by him during this period—Correspondence—Occasional Communion—Consulted by Ashley—Concluding Memorials of the year 1665.

In the preceding chapter, an account has been given of all the public transactions in which Baxter was engaged from the period of the restoration to the termination of the Savoy conference. His more private or personal affairs now require our attention. In his letter to Lord Clarendon, declining the bishoprick of Hereford, the reader will have observed that he prefers a request of a very humble nature respecting Kidderminster; that if his lordship would bestow some prebendal place on Mr. Dance, the vicar, it would enable him to return to his old and favourite sphere of employment. The following narrative brings before us the failure of this application, and, in consequence, his entire separation from Kidderminster.

“When I had refused a bishoprick, I did it from such reasons as offended not the lord chancellor; and, therefore, instead of it, I presumed to crave his favour to restore me to preach to my people at Kidderminster again, from whence I had been cast out, when many hundreds of others were ejected, upon the re-

storation of all those who had been sequestered. It was but a vicarage, and the vicar was a poor, unlearned, ignorant, silly reader, who little understood what Christianity, and the articles of his creed, did signify. Once a quarter he said something which he called a sermon, which made him the pity or the laughter of the people. This man, being unable to preach himself, kept always a curate under him for that purpose. Before the wars, I had preached there only as a lecturer, and he was bound to pay me sixty pounds per annum; my people were so dear to me, and I to them, that I would have been with them upon the lowest lawful terms. Some laughed at me for refusing a bishoprick, and petitioning to be a reading vicar's curate; but I had little hopes of so good a condition, at least for any considerable time.

"The ruler of the vicar and all the business, was Sir Ralph Clare; an old man, and an old courtier, who carried it towards me, all the time I was there, with great civility and respect, and sent me a purse of money when I went away, which I refused.¹ But his zeal against all who scrupled ceremonies, or who would not preach for prelacy and conformity, was so much greater than his respect for me, that he was the principal cause of my removal. I suppose he thought that when I was far enough off, he could so far rule the town, as to reduce the people to his way. But he and others of that temper little knew, how firm conscientious men are to the matters of their everlasting interest, and how little men's authority can do against the authority of God, with those that are unfeignedly subject to him. Openly, he seemed to be for my return at first, that he might not offend the people; and the lord chancellor seemed very forward in it, and all the difficulty was, how to provide some other place for the old vicar, Mr. Dance, that he might be no loser by the change. It was so contrived, that all must seem forward in it except the vicar. The king himself must be engaged in it; the lord chancellor earnestly presseth it; Sir Ralph is willing and very desirous of it; and the vicar is willing, if he may but be recompensed with

¹ Sir Ralph Clare, of Caldwell, of whom Baxter gives this curious account, was an eminent royalist. He spent a great part of his fortune in the cause of Charles II. Being taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester, he remained a long time in confinement, till released, probably, by Baxter's influence, by Major-General Berry coming into command in the county. It appears, from various parts of Baxter's narrative, that the old knight was a great thorn in his side. In Nash's 'History of Worcestershire,' portraits of Baxter and Sir Ralph are given in one page.—Vol. ii. p. 44.

as good a place, from which I had received but ninety pounds per annum. Either all desire it, or none desire it. But the hinderance was, that among all the livings and prebendaries of England, there was none fit for the poor vicar. A prebend he must not have, because he was incompetent, and yet he is still thought competent to be the pastor of near 4,000 souls! The lord chancellor, to make the business certain, engages himself for a valuable stipend to the vicar, and his own steward shall be commanded to pay it for him. What could he desire more? But the poor vicar was to answer him that this was no security to him; his lordship might withhold that stipend at his pleasure, and then where was his maintenance? Give him but a legal title to any thing of equal value, and he would resign. The patron also was my sure and intimate friend. But no such thing was to be had, and so Mr. Dance must keep his place.

“Though I requested not any preferment but this, yet even for this I resolved I would never be importunate. I only nominated it as the favour which I desired, when their offers in general invited me to ask more; and then I told them, that if it were any way inconvenient to them, I would not request it. Even at the very first I desired, that if they thought it best for the vicar to keep his place, I was willing to take the lecture, which, by his bond, was secured to me, and was still my right; or if that were denied me, I would be his curate while the king’s declaration stood in force. But none of these could be accepted with men that were so exceedingly willing. In the end, it appeared that two knights of the county, Sir Ralph Clare and Sir John Packington, who were very great with Dr. Morley, newly-made bishop of Worcester, had made him believe that my interest was so great, and I could do so much with ministers and people in that county, that unless I would bind myself to promote their cause and party, I was not fit to be there. And this bishop, being greatest of any man with the lord chancellor, must obstruct my return to my ancient flock. At last, Sir Ralph Clare did freely tell me, that if I would conform to the orders and ceremonies of the church, preach conformity to the people, and labour to set them right, there was no man in

1 Sir John Packington, of Westwood, was another warm royalist baronet, in the county of Worcester. He was husband to Lady Packington, to whom that well-known work, ‘The Whole Duty of Man,’ has been ascribed. Sir John’s house was the resort of many of the Episcopal clergy during the wars and the Commonwealth; and Dr. Hammond died in it.—*Athen. Oxen.* iii. 499. *Granger*, v. 377.

England so fit to be there, for no man could more effectually do it; but if I would not, there was no man so unfit for the place, for no man could more hinder it.

"I desired it as the greatest favour of them, that if they intended not my being there they would plainly tell me so, that I might trouble them and myself no more about it; but that was a favour too great to be expected. I had continual encouragement by promises till I was almost tired in waiting on them. At last, meeting Sir Ralph Clare in the bishop's chamber, I desired him, before the bishop, to tell me to my face, if he had any thing against me which might cause all this ado. He told me that I would give the sacrament to none kneeling, and that of eighteen hundred communicants, there were not past six hundred who were for me, and the rest were rather for the vicar. I answered, I was very glad that these words fell out to be spoken in the bishop's hearing. To the first accusation, I told him, that he himself knew I invited him to the sacrament, and offered it him kneeling, and that under my hand in writing; that openly in his hearing in the pulpit, I had promised and told both him and all the rest, I never had nor ever would put any man from the sacrament on the account of kneeling, but leave every one to the posture he should choose. I farther stated, that the reason why I never gave it to any kneeling, was because all who came would sit or stand, and those who were for kneeling only followed him, who would not come unless I would administer it to him and his party on a day by themselves, when the rest were not present; and I had no mind to be the author of such a schism, and make, as it were, two churches of one. But especially the consciousness of notorious scandal, which they knew they must be accountable for, did make many kneelers stay away; and all this he could not deny.

"As to the second charge, I stated, there was a witness ready to say as he did. I knew but one man in the town against me, which was a stranger newly come, one Ganderton, an attorney, steward to the Lord of Abergavenny, a Papist, who was lord of the manor. This one man was the prosecutor, and witnessed how many were against my return. I craved of the bishop that I might send by the next post to know their minds, and if that were so I would take it for a favour to be kept from thence. When the people heard this at Kidderminster, in a day's time they gathered the hands of sixteen hundred of the eighteen hundred communicants, and the rest were such as were from

home. Within four or five days after, I happened to find Sir Ralph Clare with the bishop again, and showed him the hands of sixteen hundred communicants, with an offer of more if they might have time, all very earnest for my return. Sir Ralph was silenced as to that point; but he and the bishop appeared so much the more against my return.

"The letter, which the lord chancellor upon his own offer wrote for me to Sir Ralph Clare, he gave at my request unsealed; and so I took a copy of it before I sent it away, thinking the chief use would be to keep it and compare it with their dealings. It was as followeth:

" ' Sir,

" ' I am a little out of countenance, that after the discovery of such a desire in his majesty, that Mr. Baxter should be settled in Kidderminster, as he was heretofore, and my promise to you by the king's direction, that Mr. Dance should very punctually receive a recompense by way of a rent upon his or your bills charged here upon my steward, Mr. Baxter hath yet no fruit of this his majesty's good intention towards him; so that he hath too much reason to believe that he is not so frankly dealt with in this particular as he deserves to be. I do again tell you, that it will be very acceptable to the king if you can persuade Mr. Dance to surrender that charge to Mr. Baxter; and in the mean time, and till he is preferred to as profitable an employment, whatever agreement you shall make with him for an annual rent, it shall be paid quarterly upon a bill from you charged upon my steward, Mr. Clutterbucke; and for the exact performance of this, you may securely pawn your full credit. I do most earnestly entreat you, that you will with all speed inform me what we may depend upon in this particular, that we may not keep Mr. Baxter in suspense, who hath deserved very well from his majesty, and of whom his majesty hath a very good opinion; and I hope you will not be the less desirous to comply with him for the particular recommendation of,

" ' Sir,

" ' Your very affectionate servant,

" ' EDWARD HYDE."

"Can any thing be more serious, cordial, and obliging, than all this? For a lord chancellor, that hath the business of the kingdom upon his hand, and lords attending him, to take up his time so much and often about so low a vicarage or a curateship, when it is not in the power of the king and the

lord chancellor to procure it for him, though they so vehemently desire it? But, oh! thought I, how much better life do poor men live, who speak as they think, and do as they profess, and are never put upon such shifts as these for their present conveniences! Wonderful! thought I, that men who do so much overvalue worldly honour and esteem, can possibly so much forget futurity, and think only of the present day, as if they regarded not how their actions be judged of by posterity. Notwithstanding all his extraordinary favour, since the day the king came in, I never received, as his chaplain, or as a preacher, or on any account, the value of one farthing of public maintenance. So that I, and many a hundred more, had not had a piece of bread but for the voluntary contribution, whilst we preached, of another sort of people: yea, while I had all this excess of favour, I would have taken it indeed for an excess, as being far beyond my expectations, if they would but have given me liberty to preach the Gospel, without any maintenance, and leave me to beg my bread."^k

There is something very singular in this part of Baxter's history. Giving Clarendon, and Charles, who also appears to have been a party, credit for sincerity in their professed friendship for Baxter, it is extraordinary that they should have been defeated by the management of the "old civil courtier," Sir Ralph, or the wily bishop of Worcester, Dr. Morley. Yet, if the whole was only designed to amuse and disappoint Baxter, what a view does it give of the craft and duplicity of the new government, and the high honour of the cavaliers! It is evident, from the humour with which Baxter tells the story, that he was convinced the whole was a piece of artifice. It seems probable that Charles and Clarendon would have been willing that he should get back to Kidderminster, but the bishop was determined he should not, and therefore the affair was so managed that the old vicar was made the scape goat. So little dependence can be placed on the promises of courts, where their own interests are not likely to be served by the parties!

"A little after this, Sir Ralph Clare and others caused the houses of the people of the town of Kidderminster to be searched for arms, and if any had a sword it was taken from them. Meeting him with the bishop, I desired him to tell us why his neighbours were so used, as if he would have made the world believe they were seditious, or rebels, or dangerous per-

^k Life, part ii. pp. 298—300.

sons, that should be treated as enemies to the king. He answered me, that it was because they would not bring out their arms when they were commanded, but said they had none; whereas they had arms on every occasion to appear on the behalf of Cromwell. This great disingenuity of so ancient a gentleman towards his neighbours, whom he pretended kindness to, made me break forth into some more than ordinary freedom of reproof; so that I answered him, we had thought our condition hard, that by strangers, who knew us not, we should be ordinarily traduced and misrepresented: but this was most sad and marvellous, that a gentleman so civil, should, before the bishop, speak such words against a corporation, which he knew I was able to confute, and were so contrary to truth. I asked him whether he did not know that I publicly and privately spake against the usurpers, and declared them to be rebels; and whether he took not the people to be of my mind; and whether I and they had not hazarded our liberty by refusing the engagement against the king and House of Lords, when he and others of his mind had taken it. He confessed that I had been against Cromwell; but the people had always, on every occasion, appeared in arms for him. I told him that he struck me with admiration, that it should be possible for him to live in the town, and yet believe what he said to be true, or yet to speak it in our hearing if he knew it to be untrue. I professed also that having lived there sixteen years since the wars, I never knew that they once appeared in arms for Cromwell, or any usurper; and challenged him, upon his word, to name one. I could not get him to name any time, till I had urged him to the utmost; and then he instanced in the time when the Scots army fled from Worcester. I challenged him to name one man of them that was at Worcester fight, or bare arms there, or at any time for the usurpers: and when he could name none, I told him that all that was done to my knowledge in sixteen years of that time was but this, that when the Scots fled from Worcester, as all the country sought in covetousness to catch some of them for the sake of their horses, so two idle rogues of Kidderminster, that never communicated with me any more than he did, had drawn two or three neighbours with them in the night, as the Scots fled, to catch their horses. But I never heard of three that they caught; and I appealed to the bishop and his conscience, whether he—that being urged, could name no more but this—did ingenuously accuse the corporation, magistrates, and people, to

have appeared on all occasions in arms for Cromwell? When they had no more to say, I told them by this we saw what measures to expect from strangers of his mind, when he that is our neighbour, and noted for eminent civility, never sticketh to speak such things even of a people among whom he hath still lived.

“ At the same time, about twenty, or two-and-twenty furious fanatics, called fifth-monarchy men, consisting of one Venner, a wine-cooper, and his church that he preached unto, being transported with enthusiastic pride, did rise up in arms, and fought in the streets like madmen, against all that stood in their way, till there were some killed, and the rest taken, judged, and executed.¹ I wrote a letter at this time to my mother-in-law, containing nothing but our usual matter, even encouragements to her in her age and weakness, fetched from the nearness of her rest, together with the report of this news, and some sharp and vehement words against the rebels. By means of Sir John Packington, or his soldiers, the post was searched, and my letter intercepted, opened and revised, and by Sir John sent up to London to the bishops, and the lord chancellor. It was a wonder, that having read it they were not ashamed to send it up; but joyful would they have been, could they have found but a word in it which could possibly have been distorted to an evil sense, that malice might have had its prey. I went to the lord chancellor and complained of this usage, and that I had not the common liberty of a subject to converse by letters with my own family. He disowned it, and blamed men’s rashness, but excused it from the distempers of the times; yet he and the bishops confessed they had seen the letter, and that there was nothing in it but what was good and pious. Two days after, came the Lord Windsor, lord lieutenant of the county, and governor of Jamaica, with Sir Charles Littleton, the king’s cup-bearer, to bring me my letter again to my lodgings. Lord Windsor told me the lord chancellor appointed him to do it; so after some expression

¹ Venner’s mad insurrection may be considered as the last of the fifth-monarchy system for many years. It illustrates the length to which men may be carried by adopting mistaken views of Scripture, and of the principles of the kingdom of Christ. It is quite of a piece, though on a smaller scale, with the conduct of the Munster fanatics; and was a most unfortunate occurrence, not merely for the poor deluded individuals themselves, but for the country. The court greedily laid hold of it to justify the adoption of measures to crush the dissenters, and establish a standing army, by which the arbitrary designs of Charles and his new government might be effectually accomplished.

— *Neal*, iv. 278—280.

of the abuse, I thanked him for his great civility and favour. But I saw how far that sort of men were to be trusted.”^m

Being removed from his beloved flock in Worcestershire, and uncertain whether he might ever return to them or not, he refused to take any other charge, but preached gratuitously in London, where he happened to be invited. When he had done this above a year, he thought a fixed place was better, which led him to join Dr. Bates, at St. Dunstan’s in the West, where he preached once a week, for which the people allowed him some maintenance. Before this time he scarcely ever preached a sermon in the city, but he had accounts from Westminster that he had preached seditiously or against the government; when he had neither a thought nor a word of any such tendency. Sometimes he preached purposely against faction, schism, sedition, and rebellion, and those sermons also were reported to be factious and seditious. Some sermons at Covent Garden were so much accused, that he thought it necessary to print them in his own defence. They are entitled the ‘Formal Hypocrite Detected,’ &c. When they appeared, he heard not a word more against them. The accusations against him, were, in general, of sedition and faction, and speaking against the church; but not one syllable charged of a particular nature.

“The congregation being crowded,” he says, “was that which provoked envy to accuse me: and one day the crowd did drive me from my place. It fell out that at St. Dunstan’s church, in the midst of sermon, a little lime and dust, and perhaps a piece of a brick or two, fell down in the steeple or belfrey near the boys; so that they thought the steeple and church were falling; which put them all into so confused a haste to get away, that the noise of their feet in the galleries sounded like the falling of the stones. The people crowded out of doors; the women left some of them a scarf, and some a shoe behind them, and some in the galleries cast themselves down upon those below, because they could not get down the stairs. I sat down in the pulpit, seeing and pitying their vain distemper, and as soon as I could be heard, I entreated their silence, and went on. The people were no sooner quieted and got in again, and the auditory composed, but some who stood upon a wainscot-bench, near the communion-table, brake the bench with their weight, so that the noise renewed the fear again, and they were worse disordered than before. One old woman was heard at the

^m Life, part ii. pp. 300, 301.

church-door asking forgiveness of God for not taking the first warning, and promising, if God would deliver her this once, she would take heed of coming hither again. When they were again quieted I went on;^a but the church having before an ill name as very old, rotten, and dangerous, it put the parish upon a resolution to pull down all the roof, and build it better, which they have done with so great reparation of the walls and steeple, that it is now like a new church and much more commodious for the hearers.^o

"While the church was repairing, I preached out my quarter at St. Bride's, at the other end of Fleet Street; where the common prayer being used by the curate before sermon, I occasioned abundance to be at common prayer, who before avoided it: and yet my accusations still continued. On the week days, Mr. Ashurst, with about twenty citizens, desired me to preach a lecture in Milk Street; for which they allowed me forty pounds per annum, which I continued near a year, till we were all silenced. At the same time I preached once every Lord's day at Blackfriars, where Mr. Gibbons, a judicious man, was minister. In Milk Street, I took money, because it came not from the parishioners, but from strangers, and so was no wrong to the minister, Mr. Vincent, a very holy, blameless man. But at Blackfriars I never took a penny, because it was the parishioners who called me, who would else be less able and ready to help their worthy pastor, who went to God by a consumption, a little after he was silenced and put out. At these two churches I ended the course of my public ministry, unless God cause an undeserved resurrection.^o

"Before this, I resolved to go to the archbishop of Canterbury, then bishop of London, to ask him for his license to preach in his diocese. Some brethren blamed me for it, as being an owning of prelatical usurpation. I told them, that the king had given him a power to suffer or hinder me in my duty, be-

^a This is a remarkable instance of the composure of Baxter in very alarming circumstances; and not the only occasion on which he displayed great fortitude and self-possession. Dr. Bates tells us, when the confusion was over, Baxter rose and said, "We are in the service of God, to prepare ourselves that we may be fearless at the great noise of the dissolving world; when the heavens shall pass away, and the elements melt with fervent heat."—*Funeral Sermon for Baxter*. Another instance of alarm occurred when he was preaching at the place over the market-house, in St. James's; where his wife displayed a courage and presence of mind equal to his own.—*Life of his Wife*, pp. 60, 61. edit. 1826.

^o *Life*, part ii. pp. 301, 302.

sides having power as the church magistrate or officer of the king; and though I was under no necessity, I would not refuse a lawful thing, when authority required it. The archbishop received me with very great expression of respect, offered me his license, and would let his secretary take no money of me. But when he offered me the book to subscribe in, I told him that he knew the king's declaration exempted us from subscription. He bade me write what I would: I told him what I resolved, and what I thought meet of him to expect, I would do of choice, though I might forbear. And so, in Latin, I subscribed my promise not to preach against the doctrine of the church, or the ceremonies established by law in his diocese, while I used his license. I told him also how grievous it was to me to be daily taunted with such general accusations behind my back, and asked him why I was never accused of any particulars. He confessed to me, that if they had got any particulars that would have deserved notice, I should have heard particularly from him. I scarce think that ever I preached a sermon without a spy to give them his report of it.^p

“Shortly after our disputation at the Savoy, I went to Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire, and preached there but once, from Matt. xxii. 12, ‘And he was speechless.’ I spake not a word that was any nearer kin to sedition, or that had any greater tendency to provoke them, than by showing that wicked men, and the refusers of grace, however they may now have many things to say to excuse their sin, will, at last, be speechless, and not dare stand to their wickedness before God. Yet did the bishop of Worcester tell me, when he silenced me, that the bishop of London had showed him letters from one of the hearers, assuring him that I preached seditiously. So little security was any man's innocency, who displeased the bishops, to his reputation with that party, if he had but one auditor that desired to get favour by accusing him. A multitude of such experiences made me perceive, when I was silenced, that there was some mercy in it, in the midst of judgment; for I should scarcely have preached a sermon, or put up a prayer to God, which one or other, through malice or hope of favour, would not have been tempted to accuse as guilty of some heinous crime.^q

“Soon after my return to London, I went into Worcester-shire, to try whether it were possible to have any honest terms

^p Life, part i. p. 302.

^q Ibid. p. 374.

from the reading vicar there, that I might preach to my former flock ; but when I had preached twice or thrice, he denied me liberty to preach any more. I offered then to take my lecture, which he was bound to allow me, under a bond of £500 ; but he refused it. I next offered to be his curate, and he refused it. I then offered to preach for nothing, and he refused it : and, lastly, I desired leave but once to administer the sacrament to the people, and preach my farewell sermon to them ; but he would not consent. At last, I understood that he was directed by his superiors to do what he did : but Mr. Baldwin, an able preacher, whom I left there, was yet permitted.

“ At that time, my aged father lying in great pain of the stone and strangury, I went to visit him, twenty miles further : and while I was there, Mr. Baldwin came to me, and told me that he also was forbidden to preach. We returned both to Kidderminster, and having a lecture at Shiffnal in the way, I preached there, and staid not to hear the evening sermon, because I would make haste to the bishop. It fell out that my turn at another lecture was on the same day with that at Shiffnal, viz., at Cleobury, in Shropshire ; and many were met in expectation to hear me. But a company of soldiers were there, as the country thought, to have apprehended me ; who shut the doors against the ministers that would have preached in my stead, bringing a command to the churchwarden to hinder any one who had not got a license from the bishop ; so that the poor people who had come from far, were fain to go home with grieved hearts.

“ The next day it was confidently reported, that a certain knight offered the bishop his troop to apprehend me, if I offered to preach : and the people dissuaded me from going to the bishop, supposing my liberty in danger. I went that morning, with Mr. Baldwin, and in the hearing of him and Dr. Warmestry, then dean of Worcester, I reminded the bishop of his promise to grant me his license, &c., but he refused me liberty to preach in his diocese ; though I offered to preach only on the Creed, the Lord's-prayer, and the Ten Commandments—catechetical principles, and only to such as had no preaching.

“ Bishop Morley told me when he silenced me, that he would take care that the people should be no losers, but should be taught as well as they were by me. When I was gone, he got awhile a few scandalous men, with some that were more civil to keep up the lecture, till the paucity of their auditors gave them

a pretence to put it down. He came himself one day and preached a long invective against them and me as Presbyterians, and I know not what; so that the people wondered that a man would venture to come up into a pulpit and speak so confidently to those he knew not, the things which they commonly knew to be untrue. But this sermon was so far from winning any of them to the estimation of their new bishop, or curing what he called the admiration of my person, which was his great endeavour, that they were much confirmed in their former judgments. But still the bishop looked at Kidderminster as a factious, schismatical, Presbyterian people, that must be cured of their overvaluing of me, and then they would be cured of all the rest. Whereas if he had lived with them the twentieth part so long as I had done, he would have known that they were neither Presbyterians, nor factious, nor schismatical, nor seditious; but a people that quietly followed their hard labour, learned the holy Scriptures, lived a holy, blameless life, in humility and peace with all men, and never had any sect or separated party among them, but abhorred all faction and sidings in religion, and lived in love and Christian unity.

“When the bishop was gone, the dean came and preached about three hours to cure them of the admiration of my person; and a month after came again and preached over the same, persuading the people that they were Presbyterians, and schismatical, and were led to it by their overvaluing of me. The people admired the temerity of these men, and really thought that they were scarce well in their wits, who would go on to speak things so far from truth, of men whom they never knew, and that to their own faces. Many have gone about by backbiting to make people believe a false report of others, but few will think to persuade men to believe it of themselves, who know the matter much better than the reprover doth. Yet beside all this, their lecturers went on in the same strain; and one Mr. Pitt, who lived in Sir John Packington’s house with Dr. Hammond, was often at this work, being of the judgment and spirit of Dr. Gunning, and Dr. Peirce, calling them Presbyterians, rebellious, serpents, and generation of vipers, unlikely to escape the damnation of hell, yet not knowing his accusation to be true of one man of them. For there was but one, if one Presbyterian in the town; the plain honest people minding nothing but piety, unity, charity, and their callings. This dealing, instead of winning them to the preacher, drove them from the lecture, and

then, as I said, they accused the people of deserting it, and put it down.

"In place of this ordinary preacher, they set up one, of the best parts they could get, who was far from what his patrons spake him to be; he was quickly weary and went away. They next set up a poor dry man, who had been a schoolmaster near us, and after a little time he died. They then took another course, and set up a young man, the best they could get, who took the contrary way to the first, over applauded me in the pulpit, spoke well of themselves, and used them kindly. They were naturally glad of one that had some charity. Thus the bishop used that flock, who say that till then they never knew so well what a bishop was, or were before so guilty of that dislike of Episcopacy of which they were so frequently and vehemently accused. I heard not of one person among them, who was won to the love of prelacy or formality after my removal."

"Having parted with my dear flock, I need not say with mutual sense and tears, I left Mr. Baldwin to live privately among them and oversee them in my stead, and visit them from house to house; advising them, notwithstanding all the injuries they had received, and all the failings of the ministers that preached to them, and the defects of the present way of worship, that they should keep to the public assemblies and make use of such helps as might be had in public, together with their private helps. Only in three cases they ought to absent themselves. When the minister was one that was utterly insufficient, as not being able to teach them the articles of the faith and essentials of true religion; such as, alas! they had known to their sorrow. When the minister preached any heresy, or doctrine which was directly contrary to some article of the faith, or necessary part of godliness. When in the application he set himself against the ends of his office, to make a holy life seem odious, to keep men from it, and to promote the interests of Satan; yet not to take every bitter reflection upon themselves or others, occasioned by difference of opinion or interest, to be a sufficient cause to say that the minister preacheth against godliness, or to withdraw themselves."*

"When the Act of Uniformity was passed, it gave the ministers who could not conform, no longer time than till Bartholomew's

* *Life*, part i. pp. 374—376.

* *Ibid.* p. 376.

day, August 24, 1662, and then they must be all cast out. This fatal day called to remembrance the French massacre, when on the same day thirty or forty thousand Protestants perished by Roman religious zeal and charity. I had no place of my own ; but I preached twice a week, by request, in other men's congregations, at Milk Street and Blackfriars. The last sermon that I preached in public was on May 25. The reasons why I gave over sooner than most others were, because lawyers did interpret a doubtful clause in the act, as ending the liberty of lecturers at that time ; because I would let authority soon know that I intended to obey in all that was lawful ; because I would let all ministers in England understand in time, whether I intended to conform or not : for, had I staid to the last day, some would have conformed the sooner, from a supposition that I intended it. These, with other reasons, moved me to cease three months before Bartholomew day, which many censured for awhile, but, afterwards, better saw the reasons of it.”[†]

Thus ended Baxter's ministry in the church of England. Most persons will probably think that he carried his conscientious scruples too far ; and that he might, at least, have continued his labours till he was obliged to desist. The reasons assigned for his conduct, however, possess considerable force ; but, whether they are approved or not, all must respect the man who was capable of acting in so noble and disinterested a manner. He carried his deference for authority in this case farther than he might have done ; but his example probably led others to act in the same decided manner when the fatal day arrived, who might have hesitated had there been a doubt how such a man as Baxter was likely to act.

The Act of Uniformity, for which the country was indebted chiefly to Hyde and Sheldon, by which two thousand of the most excellent ministers of the church of England were ejected from their livings, took effect, as stated by Baxter, on Bartholomew's day, August 24, 1662. Every thing practicable, and consistent with what they regarded as the will of God and the rights of conscience, had been done by the leaders of the Nonconformists, to prevent the passing of this act, or to procure some modification of its provisions ; but all was in vain. Hatred of the nonconforming clergy, a desire to be revenged for the wrongs which it

[†] Life, part ii. p. 384.

was conceived they had done to the church, and the supposed necessity of the times, urged forward the royal and episcopal party, flushed with recent success, and eager to secure the advantage which they had acquired.

To many, it may seem as if the Nonconformists brought their ejection on themselves by their needless scruples. This was the charge made against them at the time, and in which many churchmen, and all who value ease, honour, or emolument, more than conscience, continue to join. Those, however, who consider themselves bound to follow the revealed law of Heaven in all matters of religion, and to submit to their fellow-creatures only in things accordant with that law, or which are left undetermined by it, will judge very differently the conduct of these sincere confessors.

It is not to be supposed that all the ejected ministers were of the same mind on every point in which their separation from the church was involved; on the contrary, they differed considerably from each other, though they agreed generally in the unlawfulness of submitting on the terms which were proposed to them. Some laid the chief stress on one point, others on a different one; some would have gone a considerable length in submitting to authority; others objected more decidedly to its exercise. Some were, perhaps, influenced by public opinion, and regard to consistency; while the great majority appear to have acted from a conscientious regard to duty on the one hand, and fear of evil on the other.

The things imposed on them, if they would keep their livings or lectureships, or any post of service in the established church, were the following:—They must submit to be re-ordained, if not episcopally ordained before. They must declare their unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the Book of Common Prayer, and administration of the sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies of the church of England; together with the Psalter and the form or manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating bishops, priests, and deacons, &c.; to which was attached an equivalent subscription. They must take the oath of canonical obedience, and promise subjection to their ordinary, according to the canons of the church. They must abjure the solemn league and covenant; and they must also abjure the taking of arms, upon any pretence whatsoever, against the king, or any one commissioned by him. These things were all strictly enjoined

without any thing to qualify or soften them, or room left for a dispensation. So that if a man scrupled but at one point, though he could have complied with all the rest, he was as certainly ejected as if he had disputed the whole.^u

Those who wish to examine the full weight of these five points, must consult the Tenth Chapter of Dr. Calamy's 'Abridgment,' in which that learned divine illustrates, at great length, their bearing on many important matters, and supports, by reasonings which have never been fairly met, the justifiable secession of the Nonconformists from the church of England, on those grounds. The conditions were so framed, that, independently of religious considerations, it was impossible men of principle, who had taken an active part in the former changes, or who had approved of those changes, could submit to them. They extended to some things by an almost wanton stretch of authority, and involved a total departure from all just views of civil liberty, the cause of which must be regarded as virtually abandoned by those who submitted to them. All the temporal interests of the ejected party were on the side of compliance with the requirements of authority; whatever, therefore, may be thought of their judgment, every candid individual will give them full credit for sincerity.

But it is not necessary to rest the defence of the Nonconformist Confessors on this ground. They were not a body of weak, well-meaning men, for whose conscientiousness we may entertain a very high respect, while we have little reverence for their understanding. The leading individuals who influenced their brethren, were not only a match, but an over-match for their opponents. Among the churchmen of the day, there were none superior, as scholars and divines, to Calamy, Bates, Owen, Howe, Baxter, and many others who could be mentioned. They were as capable of forming enlarged and comprehensive views of truth and duty, as Pearson, Gunning, Morley, or any other of their episcopal adversaries; while, as it regards the evidences of Christian character and devotedness, there are few of the class from which they seceded, who will admit of being compared with them.

It is alleged, that the points on which they differed were, in themselves, of very inferior importance, and therefore to create so much altercation, and cause so extensive a division about

^u Calamy, vol. i. p. 196.

them, are proofs of narrow-mindedness and illiberality. It is demanded often in a tone of triumph, whether the things required were in themselves sinful ; if not sinful, it is inferred they must be innocent ; and hence the folly and impropriety of disputing about them is ascertained.

To all this it has been replied, that if the things referred to are so unimportant in themselves, why were they not viewed so by the imposers, as well as by the refusers ? It must have been worse, on this principle, to impose such things, than to resist their imposition. In fact, this was the grand matter of dispute between the parties. Importance and magnitude were given to the points in debate, by the very circumstance of their being enforced by human authority, and that implicit obedience to them was required from all. It was not so much a question, whether a prescribed form of prayer might be used in public, as whether no prayer should ever be employed but that form ; and that without deviation in all circumstances. It was not whether the cross in baptism might be used by those who approved of it ; but whether any child should be baptised, unless the minister and the parents both agreed to employ it. It was not, whether men might observe the Lord's-supper kneeling ; but whether the Lord's-supper should be refused to all who would not kneel. The same kind of remark will apply to all the other matters under discussion between the church and the Nonconformists, at this time.

Now, will any man who has the least regard for conscience, or for common sense, aver, that these were questions of a trifling or unimportant nature ? It is obvious, on the contrary, that they embrace the very first principles of religious obligation, and lie at the root of all enlightened views of our duty to God, and of what constitutes acceptable obedience in his sight. In answer to the inquiry, how far the things required were themselves sinful ; it may be said, many of the Nonconformists believed them to be so : and if this was their belief, though they had been mistaken, they were not only justified in refusing compliance, but bound to do so, at all hazards. They regarded them as human additions to the laws and ordinances of Christ ; as imposed without authority from him ; as calculated to interfere with the obedience which they owed to him alone in all matters of religion ; as popish in their origin and tendency ; and as destructive of that liberty with which Christ has made his people free. The controversy, therefore, was not about a

few trifling circumstances or adjuncts ; it was a grand struggle for principle, liberty, and the honour of Christ.

I am aware it may be said, that all the Nonconformists did not clearly understand these principles themselves, and would not have been averse to impose in their turn. What then ? does it follow that they had not truth or right on their side, when they were obliged to contend for principles in reference to themselves, the full extent of whose operation they did not clearly understand ? Certainly not. The principles which they endeavoured to maintain, and for which many of them suffered the loss of all things, are those of eternal and immutable truth ; and the men who contributed to clear off even a part of the rubbish in which they had long been buried, however imperfect they may have been in some respects, are entitled to our deepest reverence.

To do justice to those men, we ought to place ourselves in their circumstances. Suppose that the rulers of the church of England were now to determine, 'That, on or before the 24th of August, 1830, the present occupants of livings, curacies, &c., shall subscribe a declaration, engaging themselves to baptise no child without the employment of salt, oil, and spittle, as a part of the ordinance of baptism ; to administer the Lord's-supper to those only who should previously bow to the sacred chalice, and submit to a bread wafer being put upon their tongues.' What would the serious clergy of the church think of such a demand ? Would they submit to it, as a just exercise of ecclesiastical authority ? Would they not, to a man, abandon their livings, rather than allow their consciences thus to be lorded over and defiled ? Or, if they submitted to such exactions, would they not be justly regarded by their flocks and countrymen, as traitors and time-servers ? Would not any one who should speak of such a controversy as unimportant, or as relating merely to a few innocent circumstances, in no respect affecting the nature of the ordinances of Christ, be considered as an impertinent trifler ? Yet this supposed case is not stronger than that of the Nonconformists. They were placed in this very situation, and viewed the condition to which they were obliged to submit, as a similar interference would now be regarded.

The injustice and cruelty of the Bartholomew act, are strikingly apparent in two circumstances. It was designed to operate as a *post-facto* law. Had it been merely prospective in its operation, something more might have been alleged in its

favour than can now be done. A great multitude of the ministers of the church, had obtained possession of their livings while no such conformity was either required or considered necessary. Many of them, indeed, would not have entered the church at all, if such conditions had been prescribed at their entrance, or their enactment afterwards anticipated. To pass a law, then, which should compel all those persons, either to violate their consciences, or to abandon stations of usefulness, and the honourable means of living, was most flagrant injustice.

But even this is not all the hardship of the case. "So great," says Locke, "was the zeal in carrying on this church affair, and so blind was the obedience required, that if you compute the time of passing this act, with the time allowed for the clergy to subscribe the Book of Common Prayer, thereby established; you shall plainly find, it could not be printed and distributed, so as one man in forty could have seen and read the book they did so perfectly assent and consent to."^{*}

When these facts are considered, instead of being surprised that two thousand ministers preferred leaving the church rather than submit to such conditions, it is more surprising that the many thousands who remained, should have found means of reconciling their consciences to the terms. It is not so much to the honour of the Nonconformists, that they left the church, as it is to the disgrace of the Conformists, that they continued in it. Had they, as a body, resisted the iniquitous measure, it must have been abandoned. But their tame submission in this instance, prepared the court to make further encroachments, and to expect implicit obedience from the clergy, to whatever should be enacted. Such tergiversation and inconsistency on the part of ministers of religion, must have had a most injurious influence on the minds of worldly men; who could not have any respect for those who so decidedly discovered that they looked "more to the things which were seen and temporal, than to the things which are unseen and eternal." Not a few of them were *jure divinum* Prelatists in the time of Charles I; took the Presbyterian covenant under the Long Parliament; submitted to the

^{*} Locke's Works, x. 203, 204. The Act of Uniformity was passed on the 13th of May, 1662. All the ministers of the church were required to subscribe and conform before the 24th of August following. It is certain the Common Prayer-book, with the alterations and amendments made by the Convocation, did not leave the press till a few days before the 24th of August; it was therefore impossible the great body of the ministers could possess the book,

Independent engagement; and once more assented and consented to an altered prayer-book, which they had never seen.⁷

The effects resulting both to the Nonconformists and to the nation from their ejection, were of a melancholy description. Multitudes of ministers and their families were involved in great distress and poverty. Few of them had any independent property; and those to whom they afterwards ministered, when they had an opportunity, were generally poor, and therefore little able to assist them. They were not only driven out of the church, but persecuted after they were out. Their usefulness was curtailed; and, in many instances, entirely destroyed. The churches they vacated were generally supplied by men of very different principles and spirit from themselves. The established church was converted into a mass of frigid, outward uniformity, destitute of the vitality of genuine religion; and more than a century elapsed before it recovered from the effects of this almost fatal blow.

Out of evil, however, the Most High often educes good, without removing the blame from its authors. This was the case in regard to the Bartholomew ejection. If they who, imitating the vicar of Bray, change with every change of the times, harden men in wickedness and infidelity, the contrary practice must, by the divine blessing, produce an opposite effect. The testimony to the value of truth and the rights of conscience, borne by two thousand men voluntarily suffering the loss of their livings, their worldly respectability, and all hope of preferment, could not have been altogether in vain. Their patience and fortitude under suffering, with their blameless lives, added powerfully to the weight of their preaching; so that many of them were probably as useful without, as ever they had been within, the pale of the church. Besides, what they endured contributed greatly to the ultimate triumph of civil and religious freedom. They were the instruments of forming an extensive body of dissenters in all parts of the kingdom, by whose means chiefly the power of religion was preserved from destruction for many years, and to whom the country has been indebted for

⁷ This conduct of the clergy led Locke to say of them, "The clergy readily complied with the Bartholomew act; for you know that sort of men are taught rather to obey than understand; and to use that learning they have, to justify, not to examine what their superiors command."—*Letter to a Person of Quality, Works*, x. 202. Could a greater reproach be uttered against the ministers of religion?

more blessings than will ever be known or acknowledged in this world.*

Shortly after the Bartholomew ejection, an event of great importance occurred in the history of Baxter, and which appears to have made considerable noise ; I refer to his marriage. Some time before it took place, he tells us it was reported, and " rung about every where, partly as a wonder, and partly as a crime ; and that the king's marriage was scarcely more talked of than his." For this, he had no doubt furnished some occasion by the manner in which he had expressed himself respecting ministers marrying ; which he considered barely lawful, and had for many years, while engaged in the most laborious part of his ministry, dispensed with it himself. He was now considerably advanced in life, being in his forty-seventh year. His habits were formed,

* It is deplorable to find such a man as Mr. Southey, attempting to defend or palliate the iniquity and impolicy of this wicked act. " The measure," he says, " was complained of as an act of enormous cruelty and persecution ; and the circumstance of its being fixed for St. Bartholomew's day, gave the complainants occasion to compare it with the atrocious deed committed upon that day against the Huguenots in France. They were careful not to remember, that the same day, and for the same reason (because the tithes were commonly due at Michaelmas), had been appointed for the former ejection, when four times as many of the loyal clergy were deprived for fidelity to their sovereign. No small proportion of the present sufferers had obtained their preferments by means of that tyrannical deprivation ; they did but now drink of the cup which they had administered to others."—*Book of the Church*, ii. 467.

Seldom has a larger portion of misstatement been compressed into so small a space as in the above passage. It would have been obliging, if the learned author had produced his authorities for his assertions. But these are carefully suppressed throughout the work. Hallam remarks on the passage respecting Bartholomew's day : " That the day was chosen in order to deprive the incumbent of a whole year's tithes, Mr. Southey has learned from Burnet ; and it aggravates the cruelty of the proceeding. But where has he found his precedent ? The Anglican clergy were ejected for refusing the covenant at no one definite period, as, on reflection, Mr. Southey would be aware ; nor can I find any one parliamentary ordinance in Husband's collection, that mentions St. Bartholomew's day. There was a precedent, indeed, in that case, which the government of Charles did not choose to follow. One-fifth of the income had been reserved for the dispossessed incumbents."—*Constitutional History of England*, ii. 460, note.

But this is not the only misrepresentation in the above passage. Southey asserts that *four times* the number of the ministers had been ejected of " the loyal clergy," as he is pleased to denominate them. Eight thousand ministers of the church formerly dispossessed of their livings ! And for what ? For their loyalty to their sovereign ! And by whom ? By the Nonconformist ministers, who were only now drinking the cup which they had given to others ! The historian of the church is really unbounded in his demands on the confidence of his readers, when he expects them to receive such monstrous things on his bare authority.

his infirmities of body many, and the peculiarities of his views and dispositions such, as not to afford great encouragement to hope that an individual would easily be found with whom an alliance could be formed likely to be productive of lasting comfort to both parties. Such a person, however, was found, who appears to have been eminently fitted to promote the happiness and aid the usefulness of this excellent man. From what he calls "a Breviate of her life," which will be noticed in another place, I extract at present a few particulars.

"We were born in the same county, within three miles and a half of each other, but she of one of the chief families in the county, and I but of a mean freeholder, called a gentleman, for his ancestors' sake. Her father, Francis Charlton, esq., was one of the best justices of the peace in that county, a grave and worthy man, who did not marry till he was aged and gray, and died while his children were very young. There were three of them, of which the eldest daughter and the only son are yet alive. He had one surviving brother, who, after the father's death, maintained a long and costly suit about the guardianship of the heir. This uncle, Robert, was a comely, sober, gentleman; but the wise and good mother, Mary, durst not trust her only son in the hands of one that was his next heir; and she thought that nature gave her a greater interest in him than an uncle had. This was in the heat of the late civil war, and Robert, being for the parliament, had the advantage of strength, which put her to seek relief at Oxford from the king, and afterwards to marry one Mr. Hanmer, who was for the king, to make her interest that way. Her house, being a sort of small castle, was then garrisoned for the king. At last Robert procured it to be besieged by the parliament's soldiers, stormed and taken; where the mother and the children saw part of the buildings burnt, and some lie dead before their eyes; and so Robert got possession of the children.

"Afterwards, however, she, by great wisdom and diligence, surprised them, secretly conveyed them to Mr. Bernard's, in Essex, and secured them against all his endeavours. The wars being ended, and she, as guardian, possessing her son's estate, took him to herself, and used his estate as carefully as for herself; but out of it conscientiously paid the debts of her husband, repaired some of the ruined houses, and managed things faithfully, according to her best discretion, until her son marrying, took his estate into his own hands.

"She, being before unknown to me, came to Kidderminster, desiring me to take a house for her alone. I told her that I would not be guilty of doing any thing which should separate a mother from an only son, who in his youth had so much need of her counsel, conduct, and comfort ; and that if passion in her, or any fault in him, had caused a difference, the love which brought her through so much trouble for him, should teach her patience. She went home, but shortly came again, and took a house without my knowledge.

"When she had been there alone awhile, her unmarried daughter, Margaret, then about seventeen or eighteen years of age, came after her from her brother's, resolving not to forsake the mother who deserved her dearest love ; though sometimes she went to Oxford to her eldest sister, wife to Mr. Ambrose Upton, then canon of Christ-church. At this time, the good old mother lived as a blessing among the honest poor weavers of Kidderminster, strangers to her, whose company for their piety she chose before all the vanities of the world. In which time, my acquaintance with her made me know, that notwithstanding she had been formerly somewhat passionate, she was a woman of manly patience in her great trials ; of prudence, piety, justice, impartiality, and other virtues." *

The preaching of Baxter appears to have been useful to Miss Charlton. It produced very powerful impressions, and the deepest distress of mind, which he was called to assist in relieving. She became, in due time, an eminent Christian, and in all respects worthy to be the wife of Richard Baxter. But we must give his own account of the marriage, and a few particulars respecting his wife.

"The unsuitableness of our age, and my former known purposes against marriage and against the conveniency of ministers marrying, who have no sort of necessity, made ours the matter of much public talk and wonder. But the true opening of her case and mine, and the many strange occurrences which brought it to pass, would take away the wonder of her friends and mine that knew us ; and the notice of it would much conduce to the understanding of some other passages of our lives ; yet wise

* Life of Mrs. Baxter, p. 1—3.

† As nearly as I can calculate from incidental circumstances, the age of Mrs. Baxter, at the time of her marriage, must have been about twenty-two or twenty-three. Her husband, as has already been stated, was in his forty-seventh year. There was some room, therefore, for remark on the disparity of their ages.

friends, by whom I am advised, think it better to omit such personal particularities, at least at this time. Both in her case and mine there was much extraordinary, which it doth not concern the world to be acquainted with. From the first thoughts of it, many changes and stoppages intervened, and long delays, till I was silenced and ejected; and so being separated from my old pastoral charge, which was enough to take up all my time and labour, some of my dissuading reasons were then over. At last, on September 10, 1662, we were married in Bennet-Fink church, by Mr. Samuel Clark, having been before contracted by Mr. Simeon Ash, both in the presence of Mr. Henry Ashurst and Mrs. Ash.

“She consented to these conditions of our marriage: first, that I should have nothing that before our marriage was hers; that I who wanted no earthly supplies, might not seem to marry her for covetousness. Secondly, that she would so alter her affairs, that I might be entangled in no lawsuits. Thirdly, that she would expect none of my time which my ministerial work should require.

“When we were married, her sadness and melancholy vanished; counsel did something to it, and contentment something; and being taken up with our household affairs did somewhat. We lived in inviolated love, and mutual complacency, sensible of the benefit of mutual help, nearly nineteen years. I know not that ever we had any breach in point of love, or point of interest, save only that she somewhat grudged that I had persuaded her for my quietness to surrender so much of her estate, to the disabling her from helping others so much as she earnestly desired.

“But that even this was not from a covetous mind, is evident by these instances. Though her portion, which was two thousand pounds beside what she gave up, was by ill debtors two hundred pounds lost in her mother’s time, and two hundred pounds after, before her marriage; and all she had, reduced to about one thousand six hundred and fifty pounds, yet she never grudged at any thing that the poverty of debtors deprived her of.”

The married life of Baxter, owing to the state of the times, was a very unsettled one. During a great part of it, he might literally be said “to have had no certain dwelling-place.” They

first took a house in Moorfields, then they removed to Acton; after that to another there; and after that, he says, "we were put to remove to one of the former again; and after that to divers others in another place and county." "The women," he quietly remarks, "have most of that sort of trouble, but my wife easily bore it all."

We shall have occasion to speak of Mrs. Baxter again; in the mean time, we must return to the more public events of her husband's life and times. Referring to the statement already given of the causes and immediate consequences of the act of uniformity, he thus proceeds in his personal narrative.

"Having got past Bartholomew's day, I proceed in the history of the consequent calamities. When I was absent, resolving to meddle in such businesses no more, Mr. Calamy and the other ministers of London who had acquaintances at court, were put in hope the king would grant that by way of indulgence, which was formerly denied them; and that before the act was passed, it might be provided that the king should have power to dispense with such as deserved well of him in his restoration, or whom he pleased: but all was frustrated. After this, they were told that the king had power himself to dispense in such cases, as he did with the Dutch and French churches, and some kind of petition they drew up to offer the king: but when they had done it, they were so far from procuring their desires, that there fled abroad grievous threatenings against them, that they should incur a premunire for such a bold attempt. When they were drawn to it at first, they did it with much hesitancy, and they worded it so cautiously, that it extended not to the Papists. Some of the Independents presumed to say, that the reason why all our addresses for liberty had not succeeded, was because we did not extend it to the Papists; that for their parts, they saw no reason why the Papists should not have liberty of worship as well as others; and that it was better for them to have it, than for all of us to go without it.^d But the Presbyterians still answered, that the king might himself do what he pleased; and if his wisdom thought meet to give liberty to the Papists, let the Papists petition for it as we did for ours; but if it were expected that we should be forced to

^d It is gratifying to find that such were the opinions of some of the Independents of this time. It shows, that correct views of religious liberty were still to be found in that body, though much can be said in vindication of the conduct of the Presbyterians.

become petitioners for liberty to Popery, we should never do it, whatever be the issue ; nor should it be said to be our work.

“ On the 26th December, 1662, the king sent forth a declaration, expressing his purpose to grant some indulgence or liberty in religion, with other matters, not excluding the Papists, many of whom had deserved so well of him. When this came out, the ejected ministers began to think more confidently of some indulgence to themselves. Mr. Nye, also, and some other of the Independents, were encouraged to go to the king, and, when they came back, told us, that he was now resolved to give them liberty. On the second of January, Mr. Nye came to me, to treat about our owning the king's declaration, by returning him thanks for it ; when I perceived that it was designed that we must be the desirers or procurers of it ; but I told him my resolution to meddle no more in such matters, having incurred already so much hatred and displeasure by endeavouring unity. The rest of the ministers also had enough of it, and resolved that they would not meddle ; so that Mr. Nye and his brethren thought it partly owing to us that they missed their intended liberty. But all were averse to have any thing to do with the indulgence or toleration of the Papists, thinking it at least unfit for them.”^e

However we may be disposed to blame the conduct of the Nonconformists towards the Roman Catholics on this occasion, great allowance must be made for them, considering the circumstances in which they were placed. No favour shown by the court to the Catholics was intended to operate beneficially on the Nonconformists. It was not love for liberty, but the desire to promote arbitrary power, that dictated all the measures which then seemed to confer common privileges on Catholics and Protestant dissenters. All the leanings of the court were in favour of a system which was not less inimical to constitutional freedom than it was opposed to the interests of true religion. On these accounts, the Nonconformists were willing to endure temporary privations and persecutions rather than, through impatience to get rid of them, perpetuate the civil and religious degradation of the country ; which would certainly follow on the establishment of Popery.

The personal narrative of Baxter abounds with notices, more or less in extent and interest, of numerous Confessors among the ejected ministers. To introduce them all, would

^e Life, part ii. pp. 429, 430.

be impracticable within the limits of this work. But were they entirely omitted, injustice would be done to the memory of those holy men, who suffered for conscience' sake ; and an imperfect impression would be left of the state of the period. I have already introduced statesmen and politicians ; soldiers and churchmen. I must now make room for Baxter's sketch of two Nonconformists, who died shortly after the enforcement of the act.

" Good old Simeon Ash was buried on the eve of Bartholomew day, and went seasonably to heaven at the very time when he was to be cast out of the church. He was one of our oldest Nonconformists ; a Christian of primitive simplicity ; not made for controversy, nor inclined to disputes, but of a holy life, a cheerful mind, and of a fluent elegance in prayer ; full of matter and excellent words. His ordinary speech was holy and edifying. Being much confined by the gout, and having a good estate and a very good wife, inclined to entertainments and liberality, his house was very much frequented by ministers. He was always cheerful, without profuse laughter or levity : never troubled with doubtings of his interest in Christ, but tasting the continual love of God, was much disposed to the communicating of it to others, and the comforting of dejected souls. His eminent sincerity made him exceedingly loved and honoured ; insomuch that Mr. Gataker, Mr. Whittaker, and others, the most excellent divines of London, when they went to God, desired him to preach their funeral sermons. He was zealous for bringing in the king. Having been chaplain to the Earl of Manchester in the wars, he fell under the obloquy of the Cromwellians, for crossing their designs. He wrote to Colonel Sanders, Colonel Barton, and others in the army, when Monk came in to engage them for the king.

" Having preached his lecture in Cornhill, being heated, he caught cold in the vestry, and thinking it would prove but one of his old fits of the gout, he went to Highgate, where it turned to a fever. He died as he lived, in great consolation, and cheerful exercise of faith, molested with no fears or doubts discernible ; exceedingly glad of the company of his friends, and greatly encouraging all about him with his joyful expressions in respect of death and his approaching change ; so that no man could seem to be more fearless of it. When he had, towards the last, lain speechless for some time, as soon as I came to him, gladness so excited his spirits, that he spake joyfully and freely of his going to God, to those about him. I staid with him his

ast evening, till we had long expected his change, being speechless all that day; and in the night he departed.^f

“ On the first of January following was buried good Mr. James Nalton, another minister of primitive sincerity: a good linguist, a zealous, excellent preacher, commonly called the *weeping prophet*, because his seriousness oft expressed itself by tears; of a most holy, blameless life; and though learned, greatly averse to controversy and dispute. In almost all things he was like Mr. Ash, except his natural temper, and the influence it had upon his soul; both of them so composed of humility, piety, and innocence, that no enemy of godliness that knew them had a word to say against them. They were scorned as Puritans, like their brethren, but escaped all the particular exceptions and obloquy which many others underwent. But as one was cheerful, so the other was from his youth surprised with violent fits of melancholy once in every few years; which, though it distracted him not, yet kept him, till it was over, in a most despondent state. In his health he was over humble, and had too mean thoughts of himself and all that was his own, and never put out himself among his brethren into any employment which had the least show of ostentation. Less than a year before his death, he fell into a grievous fit of melancholy, in which he was so confident of his gracelessness, that he usually cried out ‘ O, not one spark of grace, not one good desire or thought! I can no more pray than a post. If an angel from heaven would tell me that I have true grace, I would not believe him.’ And yet at that time did he pray very well; and I could demonstrate his sincerity so much to him in his desires and life, that he had not a word to say against it, but yet was harping still on the same string, and would hardly be persuaded that he was melancholy. It pleased God to recover him from this fit, and shortly after he confessed that what I said was true, that his despair was all the effect of melancholy; and rejoiced much in God’s deliverance. Shortly after this came out the Bartholomew Act, which cast him out of his place and ministry, and his heart being troubled with the sad case of the church, and the multitude of ministers cast out and silenced, and at his own unserviceableness, it roused his melancholy, which began also to work with some fears of want and his family’s distress; all which cast him so low, that the violence

^f Mr. Ash was one of the ministers engaged at the Savoy conference, but personally took little part in the discussion.

of it wore him away like a true marasmus. So that without any other disease, but mere melancholy, he consumed to death, continuing still his sad despondency and self-condemning views. By which it appeareth how little judgment is to be made of a man's condition by his melancholy apprehensions, or the sadness of his mind at death ; and in what a different manner men of the same eminency in holiness and sincerity may go to God. Which I have the rather showed by the instance of those two saints, than whom this age hath scarce produced and set up a pair more pious, humble, just, sincere, laborious in their well-performed work, unblamable in their lives, not meddling with state matters, nor secular affairs, and therefore well spoken of by all." ^s

Such is a specimen of the men, whom the leaders of the church of England thought it needful to eject from the office of the ministry, because they could not submit to the exercise of an unrighteous authority. Such were some of the fathers of Non-conformity. The church and the world were not worthy of them, but they were counted worthy not only to believe, but also to suffer for the sake of Christ ; and their names will be held in everlasting remembrance.

The intolerable hardships which many excellent men were called to endure, it is not possible fully to exhibit. They were harassed and tormented by all sorts of interferences, even when they could escape fines and imprisonment. The following may be regarded as a specimen.

"As we were forbidden to preach, so we were vigilantly watched in private, that we might not exhort one another, or pray together ; and, as I foretold them oft, how they would use us when they had silenced us, every meeting for prayer was called a dangerous meeting for sedition, or a conventicle at least. I will now give but one instance of their kindness to myself. One Mr. Beale, in Hatton Garden, having a son, his only child, who being long sick of a dangerous fever was brought so low that the physicians thought he would die, desired a few friends, of whom I was one, to meet at his house to pray for him. Because it pleased God to hear our prayers, and that very night to restore him ; his mother shortly after falling sick of a fever, we were desired to meet to pray for her recovery, the last day when she was near to death. Among those who were to be there, it

^s Life, part ii, p. 430, 431.

fell out that Dr. Bates and I did fail them, and could not come; but it was known at Westminster, that we were appointed to be there, whereupon two justices of the peace were procured from the distant parts of the town, one from Westminster and one from Clerkenwell, to come with the parliament's serjeant at arms to apprehend us. They came in the evening, when part of the company were gone. There were then only a few of their kindred, beside two or three ministers to pray. They came upon them into the room where the gentlewoman lay ready to die, drew the curtains, and took some of their names; but, missing their prey, returned disappointed. What a joy would it have been to them that reproached us as Presbyterian, seditious schismatics, to have found but such an occasion as praying with a dying woman, to have laid us up in prison! Yet, that same week, there was published, a witty, malicious invective against the silenced ministers; in which it was affirmed, that Dr. Bates and I were at Mr. Beale's house, such a day, keeping a conventicle. The liar had so much extraordinary modesty as, within a day or two, to print a second edition, in which those words, so easy to be disproved, were left out. Such eyes were every where then lifted upon us."^h

In the beginning of June, 1663, the old, peaceable archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Juxon, died; and was succeeded by Dr. Gilbert Sheldon, bishop of London. Juxon was a very respectable prelate, and worthy of the character which is given him by Baxter. His conduct during the trying period of the civil wars, exhibited great moderation. He attended Charles I. on the scaffold, and received his last commands in the emphatical word, "REMEMBER." At the Restoration, he was made archbishop of Canterbury; and crowned Charles II.; by whom he appears to have been not greatly respected. He seems to have been an amiable man, but had no great energy of mind. Sheldon was his superior for learning and talents; dexterous in business, and a thorough courtier; but more of a politician than is consistent with integrity of character and religious principle. He was an implacable enemy of the Nonconformists.

"About these times, the talk of liberty to the silenced ministers, for what end, I know not, was revived again, and we were blamed by many that we had never once petitioned the parliament; for which we had sufficient reasons. It was said, that they were resolved to grant us either an indulgence by way

^h Life, part ii. p. 431, 432.

of dispensation, or a comprehension by some additional act; taking in all that could conform in some particular points. Hereupon there was great talk about the question, whether the way of indulgence or the way of comprehension was the more desirable. It was debated as seriously, as if, indeed, such a thing as one of them had been expected. And parliament men themselves persuaded us that it would be done.

“For my own part, I meddled but little with any such business, since the failing of that which incurred so much displeasure: and the rather, because though the brethren commissioned with me stuck to me as to the cause, yet they were not forward enough to bear their part of the ungrateful management, nor of the consequent displeasure. But yet, when an honourable person was earnest with me, to give him my judgment, whether the way of indulgence or comprehension was the more desirable, that he might discern which way to go in parliament himself, I gave him my mind, though I thought it was to little purpose.¹

“Instead of indulgence and comprehension, on the last day of June, 1668, the bill against private meetings for religious exercises passed the House of Commons, and shortly after was made a law. The sum of it was, ‘that every person above sixteen years old, who should be present at any meeting under colour or pretence of any exercise of religion, in other manner than is allowed by the liturgy or practice of the church of England, where there are five persons more than the household, shall, for the first offence, by a justice of peace be recorded, and sent to jail three months, till he pay five pounds; and, for the second offence, six months, till he pay ten pounds; and the third time, being convicted by a jury, shall be banished to some of the American plantations, excepting New England or Virginia.’ The calamity of the act, beside the main matter, was, that it was made so ambiguous, that no man that ever I met with could tell what was a violation of it, and what not; not knowing what was allowed by the liturgy or practice of the church of England in families, because the liturgy meddleth not with families; and among the diversity of family practice, no man knoweth what to call the practice of the church. Too much power was given to the justices of the peace to record a man an offender without a jury, and if he did it carelessly, we were without any remedy, seeing he was made a

¹ Life, part ii. p. 433.

judge. According to the plain words of the act, if a man did but preach and pray, or read some licensed book, and sing psalms, he might have more than four present, because these are allowed by the practice of the church in the church; and the act seemeth to grant an indulgence for place and number, so be it the quality of the exercise be allowed by the church; which must be meant publicly, because it meddleth with no private exercise. But when it came to the trial, these pleas with the justices were vain: for if men did but pray, it was taken for granted, that it was an exercise not allowed by the church of England, and to jail they went.

“And now came the people’s trial, as well as the ministers’. While the dangers and sufferings lay on the ministers alone, the people were very courageous, and exhorted them to stand it out and preach till they went to prison. But when it came to be their own case, they were venturous till they were once surprised and imprisoned; but then their judgments were much altered, and they that censured ministers before as cowardly, because they preached not publicly, whatever followed, did now think that it was better to preach often in secret to a few, than but once or twice in public to many; and that secrecy was no sin, when it tended to the furtherance of the work of the Gospel, and to the church’s good. The rich especially were as cautious as the ministers. But yet their meetings were so ordinary, and so well known, that it greatly tended to the jailers’ commodity.

“The people were in a great strait, those especially who dwelt near any busy officer, or malicious enemy. Many durst not pray in their families, if above four persons came in to dine with them. In a gentleman’s house, where it was ordinary for more than four visitors, neighbours, messengers, or one sort or other, to be most so many days at dinner with them, many durst not then go to prayer, and some scarcely durst crave a blessing on their meat, or give God thanks for it. Some thought they might venture if they withdrew into another room, and left the strangers by themselves: but others said, it is all one if they be in the same house, though out of hearing, when it cometh to the judgment of the justices. In London, where the houses are contiguous, some thought if they were in several houses and heard one another through the wall or a window, it would avoid the law: but others said, it is all in vain whilst the justice is judge whether it was a meeting or no. Great lawyers

said, if you come on a visit or business, though you be present at prayer or sermon, it is no breach of the law, because you met not *on pretence of a religious exercise*: but those that tried them said, such words are but wind, when the justices come to judge you.

“ And here the Quakers did greatly relieve the sober people for a time ; for they were so resolute, and so gloried in their constancy and sufferings, that they assembled openly at the Bull and Mouth, near Aldersgate, and were dragged away daily to the common jail ; and yet desisted not, but the rest came the next day, nevertheless : so that the jail at Newgate was filled with them. Abundance of them died in prison, and yet they continued their assemblies still. They would sometimes meet only to sit still in silence, when, as they said, the Spirit did not move them : and it was a great question, whether this silence was a religious exercise not allowed by the liturgy, &c. Once, upon some such reasons as these, when they were tried at the sessions, in order to a banishment, the jury acquitted them ; but were grievously threatened for it. After that, another jury did acquit them, and some of them were fined and imprisoned for it. But thus the Quakers so employed Sir K. B., and the other searchers and prosecutors, that they had the less leisure to look after the meetings of soberer men ; which was much to their present ease.^k

“ The divisions, or rather the censures of the nonconforming people, against their ministers and one another, began now to increase ; which was long foreseen, but could not be avoided. I that had incurred so much the displeasure of the prelates, and all their party, by pleading for the peace of the Nonconformists, did fall under more of their displeasure than any one man beside, as far as I could learn. With me they joined Dr. Bates, because we went to the public assemblies, and also to the common-prayer, even at the beginning of it. Not that they thought worse of us than of others, but that they thought our example would do more harm ; for I must bear them witness, that in the midst of all their censures of my judgment and actions, they never censured my affections and intentions, nor

^k Had there been more of the same determined spirit among others, which the Friends displayed, the sufferings of all parties would sooner have come to an end. The government must have given way, as the spirit of the country would have been effectually roused. The conduct of the Quakers was infinitely to their honour.

abated their charitable estimation of me in the main. Of the leading prelates, I had so much favour in their hottest indignation, that they thought what I did was only in obedience to my conscience. So that I see by experience, that he who is impartially and sincerely for truth, and peace, and piety, against all factions, shall have his honesty acknowledged by the several factions, whilst his actions, as cross to their interest, are detested: whereas, he that joineth with one of the factions, shall have both his person and actions condemned by the other, though his party may applaud both.”¹

That Baxter acted conscientiously, no doubt can be entertained; and it must have been a comfort to him, to enjoy the testimony of a good conscience amidst the conflict through which he was called to pass. But we cannot be surprised that his conduct troubled and offended both churchmen and dissenters, even while they gave him credit for integrity. Few could enter into his numerous, and often wire-drawn distinctions; sometimes, even with all his acuteness, they were founded on a mistaken view of the case. The attempt to meet all parties, and to reconcile them, was the vainest in which this most worthy and devoted individual ever engaged. His catholic spirit grasped and hoped for that which is reserved for happier times than his own, or than has yet blessed the church of God.

“ Having lived three years and more in London, and finding it neither agree with my health nor studies, the one being brought very low and the other interrupted, and all public service being at an end, I betook myself to live in the country, at Acton, that I might set myself to writing, and do what service I could for posterity, and live as much as possibly I could out of the world. Thither I went on the 14th of July, 1663, where I followed my studies privately, in quietness, and went every Lord’s-day to the public assembly, when there was any preaching or catechising, and spent the rest of the day with my family, and a few poor neighbours that came in; spending now and then a day in London. The next year, 1664, I had the company of divers godly, faithful friends that tabled with me in summer, with whom I solaced myself with much content. Having almost finished a large treatise, called ‘A Christian Directory, or Sum of Practical Divinity,’ that I might know whether it would be licensed for the press, I tried the licensers with a small treatise, the ‘Character

¹ Life, part ii. pp. 435, 436.

of a Sound Christian, as differenced from the weak Christian and the Hypocrite.' I offered it Mr. Grig, the Bishop of London's chaplain, who had been a Nonconformist, and professed an extraordinary respect for me; but he durst not license it. Yet after, when the plague began, I sent three single sheets to the Archbishop of Canterbury's chaplain, without any name, that they might have passed unknown; but, accidentally, they knew them to be mine, and they were licensed. The one was Directions for the sick; the second was Directions for the conversion of the ungodly; and the third was Instructions for a holy life: for the use of poor families that cannot buy greater books, or will not read them."^m

Beside these works, he wrote or published, between the time of his leaving Kidderminster and the year 1665, several considerable works, both practical and controversial. Among these were, his 'Life of Faith,' 'The Successive Visibility of the Church,' 'The Vain Religion of the Formal Hypocrite,' 'The Last Work of a Believer,' 'The Mischiefs of Self-ignorance,' his Controversy with the Bishop of Worcester about the Causes of his leaving Kidderminster, his 'Saint, or Brute,' 'Now or Never,' and 'The Divine Life.' These works, considering the public business in which he was engaged, and his various trials and changes, must have found him very full employment; and only a mind of unceasing activity, and a pen of more than ordinary dispatch, could have accomplished so much.

"March 26, 1665, being the Lord's-day, as I was preaching in a private house, where we received the Lord's supper, a bullet came in at the window among us, passed by me, and narrowly missed the head of a sister-in-law of mine that was there, but hurt none of us. We could never discover whence it came.

"In June following, an ancient gentlewoman, with her son and daughter, came four miles in her coach to hear me preach in my family, as out of special respect to me. It fell out, contrary to our custom, that we let her knock long at the door, and did not open it: and so a second time, when she had gone away and come again; and the third time she came when we had ended. She was so earnest to know when she might come again to hear me, that I appointed her a time; but before she came I had secret intelligence from one that was nigh her, that she came with a heart exceeding full of malice, resolving, if possible, to do

^m Life, part ii. pp. 440, 441.

me what mischief she could by accusation, and so that danger was avoided."^a

During this period, some foreign ministers of eminence, who had heard of Baxter's character and talents, and were desirous of cultivating his acquaintance and friendship, wished to engage him in correspondence. Among these were Amyrald, or Amyraut, a French Protestant minister, and professor of theology at Saumur, whose sentiments on some doctrinal points were nearly allied to those of Baxter, and Zollicoffer of Switzerland, who seems, from his letter, to have visited England, and to have been well acquainted with his writings. He was afraid, however, to answer their letters.

"The vigilant eye of malice that some had upon me, made me understand that, though no law of the land was against literary persons' correspondencies beyond the seas, nor had any divines been hindered from it, yet, it was likely to have proved my ruin, if I had but been known to answer one of their letters, though the matter had been ever so much beyond exception. So that I neither answered this nor any other, save only by word of mouth to the messenger, and that but in small part. Our silencing and ejection, they would quickly know by other means, and how much the judgment of the English bishops did differ from theirs about the labours and persons of such as we.

"About this time, I thought meet to debate the case with some learned and moderate ejected ministers of London, about communicating sometimes at the parish churches in the sacrament; for they that came to common prayer, came not yet to the sacrament. They desired me to bring in my judgment and reasons in writing, which being debated, they were all of my mind in the main, that it is lawful and a duty where greater accidents preponderate not. But they all concurred unanimously in this, that if we did communicate at all in the parish churches, the sufferings of the Independents, and those Presbyterians that could not communicate there, would certainly be very much increased; which now were somewhat moderated by our concurrence with them. I thought the case very hard on both sides; that we, who were so much censured by them for going somewhat further than they, must yet omit that which else must be our duty, merely to abate their sufferings who censure us: but I resolved to forbear with them awhile, rather than any

^a Life, part ii. p. 444.

Christian should suffer by occasion of an action of mine, seeing God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; and no duty is a duty at all times."

He thus concludes his memorials of the year 1665. The reader will be struck, as the writer of the present work is, that the year, in which he writes this page, 1828, the prayer of Baxter has been answered respecting the Corporation Act; and that for the first time during one hundred and sixty-three years, it can be said that the Protestant Dissenters of England are in possession of common rights and privileges with their fellow subjects of the established church. After such a delay in the discharge of justice, let no man be sanguine in his expectations of speedy change. After the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, under all the circumstances in which it has been accomplished, let no man despair.

"And now, after the breaches on the churches, the ejection of the ministers, and impenitency under all, wars and plague and danger of famine began at once on us. War with the Hollanders, which yet continueth; and the dryest winter, spring, and summer, that ever man alive knew, or our forefathers mention of late ages: so that the grounds were burnt like the highways, where the cattle should have fed. The meadow grounds where I lived, bare but four loads of hay, which before bare forty; the plague hath seized on the famous and most excellent city of Christendom, and at this time nearly 8,300 die of all diseases in a week. It hath scattered and consumed the inhabitants; multitudes being dead and fled. The calamities and cries of the diseased and impoverished, are not to be conceived by those that are absent from them. Every man is a terror to his neighbour and himself: and God, for our sins, is a terror to us all. O! how is London, the place which God hath honoured with his Gospel above all places of the earth, laid low in horrors, and wasted almost to desolation by the wrath of that God, whom England hath contemned! A God-hating generation are consumed in their sins, and the righteous are also taken away as from greater evils yet to come. Yet, under all these desolations, the wicked are hardened, and cast all on the fanatics; the true dividing fanatics and sectaries are not yet humbled for former miscarriages, but cast all on the prelates and imposers; and the ignorant vulgar are stupid, and know not what use to make of any thing they feel. But thousands of the sober, prudent, faithful servants of the Lord are

mourning in secret, and waiting for his salvation ; in humility and hope they are staying themselves on God, and expecting what he will do with them. From London the plague is spread through many counties, especially next London, where few places, especially corporations, are free : *which makes me oft groan, and wish that London, and all the corporations of England, would review the Corporation Act, and their own acts, and speedily repent.*

“ Leaving most of my family at Acton, compassed about with the plague, at the writing of this, through the mercy of my dear God, and Father in Christ, I am hitherto in safety and comfort in the house of my dearly beloved and honoured friend, Mr. Richard Hampden, of Hampden, in Buckinghamshire, the true heir of his famous father’s sincerity, piety, and devotedness to God ; whose person and family the Lord preserve ; honour them that honour him, and be their everlasting rest and portion.”^o

• Life, part ii. p. 448.

CHAPTER IX.

1665—1670.

The Plague of London—Preaching of some of the Nonconformists—The Five-Mile Act—The Fire of London—Benevolence of Ashurst and Gouge—The Fire advantageous to the Preaching of the Silenced Ministers—Conformist Clergy—More Talk about Liberty of Conscience—The Latitudinarians—Fall of Clarendon—The Duke of Buckingham—Sir Orlando Bridgman—Preaching of the Nonconformists connived at—Fresh Discussions about a Comprehension—Dr. Creighton—Ministers imprisoned—Address to the King—Nonconformists attacked from the Press—Baxter's Character of Judge Hale—Dr. Rives—Baxter sent to Prison—Advised to apply for a Habeas Corpus—Demands it from the Court of Common Pleas—Behaviour of the Judges—Discharged—Removes to Totteridge—His Works during this period—Correspondence with Owen.

IN the end of the preceding chapter, we left Baxter at Hampden, moralising on the desolation of London, during the raging of the plague. Of that fearful calamity, and also of the fire, which followed soon after, he has left some additional notices, as well as of the influence of these events on the trials or enlargement of the Nonconformists.

“The number that died in London, he informs us, beside all the rest of the land, was about a hundred thousand, reckoning the Quakers, and others, that were never put in the bills of mortality.

“The richer sort removing out of the city, the greatest blow fell on the poor. At first so few of the more religious sort were taken away that, according to the mode of too many such, they began to be puffed up, and boast of the great difference which God did make; but quickly after they all fell alike. Yet not many pious ministers were taken away. I remember only three, who were all of my acquaintance.

“It is scarcely possible for people who live in a time of health and security, to apprehend the dreadful nature of that pestilence. How fearful people were thirty or forty, if not a hundred miles

from London, of any thing they bought from mercers' or drapers' shops, or of goods that were brought to them ; or of any person who came to their houses ! How they would shut their doors against their friends ; and if a man passed over the fields, how one would avoid another as we did in the time of the wars ; how every man was a terror to another !^p Oh, how sinfully unthankful are we for our quiet societies, habitations, and health !

“ Not far from the place where I sojourned, at Mrs. Fleetwood's, three ministers of extraordinary worth were together in one house, Mr. Clarkson, Mr. Samuel Cradock, and Mr. Terry, men of singular judgment, piety, and moderation. The plague came into the house where they were, and one person dying of it, caused many, that they knew not of, earnestly to pray for their deliverance ; and it pleased God that no other person died.

“ One great benefit the plague brought to the city, it occasioned the silenced ministers more openly and laboriously to preach the Gospel, to the exceeding comfort and profit of the people ; insomuch, that to this day the freedom of preaching, which this occasioned, can not by the daily guards of soldiers nor by the imprisonment of multitudes be restrained. The ministers that were silenced for Nonconformity, had ever since 1662 done their work very privately and to a few ; not so much through their timorousness, as their loathness to offend the king, and in hope that their forbearance might procure them some liberty, and through some timorousness of the people that would hear them. When the plague grew hot, most of the conformable ministers fled, and left their flocks in the time of their extremity ; whereupon divers Nonconformists, pitying the dying and distressed people, who had none to call the impenitent to repentance, or to help men to prepare for another world,

^p Among the places which the plague visited at a distance, was the village of Loughborough, in the county of Leicester ; it there entered the house of the Rev. Samuel Shaw, the ejected minister of Long Whatton. He buried two of his children, two friends, and a servant, who had died of the distemper. Both his wife and himself were attacked, but mercifully escaped. His house was shut up for three months, none being permitted to enter it ; so that he had to attend the sick himself, and afterwards to bury them in his own garden. It was in those circumstances he produced that beautiful and impressive little volume, ‘ The Welcome to the Plague.’ It was originally a sermon, preached to his own family, and affords an admirable illustration of the power and blessedness of true religion. If the reader has not seen this little work, or another of Shaw's, ‘ Immanuel ; or, a Discovery of True Religion,’ I beg to recommend them to his attention, as among the finest specimens of the Nonconformist school of theology. The author died in 1696.—See the *Memoir prefixed to Immanuel*.

or to comfort them in their terrors, when about ten thousand died in a week, resolved that no obedience to the laws of mortal men whatsoever, could justify them in neglecting men's souls and bodies in such extremities. They, therefore, resolved to stay with the people, and to go into the forsaken pulpits, though prohibited, and to preach to the poor people before they died; also to visit the sick and get what relief they could for the poor, especially those that were shut up.

"Those who set upon this work were, Mr. Thomas Vincent, late minister in Milk-street,^a with some strangers that came thither after they were silenced; as Mr. Chester, Mr. Janeway, Mr. Turner, Mr. Grimes, Mr. Franklin, and some others. Often those heard them one day, who were sick the next, and quickly dead. The face of death did so awaken both the preachers and the hearers, that preachers exceeded themselves in lively, fervent preaching, and the people crowded constantly to hear them. All was done with great seriousness, so that through the blessing of God, abundance were converted from their carelessness, impenitency, and youthful lusts and vanities; and religion took such a hold on many hearts, as could never afterwards be loosed.^r

"Whilst God was consuming the people by these judgments, and the Nonconformists were labouring to save men's souls, the parliament, which sat at Oxford, whither the king removed from the danger of the plague, was busy with an act of con-

^a Vincent published, in 1667, a work, entitled 'God's Terrible Voice in the City by Plague and Fire,' founded on these two awful calamities, both of which he had witnessed. He remained in the city, preaching with great fervour and effect during the whole time of the plague. It came into the house in which he resided, and took off three persons, but he escaped alive. The name of such a man, and of those who acted with him, deserve to be preserved in an imperishable record. He died at Hoxton, in 1671.—*Calamy*, ii. 32.

^r 'De Foe's Journal of the Plague Year,' though written as a fiction, but yet no fiction, gives the best account of this tremendous calamity which we have. It is only to be regretted that what is fact and what is fiction, are so mingled together that it is impossible to separate them. While the description is not more terrible than the reality, and many of the narratives are probably descriptive of real occurrences, the book cannot be used as authority. There are some affecting notices of it in the 'Diary of Pepys;' and several letters are given by Ellis, in the fourth volume of his second series of 'Original Letters, illustrative of English History,' relative to it. They are by the Rev. Stephen Bing and Dr. Tillotson, and addressed to Dr. Sancroft, then dean of St. Paul's. It appears from them that the Bishop of London threatened those of his clergy who had deserted their flocks, in consequence of the plague, that if they did not return to their charges speedily, he would put others in their places.

finement to make the silenced ministers' case incomparably harder than it was before, by putting upon them a certain oath, which if they refused, they must not come, except on the road, within five miles of any city, or of any corporation, or any place that sendeth burgesses to the parliament; or of any place where-ever they had been ministers, or had preached since the Act of Oblivion. So little did the sense of God's terrible judgments, or of the necessities of many hundred thousand ignorant souls, or the groans of the poor people for the teaching which they had lost, or the fear of the great and final reckoning, affect the hearts of the prelatists, or stop them in their way. The chief promoters of this among the clergy were said to be the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Dr. Seth Ward, the bishop of Salisbury. One of the greatest adversaries of it in the Lords' House, was the Earl of Southampton, lord treasurer of England, a man who had ever adhered to the king, but understood the interest of his country, and of humanity. It is, without contradiction, reported that he said no honest man would take that oath.* The Lord Chancellor Hyde, also, and the rest of the leaders of that mind and way, promoted it, and easily procured it to pass the houses, notwithstanding all that was said against it.

"By this act, the case of the ministers was made so hard, that many thought themselves obliged to break it, not only by the necessity of their office, but by a natural impossibility of keeping it, unless they should murder themselves and their families."

The oath imposed on them by the act was as follows :

"I, A. B., do swear that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king; and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those that are commissioned by him, in pursuance of such commission: and that I will not, at any time, endeavour any alteration of the government, either in church or state."

We are at a loss which most to be astonished at—the impiety,

* Burnet tells us, Southampton spoke vehemently against the bill, and said "he could take no such oath himself; for how firm soever he had always been to the church, as things were managed, he did not know but he himself might see cause to endeavour an alteration."—*Own Times*, vol. i. p. 329. Southampton was a very able man, exemplary in private life, and of invincible integrity in his public conduct. He died in 1667.

* Life, part til. pp. 1—3.

* Ibid. p. 4.

the folly, or the cruelty, of the men who could impose this oath. They could not suppose that religious men would generally take it; they must therefore have contemplated the infliction of the most grievous wrongs on some of the best friends of the country. It was carried through the House of Lords chiefly by the influence of the archbishop and the lord chancellor. In the House of Commons, an unsuccessful attempt was made to insert the word "legally" before "commissioned;" but the bill passed without a division, the lawyers declaring that the word "legally" must be understood. Some Nonconformist ministers took the oath on this construction: but the far greater number refused. Even if they could have borne the solemn assertion of the principles of passive obedience in all possible cases, their consciences revolted from a pledge to endeavour no kind of alteration in church or state; an engagement, in its extended sense, irreconcilable with their religious principles, and with the civil duties of Englishmen. Yet, to quit the towns where they had long been connected, and where alone they had friends and disciples, for a residence in country villages, was an exclusion from the ordinary means of subsistence. The Church of England had, doubtless, her provocations; but she made retaliation much more than commensurate to the injury. No severity comparable to this cold-blooded persecution had been inflicted by the late powers, even in the ferment and fury of a civil war.²

Baxter submitted the consideration of the oath to his kind friend, Serjeant Fountain, with a series of queries, to which that learned person replied at considerable length. The answers, however, could by no means satisfy Baxter that it was lawful to take the oath the reasons for which he assigns with his usual minuteness.

"The act which imposed this oath," he says, "openly accused the nonconformable ministers, or some of them, of seditious doctrine, and such heinous crimes, wherefore, when it first came out, I thought that at such an accusation no innocent persons should be silent; especially when Papists, strangers, and posterity, may think that a recorded statute is a sufficient history to prove us guilty; and the concernments of the Gospel, and our callings, and men's souls, are herein touched. I therefore drew up a profession of our judgment about the case of loyalty, and obedience to kings and governors; and the reasons why we re-

² Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. ii. p. 474.

fused the oath. But reading it to Dr. Seaman, and some others wiser than myself, they advised me to cast it by, and to bear all in silent patience; because it was not possible to do it so fully and sincerely but that the malice of our adversaries would make an ill use of it, and turn it all against ourselves: and the wise statesmen laughed at me for thinking that reason would be regarded by such men as we had to do with, and would not exasperate them the more.”^r

Sheldon determined to execute the act as strictly as possible, and therefore, on the 7th of July, 1665, orders were issued to the several bishops in the province of Canterbury, requiring among other things, a return of the names of all the ejected ministers, with their place of abode, and manner of life. The returns of the several bishops are said to be still preserved in the Lambeth library.^s

“After this, the ministers finding the pressure of this act so heavy, and the loss likely to be so great to cities and corporations, some of them studied how to take the oath lawfully. Dr. Bates being much in favour with the Lord Keeper Bridgman,^a consulted with him, who promised to be at the next sessions, and there, on the bench, to declare openly that, by *endeavour*, to change the church government, was meant *unlawful endeavour* which satisfying him, he thereby satisfied others, who, to avoid the imputation of seditious doctrine, were willing to go as far as they durst; and so twenty ministers came in at the sessions, and took the oath.”^b

Dr. Bates’ reasons for taking the oath may be seen in the letter which he addressed to Baxter on the occasion;^c but the reasoning of Baxter seems fully to justify his declining to do so. The oath was a wicked device, to ensnare and injure the ministers; and those of them who took it, even with the Lord Keeper Bridgman’s explanation, that *only* seditious endeavours were

^r Life, part iii. p. 13.

^s Calamy, vol. i. p. 313.

^a Sir Orlando Bridgman was a son of the Bishop of Chester. Soon after the Restoration, he was made lord chief baron of the Exchequer, and, a few months after, was removed to the Common Pleas, in which he presided with great dignity. He possessed sufficient integrity for the high office of lord keeper, but not sufficient firmness for the difficulties which belonged to it. He is said, however, to have lost the office for refusing to affix the seal to the king’s unconstitutional declaration for liberty of conscience. He wished, as will afterwards be seen, the comprehension of the Dissenters in the church, but was opposed to the toleration of Popery.

^b Life, part iii. p. 13.

^c Ibid. p. 14.

meant, seem not to have added to their reputation among the people.

"The plague which began at Acton, July 29, 1665, having ceased on the first of the following March, I returned home, and found the church-yard like a ploughed field, with graves, and many of my neighbours dead; but my house, near the church-yard, uninfected, and that part of my family which I left there all safe, through the great mercy of God, my merciful protector.

"On the second of September, 1666, after midnight, London was set on fire; next day the Exchange was burnt, and, in three days, almost all the city within the walls, and much without them. The season had been exceeding dry before, and the wind in the east when the fire began. The people having none to conduct them aright, could do nothing to resist it, but stand and see their houses burn without remedy, the engines being presently out of order, and useless. The streets were crowded with people and carts, to carry away what goods they could get out; they that were most active, and befriended by their wealth, got carts and saved much, and the rest lost almost all. The loss in houses and goods is scarcely to be valued, and among the rest, the loss of books was an exceeding great detriment to the interests of piety and learning. Mostly all the booksellers in St. Paul's Church-yard brought their books into vaults under St. Paul's church, where it was thought almost impossible that fire should come. But the church itself taking fire, the exceeding weight of the stones falling down, did break into the vault, and let in the fire, and they could not come near to save the books. The library of Sion college was burned, and most of the libraries of ministers, conformable and nonconformable, in the city; with the libraries of many Nonconformists of the country, which had lately been brought up to the city. I saw the half-burnt leaves of books near my dwelling at Acton, six miles from London; but others found them near Windsor, twenty miles distant.

"At last the seamen taught them to blow up some of the houses with gunpowder, which stopped the fire, though in some places it stopped as wonderfully as it had proceeded, without any known cause. It stopped at Holborn-bridge, and near St. Dunstan's church, in Fleet-street; at St. Sepulchre's church, when the church was burnt; at Christ's church, when it was burnt; and near Aldersgate and Cripplegate, and other

places at the city wall. In Austin-Friars, the Dutch church stopped it, and escaped; in Bishopsgate-street, and Leadenhall-street, and Fenchurch-street, in the midst of the streets it stopped short of the Tower: and all beyond the river, escaped.

"Thus was the best, and one of the fairest cities in the world turned into ashes and ruins in three days' space, with many scores of churches, and the wealth and necessities of the inhabitants. It was a sight which might have given any man a lively sense of the vanity of this world, and of all its wealth and glory, and of the future conflagration, to see the flames mount towards heaven, and proceed so furiously without restraint; to see the streets filled with people so astonished that many had scarcely sense left them to lament their own calamity; to see the fields filled with heaps of goods, costly furniture, and household stuff, while sumptuous buildings, warehouses, and furnished shops and libraries, &c., were all on flames, and none durst come near to secure any thing; to see the king and nobles ride about the streets, beholding all these desolations, and none could afford the least relief; to see the air, as far as could be beheld, so filled with the smoke, that the sun shined through it with a colour like blood; yea, even when it was setting in the west, it so appeared to them that dwelt on the west side of the city. But the dolefullest sight of all was afterwards, to see what a ruinous, confused place the city was, by chimneys and steeples only standing in the midst of cellars and heaps of rubbish; so that it was hard to know where the streets had been; and dangerous, for a long time, to pass through the ruins, because of vaults, and fire in them. No man that seeth not such a thing can have a right apprehension of the dreadfulfulness of it."^d

Baxter seems to have been fully convinced that the fire was caused by the emissaries of Popery. In this belief he was not alone; and many circumstances afforded some ground at the time for entertaining it.* It is highly probable, however, notwithstanding the testimony of "London's tall pillar," that it was a groundless prejudice, excited by hatred of the Catholics, and the apprehensions of danger from them with which

^d Life, part i. pp. 98—100. Pepys has preserved some interesting memoirs of this second dire calamity which befell the city of London within two years. Calamy, then drooping, was driven through the ruins, after the fire had been extinguished, and it is said was so affected by the sight, that he went home and never left his house again till he died, which was shortly after.—*Calamy*, vol. ii. p. 7.

* See 'State Trials,' vol. vi.; Burnet, i. pp. 336—341; Hallam, vol. ii. 512.

multitudes were then haunted. Among the individuals who distinguished themselves by their exertions to relieve the distresses occasioned by this frightful calamity, were Mr. Henry Ashurst and Mr. Gouge. Baxter bears the following honourable testimony to their benevolent exertions.

“The most famous person in the city, who purposely addicted himself to works of mercy, was my very dear friend Mr. Henry Ashurst, a draper, a man of the primitive sort of Christians for humility, love, blamelessness, meekness, doing good to all as he was able, especially needy, silenced ministers, to whom, in Lancashire alone, he allowed one hundred pounds per annum; and in London was most famous for their succour and for doing hurt to none. His care was now to solicit the rich abroad, for the relief of the poor, honest Londoners. Mr. Thomas Gouge, the silenced minister of Sepulchre’s parish, son to Dr. William Gouge, was such another man, who made works of charity a great part of the business of his life: he was made the treasurer of a fund collected for this purpose. Once a fortnight they called a great number of the needy together to receive their alms. I went once with Mr. Ashurst to his meeting to give them an exhortation and counsel, as he gave them alms, and saw more cause than I was sensible of before, to be thankful to God, that I never much needed relief from others.

“It was not the least observable thing in the time of the fire, and after it, considering the late wars, the multitude of disbanded soldiers, and the great grief and discontent of the Londoners for the silencing and banishing of their pastors, that there were heard no passionate words of discontent, or dishonour against their governors; even when their enemies had so often accused them of seditious inclinations, and when extremity might possibly have made them desperate.

“Some good, however, rose out of all these evils: the churches being burnt, and the parish ministers gone, for want of places and maintenance, the Nonconformists were now more resolved than ever to preach till they were imprisoned. Dr. Manton had his rooms full in Covent Garden; Mr. Thomas Vincent, Mr. Thomas Doolittle, Dr. Samuel Annesly, Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Janeway at Rotherhithe, Mr. Chester, Mr. Franklin, Mr. Turner, Mr. Grimes, Mr. Nathaniel Vincent, Dr. Jacomb in the Countess of Exeter’s house, and Mr. Thomas Watson, &c., all kept their meetings very openly, and prepared large rooms, and some of them plain chapels, with pulpits, seats, and

galleries, for the reception of as many as could come. The people's necessity was now unquestionable. They had none other to hear, save in a few churches that would hold no considerable part of them; so that to forbid them to hear the Non-conformists, was all one as to forbid them all public worship; to forbid them to seek heaven when they had lost almost all that they had on earth; to take from them their spiritual comforts, after all their outward comforts were gone. They thought this a species of cruelty so barbarous, as to be unbecoming any man who would not own himself to be a devil. But all this little moved the ruling prelates, saving that shame restrained them from imprisoning the preachers so hotly and forwardly as before. The Independents also set up their meetings more openly than formerly. Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Caryl, Mr. Barker, Dr. Owen, Mr. Philip Nye, and Dr. Thomas Goodwin, who were their leaders, came to the city. So that many of the citizens went to those meetings called private, more than went to the public parish churches.

"At the same time it also happily fell out that the parish churches which were left standing had the best and ablest of the Conformists in them; especially Dr. Stillingfleet, Dr. Tillotson, Mr. White, Dr. Outram, Dr. Patrick, Mr. Gifford, Dr. Whitehead, Dr. Horton, Mr. Nest, &c. So that the moderate class of the citizens heard either sort in public and private indifferently; whilst those on the one extreme reproached all men's preaching save their own, as being seditious conventicles; and those on the other extreme would hear none that did conform; or if any heard them, they would not join in the common prayers or the sacraments."

Baxter's account of these Conformists is creditable to his candour, and shows his willingness to do justice to men of all descriptions. The individuals whom he mentions were doubtless men highly respectable both for character and talents; but they were the principal means of introducing into the pulpits of the established church, that cold, inaccurate, and imperfect mode of preaching the Gospel which characterised even the respectable part of the clergy for more than a century. In the writings of Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and men like them, the leading doctrines, such as the Trinity, the atonement of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, &c., are clearly stated; with much important argument on the truth of Christianity, and the duty of all to

¹ *Life*, part iii. pp. 17—19.

receive and obey it. But in vain do we look to their discourses, with those of their successors, for correct and striking views of the grace of the Gospel, or of justification by faith alone; and much less do we find warm and pungent appeals to the conscience and the heart. They were afraid of being thought puritanical, and enthusiastic. They studied to reconcile the world to the Gospel, by modifying its statements, and endeavouring to meet, by cautious approaches, the enmity of the human heart to Christ and godliness. The effect of this style of preaching has been exceedingly injurious.

"About this time, the talk of liberty of conscience was renewed: whereupon many wrote for it, especially Mr. John Humfries, and Sir Charles Wolsley; and many wrote against it, as Dr. Perinchief, and others, mostly without names. The Conformists were now grown so hardened, as not only to do all themselves that was required of them, but also to think themselves sufficient for the whole ministerial work through the land; and not only to consent to the silencing of their brethren, but also to oppose their restitution, and write most vehemently against it, and against any toleration of them. So little do men know, when they once enter into an evil way, where they shall stop. Not that it was so with all, but with too many, especially with most of the young men, that were of pregnant wits, and ambitious minds, and set themselves to seek preferment.

"On this account, a great number of those who were called Latitudinarians began to change their temper, and to contract some malignity against those that were much more religious than themselves. At first they were only Cambridge Arminians, and some of them not so much; and were much for new and free philosophy, and especially for De Cartes, and not at all for any thing ceremonious. Being not so strict in their theology or way of piety as some others, they thought that conformity was too small a matter to keep them out of the ministry. But afterwards, many of them grew into such a distaste of the weakness of many serious Christians, who would have some harsh phrases in prayer, preaching, and discourse, that thence they seemed to be out of love with their very doctrine, and their manner of worshipping God."*

* Life, part iii. pp. 19, 20. The Latitudinarians spoken of by Baxter, were such men as More, Worthington, Whitchcot, Cudworth, Wilkins, mostly of Cam-

After noticing the burning of London, the loss and disgrace sustained by the country from the Dutch, who sailed up the Thames in triumph, Baxter says :—

“The parliament at last laid all upon the Lord Chancellor Hyde : and the king was content it should be so. Whereupon many speeches were made against him, and an impeachment or charge brought in against him, and vehemently urged. Among other things, it was alleged that he counselled the king to rule by an army, which many thought, bad as he was, he was the chief means of hindering. To be short, when they had first sought his life, at last it was concluded that his banishment should satisfy for all ; and so he was, by an act of parliament, banished during his life. The sale of Dunkirk to the French, and a great comely house which he had newly built, increased the displeasure that was against him : but there were greater causes which I must not name.

“It was a notable providence that this man, who had been the great instrument of state, and had dealt so cruelly with the Nonconformists, should thus, by his own friends, be cast out and banished, while those that he had persecuted were the most moderate in his cause, and many of them for him. It was a great ease that befell good people throughout the land by his dejection. For his way had been to decoy men into conspiracies, or to pretend plots, upon the rumour of which the innocent people of many counties were laid in prison ; so that no man knew when he was safe. Since then the laws have been made more and more severe, yet a man knoweth a little better what to expect, when it is by a law that he is to be tried. It is also notable that he, who did so much to make the Oxford law for banishing ministers from corporations who took not that oath,

bridge, who joined with the others of whom we have already spoken, in introducing a very inefficient mode of preaching into the established church. They endeavoured to examine all the principles of morality and religion on philosophical principles, and to maintain them by the reason of things. They declared against superstition on the one hand, and enthusiasm on the other. They were attached to the constitution and forms of the church ; but moderate in their opposition to those who dissented from it. They were mostly Arminians of the Dutch school, but admitted of a considerable latitude of sentiment, both in philosophy and theology. On this account, they obtained the name which Baxter assigns to them. They were, in fact, low churchmen of Arminian principles ; moderate in piety, in sentiment, and in zeal. Some of them, it appears, gradually became (to use a phrase well understood in the northern part of the island) “fierce for moderation.” See ‘Burnet’s Own Times,’ vol. i. p. 274.

doth, in his letter from France, since his banishment, say, that he never was in favour since the parliament sat at Oxford.³

"Before this, the Duke of Buckingham being at the head of Clarendon's adversaries, had been overtopped by him, and was fain to hide himself, till the Dutch put us in fear. He then surrendered himself, and went prisoner to the Tower; but with such acclamations of the people, as was a great discouragement to the chancellor; the duke accordingly was quickly set at liberty. Whereupon, as the chancellor had made himself the head of the prelatical party, who were for setting up themselves by force, and suffering none that were against them; so Buckingham would now be the head of all those parties that were for liberty of conscience. The man was of no religion, but notoriously and professedly lustful; and yet of greater wit and parts, and sounder principles, as to the interests of humanity and the common good, than most lords in the court. Wherefore he countenanced fanatics and sectaries, among others, without any great suspicion, because he was known to be so far from them himself. He married the daughter and only child of Lord Fairfax, late general of the parliament's army, and became his heir hereby, yet was he far enough from his mind; though still defender of the privileges of humanity.⁴

³ "The estrangement of the king's favour is sufficient to account for Clarendon's loss of power; but his entire ruin was rather accomplished by a strange coalition of enemies, which his virtues, or his errors and infirmities, had brought into union. The Cavaliers hated him on account of the act of indemnity, and the Presbyterians for that of uniformity. Yet the latter were not in general so eager in his prosecution as the others. A distinguished characteristic of Clarendon, had been his firmness, called, indeed, by most, pride and obstinacy, which no circumstances, no perils, seemed likely to bend. But his spirit sunk all at once with his fortune. Clinging too long to office, and cheating himself, against all probability, with a hope of his master's kindness, when he had lost his confidence, he abandoned that dignified philosophy which ennobles a voluntary retirement, that stern courage which innocence ought to inspire; and hearkening to the king's treacherous counsels, fled before his enemies into a foreign country."—*Hallam*, vol. ii. pp. 494—503. Ellis has given a letter from Charles to the Duke of Ormond, in which he assigns as the reason for depriving Clarendon of the seals, "that his behaviour and humour had grown so unsupportable to himself, and to all the world else, that he could not longer endure it."—*Original Letters*, second series, vol. iv. pp. 38—40. Clarendon deserved all that befell him; but the conduct of his royal master to him was base and ungrateful.

⁴ All who are conversant with the times of Charles II., are familiar with the character of Villiers, duke of Buckingham. Gay, witty, and profligate, he was a fit servant of such a master. He was the alchemist and the philosopher, the fiddler and the poet, the mimic and the statesman. In the last capacity, Baxter seems to have had a better opinion of his principles than he was entitled to.

"When the chancellor was banished, Sir Orlando Bridgman was made lord keeper : a man who, by his becoming moderation to the Nonconformists, though a zealous patron of prelacy, got himself a good name for a time. At first, whilst the Duke of Buckingham kept up the cry for liberty of conscience, he seemed to comply with that design, to the great displeasure of the ruling prelates. But when he saw that the game would not go on, he turned as zealous the other way, and wholly served the prelati-cal interest ; yet was he not much valued by either side, but taken for an uncertain, timorous man. High places, great business and difficulties, do so try men's abilities and their morals, that many, who in a low or middle station acquired and kept up a great name, do quickly lose it, and grow despised and reproached persons, when exaltation and trial have made them known ; besides that, as in prosperous times the chief state ministers are praised, so in evil and suffering times they bear the blame of what is amiss.

"When the Duke of Buckingham came first into this high favour, he was looked on as the chief minister of state, instead of the chancellor, and showed himself openly for toleration, or liberty for all parties, in matters of God's worship. Others also then seemed to look that way, thinking that the king was for it. Whereupon those who were most against it grew into seeming discontent. The bishop of Winchester, Morley, was put out of his place, as dean of the chapel royal, and Bishop Crofts, of Hereford, who seemed then to be for moderation, was put into it. But it was not long till Crofts was either discouraged, or, as some said, upon the death of a daughter, for grief left both it and the court ;² the Bishop of Oxford was brought into his place, and Dr. Crew, the son of that wise and pious man the Lord Crew, was made clerk of the closet.¹

"At the same time, the ministers of London, who had ven-

² Burnet says, "Crofts was a warm, devout man, but of no discretion in his conduct ; so he lost ground quickly. He used much freedom with the king ; but it was in the wrong place, not in private, but in the pulpit."—*Own Times*, vol. i. pp. 379.

¹ Crew, who was afterwards raised to the bishoprick of Durham, was vain, ambitious, unsteady, and insincere ; more compliant with all the measures of court, than any of his brethren. He was regarded, Granger says, as the grand inquisitor in the reign of James II. ; in whose fate he very nearly shared, as, at the revolution, he was excepted from the act of indemnity ; but he afterwards obtained a pardon through the influence chiefly of Dr. Bates.—*Birch's Life of Tillotson*, pp. 137, 138.

tured to keep open meetings in their houses, and preached to great numbers contrary to the law, were, by the king's favour, connived at: so that the people went openly to hear them without fear. Some imputed this to the king's own inclination to liberty of conscience; some to the Duke of Buckingham's prevalency; and some to the Papists' influence, who were for liberty of conscience for their own interest. But others thought that the Papists were really against liberty of conscience, and did rather desire that the utmost severities might ruin the Puritans, and cause discontents and divisions among ourselves, till we had broken one another all into pieces, and turned all into such confusion as might advantage them to play a more successful game than ever toleration was likely to be. Whatever was the secret cause, it is evident that the great visible cause, was the burning of London, and the want of churches for the people to meet: it being, at the first, a thing too gross, to forbid an undone people all public worship, with too great rigour; and if they had been so forbidden, poverty had left so little to lose as would have made them desperately go on. Therefore some thought all this was to make necessity seem a *favour*.

“Whatever was the cause of the connivance, it is certain that the country ministers were so much encouraged by the boldness and liberty of those in London, that they did the like in most parts of England, and crowds of the most religiously-inclined people were their hearers. Some few got, in the way of travelling, into pulpits where they were not known, and the next day went away to another place. This, especially with the great discontents of the people, for their manifold payments, and of cities and corporations for the great decay of trade, and breaking and impoverishing of many thousands, by the burning of the city; together with the lamentable weakness and badness of great numbers of the ministers, that were put into the Nonconformists' places, did turn the hearts of most of the common people in all parts against the bishops and their ways, and inclined them to the Nonconformists, though fear restrained men from speaking what they thought, especially the richer sort.

“In January, 1668, I received a letter from Dr. Manton, that Sir John Babor told him it was the lord keeper's desire to speak with him and me, about a comprehension and toleration. On coming to London, Sir John Babor told me, that the lord keeper spake to him to bring us to him for the aforesaid end,

as he had certain proposals to offer us; that many great courtiers were our friends in the business, but that, to speak plainly, if we would carry it, we must make use of such as were for a toleration of the Papists also. He demanded how we would answer the common question, *What will satisfy you?* I answered him that other men's judgments and actions, about the toleration of the Papists, we had nothing to do with at this time; for it was no work for us to meddle in. But to this question, we were not so ignorant whom we had to do with, as to expect full satisfaction of our desires as to church affairs. The answer must be suited to the sense of his question: and if we knew their ends, what degree of satisfaction they were minded to grant, we would tell them what means are necessary to attain them. There are degrees of satisfaction, as to the number of persons to be satisfied; and there are divers degrees of satisfying the same persons. If they will take in all orthodox, peaceable, worthy ministers, the terms must be larger. If they will take in but the greater part, somewhat less and harder terms may do it. If but a few, yet less may serve: for we are not so vain as to pretend that all Nonconformists are, in every particular, of one mind.

"When we came to the lord keeper, we resolved to tell him that Sir John Babor told us his lordship desired to speak with us, lest it should be after said, that we intended, or were the movers of it; or lest it had been Sir John Babor's forwardness that had been the cause. He told us why he sent for us: that it was to think of a way of our restoration; to which end he had some proposals to offer us, which were for a comprehension for the Presbyterians, and an indulgence for the Independents and the rest. We asked him whether it was his lordship's pleasure that we should offer him our opinion of the means, or only receive what he offered to us. He told us, that he had somewhat to offer us, but we might also offer our own to him. I told him, that I did think we could offer such terms, which, while no way injurious to the welfare of any, might take in both Presbyterians and Independents, and all sound Christians, into the established ministry. He answered, that was a thing he would not have; but only a toleration for the rest; which being none of our business to debate, we desired him to consult such persons about it as were concerned in it; and so it was agreed that we should meddle with the comprehension only. A few days after he accordingly sent us his proposals.

"When we saw the proposals, we perceived that the business of the lord keeper, and his way, would make it unfit for us to debate such cases with himself; and therefore we wrote to him, requesting that he would nominate two learned, peaceable divines to treat with us, till we had agreed on the fittest terms; and that Dr. Bates might be added to us. He nominated Dr. Wilkins, who, we then found, was the author of the proposals, and of the whole business,"^m and his chaplain, Mr. Burton.ⁿ When we met, we tendered them some proposals of our own, and some alterations which we desired in their proposals; for they presently rejected ours, and would hear no more of them; so that we were fain to treat upon theirs alone."^o

According to the heads of agreement which had been entered into between the parties in private, a bill was prepared for parliament by Lord Chief Justice Hale; but Bishop Wilkins, an honest and open-hearted man, having disclosed the affair to Bishop Ward, in hope of his assistance, he alarmed the bishops; who, instead of promoting the design, concerted measures to defeat it. As soon as parliament met, it was mentioned that there were rumours out of doors that a bill was to be proposed for comprehension and indulgence; on which a resolution was passed, that no man should bring such a bill into the House.^p To crush the Nonconformists more effectually, Archbishop Shel-

^m Bishop Wilkins was one of the best members of the episcopacy during his time. His character as a philosopher is well known; his moderation as a churchman appears from his conduct in the affair of the comprehension, which failed from no want of firmness and principle in him, but from the violence of the high-church party.

ⁿ Dr. Hezekiah Burton was chaplain to the lord keeper, and a person of great respectability. Beside the persons engaged in this affair mentioned by Baxter, it appears that Tillotson and Stillingfleet were also concerned in it.—*Birch's Life of Tillotson*, p. 42.

^o Life, part iii. pp. 20–24. Hallam says, "The design was to act on the principle of the declaration of 1660, so that Presbyterian ordination should pass *sub modo*. Tillotson and Stillingfleet were concerned in it. The king was at this time exasperated against the bishops for their support of Clarendon."—*Constitutional Hist.* vol. ii. p. 506.

^p "Sir Thomas Littleton spoke in favour of the comprehension, as did Seymour and Waller; all of them enemies of Clarendon, and probably connected with the Buckingham faction: but the church party was much too strong for them. Pepys says the Commons were furious against the project: it was said, that whoever proposed new laws about religion, must do it with a rope about his neck.—January 10, 1668. This is the first instance of a triumph obtained by the church over the crown, in the House of Commons. Ralph observes upon it, 'It is not for nought that the words Church and State are so often coupled together, and that the first has so insolently usurped the precedence of the last,'"—Hallam, vol. ii. p. 506.

don wrote a circular letter to the bishops of his province to send him a particular account of the conventicles in their several dioceses, and of the numbers that frequented them ; and whether they thought they might be easily suppressed by the magistrate.⁴ When he obtained this information, he went to the king and got a proclamation to put the laws in execution against the Nonconformists, and particularly against the preachers, according to the statute which forbade their living in corporate towns.⁵

This treaty not only shared the fate of all former treaties of the same kind, but eventually increased the sufferings of the Nonconformists. It amused and occupied attention for a time, and then came to nothing. The papers given in showed how much the Nonconformists were disposed to yield for the sake of peace ; but they were perpetually doomed to be first tantalized and then disappointed. The bishops, who ought to have been ministers of peace and reconciliation, were generally the means of retarding or preventing them.

"How joyfully," says Baxter, "would 1400, at least, of the nonconformable ministers of England have yielded to these terms if they could have got them ! But, alas ! all this labour was in vain ; for the active prelates and prelatists so far prevailed, that as soon as ever the parliament met, they prevented all talk or motion of such a thing ; and the lord keeper, that had called us, and set us on work, himself turned that way, and talked after as if he understood us not.

"In April, 1668, Dr. Creighton, dean of Wells, the most famous loquacious, ready-tongued preacher of the court, who was used to preach Calvin to hell, and the Calvinists to the gallows, and by his scornful revilings and jests to set the court on a laughter, was suddenly, in the pulpit, without any sickness, surprised with astonishment, worse than Dr. South, the Oxford orator, had been before him. When he had repeated a sentence over and over, he was so confounded that he could go no further at all, and was fain, to all men's wonder, to come down. His case was more wonderful than almost any other man's, being not only a

⁴ It is said there were private instructions given to some of the clergy, "to make the conventicles as few and inconsiderable as might be ;" with which they were requested to answer the question, "Whether they thought they might be easily suppressed by the assistance of the civil magistrate ?"—*The Conformist's Plea for Nonconformists*, part i. p. 40.

⁵ Neal, vol. iv. pp. 385, 386. Neal gives a full detail of the nature of the terms proposed in this treaty, to which the reader may easily refer, if he wishes to enter more minutely into the subject.

fluent extempore speaker, but one that was never known to want words, especially to express his satirical or bloody thoughts.

"In July, Mr. Taverner, late minister of Uxbridge, was sentenced to Newgate, for teaching a few children at Brentford, but paying his fine prevented it. Mr. Button, of Brentford, a most humble, worthy, godly man, who never had been in orders, or a preacher, but had been canon of Christ's church, in Oxford, and orator to the University, was sent to gaol for teaching two knight's sons in his house, not having taken the Oxford oath. Many of his neighbours, of Brentford, were sent to the same prison for worshipping God in private together, where they all lay many months. I name these because they were my neighbours, but many counties had the like usage: yea, Bishop Crofts, that had pretended great moderation, sent Mr. Woodward, a worthy, silenced minister, of Herefordshire, to gaol for six months. Some were imprisoned upon the Oxford Act, and some on the Act against Conventicles.

"In September, Colonel Phillips, a courtier of the bed-chamber, and my next neighbour, who spake to me fair, complained to the king of me, for preaching to great numbers; but the king put it by, and nothing was done at that time.

"About this time, Dr. Manton, being nearest the court, and of great name among the Presbyterians, and being heard by many of great quality,* was told by Sir John Babor that the king was much inclined to favour the Nonconformists, that an address now would be acceptable, and that the address must be a thankful acknowledgment of the clemency of his majesty's government, and the liberty which we thereby enjoy, &c. Accordingly, they drew up an address of thanksgiving, and I was invited to join in the presenting of it, but not in the penning, for I had marred their matter oft enough: but I was both sick

* Dr. Manton was a person of very excellent character and talents as a minister; and seems to have enjoyed a considerable portion of popularity. He had a good deal of intercourse with the king, and could number among his hearers many of the nobility. If we may attach any importance to Clarendon's joke, and a good plump portrait, we should regard Manton as a remarkably pleasant, good-tempered, easy man. Such probably he was; but he was far from being a timid, or a time-serving, courtier. On the contrary, he was a man of invincible integrity and principle, combined with great prudence, which were put to the test on various occasions in his life. He was a very voluminous preacher, as some of his published works prove. Lord Bolingbroke appears to have been, in early life, one of his hearers, who says, "He taught my youth to yawn, and prepared me to be a high churchman, that I might never hear him read or read him more." See his life, prefixed to his sermons on the 119th Psalm; Granger's Biog. Hist.; and Palmer's Noncon. Mem.

and unwilling, having been often enough employed in vain. I told them, however, only of my sickness ; so Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Dr. Jacomb, and Mr. Ennis, presented it.”[†]

The address of the ministers was most graciously received ; and Charles on this, as on many other occasions, played the hypocrite very successfully.”

“ But after all this,” says Baxter, “ we were as before. The talk of liberty did but occasion the writing many bitter pamphlets against toleration. Among others, they gathered out of mine and other men’s books all that we had there said against liberty for Popery, and for Quakers railing against the ministers in open congregations, which they applied as against a toleration of ourselves ; for the bare name of toleration did seem in the people’s ears to serve their turn by signifying the same thing. Because we had said that men should not be tolerated to preach against Jesus Christ and the Scriptures, they would thence justify themselves for not tolerating us to preach for Jesus Christ, unless we would be deliberate liars, and use all their inventions. Those same men, who, when commissioned with us to make such alterations in the liturgy as were necessary to satisfy tender consciences, did maintain that no alteration was necessary to satisfy them, and did moreover, contrary to all our importunity, make so many new burdens of their own to be anew imposed on us, had now little to say but that they must be obeyed, because they were imposed.”[‡]

We cannot but sympathise with the Nonconformists in the treatment they experienced ; and yet those of them who had contended for a limited toleration, were scarcely entitled to complain when they found their own weapons turned against themselves. The parties who did so, however, had no great ground for boasting, for the doctrine of toleration they neither understood nor acted on, except while they were themselves tolerated. Among those who distinguished themselves in writing against the ministers, were, Dr. Patrick in his ‘ Friendly Debate between a Conformist and a Nonconformist,’ which was answered by several writers ; and Samuel Parker, whose ‘ Ecclesiastical

[†] *Life*, part iii. p. 36.

[‡] Dr. Manton, in a letter to Baxter, gives him an account of the reception which they experienced from his majesty, and of the reference which Charles made to his preaching at Acton ; the popularity of which seems not to have been acceptable to the higher powers.—*Life*, part iii. p. 37.

[§] *Life*, part iii. pp. 38, 39.

Polity' called forth the weight of Owen's displeasure, and the pungency of Marvel's wit. But the controversial affairs of the period, we must defer to a subsequent part of this work, and return to Baxter's narrative.

"While I lived at Acton, as long as the act against conventicles was in force, though I preached to my family, few of the town came to hear me; partly because they thought it would endanger me, and partly for fear of suffering themselves, but especially because they were an ignorant poor people, and had no appetite for such things. When the act expired, there came so many, that I wanted room; and when once they had come and heard, they afterwards came constantly; insomuch, that in a little time, there was a great number of them, who seemed very seriously affected with the things they heard, and almost all the town and parish, besides abundance from Brentford and the neighbouring parishes, came; and I know not of three in the parish that were adversaries to us or our endeavours, or wished us ill."

It was while residing at Acton, that Baxter first became acquainted with Sir Matthew Hale, then lord chief baron of the Exchequer, and one of the most eminent men for integrity and worth in his profession, as well as for pure and enlightened views as a Christian, whom this country has been honoured to produce. As Baxter has drawn his character at large with considerable power, the reader, I am sure, will be glad to have it placed before him.

"He was a man of no quick utterance, but spake with great reason. He was most precisely just; insomuch that, I believe, he would have lost all he had in the world rather than do an unjust act. Patient in hearing the most tedious speech which any man had to make for himself. The pillar of justice, the refuge of the subject who feared oppression, and one of the greatest honours of his majesty's government; for, with some other upright judges, he upheld the honour of the English nation, that it fell not into the reproach of arbitrariness, cruelty, and utter confusion. Every man that had a just cause, was almost past fear, if he could but bring it to the court or assize where he was judge; for the other judges seldom contradicted him. He was the great instrument for rebuilding London: for when an act was made for deciding all controversies that

Life, part iii. p. 46.

hindered it, he was the constant judge, who, for nothing, followed the work, and, by his prudence and justice, removed a multitude of great impediments.

“His great advantage for innocency was, that he was no lover of riches or of grandeur. His garb was too plain; he studiously avoided all unnecessary familiarity with great persons, and all that manner of living which signifieth wealth and greatness. He kept no greater a family than myself. I lived in a small house, which, for a pleasant back opening, he had a mind to; but caused a stranger, that he might not be suspected to be the man, to know of me whether I were willing to part with it, before he would meddle with it. In that house he lived contentedly, without any pomp, and without costly or troublesome retinue or visitors; but not without charity to the poor. He continued the study of physics and mathematics still, as his great delight. He hath himself written four volumes in folio, three of which I have read, against atheism, Sadduceism, and infidelity, to prove first the Deity, and then the immortality of man’s soul, and then the truth of Christianity, and the Holy Scripture, answering the infidel’s objections against Scripture. It is strong and masculine, only too tedious for impatient readers. He said, he wrote it only at vacant hours in his circuits, to regulate his meditations, finding that while he wrote down what he thought on, his thoughts were the easier kept close to work, and kept in a method. But I could not persuade him to publish them.

“The conference which I had frequently with him, mostly about the immortality of the soul, and other philosophical and foundation points, was so edifying, that his very questions and objections did help me to more light than other men’s solutions. Those who take none for religious, who frequent not private meetings, &c., took him for an excellently righteous, moral man: but I, who heard and read his serious expressions of the concernments of eternity, and saw his love to all good men, and the blamelessness of his life, thought better of his piety than my own. When the people crowded in and out of my house to hear, he openly showed me so great respect before them at the door, and never spake a word against it, as was no small encouragement to the common people to go on; though the other sort muttered, that a judge should seem so far to countenance that which they took to be against the law. He was a great lamenter of the extremities of the times, and of the violence

and foolishness of the predominant clergy; and a great desirer of such abatements as might restore us all to serviceableness and unity. He had got but a very small estate, though he had long the greatest practice, because he would take but little money, and undertake no more business than he could well dispatch. He often offered to the lord chancellor to resign his place, when he was blamed for doing that which he supposed was justice. He had been the learned Selden's intimate friend, and one of his executors; and because the Hobbians, and other infidels would have persuaded the world that Selden was of their mind,^a I desired him to tell me the truth therein. He assured me that Selden was an earnest professor of the Christian faith, and so angry an adversary to Hobbes, that he hath rated him out of the room."^a

Such is Baxter's account of this distinguished man, whose moral worth threw a glory over his high professional attainments, and rendered him an eminent blessing to his country. Unfortunately, few of the clergy were like this ornament of the law, either in religious character, or in peaceable disposition. Very different, for example, was the clergyman of the parish in which Judge Hale and Baxter resided. The conduct of this individual brought Baxter into such trouble, that I must leave him to describe both his character and his behaviour.

^a I am at a loss to understand on what grounds the class of persons to whom Baxter refers, could claim Selden as one of them. I suspect the insinuation must have originated with the high-church party, to whose claims Selden was certainly no friend. His attack on the divine right of tithes, the *publication*, not the *doctrine* of which he retracted, gave great offence to the church. His Erastianism, in regard to church government, made him unacceptable to the Presbyterians; while his jokes, at the expense of the Westminster Assembly, of which he was a lay member, probably rendered his serious piety a little doubtful. Nothing in his writings, however, can induce any one to suppose that Selden was either infidel or sceptical in his notions of religion; but more firmness of character than he appears to have possessed, would have greatly increased the lustre of his eminent talents and profound learning.

^a Life, part iii. pp. 47, 48. Bishop Burnet published an interesting little volume, 'The Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale,' which confirms all that Baxter has said of his illustrious friend. Burnet was not himself acquainted with Hale, but does great justice to his character. He mentions that "he held great conversation with Mr. Baxter, who was his neighbour at Acton; on whom he looked as a person of great devotion and piety, and of a very subtle and quick apprehension. Their conversation lay most in metaphysical and abstracted ideas and schemes."—p. 45. Burnet concludes his memoirs of the judge by saying, "He was one of the greatest patterns this age has afforded, whether in his private deportment as a Christian, or in his public employments either at the bar, or on the bench."—p. 128. A second edition of this life was accompanied with notes by Baxter.

"The parson of this parish was Dr. Ryves, dean of Windsor and of Wolverhampton, parson of Hasely and of Acton, chaplain in ordinary to the king, &c. His curate was a weak young man, who spent most of his time in the ale-houses, and read a few dry sentences to the people once a day. Yet, because he preached true doctrine, and I had no better to hear, I constantly heard him when he preached, and went to the beginning of the common prayer. As my house faced the church door, and was within hearing of it, those that heard me before, went with me to the church; scarcely three, that I know of, in the parish refusing. When I preached, after the public exercise, they went out of the church into my house. It pleased the doctor and parson, that I came to church and brought others with me, but he was not able to bear the sight of people crowding into my house, though they heard him also; so that though he spake me fair, and we lived in seeming love and peace while he was there, yet he could not long endure it. When I had brought the people to church to hear him, he would fall upon them with groundless reproaches; as if he had done it purposely to drive them away, and yet he thought that my preaching to them, because it was in a house, did all the mischief; though he never accused me of any thing that I spake, for I preached nothing but Christianity and submission to our superiors, faith, repentance, hope, love, humility, self-denial, meekness, patience, and obedience.

"He was the more offended, because I came not to the sacrament with him; though I communicated in the other parish churches in London and elsewhere. I was loth to offend him, by giving him the reason; which was, that he was commonly reputed a swearer, a curser, a railer, &c. In those tender times, it would have been so great an offence to the Congregational brethren, if I had communicated with him, and perhaps have hastened their sufferings who durst not do the same, that I thought it would do more harm than good."^b

It is a pity Baxter did not put his refusal to communicate with such a man, on a better footing than merely that of giving offence to his brethren.^c An individual acting in a manner

^b Life, part iil. pp. 46, 47.

^c The account which Baxter gives of the conduct of Dean Ryves corresponds accurately with the opinion which we should have formed of him from some of his writings. He was a violent royalist; and as he had suffered for his principles during the civil wars, he probably thought himself justified in retaliating on the Nonconformists. His '*Mercurius Rusticus, or the Country's Complaint of the barbarous outrages committed by the Sectaries of*

so openly profane, ought not to have been countenanced as a religious teacher by any Christian. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how Baxter could reconcile himself even to hear such a man, and, by his example, to influence others to do the same; when we reflect on his strong views of the mischief and sinfulness of countenancing ungodly ministers. His love of peace, and desire to prevent schism in the established church, were the impelling motives, which, in this instance, certainly carried him too far.

"At Wolverhampton, in Staffordshire, where Ryves was dean, were abundance of Papists and violent formalists. Amongst whom was one Brasgirdle, an apothecary, who, in conference with Mr. Reynolds (an able preacher there silenced and turned out), by his bitter words tempted him into so much indiscretion as to say, that the Nonconformists were not so contemptible for number and quality as he made them; that most of the people were of their mind; that Cromwell, though an usurper, had kept up England against the Dutch; and that he marvelled he would be so hot against private meetings, when at Acton the dean suffered them at the next door. Having this advantage, Brasgirdle writeth all this, greatly aggravated, to the dean. The dean hastens away with it to the king, as if it were the discovery of treason. Mr. Reynolds is questioned, but the justices of the county to whom it was referred, upon hearing of the business, found mere imprudence heightened to a crime, and so released him. But before this could be done, the king, exasperated by the name of Cromwell, and other unadvised words, as the dean told me, bid him go to the Bishop of London from him, and bid him see to the suppression of my meeting, which was represented to him as much greater than it was. Whereupon, two justices were chosen for their turn to do it. One Ross, of Brentford, a Scotsman, and one Phillips, a steward to the Archbishop of Canterbury."^d

In consequence of this complaint, a warrant was granted to

this late flourishing Kingdom,' contains some curious accounts of the battles, sieges, and combats, between the king's and the parliament's forces, to the year 1646. He represents the treatment of the royal party to have been, in many instances, intolerably severe, which was probably the case. His account of the treatment of the sectaries, is, I apprehend, a good deal aggravated. The '*Querela Cantabrigiensis*,' which is commonly ascribed to him, is also ascribed to Dr. John Barwick.—See '*Life of Barwick*,' pp. 32, 33. Dr. Ryves died in 1677, in the 81st year of his age.

^d *Life*, part iii. p. 48.

bring Baxter before the justices at Brentford. After maintaining a considerable conflict with them, in which they treated him very indecorously, he was, by their mittimus, sent to Clerkenwell prison, for holding a conventicle, not having taken the Oxford oath, and refusing it when tendered to him.

"They would have given me leave to stay till Monday, before I went to gaol, if I would have promised them not to preach the next Lord's day, which I refused. This was made a heinous crime against me at the court, and it was also said that it could not be out of conscience that I preached, else why did not my conscience put me on it so long before? Whereas I had ever preached to my own family, and never once invited any one to hear me, or forbade any; so that the difference was made by the people, and not by me. If they came more at last than at first, before they had heard me, that signified no change in me. But thus must we be judged of, where we are absent, and our adversaries present; and there are many to speak against us what they please, and we are banished from cities and corporations, and cannot speak for ourselves.

"The whole town of Acton were greatly exasperated against the dean, when I was going to prison; so much so, that ever after they abhorred him as a selfish persecutor. Nor could he have devised to do more to hinder the success of his seldom preaching there; but it was his own choice,—'Let them hate me, so they fear me.'

"Thus I finally left that place, being grieved most that Satan had prevailed to stop the poor people in such hopeful beginnings of a common reformation, and that I was to be deprived of the exceeding grateful neighbourhood of the Lord Chief Baron Hale, who could scarce refrain tears when he heard of the first warrant for my appearance.

"As I went to prison, I called on Serjeant Fountain, my special friend, to take his advice; for I would not be so injurious to Judge Hale. He perused my mittimus, and, in short, advised me to seek for a *habeas corpus*, but not in the usual court (the King's Bench), for reasons known to all that knew the judges; nor yet in the Exchequer, lest his kindness to me should be an injury to Judge Hale, and so to the kingdom; but at the Common Pleas, which he said might grant it, though it is not usual.

"My greatest doubt was, whether the king would not take it ill, that I rather sought to the law than unto him; or if I sought

any release rather than continue in prison. My imprisonment was at present no great suffering to me, for I had an honest jailor, who showed me all the kindness he could. I had a large room, and the liberty of walking in a fair garden. My wife was never so cheerful a companion to me as in prison, and was very much against my seeking to be released. She had brought so many necessaries, that we kept house as contentedly and comfortably as at home, though in a narrower room, and had the sight of more of my friends in a day, than I had at home in half a year. I knew also that if I got out against their will, my sufferings would be never the nearer to an end. But yet, on the other side, it was in the extreme heat of summer, when London was wont to have epidemical diseases. The hope of my dying in prison, I have reason to think was one great inducement to some of the instruments to move to what they did. My chamber being over the gate, which was knocked and opened with noise of prisoners, just under me almost every night, I had little hope of sleeping but by day, which would have been likely to have quickly broken my strength, which was so little that I did but live. The number of visitors daily, put me out of hope of studying, or of doing any thing but entertain them. I had neither leave at any time to go out of doors, much less to church on the Lord's days, nor on that day to have any come to me, or to preach to any but my family.

"Upon all these considerations the advice of some was, that I should petition the king. To this I was averse; and my counsellor, Serjeant Fountain, advised me not to seek to it, nor yet to refuse their favour if they offered it, but to be wholly passive as to the court, and to seek my freedom by law, because of my great weakness and the probability of future peril to my life: and this counsel I followed.

"The Earl of Orrery, I heard, did earnestly and specially speak to the king, how much my imprisonment was to his disservice. The Earl of Manchester could do little but by Lord Arlington, who, with the Duke of Buckingham, seemed much concerned in it; but the Earl of Lauderdale, who would have been most forward, had he known the king's mind to be otherwise, said nothing. So all my great friends did me not the least service, but made a talk of it, with no fruit at all. The moderate, honest part of the episcopal clergy were much offended, and said I was chosen out designedly to make them all odious to the people. But Sir John Babor, often visiting me, assured me that he had

spoken to the king about it, but that, after all had done their best, he was not willing to be seen to relax the law and discourage justices in executing it, &c. ; but that his majesty would not be offended if I sought my remedy at law, which most thought would come to nothing.

“ While I was thus unresolved which way to take, Sir John Babor desiring a narrative of my case, I gave him one, which he showed to Lord Arlington. The lord chief baron, about the same time, at the table at Serjeant’s Inn, before the rest of the judges, gave such a character of me, without fear of any man’s displeasure, as is not fit for me to own or recite. He was so much revered by the rest, who were every one strangers to me, save by hearsay, that I believe it much settled these resolutions. The Lord Chief Justice Vaughan was no friend to Non-conformity, or Puritans ; but he had been one of Selden’s executors, and so Judge Hale’s old acquaintance. Judge Tyrell was a well-affected, sober man, and Serjeant Fountain’s brother-in-law by marriage, and sometime his fellow-commissioner for keeping the great seal and chancery. Judge Archer was one that privately favoured religious people : and Judge Wild, though greatly for the prelates’ way, was noted for a righteous man. These were the four judges of the court.

“ My *habeas corpus* being demanded at the Common Pleas, was granted, and a day appointed for my appearance. When I came, the judges, I believe, having not before studied the Oxford act, when Judge Wild had first said I hope you will not trouble this court with such causes, asked whether the king’s counsel had been acquainted with the case, and seen the order of the court ; which being denied, I was remanded back to prison, and a new day set. They suffered me not to stand at the bar, but called me up to the table, which was an unusual respect ; and they sent me not to the Fleet, as is usual, but to the same prison, which was a greater favour.

“ When I appeared next, the lord chief justice, coming towards Westminster Hall, went into Whitehall by the way, which caused much talk among the people. When he came, Judge Wild began, and having showed that he was no friend to conventicles, opened the act, and then opened many defaults in the mittimus, for which he pronounced it invalid ; but, in civility to the justices, said, that the act was so penned, that it was a very hard thing to draw up a mittimus by it ; which was no compliment to the parliament. Judge Archer next spake largely

against the mittimus, without any word of disparagement to the main cause, and so did Judge Tyrell after him. Judge Vaughan concluded in the same manner, but with these two singularities above the rest. He made it an error in the mittimus, that the witnesses were not named, seeing that the Oxford act giving the justices so great a power if the witnesses be unknown, any innocent person may be laid in prison, and shall never know where, or against whom, to seek remedy, which was a matter of great moment.

“ When he had done with the cause, he made a speech to the people, and told them that by their appearance, he perceived that this was an affair of as great expectation as had been before them. It being usual with the people to carry away things by halves, and as their misreports might mislead others, he therefore acquainted them, that though he understood that Mr. Baxter was a man of great learning and of a good life, yet he having this singularity, that he was a conventicler, and as the law was against conventicles, it was only upon the error of the warrant that he was released. That the judges were accustomed, in their charges at assizes, to inquire after conventicles, which are against the law ; so that, if they that made the mittimus, had but known how to make it, they could not have delivered him, nor can do it for him, or any that shall so transgress the law.

“ This was supposed to be that which was resolved on at Whitehall, by the way. But he had never heard what I had to say in the main cause, to prove myself no transgressor of the law ; nor did he at all tell them how to know what a conventicle is, which the common law is so much against.

“ Being discharged from my imprisonment, my sufferings began ; for I had there better health than I had for a long time before or after. I had now more exasperated the authors of my imprisonment. I was not at all acquitted as to the main cause. They might amend their mittimus, and lay me up again. I knew no way how to bring my main cause, whether they had power to put the Oxford oath on me to a legal trial, and my counsellors advised me not to do it, much less to question the judges for false imprisonment, lest I were borne down by power. I had now a house of great rent on my hands, which I must not come to, and had no other house to dwell in. I knew not what to do with all my goods and family. I must go out of Middlesex ; I must not come within five miles of a city, corpo-

ration, &c. Where to find such a place, and therein a house, and how to remove my goods thither, and what to do with my house till my time expired, were more trouble than my quiet prison by far, and the consequents yet worse.

“Gratitude commandeth me to tell the world who were my benefactors in my imprisonment, and calumny as much obligeth me, because it is said among some that I was enriched by it. Serjeant Fountain’s general counsel ruled me. Mr. Wallop and Mr. Offley lent me their counsel, and would take nothing. Of four serjeants that pleaded my cause, two of them, Serjeant Windham, afterwards baron of the Exchequer, and Serjeant Sise, would take nothing. Sir John Bernard, a person I never saw but once, sent me no less than twenty pieces; the Countess of Exeter, ten pounds; and Alderman Bard, five. I received no more, but I confess more was offered me, which I refused; and more would have been given, but that they knew I needed it not: and this much defrayed my law and prison charges.

“When the same justices saw that I was thus discharged, they were not satisfied to have driven me from Acton, but they made a new mittimus by counsel, as for the same supposed fault, naming the fourth of June as the day on which I preached; and yet not naming any witness, though the act against conventicles was expired long before. This mittimus they put into an officer’s hands, in London, to bring me, not to Clerkenwell, but among the thieves and murderers, to the common jail at Newgate, which was, since the fire which burnt down all the better rooms, the most noisome place that I have heard of, of any prison in the land, except the Tower dungeon.

“The next habitation which God’s providence chose for me, was at Totteridge, near Barnet, where, for a year, I was fain with part of my family separated from the rest, to take a few mean rooms, which were so extremely smoky, and the place withal so cold, that I spent the winter in great pain; one quarter of a year by a sore sciatica, and seldom free from much anguish.”^e

Between the years 1665 and 1670, Baxter laboured diligently on some of his most important works. It was during this period he produced his ‘Reasons of the Christian Religion,’ and his ‘Directions to weak Christians how to grow in Grace.’ He finished, though he did not then print, his ‘Christian Directory.’ He enlarged his sermon before the king into a quarto volume,

^e Life, part iii. pp. 50—60.

on the 'Life of Faith;' beside some minor pieces, such as his 'Cure of Church Divisions.' He wrote also 'his Apology for the Nonconformists,' and a great part of his 'Methodus,' though it was not published till some time afterwards.

During this period also, he had a long discussion in person, and in writing, with Dr. Owen, about the terms of agreement among Christians of all parties. It was not productive of any practical effect at the time; and the blame of its failure Baxter lays upon Owen. The correspondence he has published, from which it is not difficult to account for the failure, without attaching blame to either party. The views of these two distinguished individuals differed, not, indeed, in any essential points, but on various subordinate matters affecting systematic union and co-operation. They differed also in their dispositions and anticipations. Owen was calm, dignified, and firm, but respectful and courteous. Baxter was sharp and cutting in his reproofs, sanguine in his expectations of success; and, confident of his own guileless simplicity, disposed to push matters further than the circumstances of the times admitted. Though not superior in the substantial attainments of the Christian character, the deportment of Owen was bland and conciliating, compared with that of Baxter. Hence, Owen frequently made friends of enemies, while Baxter often made enemies of friends. The one expected to unite all hearts, by attacking all understandings; the other trusted more to the gradual operation of Christian feeling, by which alone he believed that extended unity would finally be effected. The issue has proved that, in this case, Owen had made the wiser calculation.

CHAPTER X.

1670—1676.

Conventicle Act renewed—Lord Lauderdale—Fears of the Bishops about the increase of Popery—Bishop Ward—Grove—Serjeant Fountain—Judge Vaughan—The King connives at the Toleration of the Nonconformists—Shuts up the Exchequer—The Dispensing Declaration—License applied for on Baxter's behalf—Pinner's Hall Lecture—Baxter Preaches at different places—The King's Declaration voted illegal by Parliament—The Test Act—Baxter desired by the Earl of Orrery to draw up new Terms of Agreement—Healing Measure proposed in the House of Commons, which fails—Conduct of some of the Conformists—Baxter's Afflictions—Preaches at St. James's Market-House—Licenses recalled—Baxter employs an Assistant—Apprehended by a Warrant—Escapes being Imprisoned—Another Scheme of Comprehension—Informers—City Magistrates—Parliament falls on Lauderdale and others—The Bishops' Test Act—Baxter's Goods distrained—Various Ministerial Labours and Sufferings—Controversy with Penn—Baxter's Danger—His Writings during this period.

IN the year 1670, the act against conventicles was renewed, and made more severe than ever, several new clauses being inserted, which Baxter believed to have a particular reference to his own case. It was declared, for instance, contrary to all justice, that the faults of the mittimus should not vitiate it, and that all doubtful clauses should be interpreted in the sense most unfavourable to conventicles. It seemed as if the intention of the court had been to extirpate the Nonconformists root and branch; for the act was enforced with the utmost rigour against the most respectable persons among them.^f The meetings in London were continually disturbed by bands of soldiers. Dr.

^f Sheldon again addressed the bishops of the province of Canterbury, urging them to promote, by every means in their power, "so blessed a work as the preventing and suppressing of conventicles," which the king and parliament, "out of their pious care for the welfare of the church and kingdom," had endeavoured to accomplish in the late act.—*Calamy's Abridgment*, i. 328—331. Harris also, in his 'Life of Charles II.,' has given the letter entire, vol. ii. pp. 106, 107. Bishop Wilkins opposed the above act in the House of Lords, notwithstanding the king's request that he would at least be silent.

Manton, though his friends were numerous and powerful, was sent six months to the Gate-house prison for preaching in his own house, in the parish of which he had formerly been minister.

While Baxter remained quiet at Totteridge, he was sent for to Barnet, by the Earl of Lauderdale, who was then proceeding to Scotland with a project of making some alterations in the state of ecclesiastical affairs in that country. By the king's permission, he consulted Baxter, and offered him, if he would go to Scotland, a church, or a bishoprick, or the management of some of the colleges. Baxter was not to be taken in such a trap, for such in all probability it was; as Lauderdale no sooner went into Scotland, than he became one of the greatest persecutors of the Presbyterian church. In answer to his requests and offers, Baxter, on the 24th of June, 1670, wrote him the following admirable letter, which illustrates his character as a minister, his courtesy as a gentleman, and supplies some particulars respecting his family.

" My Lord,

" Being deeply sensible of your lordship's favours, and especially for your liberal offers for my entertainment in Scotland, I humbly return you my very hearty thanks; but the following considerations forbid me to entertain any hopes, or further thoughts of such a removal :

" The experience of my great weakness and decay of strength, and particularly of this last winter's pain, and how much worse I am in winter than in summer, fully persuade me that I should live but a little while in Scotland, and that in a disabled, useless condition, rather keeping my bed than the pulpit.

" I am engaged in writing a book, which, if I could hope to live to finish, is almost all the service I expect to do God and his church more in the world—a Latin *Methodus Theologiæ*. Indeed I can hardly hope to live so long, as it requires yet nearly a year's labour more. Now, if I should spend that half year, or year, which should finish this work, in travel, and the trouble of such a removal, and then leave it undone, it would disappoint me of the ends of my life. I live only for work, and therefore should remove only for work, and not for wealth and honours, if ever I remove.

" If I were there, all that I could hope for, were liberty to preach the Gospel of salvation, and especially in some university among young scholars. But I hear that you have enough already for this work, who are likely to do it better than I can.

"I have a family, and in it a mother-in-law of eighty years of age, of honourable extract and great worth, whom I must not neglect, and who cannot travel. To such an one as I, it is so great a business to remove a family, with all our goods and books so far, that it deterreth me from thinking of it, especially having paid so dear for removals these eight years as I have done; and being but yesterday settled in a house which I have newly taken, and that with great trouble and loss of time. And if I should find Scotland disagree with me, which I fully conclude it would, I must remove all back again.

"All these things concur to deprive me of the benefit of your lordship's favour. But, my lord, there are other parts of it, which I am not altogether hopeless of receiving. When I am commanded 'to pray for kings and all in authority,' I am allowed the ambition of this preferment, which is all that ever I aspired after, 'to live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.' *Diu nimis habitavit anima mea inter osiores pacis.*

"I am weary of the noise of contentious revilers, and have oft had thoughts to go into a foreign land, if I could find where I might have healthful air and quietness, but to live and die in peace. When I sit in a corner, and meddle with nobody, and hope the world will forget that I am alive, court, city, and country, are still filled with clamours against me. When a preacher wanteth preferment, his way is to preach or write a book against the Nonconformists, and me by name; so that the *menstrua* of the press, and the pulpits of some, are bloody invectives against myself, as if my peace were inconsistent with the kingdom's happiness. Never did my eyes read such impudent untruths, in matter of fact, as such writings contain. They ery out for answers and reasons of my non-conformity, while they know the law forbiddeth me to answer them unlicensed. I expect not that any favour or justice of my superiours should cure this, but if I might but be heard speak for myself before I be judged by them, and such things believed (for, to condemn the judgment of my rulers, is to dishonour them), I would request that I might be allowed to live quietly to follow my private studies, and might once again have the use of my books, which I have not seen these ten years. I pay for a room for their standing in at Kidderminster, where they are eaten by worms and rats; having no sufficient security for my quiet abode in any place to encourage me to send for them. I would also ask that I might have the liberty every beggar

hath, to travel from town to town. I mean but to London, to oversee the press, when any thing of mine is licensed for it. If I be sent to Newgate for preaching Christ's Gospel (for I dare not sacrilegiously renounce my calling, to which I am consecrated *per sacramentum ordinis*), I would request the favour of a better prison, where I may but walk and write. These I should take as very great favours, and acknowledge your lordship my benefactor if you procure them: for I will not so much injure you as to desire, or my reason as to expect, any greater matters; no, not the benefit of the law.

"I think I broke no law, in any of the preachings of which I am accused. I most confidently think, that no law imposeth on me the Oxford oath, any more than on any conformable minister; and I am past doubting the present mittimus for my imprisonment is quite without law. But if the justices think otherwise now, or at any time, I know no remedy. I have a license to preach publicly in London diocese, under the archbishop's own hand and seal, which is yet valid for occasional sermons, though not for lectures or cures; but I dare not use it, because it is in the bishop's power to recall it. Would but the bishop, who, one should think, would not be against the preaching of the Gospel, not recall my license, I could preach occasional sermons, which would absolve my conscience from all obligation to private preaching. For it is not maintenance that I expect. I never received a farthing for my preaching, to my knowledge, since May 1st, 1662. I thank God that I have food and raiment, without being chargeable to any man, which is all that I desire, had I but leave to preach for nothing; and that only where there is a notorious necessity. I humbly crave your lordship's pardon for the tediousness of this letter; and again return you my very great thanks for your great favours, and remain," &c.^s

This touching letter was followed by another to the same nobleman, in which Baxter offers some observations on the divided state of the country, and makes a proposal, that moderate divines should be appointed to meet and debate matters, in order to some plan of concord, which might afterwards receive his majesty's approbation. It is surprising, after all that had occurred, he should have had any faith in the utility or success of such a scheme. It does not appear, however, that any attention was paid to it; but after Lauderdale had gone to

^s Life, part iii. pp. 75, 76.

Scotland, Sir Robert Murray, a confidential friend of his lordship, sent Baxter a frame or body of discipline for the church of Scotland, on which he desired his animadversions. It appears to have been a modified system of episcopacy, which it was the great object of the court then to force upon the people of Scotland. Resistance to it brought on that country the most horrible persecution a Protestant people was ever exposed to from its own Protestant government; and has made the name and form of episcopacy an execration in Scotland to the present time. Baxter's remarks extended not to the principles of the system, but to details, into which it is quite unnecessary to enter.

The Earl of Lauderdale, with whom this correspondence was held, was a very extraordinary character. He had originally been a decided Covenanter; and, indeed, remained a professed Presbyterian to the last. He was actuated by mean and arbitrary principles, fawning to those above him, but imperious and violent to all below. A man of learning, being well acquainted with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; and possessed of a strong but blundering mind. Devoted to the interests of Charles II., though he continued to hate even the memory of his royal father. In Scotland he acted like a demon; and by the fury of his behaviour, increased the severity of his administration, which had more of the cruelty of the inquisition, than the legality of justice.^f Yet this man would talk about religion, and was spoken to and of as a religious character, by Bishop Burnet, Baxter, and other religious men of the day. I shall have occasion to refer to the intimacy between Lauderdale and Baxter, in another part of this work.

"In the latter end of this year, the bishops and their agents gave out their fears of Popery, and greatly lamented that the Duchess of York was turned Papist.^g They thereupon professed a strong desire that some of the Presbyterians, as they called even the episcopal Nonconformists, might, by some abatement

^f Burnet's 'Own Times,' vol. i. pp. 142—144.

^g The Duchess of York, daughter of Clarendon, embraced the same creed as her husband, and, as he tells us, without knowledge of his sentiments, but one year before her death, in 1670. She left a paper at her decease, containing the reasons for her change. See it in Kennet, p. 320. It is plain that she, as well as the duke, had been influenced by the Romanizing tendency of some Anglican divines.—Hallam, vol. ii. p. 515. So much for the effects of the writings of Hooker and Heylin, and of the conduct of Morley and Sheldon.

of the new oaths and subscriptions, have better invitation to conform in other things. Bishop Morley, Bishop Ward, and Bishop Dolben,^b spake ordinarily their desires of it; but after long talk, nothing was done, which made men variously interpret their pretensions. Some thought that they were real in their desires, and that the hinderance was from the court; while others said they would never have been the grand causes of our present situation, if it had been against their wills; that if they had been truly willing for any healing, they would have shown it by more than their discourses; and that all this was but that the odium might be diverted from themselves. I hope they are not so bad as this censure doth suppose. But it is strange that those same men, who so easily led the parliament to what was done, when they had given the king thanks for his declaration about ecclesiastical affairs, could do nothing to bring it to moderate abatements, and the healing of our breaches, if they had been truly willing.

"In the year 1671, the diocese of Salisbury was more fiercely driven on to conformity, by Dr. Seth Ward, than any place else, or than all the bishops in England did in theirs.¹ Many hundreds

^b Afterwards archbishop of York.

¹ Dr. Seth Ward, who acted in this violent manner, was one of those ecclesiastical turn-coats who, during a succession of changes, always appear to consult their worldly interests. In the time of the Commonwealth he took the engagement to be true to the government as then established. He wrote against the covenant, and took the place of Greaves, as professor of astronomy in the University of Oxford, who was ejected for refusing it. At the Restoration he paid court to the royal party, by supporting all its measures. Even Anthony Wood calls him a "politician," and speaks of him as "winding himself into favour by his smooth language and behaviour."—*Athen. Ox.* Bliss. vol. iv. p. 248. Yet Ward was, in other respects, a respectable man. He was a profound mathematician, and an able speaker; but he was a persecutor. Dr. Pope, the author of his life, endeavours to apologise for his conduct, but very unsatisfactorily: he admits that he endeavoured to suppress conventicles; that his measures produced a petition against him from the principal manufacturers in the towns of his diocese, alleging that their trade had been ruined by him. In answer to all which he says, "he was no violent man as these petitioners represented him; but if at any time he was more active than ordinary against the dissenters, it was by express command from the court—sometimes by letters, and sometimes given in charges by the judges of the assizes; which councils altered frequently—now in favour of the dissenters, and then again in opposition. It is true he was for the act against conventicles, and laboured much to get it to pass, not without the order and direction of the greatest authority, both civil and ecclesiastical; not out of enmity to the dissenters' persons, as they unjustly suggested, but of love to the repose and the welfare of the government. For he believed, if the growth of them were not timely suppressed, it would either cause a ne-

were prosecuted by him with great industry ; and among others, that learned, humble, holy gentleman, Mr. Thomas Grove, an ancient parliament man, of as great sincerity and integrity as almost any man I ever knew. He stood it out awhile in a law-suit, but was overthrown, and fain to forsake his country, as many hundreds more are likely to do. His name remindeth me to record my benefactor. A brother's son of his, Mr. Robert Grove, was one of the Bishop of London's chaplains, and the only man that licensed my writings for the press, supposing them not to be against law ; in which case I could not expect it. Beside him, I could get no licenser to do it.* And as being silenced, writing was the far greatest part of my service to God for his church, and without the press my writings would have been in vain, I acknowledge that I owe much to this man, and one Mr. Cook, the archbishop's chaplain, that I lived not more in vain.

“ While I am acknowledging my benefactors, I add that this year died Serjeant John Fountain, the only person from whom I received an annual sum of money ; which though through God's mercy I needed not, yet I could not in civility refuse : he gave me ten pounds per annum, from the time of my being silenced till his death. I was a stranger to him before the king's return ; save that when he was judge, before he was one of the keepers of the great seal, he did our country great service against vice. He was a man of quick and sound understanding, and upright, impartial life ; of too much testiness in his weakness, but of a most believing, serious fervency towards God, and open, zealous owning of true piety and holiness, without regarding the little partialities of sects, as most men that ever I came near in sickness. When he lay sick, which was almost a year, he delivered to the judges and lawyers that sent to visit him such answers as these, ‘ I thank your lord or master for his kindness ; present my service to him, and tell him, it is a great work to die well ; his time is near, all worldly glory must come down ; intreat him to keep his integrity, overcome temptations, and please God, and

cessity for a standing army to preserve the peace, or a general toleration, which would end in Popery.”—p. 68. Pope further informs us, that so effectually did the bishop play his part, that there was scarcely a conventicle left in the diocese of Salisbury, except on the skirts of Wilts, where there was not a settled militia. Yet Ward was no persecutor !

* Mr. Grove, who acted this friendly part to Baxter, was afterwards raised to the episcopal bench as bishop of Chichester. This took place in 1691, and his death in 1696.—*Athen. Ox.* vol. iv. p. 337.

prepare to die.' He deeply bewailed the great sins of the times, and the prognostics of dreadful things which he thought we were in danger of; and though in the wars he suffered imprisonment for the king's cause, towards the end he abandoned that party, and greatly feared an inundation of poverty, enemies, Popery, and infidelity.¹

"During the mayoralty of Sir Samuel Stirling, many jury-men in London were fined and imprisoned by the recorder, for not finding certain Quakers guilty of violating the act against conventicles. They appealed, and sought remedy.^m The judges remained about a year in suspense; and then, by the Lord Chief Justice Vaughan, delivered their resolution against the recorder, for the subject's freedom from such sort of fines. When he had, in a speech of two or three hours long, spoke vehemently to that purpose, never thing, since the king's return, was received with greater joy and applause by the people; so that the judges were still taken for the pillars of law and liberty.ⁿ

"The parliament having made the laws against Nonconformists' preaching, and private religious meetings, so grinding and terrible, the king, who consented to those laws, became the sole patron of the Nonconformists' liberties; not by any abatements of law, but by his own connivance as to the execution; the magistrates, for the most part, doing what they perceived to be his will. So that Sir Richard Ford, all the time of his mayoralty, though supposed one of their greatest and most knowing adversaries, never disturbed them. The ministers, in several parties, were oft encouraged to make their addresses to the king, only to acknowledge his clemency, by which they held their liberties,

¹ Fountain, of whom Baxter makes such honourable mention, was son of William Fountain, of Seabroke, in Bucks; and educated at Christ-church, Oxford. He adopted the cause of the parliament, in whose army he had the command of a regiment. He was made a serjeant-at-law by Cromwell, and in 1659 one of the commissioners of the great seal. At the Restoration he was made a serjeant by the king.—*Wood's Fasti*, vol. i. p. 497. Edit. Blise.

^m Baxter refers here to the celebrated trial of Penn and Mead, before the recorder of London, who has thus, with the lord mayor, Stirling, obtained an infamous notoriety. The trial rendered immense service to the cause of liberty.

ⁿ Sir John Vaughan, lord chief justice of the Common Pleas, who acquitted himself so nobly on this occasion, was a man of excellent parts and good learning. He was the intimate friend of Selden, and a man of the same principles and independence. His son published his Reports, among which is the case above referred to. Baxter has noticed his treatment of his own case in the preceding chapter, in which he appears to have acted with a good deal of tact.

and to profess their loyalty. Sir John Babor introduced Dr. Manton, Mr. Ennis, a Scots Nonconformist, Mr. Whittaker, Dr. Annesly, Mr. Watson, and Mr. Vincent, &c. The king told them, that though such acts were made, he was against persecution, and hoped ere long to stand on his own legs, and then they should see how much he was against it. By this means, many scores of nonconformable ministers in London kept up preaching in private houses. Some fifty, some a hundred, many three hundred, and many one thousand or two thousand at a meeting; by which, for the present, the city's necessities were much supplied, for very few of the burnt churches were yet built up again. Yet this never moved the bishops to relent, or give any favour to the preaching of Nonconformists; and though the best of the Conformists, for the most, were got up to London, alas! they were but few: and the most of the religious people were more and more alienated from the prelates and their churches.*

"Those who from the beginning saw plainly what was doing, lamented all this. They thought it was not without great cunning, that seeing only a parliament was formerly trusted with the people's liberties, and could raise a war against him (interest ruling the world), it was contrived that this parliament should make the severest laws against the Nonconformists, to grind them to dust, and that the king should allay the execution at his pleasure, and become their protector against parliaments; and that they who would not consent to this should suffer. Indeed, the ministers themselves seemed to make little doubt of this; but they thought, that if Papists must have liberty, it was as good for them also to take theirs as to be shut out; that it was not lawful for them to refuse their present freedom, though they were sure that evil was designed in granting it; and that before men's designs could come to ripeness, God might, in many ways, frustrate them. All attempts, however, to get any comprehension, as it was then called, any abatement of the

* The conduct of the court towards the dissenters at this time, can only be explained by a knowledge of the secret treaty with France; the object of which, on Charles's part, was to be rendered independent of parliament; the object of France was the re-establishment of Popery in England. Though the relaxation of the persecution of the dissenters is said to have proceeded from the advice of Shaftesbury, who had no concern in the original secret treaty with France, it was completely in the spirit of that compact, and must have been acceptable to the king.—*Hallam*, ii. 525.

rigour of the laws, or legal liberty and union, were most effectually made void.^p

"In the beginning of the year 1671-2, the king caused his Exchequer to be shut; so that whereas a multitude of merchants and others had put their money into the bankers' hands, and the bankers lent it to the king, and the king gave orders to pay out no more of it for a year, the murmur and complaint in the city were very great, that their estates should be, as they called it, so surprised. This was the more complained of, because it was supposed to be in order to assist the French in a war against the Dutch; they therefore took a year to be equal to perpetuity, and the stop to be a loss of all, seeing wars commonly increase necessities, but do not supply them. Among others, all the money and estate that I had in the world, of my own, was there, except ten pounds per annum, which I enjoyed for eleven or twelve years. Indeed, it was not my own, which I will mention to counsel those that would do good, to do it speedily, and with all their might. I had got in all my life, the net sum of one thousand pounds. Having no child, I devoted almost all of it to a charitable use, a free-school; I used my best and ablest friends for seven years, with all the skill and industry I could, to help me to some purchase of house or land to lay it out on, that it might be accordingly settled. But though there were never more sellers, I could never, by all these friends, hear of any that reason could encourage a man to lay it out on, as secure, and a tolerable bargain; so that I told them, I did perceive the devil's resistance of it, and did verily suspect that he would prevail, and I should never settle, but it would be lost. So hard is it to do any good, when a man is fully resolved. Divers such observations, verily confirm me, that there are devils that keep up a war against goodness in the world."^q

The shutting up of the Exchequer, by which many were totally ruined, was one of the most infamous transactions of an infamous reign. The Earl of Shaftesbury was considered at the time the principal adviser of the measure; but he took care previously to withdraw his own money from the hands of his banker, and to advise some of his friends to do the same. The real author of the measure, it is now known, was Lord Clifford.^r

^p Life, part iii. pp. 86—88.

^q Ibid. part iii. p. 89.

^r Shaftesbury defends himself against the charge of having advised the measure, or approving of it, in a letter to Locke, which Lord King has published.

The stoppage, as Baxter says, was intended to last only for a year; but it does not appear that he ever recovered the money. He bore the loss, however, very patiently, and records the disaster rather to instruct others how to use their property, than to mourn over it himself. The difficulty he experienced in disposing of his thousand pounds, which he ascribes to the devil's resistance, is a curious illustration of the peculiarity of his own mind. He appears always to have found great difficulty in satisfying himself, where there was the least room for doubt or objection. Doubts presented themselves to him, which would scarcely have occurred to any other man. He possessed great decision of character, yet often strangely manifested a want of decision of mind. It is to be regretted, if this was owing to satanic influence, that he should have allowed the devil to have such advantage over him.

We come now to a very important event in the history of these times; the king's declaration, dispensing with the penal laws against the Nonconformists. This document was issued on the 15th of March, 1672, and declares "that his majesty, by virtue of his *supreme power in matters ecclesiastical*, suspends all penal laws thereabout, and that he will grant a convenient number of public meeting-places to men of all sorts that conform not. Provided the persons are approved by him; that they only meet in places sanctioned by him, with open doors, and do not preach seditiously, nor against the church of England."*

The evident design of this transaction, projected by Shaftesbury, was to secure liberty, not to the Nonconformists, but to the Roman Catholics; consequently, the views of the London ministers, as might be expected, were not harmonious as to the use which should be made of this just, but illegal privilege.

It is plain enough, from that letter, however, that he had taken care that his own interests should not be affected by the measure. It was properly the commencement of the national debt, and produced at the time universal dismay.

* The Lord Keeper Bridgman resigned the great seal because he would not attach it to this act, and Shaftesbury, the author of the measure, succeeded to his place. Locke was at this time appointed secretary to Shaftesbury, for the presentation of benefices. It is probable, therefore, that Shaftesbury's designs were not intended in hostility to the dissenters.—*Lord King's Life of Locke*, p. 33. Locke's letter to a person of quality states very clearly the part which Shaftesbury took in this measure, and the reasons which influenced him.

"When it came out," says Baxter, "the London nonconformable ministers were invited to return his majesty their thanks. At their meeting, Dr. Seaman and Mr. Jenkins, who had been till then most distant from the court, were for a thanksgiving, in such high applauding terms as Dr. Manton, and almost all the rest, dissented from. Some were for avoiding terms of approbation, lest the parliament should fall upon them; and some, because they would far rather have had any tolerable state of unity with the public ministry than a toleration; supposing, that the toleration was not chiefly for their sakes, but for the Papists, and that they should hold it no longer than that interest required it; which is inconsistent with the interest of the Protestant religion, and the church of England: and that they had no security for it, but it might be taken from them at any time.

"They thought that it tended to continue our divisions, and to weaken the Protestant ministry and church; and that while the body of the Protestant people were in all places divided, one part was still ready to be used against the other, and many sins and calamities kept up. They thought the present generation of Nonconformists was likely to be soon worn out, and the public assemblies to be lamentably disadvantaged by young, raw, unqualified ministers, that were likely to be introduced; they concluded, therefore, on a cautious and moderate thanksgiving for the king's clemency, and their own liberty; and when they could not come to agreement about the form of it, Lord Arlington introduced them to a verbal, extemporate thanksgiving; and so their difference was ended as to that.¹

"The question, whether toleration of us in our different assemblies, or such an abatement of impositions as would restore some ministers to the public assemblies by law, were more

¹ I apprehend Baxter has here fallen into some mistake. It is not likely the ministers would have been received to deliver an extempore address. Besides, if they could not agree among themselves what to say in writing, who would have undertaken to speak for them? An address drawn up by Owen, though he seldom appears in Baxter's accounts of the London ministers, was adopted on this occasion.—*Memoirs of Owen*, pp. 272, 273. 2d Edit. It was at this time, if we may believe Burnet, that the court ordered fifty pounds a year to be paid to most of the Nonconformist ministers in London, and a hundred to the chief of them. Baxter, he says, sent back his pension, and would not touch it; but most of the others took it. Burnet gives this on Stillingfleet's authority, and represents it as hush money. It is very strange, if this was done, that Baxter should not have mentioned it.—*Burnet's Own Times*, vol. ii. p. 16. Calamy remarks on this passage, in 'His Own Life,' vol. ii. p. 468.

desirable, was a great controversy then among the Nonconformists, and greater it had been, but that the hopes of abatement, called then a comprehension, were so low as made them the less concerned in the agitation of it. But whenever there was a new session of parliament, which put them in some little hope of abatement, the controversy began to revive according to the measure of those hopes. The Independents and all the sectaries, and some few Presbyterians, especially in London, who had large congregations, and liberty and encouragement, were rather for a toleration. The rest of the Presbyterians, and the episcopal Nonconformists, were for abatement and comprehension.”^a

The several parties were influenced by their respective principles of church government and civil establishments. All parties, however, were glad to obtain what they could, and to use the temporary freedom which was allowed, though in a very unconstitutional manner, for the promotion of the interests of religion. The attachment to Popery on the part of the reigning powers, threatened great danger to the country; but I very much doubt, whether if this had not created much anxiety to the church party, the Nonconformists would not have been entirely crushed. From the conflicting interests of party, the cause of the dissenters in this country has often been permitted to gain ground, till their body has arrived at such a measure of strength as even now constitutes its best security.

In the month of October of this year, Baxter fell into a dangerous fit of sickness, which, he says, God, in his wonted mercy, did, in time, so far remove as to restore him to some capacity of service.—“I had till now forborne, for several reasons, to seek a license for preaching from the king, upon the toleration; but when all others had taken theirs, and were settled in London and other places, as they could get opportunity, I delayed no longer, but sent to seek one, on condition I might have it without the title of Independent, Presbyterian, or any other party, but only as a Nonconformist. Before I sent, Sir Thomas Player, chamberlain of London, had procured it me so, without my knowledge or endeavour. I had sought none so long, because I was unwilling to be, or seem, any cause of that way of liberty, if a better might have been had, and therefore would not meddle in it. I lived ten miles from London, and thought it not just to come and set up a congregation there till the ministers had

^a Life, part iii. pp. 99, 100.

fully settled theirs, who had borne the burden in the times of the raging plague, and fire, and other calamities, lest I should draw away any of their auditors, and hinder their maintenance. No one that ever I heard of till mine could get a license, unless he would be entitled in it, a Presbyterian, Independent, Anabaptist, or of some sect.

"The 19th of November,² my baptism day, was the first day, after ten years' silence, that I preached in a tolerated, public assembly, though not yet tolerated in any consecrated church, but only against law, in my own house. Some merchants set up a Tuesday's lecture in London, to be kept by six ministers, at Pinner's Hall, allowing them twenty shillings a piece each sermon, of whom they chose me to be one. But when I had preached there only four sermons, I found the Independents so quarrelsome with what I said, that all the city did ring of their backbitings and false accusations;³ so that, had I but preached for unity, and against division, or unnecessary withdrawing from each other, or against unwarrantable narrowing of Christ's church, it was said, abroad, that I preached against the Independents. Especially if I did but say that man's will had a natural liberty, though a moral thralldom to vice; that men might have Christ and life, if they were truly willing; and that men have power to do better than they do; it was cried abroad, among all the party, that I preached up Arminianism, and free will, and man's power; and, O! what an odious crime was this!

"On January the 24th, 1672-3, I began a Tuesday lecture at Mr. Turner's church, in New Street, near Fetter Lane, with great convenience, and God's encouraging blessing; but I never

² Here is another discrepancy of date from what is given in the 'Baptismal Register,' and referred to in the first page of this volume. According to this, he was not baptised either on the sixth or the sixteenth; but it is pretty evident he was born on the twelfth of November, according to his own account.

³ For some reason or other, Baxter and the Independents seem never to have agreed. There were probably faults on both sides; though, I apprehend, the principal causes were, the rashness and imprudence with which he carried things to the pulpit, and allowing himself to be influenced by mischievous and often trifling reports.

⁴ The Tuesday-morning lecture now set up, continues to the present time, and is regularly preached at New Broad-street Meeting-house. It is not to the credit of the dissenters, that some of their most respectable ministers were long left to deliver that lecture to almost empty benches. The lecturers, much to their honour, though I believe they derive no pecuniary benefit from their labours, continue them, as there is some property for the good of others entrusted to their distribution.

took a penny of money for it from any one.^a On the Lord's days I had no congregation to preach to, but occasionally to any that desired me, being unwilling to set up a church and become the pastor of any, or take maintenance in this distracted and unsettled way, unless further changes should manifest it to be my duty; nor did I ever give the sacrament to any one person, but to my flock at Kidderminster. I saw it offended the Conformists, and had many other present inconveniences, while we had any hope of restoration and concord from the parliament.

"The parliament met again in February, and voted down the king's declaration as illegal. The king promised them that it should not be brought into precedent; and thereupon they consulted of a bill for the ease of Nonconformists, or dissenters. Many of them highly professed their resolution to carry it on; but when they had granted the tax, they turned it off, and left it undone, destroying our shelter of the king's declaration; and so leaving us to the storm of all their severe laws, which some country justices rigorously executed, though the most forbore.^b

"On February the 20th, I took a house in Bloomsbury, in London, and removed thither after Easter, with my family; God having mercifully given me three years of great peace, among quiet neighbours, at Totteridge, and much more health or ease than I expected, and some opportunity to serve him.

"The parliament grew into great jealousies of the prevalence of Popery. There was an army raised which lay upon Blackheath, encamped, as for service against the Dutch: in which so many of the commanders were Papists, as made men fear the design was worse. They feared not to talk openly, that

^a The place in which Baxter officiated in Fetter Lane, is that between Nevil's Court and New Street, now occupied by the Moravians. It appears to have existed, though perhaps in a different form, before the fire of London. Turner, who was the first minister, was a very active man during the plague. He was ejected from Sunbury, in Middlesex, and continued to preach in Fetter Lane till towards the end of the reign of Charles II., when he removed to Leather Lane. Baxter carried on the Friday morning lecture till the 24th of August, 1682. The church which then met in it was under the care of Mr. Lobb, whose predecessors had been Dr. Thomas Goodwin and Thankful Owen. It has been preserved by an unbroken line of Evangelical pastors to the present time, in which it enjoys the ministry of my venerable friend the Rev. George Burder, and his worthy co-pastor the Rev. Caleb Morris.—See *'Wilson's Dissenting Churches,'* vol. iii. p. 420.

^b It was suspected that the women about the king interposed, and induced him to withdraw his declaration. Upon this, Shaftesbury turned short round, provoked at the king's want of steadiness, and, especially, at his giving up the point about issuing writs in the recess of parliament.—*Hallam*, vol. ii. p. 530.

the Papists, having no hope of getting the parliament to set up their religion by law, did design to take down parliaments, and reduce the government to the French model, and religion to their state, by a standing army. These thoughts put them into dismal expectations, and many wished that the army, at any rate, might be disbanded. The Duke of York being general, the parliament made an act that no man should be in any office of trust who would not take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance; receive the sacrament according to the order of the church of England; and renounce transubstantiation. Some that were known, sold or laid down their places: the Duke of York and the new lord treasurer, Clifford, laid down all. It was said that they did it on supposition that the act left the king empowered to renew their commissions when they had laid them down: but the lord chancellor told the king that it was not so; and so they were put out by themselves. This settled men in the full belief that the Duke of York and Lord Clifford were Papists. The Londoners had special hatred against the duke, ever since the burning of London, commonly saying, that divers were taken casting fire-balls, and brought to his guards of soldiers to be secured, whom he let go, and both secured and concealed them.”*

It was in these circumstances that the celebrated Test Act was passed. The church party, according to Burnet, showed a noble zeal for their religion; and the dissenters got great reputation for their silent deportment. The design of the measure is very obvious; but the impropriety of doing evil that good might come, is strikingly illustrated by it. To get rid of the Duke of York, and a Popish party, who might have been thrown out by other means, the prostitution of a sacred ordinance of religion was resorted to, by which a gross enormity came to be perpetuated in the country for more than a century and a half. The disinterestedness of the dissenters in submitting to let this bill pass quietly, is more worthy of commendation than is their wisdom; while the injustice and ingratitude of the party which then praised them, do it infinite discredit. It is highly satisfactory to the enlightened men of all parties that this abomination is now no more.

Though the preamble of the act, and the whole history of the transaction, show that the main object was a safeguard against Popery, it is probable that a majority of both houses liked it the better for this secondary effect of shutting out the Presbyterians still more than had been done by previous statutes

* Life, part iii. p. 106.

of this reign. There took place, however, a remarkable coalition between the two parties; for many who had always acted as high churchmen and cavaliers, sensible, at last, of the policy of their common adversaries, renounced a good deal of the intolerance and bigotry that had characterised the present parliament. The dissenters, with much disinterestedness, gave their support to the Test act: in return, a bill was brought in, and, after some debate, passed to the Lords, repealing, in a considerable degree, the persecuting laws against their worship. The Upper House, perhaps insidiously, returned it with amendments more favourable to the dissenters, and insisted upon them, after a conference. A sudden prorogation put an end to this bill, which was as unacceptable to the court as it was to the zealots of the church of England.^d

“ On the 20th of October, the parliament met again, and suddenly voted an address to the king, about the Duke of York’s marriage with the Duke of Modena’s daughter, an Italian Papist, akin to the pope, and to desire that it might be stopped, she being not yet come over. As soon as they had done that, the king, by the chancellor, prorogued them till Monday following, because it was not usual for a parliament to grant money twice in a session. On Monday, when they met, the king desired speedy aid of money against the Dutch; and the lord chancellor set forth the reasons and the unreasonableness of the Dutch. But the parliament still stuck to their former resentment of the Duke of York’s marriage, and renewed their message to the king against it, who answered them that it was debated at the open council, and resolved that it was too late to stop it. On Friday, October 31, the parliament went so high as to pass a vote that no more money should be given till the eighteen months of the last tax were expired, unless the Dutch proved obstinate, and unless we were secured against the danger of Popery, and Popish counsellors, and their grievances were redressed. It voted also to ask of his majesty a day of humiliation, because of the growth of Popery. It intended solemnly to keep the Gunpowder Plot, and appointed Dr. Stillingfleet to preach before it, who was then mostly engaged in

^d Hallam, vol. ii. pp. 532, 533. Some of the ablest discussions respecting the Test act, and the circumstances in which it was passed, took place in the debates on the passing of the Repeal bill, in the year 1828. Lord Holland’s speech, on introducing the bill in the House of Lords, is a masterly specimen of historical accuracy and parliamentary eloquence. In the ‘Test Act Reporter,’ all the debates are accurately recorded.

writing against Popery : but on the day before, being November 4th, the king, to their great discontent, prorogued the parliament to the 7th of January.

“ On that day, the parliament met again, and voted that their first work should be to prevent Popery, redress grievances, and be secured against the instruments or counsellors of these evils. They shortly after voted the Dukes of Buckingham and Lauderdale unfit for trust about the king, and desired their removal. When they came to the Lord Arlington, and would have treated him in the same manner, without an impeachment, it was carried against that attempt; and because the members who favoured the Nonconformists were against the rest, and helped off Lord Arlington, the rest were greatly exasperated against them, and reported that they did it because he had furthered the Nonconformists’ licenses for tolerated preaching.

“ The 3d of February was a public fast against Popery, the first which I remember, beside the anniversary fasts, which had ever been since this parliament was called, which had now sat longer than that called the Long Parliament. The preachers, Dr. Cradock and Dr. Whitchcot, meddled but little with that business, and did not please them as Dr. Stillingfleet had done; who greatly animated them and all the nation against Popery, by his open and diligent endeavours for the Protestant cause.

“ During this session, the Earl of Orrery^d desired me to draw him up, in brief, the terms and means which I thought would satisfy the Nonconformists, so far as to unite us all against Popery; professing that he met with many great men that were much for it, and particularly the new lord treasurer, Sir Thomas Osborn, afterwards created Lord Danby,^e and Dr. Morley, bishop of Winchester, who vehemently professed his desires of it. Dr. Fulwood, and also divers others, had been with me to the like purpose, testifying the said bishop’s resolution herein. I wished them all to tell him from me, that he had done so much to the

^d Formerly Lord Broghill, under which title he is generally spoken of by Baxter, and other writers of that period. He was a very distinguished man, and probably sincerely desirous on this occasion to promote the good of the country, and the benefit of the Nonconformists, to whom he was a steady friend.

^e Danby succeeded Clifford, on the fall of the cabal ministry. He was not a Papist like his predecessor; but was a corrupt man, capable of resorting to measures, to please the court, which were most injurious to the constitution and interests of his country. It was through his instrumentality, however, that the marriage of the Princess Mary with the Prince of Orange was effected, to which circumstance we ultimately owe the Revolution.

contrary, and never any thing this way, since his professions of that sort, that till his real endeavours convinced men, it would not be believed that he was serious. But when I had given the Earl of Orrery my papers, he returned them me with Bishop Morley's strictures, or animadversions, as by his words and the hand-writing I had reasons to be confident; by which he made me see fully that all his professions for abatement and concord were deceitful snares, and that he intended no such thing."^f

Again, our worthy and indefatigable friend of peace took up his pen, and devoted no small attention to this new scheme of union. His proposals, Bishop Morley's strictures, and his reply, are given at large, in his own narrative;^g but it would be useless to trouble the reader with any part of the documents, since the whole ended, as all other schemes of the same kind had done, in disappointment.

"A little after, some great men of the House of Commons drew up a bill, as tending to our healing, to take off our oaths, subscriptions, and declarations, except the oath of supremacy, and allegiance, and subscriptions to the doctrine of the church of England, according to the 13th of Elizabeth. But showing it to the said Bishop of Winchester, he caused them to forbear, and broke it; and instead of it he furthered an act, to take off only *assent* and *consent*, and the renunciation of the government; which would have been but a cunning snare to make us more remediless, and do no good; seeing that the same things, with the repeated clauses, would be still, by other continued obligations required, as may be seen in the canon for subscription, art. ii., and in the Oxford act, for the oath and for confining refusers. It is credibly averred, that when most of the other bishops were against this ensnaring show of abatement, he told them in the house that had it been but to abate us a ceremony, he would not have spoken in it: but he knew that we were bound to the same things still, by other clauses or obligations, if these were repealed.

"On February 24th, all these things were suddenly ended, the king early and unexpectedly proroguing the parliament till November: whereby the minds of both houses were much troubled, and multitudes greatly exasperated and alienated from the court: of whom many now saw that the leading bishops had been the great causes of our distractions; but

^f Life, part iii. pp. 102—109.

^g Ibid. pp. 113—140.

others hating the Nonconformists more, were still as hot for prelacy and violence as ever.

“All this while, the aspiring sort of Conformists, who looked for preferment, and the chaplains who lived in fulness, and other malignant factious clergymen, did write and preach to stir up king, parliament, and others, to violence and cruelty against the liberty and blood of the Nonconformists, who lived quietly by them in labour and poverty, and meddled not with them. Some railed at them as the most intolerable villains in the world, especially Sam. Parker, who was jocularly confuted and detected by Mr. Marvel, a parliament man. One Hickering-hill, and others, came near him in their malignity; and Papists taking the advantage, set in and did the like. One wrote a ‘Sober Inquiry’ of the reasons why the nonconformable ministers were still so valued by the people, which was their grievous vexation, and pretended many causes; I know not whether more malignantly or foolishly, which none could believe but strangers, and those that were blinded by faction, malignity, or false reports.^h

“The Lord’s-day before the parliament was dissolved, one of these prelatists preached to them, to persuade them that we are obstinate, and not to be tolerated or eased by any means but vengeance, urging them to set fire to the faggot, and teach us by scourges or scorpions, and open our eyes with gall. Yet none of these will procure us leave to publish, or offer to authority the reasons of our nonconformity. But this is not the first proof that a carnal, worldly, proud, ungodly clergy, who never were serious in their own professed belief, nor felt the power of what they preach, have been, in most ages of the church, its greatest plague, and the greatest hinderers of holiness and concord, by making their formalities and ceremonies the test of holiness, and their worldly interest and domination the only cement of concord. Oh how much hath Satan done against Christ’s kingdom in the world, by setting up pastors and rulers over the churches, to fight against Christ in his own name and livery, and to destroy piety and peace, by a pretence of promoting them!

“At this time, April, 1674, God so much increased my languishing, and laid me so low, by an incessant inflation of my

^h See an account of the controversy here referred to, and of the behaviour of Parker and Marvel, in ‘Memoirs of Owen,’ pp. 268—273.

head, and translation of my great flatulency thither to the nerves and members, increasing for ten or twelve weeks to greater pains, that I had reason to think that my time on earth would not be long. And, oh! how good hath the will of God proved hitherto to me: and will it not be best at last? Experience causeth me say to his praise, 'Great peace have they that love his law, and nothing shall offend them; and though my flesh and heart do fail, God is the rock of my heart, and my portion for ever.'

"Taking it to be my duty to preach while toleration continued, I removed the last spring to London, where my diseases increasing for about half a year, constrained me to cease my Friday's lecture,¹ and an afternoon's sermon on the Lord's day in my own house, to my grief; and to preach only one sermon a week at St. James's market-house, where some had hired an inconvenient place. But I had great encouragement to labour there, because of the notorious necessity of the people: for it was noted as the habitation of the most ignorant, atheistical, and popish, about London; while the greatness of the parish of St. Martin, made it impossible for the tenth, perhaps the twentieth person in the parish, to hear in the parish church; and the next parishes, St. Giles and Clement Danes, were almost in the like case.

"On July 5, 1674, at our meeting over St. James's market-house, God vouchsafed us a great deliverance. A main beam, weakened before by the weight of the people, so cracked, that three times they ran in terror out of the room, thinking it was falling, but remembering the like at St. Dunstan's in the West, I reproved their fear as causeless. But the next day, taking up the boards, we found that two rends were so great, that it was a wonder of Providence that the floor had not fallen, and the roof with it, to the destruction of multitudes. The Lord make us thankful!¹

"It pleased God to give me marvellous encouragement in my

¹ I suppose he renewed it again, and continued it, though perhaps with frequent interruptions, till 1682, when he finally gave it up.

² On this occasion Mrs. Baxter discovered great presence of mind. After the first crack was heard, she went immediately down stairs, and accosting the first person she met, asked what was his profession. He said, a carpenter. "Can you suddenly put a prop under the middle of this beam?" said she. The man dwelt close by, had a great prop ready, suddenly put it under, while the congregation above knew nothing of it, but had its fears increased by the man's knocking.—*Memoirs of Mrs. Baxter*, p. 61.

preaching at St. James's. The crack having frightened away most of the richer sort, especially the women ; most of the congregation were young men of the most capable age, who heard with very great attention, and many that had not come to church for years, received so much, and manifested so great a change (some Papists, and divers others, returning public thanks to God for their conversion), as made all my charge and trouble easy to me. Among all the popish, rude, and ignorant multitude who were inhabitants of those parts, we had scarce any that opened their mouths against us, and that did not speak well of the preaching of the word among them ; though, when I first went thither, the most knowing inhabitants assured me that some of the same persons wished my death. Among the ruder sort, a common reformation was notified in the place, in their conversation as well as in their judgments.

" But Satan, the enemy of God and souls, did quickly use divers means to hinder me : by persecution, by the charges of the work, and by the troublesome clamours of some that were too much inclined to separation. First, a fellow, that made a trade of being an informer, accused me to Sir William Pulteney, a justice near, upon the act against conventicles. Sir William dealt so wisely and fairly in the business, as frustrated the informer's first attempts, who offered his oath against me ; and before he could make a second attempt, Mr. David Lloyd, the Earl of St. Alban's bailiff, and other inhabitants, so searched after the quality of the informer, and prosecuted him to secure the parish from the charge of his children, as made him flee, and appear no more. I, who had been the first silenced, and the first sent to gaol upon the Oxford act of confinement, was the first prosecuted upon the act of conventicles, after the parliament's condemning the king's declaration, and licenses to preach.

" Shortly after this, the storm grew much greater. The ministers of state had new consultations. The Duke of Lauderdale, the Lord Treasurer, the Earl of Danby, the Lord Keeper, Sir Heneage Finch,^k Bishop Morley, and Bishop Ward, &c., were

^k Sir Heneage Finch was one of the leading members of the parliament which restored Charles II., by whom he was made solicitor-general immediately after. He became attorney-general in 1670, and lord-keeper of the great seal in 1673 ; was raised to the chancellorship in 1676, and created Earl of Nottingham in 1681. His lordship was properly the founder of the noble family of Winchilsea. He possessed good learning, considerable eloquence, and was, on the whole, a respectable public character. He himself refused to put the great seal to Lord Danby's pardon.

the men whom the world talked of as the doers of the business. The first thing that appeared, was, his majesty calling the bishops up to London to give him advice what was to be done for the securing of religion. The bishops, after divers meetings and delays, the said duke and lord treasurer being appointed to meet with them, at last advised the king to recall his licenses, and put the laws in execution, which was done by a proclamation, declaring the licenses long since void, and requiring the execution of the laws against Papists (who were most largely mentioned) and conventicles. No sooner was this proclamation published, but special informers were set at work, to ascertain the execution, and I must here also be the first to be accused."¹

It appears that Baxter, partly to avoid the penalties for not complying with the act of uniformity, and partly for his own relief, employed an assistant, who read a portion of the church service for him on the Lord's day. This partial conformity occasioned many false reports respecting his sentiments, which gave him great trouble, while it failed to commend him to the staunch supporters of ecclesiastical order.

"The Separatists gave out presently that I had conformed, and openly declared my assent and consent, &c.; and so confidently did they affirm it, that almost all the city believed it. The prelatists again took the report from them, with their own willingness that so it should be, and reported the same thing. In one episcopal city, they gave thanks in public that I had conformed; in many counties their news was, that I most certainly conformed, and was, thereupon, to have a bishoprick; which if I should, I had done foolishly in losing thirteen years lordship and profit, and then taken it when I was dying. This was divulged by the Conformists, to fortify their party in the conceits of their innocency, and by the Separatists, in spleen and quarrelsome zeal; but confident lying was too common with both. And yet, the next day, or the next day save one, letters fled abroad, on the contrary, that I was sent to gaol for not conforming.

"While I was thus murmured at by backbiters, sectaries and prelatists, when the king's licenses were recalled, I was the first that was apprehended by warrant, and brought before the justices as a conventicler. One Keeling,² an ignorant fellow, had got a warrant, as bailiff and informer, to search after conventiclors,

Life, part iii. pp. 140—153.

² Burnet gives a long account of Keeling, with his conduct as a contriver of plots, and an informer.—Vol. ii. pp. 369—390.

Papists and Protestants, which he prosecuted with great animosity and violence. Having then left St. James's, the lease of the house being out, I preached only on Thursdays, at Mr. Turner's. By the act, it was required I should be judged by a justice of the city or division where I preach; but be distrained on by warrant from a justice of the division or county where I live. So that the preaching place being in the city, only a city justice might judge me. Keeling went to many of the city justices, but none of them would grant him a warrant against me; he therefore went to the justices of the county, who lived near me, and one, Sir John Medlicot, and Mr. Bennet, brother to Lord Arlington, ignorant of the law herein, gave their warrant to apprehend me, and bring me before them, or some other of his majesty's justices. The constable, or informer, gave me leave to choose what justices I would go to. I accordingly went with them to seek divers of the best justices, but could find none of them at home, and so spent that day, in a state of pain and great weakness, being carried up and down in vain. But I used the informer kindly, and spake that to him which his conscience, though a very ignorant fellow, did not well digest. The next day, I went with the constable and him, to Sir William Pulteney, who made him show his warrant, which was signed by Henry Montague, son to the late worthy Earl of Manchester, as bailiff of Westminster, enabling him to search, after mass-priests and conventiclers. Sir William showed him and all the company, from the act, that none but a city justice had power to judge me for a sermon preached in the city, and so the informer was defeated. As I went out of the house, I met the Countess of Warwick and Lady Lucy Montague, sister to the said Mr. Henry Montague, and told them of the case and warrant, who assured me, that he whose hand was at it, knew nothing of it; and some of them sent to him, and Keeling's warrant was called in within two or three days. It proved that one Mr. Barwell, sub-bailiff of Westminster, was he that set Keeling on work, gave him his warrant; and told him how good a service it was to the church, and what he might gain by it. Barwell sharply chid Keeling for not doing his work with me more skilfully. Lord Arlington most sharply chid his brother for granting his warrant; and within a few days, Mr. Barwell, riding the circuit, was cast by his horse, and died in the very fall. Sir John Medlicot and his brother, a few weeks after, lay both dead in his house together. Shortly after

Keeling came several times to have spoken with me, to ask my forgiveness; and not meeting with me, went to my friends in the city, with the same words: though a little before, he had boasted, how many hundred pounds he should have of the city justices for refusing him justice. At last he found me within, would have fallen down on his knees to me, and asked me earnestly to forgive him. I asked him what had changed his mind; he told me that his conscience had no peace from the hour that he troubled me, and that it increased his disquiet, that no justice would hear, nor one constable of forty execute the warrant, and all the people cried out against him; but that which set it home, was Mr. Barwell's death, for of Sir John Medlicot's he knew not. I exhorted the man to universal repentance, and reformation of life. He told me he would never meddle in such businesses, or trouble any man more, and promised to live better himself than he had done.

"As the next session of parliament approached, Bishop Morley set upon the same course again, and Bishop Ward, as his second and chief co-agent, joined with him; so that they were famed to be the two bishops that were for comprehension and concord: none so forward as they. At last, Dr. Bates brought me a message from Dr. Tillotson, dean of Canterbury, that he and Dr. Stillingfleet desired a meeting with Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Mr. Pool, and me, to treat of an act of comprehension and union; and that they were encouraged to it by some lords, both spiritual and temporal. We met to consider whether such an attempt was safe and prudent, or whether it was offered by some bishops as a snare to us. I told them my opinion, that experience could not suffer my charity to believe better of some of them; but as they knew Dr. Stillingfleet and Dr. Tillotson to be the likeliest men to have a hand in an agreement, if such a thing should be attempted; they would therefore make themselves masters of it to defeat it, and no better issue could be expected from them. Yet these two doctors were men of so much learning, honesty, and interest, that I took it as our duty to accept the offer, and to try with them how far we could agree, and whether they would promise us secrecy, unless it came to maturity, when it might be further notified by consent. I thought that we might hope for success with these two men; and, in time, it might be some advantage to our desired unity, that our terms were such as they consented to."^a

^a Life, part iii. pp. 154—157.

It is irksome to record these constantly recurring schemes of comprehension and union, from which nothing whatever resulted. Tillotson and Stillingfleet appear to have been sincere, while neither Morley nor Ward was so; and thus, after various meetings and discussions, Baxter, who had taken the trouble of drawing up a "Healing Act," and several petitions or addresses to the king, which were never used, was left only with the comfort of reflecting that he had conscientiously sought that peace, which others either wanted the will or the power to promote.

"While the said two bishops were fraudulently seeming to set us in this treaty, their cause required them outwardly to pretend that they would not have me troubled; but I was still the first that was hunted after and persecuted. For even while I was in this treaty, the informers of the city, set on work by the bishops, were watching my preaching, and contriving to load me with divers convictions and fines at once. They found an alderman-justice, even in the ward where I preached, fit for their design, one Sir Thomas Davis, who understood not the law, but was ready to serve the prelates in their own way. To him, oath was made against me, and the place where I preached, for two sermons, which came to threescore pounds fine to me, and fourscore to the owner of the place where we assembled; but I only was sought after and prosecuted.

"The execution of these laws, which were to ruin us for preaching, was so much against the hearts of the citizens, that scarcely any could be found to execute them. Though the corporation oath and declaration had new moulded the city, and all the corporations of the land, except a few, such as Taunton, which were entirely dissolved by it, the aldermen were, for the most part, utterly averse to such employment; so that, whenever an informer came to them, though they forfeited a hundred pounds every time they refused to execute their office, some shifted out of the way, and some plainly denied and repulsed the accusers, and one was sued for it. Alderman Forth got an informer bound to his behaviour, for breaking in upon him in his chamber, against his will. Two fellows, called Stroud and Marshall, became the general informers in the city. In all London, notwithstanding that the third parts of those great fines might be given the informers, very few could be found to do it: and those two were presently fallen upon by their creditors on purpose. Marshall was laid in the Compter for debt, where he remained for a considerable time; but Stroud, keeping

a coffee-house, was not so deep in debt, and was bailed. Had a stranger of another land come into London, and seen five or six poor, ignorant, sorry fellows, unworthy to have been inferior servants to an ordinary gentleman, hunting and insulting even the ancient aldermen, and the lord mayor himself, and all the reverend, faithful ministers that were ejected ; while eighty-nine churches were destroyed by the fire ; and, in many parishes, the churches yet standing, could not hold a sixth or tenth part of the people, yet those that preached for nothing were prosecuted to utter ruin, with such unwearied eagerness, sure he would have wondered what these prelates and prosecutors were. It may convince us that the designation *διδάσκαλοι* (false accusers), given in Scripture to some, is not unmeet, when men pretending to be the fathers of the church, dare turn loose half-a-dozen paltry, silly fellows, that know not what they do, to be to so many thousand sober men, as wolves among the sheep, to the distraction of such a city, and the disturbance of so many thousands for worshipping God. How lively doth this tell us, that Satan, the prince of the aerial powers, worketh in the children of disobedience ; and that his kingdom on earth is kin to hell, as Christ's kingdom is to heaven !

“ When I understood that the design was to ruin me, by heaping up convictions, before I was heard to speak for myself, I went to Sir Thomas Davis, and told him, that I undertook to prove I broke not the law, and desired him that he would pass no judgment till I had spoken for myself before my accusers. But I found him so ignorant of the law, as to be fully persuaded that if the informers did but swear in general that I kept an unlawful meeting on pretence of a religious exercise in other manner than according to the liturgy and practice of the church of England, he was bound to take this general oath for proof, and to record a judgment ; so that the accusers were indeed the judges, and not he. I told him that any lawyer would soon tell him the contrary, and that he was judge whether by particular proof they made good their general accusation, as in case a man be accused of felony or treason, it is not enough that men swear that he is a felon or traitor, they must name what the act was, and prove him guilty. Though I was at charge in feeling counsellors to convince him and others, yet I could not persuade him out of his mistake. I told him that if this were so, any two such fellows might defame and bring to fines and punishment himself and all the magistrates and parliament men

themselves, and all that meet in the parish churches, and they would have no remedy. At last, he told me that he would consult with other aldermen at the sessions, and they would go one way. When the sessions came, I went to Guildhall, and again desired that I might be heard before I was judged; but though the other aldermen, save two or three, were against such doings, I could not prevail with him; but professing great kindness, he then laid all on Sir John Howell, the recorder, saying that it was his judgment, and he must follow his advice. I requested him, and Sir Thomas Allan, to desire the recorder that I might be heard before I was judged, and as it must pass by his judgment, that he would hear me speak; but I could not procure it, as the recorder would not speak with me. When I saw their resolution, I told Sir Thomas Davis, if I might not be heard, I would record to posterity the injustice of his judgment. But I perceived that he had already made the record, though he had not yet given it in to the sessions. At last, upon consultation with his leaders, he granted me a hearing, and three of the informers that had sworn against me met me at his house.”^a

At this meeting, Baxter was charged by the informers with preaching in an unconsecrated place, with being a Nonconformist, and with not using the common prayer. These accusations he met in such a way as confounded the informers and perplexed the alderman, who accordingly suspended his warrant to distrain.

“In the mean time, the parliament met on the 13th of April, 1675, and fell first on the Duke of Lauderdale, renewing their desire to the king, to remove him from all public employment and trust. His chief accusing witness was Burnet, late public professor of theology at Glasgow, who said that he asked him whether the Scottish army would come into England, when Lauderdale replied, that if the dissenting Scots should rise, an Irish army should cut their throats, &c. But because Burnet had lately magnified the said duke, in an epistle before a published book, many thought his testimony now to be more unsavoury and revengeful; every one judging as he was affected.”^b But the king sent

^a Life, part iii. pp. 165, 166.

^b Baxter refers here to Bishop Burnet’s ‘Vindication of the Authority and Constitution of the Church of Scotland,’ 12mo, 1673, which is dedicated to the duke, who was then the king’s commissioner for Scotland. Burnet himself, was at the time professor of theology in the University of Glasgow. The dedication is abundantly fulsome and adulatory. The duke’s “patrociny,” the author very earnestly implores. The style of this document is not much in harmony with the character which Burnet afterwards gave of the duke,

them answer, that the words were spoken before his late act of pardon, which, if he should violate, it might cause jealousies in his subjects, that he might do so also by the act of indemnity.

“Their next assault was against the lord treasurer, the Earl of Danby, who found more friends in the House of Commons, which at last acquitted him. But the great work was in the House of Lords, where an act was brought in to impose such an oath on lords, commons, and magistrates, as was imposed by the Oxford act of confinement on ministers, and like the corporation oath; of which more anon. It was now supposed that the bringing of the parliament under this oath and test, was the great work which the house had to perform. The sum of it was, that none commissioned by the king may be by arms resisted, and that none must endeavour any alteration of the government of church or state. Many lords spake vehemently against it, as destructive to the privileges of their house, which should vote freely, and not be pre-obliged by an oath to the prelates. The Lord Treasurer, the Lord Keeper, with Bishop Morley, and Bishop Ward, were the great speakers for it; and the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Hollis, Lord Halifax, the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Salisbury, the chief speakers against it; they that were for it being the major part, many of the rest entered their protestation against it.

“The protesting lords having many days striven against the test, and being outvoted, attempted to join to it an oath for honesty and conscience, in these words: ‘I do swear, that I will never by threats, injunctions, promises, or invitations, by or from any person whatsoever, nor from the hopes or prospects of any gift, place, office, or trust whatever, give my vote, other than according to my opinion and conscience, as I shall be truly and really persuaded upon the debate of any business in parliament.’ But the bishops on their side did cry it down, and cast it out.

“The debating of this test, did more weaken the interest

&c.—*Hist.* vol. i. pp. 142—144. I suspect the bishop himself did not regard this publication as among the wisest things he ever did. In his ‘Own Times,’ however, he explains the circumstances in which he appeared against the duke, and defends himself against the charge of ingratitude or revenge.—vol. i. pp. 123—125. Bishop Burnet acknowledged to Calamy that “if he had any acquaintance with serious, vital religion, it was owing to his reading Baxter’s practical works in his younger days. These works he greatly extolled, saying many handsome things of Baxter and his writings; but expressed his dislike of the multitude of his distinctions.”—*Calamy’s Own Life*, vol. i. p. 468.

and reputation of the bishops with the nobles, than any thing that ever befell them after the king came in : so much doth unquiet over-doing tend to undoing. The Lords, that would not have heard a Nonconformist say half so much, when it came to be their own case, did long and vehemently plead against that oath and declaration being imposed upon them, which they, with the Commons, had before imposed upon others. They exercised so much liberty, for many days together, in opposing the bishops, and by free and bold speeches against their test, as greatly turned to the bishops' disparagement. The Earl of Shaftesbury, the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Bristol,¹ the Marquis of Winchester, the Earl of Salisbury, Lord Hollis, Lord Halifax, and the Lord of Aylesbury, distinguished themselves in the debate ; which set the tongues of men at so much liberty, that the common talk was against the bishops. It was said there were so few among the bishops, able to speak to purpose, Bishop Morley, of Winchester, and Bishop Ward, of Salisbury, being their chief speakers, that they grew very low, even as to the reputation of their parts.

" At last, though the test was carried by the majority, those who were against it, prevailed to make so great an alteration of it as made it quite another thing, and turned it to the greatest disadvantage of the bishops, and the greatest accommodation of the cause of the Nonconformists, of any thing that this parliament ever did, for they reduced it to these words of a declaration and an oath.

" ' I, A. B., do declare that it is not lawful, on any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king ; and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those that are commissioned by him according to law, in time of rebellion and war, in acting in pursuance of such commission.'²

¹ Bristol was a Roman Catholic, but appears to have opposed this bill on much the same grounds with the Protestant dissenters. He considered that it endangered the constitution and interests of the country.—*Rapin*, vol. ii. p. 670.

² The declaration originally proposed, was as follows:—" I, A. B., do declare, that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatever, to take up arms against the king ; and that I do abhor that traitorous position of taking arms by his authority, against his person, or against those who are commissioned by him, in pursuance of such commission ; and I do swear that I will not, at any time, endeavour the alteration of the government, either in church or state—So help me God."—*Locke's Works*, vol. x. p. 213. The modifying clauses finally introduced, did not alter the spirit or principle of the measure, but rendered the oath ambiguous, and thus so far extracted its poison.

“ ‘I, A. B., do swear that I will not endeavour an alteration of the Protestant religion now established by law in the church of England ; nor will I endeavour any alteration in the government of this kingdom in church or state, as it is by law established.’ ”*

Baxter mentions that the Nonconformists would have taken this declaration and oath, had they been offered them, instead of the Oxford oath, the subscription for conformity, and the corporation and vestry declarations. But the arguments, by which he endeavoured to prove the lawfulness of taking them, though they were doubtless satisfactory to his own mind, savour more of the subtlety of the schoolmen, than of Christian simplicity. By the same mode of reasoning, it would be easy to show the lawfulness of the most unjust and absurd proceedings, or of submission to the grossest outrages on the rights and liberties of men.†

“ While this discussion was carrying on in the House of Lords, and five hundred pounds voted to be the penalty of the refusers of the test, before it could come to the Commons, a difference took place between the Lords and Commons about their privileges. This was occasioned by two suits that were brought before the Lords, in which two members of the Commons were parties, which led the Commons to send to the Tower Sir John Fagg, one of their members, for appearing at the Lords’ bar without their consent, and four counsellors, Sir John Churchill, Serjeant Pemberton, Serjeant Pecke, and another, for pleading there. This the Lords voted illegal, and that they should be released. Sir John Robinson, lieutenant of the Tower, obeyed the Commons ; for which the Lords voted him to be a delinquent ; and so far went they in daily voting at each other, that the king was fain to prorogue the parliament, from June

* Life, part lii. pp. 167, 168.

Sheldon at this time discovered his wonted activity in hunting out separatists from the church of England. Calamy has preserved another circular letter from him, addressed to the bishops of the province of Canterbury, enjoining them to make returns of the number of persons in their dioceses, of all Popish recusants, and “ what number of other dissenters were in each parish, of what sect soever, which either obstinately refuse, or wholly absent themselves from the communion of the church of England, at such times as they are by law required.”—*Calamy’s Abridgment*, vol. i. p. 345.

† A full and admirable account of the memorable debate on this bill in the House of Lords, is given by Locke, in his letter to a person of quality ; in which, availing himself of the intimacy he enjoyed with Lord Shaftesbury, he opens the secret springs of several of the measures then proposed.—*Locke’s Works*, vol. x. pp. 240—246, edit. 1812.

the 9th till October the 13th; there appearing no hope of reconciling them, which rejoiced many that they rose without doing further harm."^a

The debate on this celebrated bill, commonly called "the Bishops' Test," on account of their united zeal for its accomplishment, lasted five days, before it was committed to a committee of the whole house. It was afterwards debated sixteen or seventeen whole days; the house sometimes sitting from morning till midnight. After it passed the committee in the manner described by Baxter, the grand contest arose between the two houses about their privileges, in consequence of which the king was obliged to prorogue the parliament, so that the bill was never reported to the house by the committee. Its defeat was generally ascribed chiefly to Lord Shaftesbury, who was at the head of the country party, and who was, in private, greatly assisted by John Locke.^x In this manner did Providence defeat that unjust attempt to injure the rights and liberties of the people of England.

"Keeling, the informer, being commonly detested for prosecuting me, was cast into gaol for debt, and wrote to me to endeavour his deliverance, which I did. A while before, another of the chief informers of the city and my accuser, Marshall, died in the Compter, where his creditors laid him, to keep him from doing more harm; yet did not the bishops change or cease. Two more informers were set on work, who first assaulted Mr. Case's meeting, and next got in as hearers into Mr. Read's meeting, where I was preaching. When they would have gone out to fetch justices, for they were known, the doors were locked to keep them in till I had done; and one of them, supposed to be sent from Fulham, stayed weeping. Yet went they straight to the justices, and the week following heard me again, as informers, at my lectures; but I heard nothing more of their accusation.

"Sir Thomas Davis, notwithstanding all his warnings and confessions, sent his warrants to a justice of the division where I dwelt, to distrain on me, upon two judgments, for fifty pounds, for preaching my lecture in New-street.^y Some Conformists are

^a Life, part iii. p. 171.

^x Lord King's 'Life of Locke,' p. 37.

^y When the warrants were issued by Sir Thomas Davis, Baxter says, "My wife did, without any repining, encourage me to undergo the loss, and did herself take the trouble of removing and hiding my library awhile (many scores of books being so lost), and after, to give it away, *bona fide*, some to

paid to the value of twenty pounds a sermon for their preaching, and I must pay twenty pounds, and forty pounds, a sermon, for preaching for nothing. O, what pastors hath the church of England, who think it worth their unwearied labours, and all the odium which they contract from the people, to keep such as I am from preaching the Gospel of Christ, and to undo us for it as far as they are able; though these many years they do not, for they cannot accuse me for one word that ever I preached, nor one action else that I have done; while the greatest of the bishops preach not three a year themselves!

"The dangerous crack over the market-house, at St. James's, put many upon desiring that I had a larger and safer place for meeting; and though my own dulness, and great backwardness to troublesome business, made me very averse to so great an undertaking, judging that it being in the face of the court, it would never be endured, yet the great and incessant importunity of many, out of a fervent desire of the good of souls, did constrain me to undertake it. When it was almost finished, in Oxenden-street, Mr. Henry Coventry, one of his majesty's principal secretaries, who had a house joining to it, and was a member of parliament, spake twice against it in the parliament, but no one seconded him." *

For the building of this place he received considerable subscriptions from a number of respectable and wealthy persons. Among the most distinguished of these were, Lady Armine, Sir John Maynard, Sir James Langham; the Countesses of Clare, Tyrconnel, and Warwick, the Ladies Clinton, Hollis, Richards, and Fitzjames; Mr. Hambden; Alderman Ashurst, &c.

By the zeal and influence of his wife, another place was built in Bloomsbury for Mr. Read, in which Baxter engaged to help him occasionally: but he was still doomed to be harassed and hunted by his persecutors. The following is a painful statement of what he endured; while it supplies an interesting illustration of the kindness of Providence which he experienced, as well as of the happy state of his mind:

"I was so long wearied with keeping my doors shut against them that came to distrain on my goods for preaching, that I was fain to go from my house, and to sell all my goods, and to

New England, and the most at home, to avoid distraining on them."—*Memoirs of Mrs. Baxter*, p. 70. It appears that he sent valuable presents of books to Harvard College.

* Life, part iii. pp. 171.

hide my library first, and afterwards to sell it ; so that if books had been my treasure (and I valued little more on earth), I had now been without a treasure. For about twelve years, I was driven a hundred miles from them ; and when I had paid dear for the carriage, after two or three years, I was forced to sell them. The prelates, to hinder me from preaching, deprived me also of these private comforts ; but God saw that they were my snare. We brought nothing into this world, and we must carry nothing out. The loss is very tolerable.

“ I was the more willing to part with goods, books, and all, that I might have nothing to be distrained, and so go on to preach ; and accordingly removing my dwelling to the new chapel which I had built, I purposed to venture to preach in it, there being forty thousand persons in the parish, as is supposed, more than can hear in the parish church, who have no place to go to for God’s public worship ; so that I set not up church against church, but preached to those that must else have had none. When I had preached there but once, a resolution was taken to surprise me the next day, and send me for six months to the common gaol, upon the act for the Oxford oath. Not knowing this, it being the hottest part of the year, I agreed to go for a few weeks into the country, twenty miles off ; but the night before I should go, I felt so ill, that I was fain to send to disappoint both the coach and my intended companion, Mr. Sylvester. When I was thus fully resolved to stay, it pleased God, after the ordinary coach hour, that three men, from three parts of the city, met at my house, accidentally, just at the same time, almost to a minute ; of whom, if any one had not been there, I had not gone ; viz., the coachman again to urge me, Mr. Sylvester, whom I had put off, and Dr. Cox, who compelled me, and told me he would, else, carry me into the coach. It proved a special, merciful providence of God ; for, after one week of languishing and pain, I had nine weeks’ greater ease than ever I expected in this world, and greater comfort in my work. For my good friend, Richard Beresford, esq., clerk of the Exchequer, whose importunity drew me to his house, spared no cost, labour, or kindness, for my health or service.”^a

The extraordinary variety of Baxter’s diseases, the enumeration of which follows this passage, would be any thing but entertainment to the reader : suffice it to say, that he was, for many years, a living wonder to himself, and to those who were

^a Life, part iii. p. 172.

acquainted with his condition. It is amazing how he could exist, and still more wonderful how he was capable of the unceasing labour in public or in writing, in which he was engaged. Though "in deaths oft," he prosecuted, with unremitting and growing ardour, the service of his Master, and the salvation of his fellow-creatures.

"Being driven from home, and having an old license yet in force, by the countenance of that, and the great industry of Mr. Beresford, I had leave and invitation for ten Lord's days, to preach in the parish churches round about. The first parish that I preached in, after thirteen years' ejection and prohibition, was Rickmersworth, after that at Sarrat, at King's Langley, at Chesham, at Chalford, at Amersham, and that often twice a day. Those heard, who had not come to church for seven years; and two or three thousand heard, where scarcely an hundred were wont to come, and with so much attention and willingness as gave me very great hopes that I never spake to them in vain; thus soul and body had these special mercies.

"But the censures of men pursued me as before: the envious sort of the prelatists accused me, as if I had intruded into the parish churches too boldly, and without authority. The quarrelsome Sectaries, or Separatists, did, in London, speak against me, for drawing people to the parish churches and the liturgy, and many gave out that I did conform. All my days, nothing hath been charged on me as crimes, so much as my costliest and greatest duties. But the pleasing of God, and saving souls, will pay for all.

"The country about Rickmersworth, abounding with Quakers, because W. Penn, their captain, dwelleth there, I was desirous that the poor people should once hear what was to be said for their recovery, which coming to Mr. Penn's ears, he was forward to a meeting, where we continued speaking to two rooms full of people, fasting, from ten o'clock till five.^b One lord, two knights, and four conformable ministers, beside others, being present; some all the time, some part. The success gave me

^b No account of this meeting has been printed, as far as is known to me; but part of the correspondence between Penn and Baxter remains. From the letters of Penn it appears that Baxter proposed the meeting, to which Penn acceded. A second meeting appears to have been demanded, but does not seem to have taken place. Penn's language to Baxter, in two of his letters, is very abusive. He tells him, "I perceive the scurvy of the mind is thy distemper, and I fear it is incurable. I had rather be Socrates at the day of judgment, than Richard Baxter." In the last letter, however, he speaks in a much more

cause to believe that it was not labour lost : an account of the conference may be published ere long, if there be cause.^c

"While this was my employment in the country, my friends at home had got one Mr. Seddon, a Nonconformist, of Derbyshire, lately come to the city as a traveller, to preach the second sermon in my new-built chapel ; he was told, and overtold, all the danger, and desired not to come if he feared it. I had left word, that if he would but step into my house through a door, he was in no danger, they not having power to break open any but the meeting house. While he was preaching, three justices, supposed of Secretary Coventry's sending, came to the door to seize the preacher. They thought it had been I, and had prepared a warrant upon the Oxford act, to send me for six months to the common gaol. The good man, and two weak, honest persons, entrusted to have directed him, left the house where they were safe, and thinking to pass away, came to the justices and soldiers at the door, and there stood by them till some one said, 'This is the preacher;' and so they took him, blotted my name out of the warrant and put in his ; though almost every word fitted to my case was false of his. To the Gate-house he was carried, where he continued almost three months of the six : and being earnestly desirous of deliverance, I was put to charges to accomplish it, and at last, having righteous judges, and the warrant being found faulty, he had an *habeas corpus*, and was freed upon bonds to appear again the next term."^d

Baxter was now placed in great jeopardy. His prosecutors were exasperated against him, and determined, if possible, to succeed in the next warrant, which they only waited an opportunity to get against him. Several of the justices, however, who had been his greatest enemies, died. At the same time, he lost his kind and excellent friend, Judge Hale, to whom he had often been indebted, and of whose death he speaks in a very affecting manner. Before proceeding to notice his next trials, I shall just mention the books which he wrote during the period which this chapter embraces.

courteous style ; and acknowledges the great civility he had experienced from Baxter at the meeting. The correspondence is curious, as showing, in one way, that Penn was both a man of talents and a gentleman ; and, in another, that, when excited by his religious views, he was rabid and vulgar. Baxter could be severe, but it was the severity of an ardent and ingenuous mind ; the severity of Penn is sheer ribaldry.—*Baxter's MSS.*

^c Life, part iii. 174.

^d Ibid. p. 174, 175.

He published, in 1671, his *Defence of the Principles of Love*—*His Answer to Exceptions against it*—*The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day*—*The Duty of Heavenly Meditation*—*Holiness the Design of Christianity*—*The Difference between the Power of Magistrates and Church Pastors*—*Vindication of God's Goodness*—*Second Admonition to Mr. Bagshaw*. In 1672, appeared *More Reasons for the Christian Religion*—*Desertion of the Ministry Rebuked*—*Certainty of Christianity without Popery*—*A Third Answer to Bagshaw*. In 1673 and 1674, he published his *Christian Directory*, on which he had been employed for some years. In these two years, he also published his *Full and Easy Satisfaction*, and his *Poor Man's Family Book*. In 1675, he produced his *Catholic Theology*, a folio volume, which was followed by several other pieces in the course of that and the following year, which I need not now enumerate. Looking at the number and variety of these works, this must have been one of the busiest periods in his life as a writer. He preached less; but during his afflictive retirement, he laboured incessantly with his pen. The mere oversight of the press of so many works, would have been employment enough for an ordinary man. But Baxter must not be measured by this standard. He lived but to labour; and labour was his life.

CHAPTER XI.

1676—1681.

Baxter resumes preaching in the parish of St. Martin—Nonconformists again persecuted—Dr. Jane—Dr. Mason—Baxter preaches in Swallow-street—Compton, Bishop of London—Lampugh, Bishop of Exeter—Lloyd, Bishop of Worcester—Various slanders against Baxter—Death of Dr. Manton—Flaner's-Hall Lecture—Popish Plot—Earl of Danby—Baxter's interference on behalf of banished Scotsmen—Hungarians—the Long Parliament of Charles II. dissolved—Transactions of the New Parliament—Bill of Exclusion—Meal-Tub Plot—Baxter's Reflections on the Times—Writings—Death of Friends—Judge Hale—Stubbs—Corbet—Gouge—Ashurst—Baxter's Step-mother—Mrs. Baxter.

In the latter years of Baxter's life, the information which he has furnished respecting himself, is much less particular, than what he has supplied respecting the earlier and more bustling period of it. As he advanced in age, he appears to have lived more retired; and either from choice, or from necessity, took a less active part in public affairs. His ill state of health rendered retirement absolutely necessary, and his experience of the uselessness of contending against the disposition of the government, and the bigotry of the church, probably reconciled him to wait and pray for better times, which happily he lived to see. The gleanings of his last days, however, we must endeavour carefully to gather up. He thus resumes his narrative :

“ When I had been kept a whole year from preaching in the chapel which I built, I began in another, in a tempestuous time, on account of the necessity of the parish of St. Martin ; where about 60,000 souls had no church to go to, nor any public worship of God ! How long, Lord !

“ About February and March, 1676, it pleased the king importunately to command and urge the judges, and London justices, to put the laws against Nonconformists in execution ; but the nation was backward to it. In London they were often and long commanded to it ; till, at last, Sir Joseph Sheldon, the

Archbishop of Canterbury's near relation, being lord mayor, on April 30th, the execution began. They were required especially to send all the ministers to the common jails for six months, on the Oxford act, for not taking the oath, and dwelling within five miles. This day, Mr. Joseph Read was sent to jail, being taken out of the pulpit, preaching in a chapel in Bloomsbury, in the parish of St. Giles. He did so much good to the poor ignorant people who had no other teacher, that Satan owed him a malicious disturbance. He had built the chapel in his own house (with the help of friends), in compassion to those people, who, as they crowded to hear him, so did they follow him to the justices, and to the jail, to show their affection. It being the place where I had been used often to preach, I suppose was somewhat the more maliced. The very day before, I had new secret hints of men's desires of reconciliation and peace, and motions to offer some proposals towards them, as if the bishops were at last grown peaceable. To which, as ever before, I yielded, and did my part, though long experience made me suspect that some mischief was near, and some suffering presently to be expected from them.

"Mr. Jane, the Bishop of London's chaplain,* preaching to the lord mayor and aldermen, in the month of June, turned his sermon against Calvin and me. My charge was, that I had sent as bad men to heaven as some that be in hell; because, in my book called the 'Saint's Rest,' I had said, that I thought of

* Dr. Jane, of whom Baxter gives this account, was one of the highest of the high churchmen of his day. His father was a member of the Long Parliament; one of the most decided friends of the king; and author of the *Εκων αχλαρος*, the 'Image unbroken,' in answer to Milton's *Εκωνυχλαρος*, the 'Image Broken.' The son was educated at Westminster and Oxford, and no doubt expected to rise high in the church, for his father's services. He does not appear, however, to have advanced beyond the deanery of Gloucester, which he held with the precentorship of the church of Exeter. He had the principal share in drawing up the famous decree passed by the University of Oxford, on the 21st of July, 1683, condemning the political principles and writings of Locke, Baxter, Owen, and others of their description. On the 24th of that month, it was presented to Charles II., in the presence of the Duke of York, by Dr. Jane and Dr. Huntingdon, but had the honour to be burnt by the common hangman, by order of the House of Lords, in 1710. Notwithstanding the principles avowed in this document, Dr. Jane was one of four sent to the Prince of Orange, when on his march to London, with an offer of the University plate, to his highness, who declined it; but Jane thought his services then so important, that he took the opportunity of soliciting for himself the see of Exeter. This could not be obtained: in consequence of which he remained secretly disaffected to King William, during his reign. Jane died in 1716.—*Birch's Life of Tillotson*, pp. 173, 174.

heaven with the more pleasure, because I should there meet with Peter, Paul, Austin, Chrysostom, Jerome, Wicliff, Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, Zanchy, Paræus, Piscator, Hooper, Bradford, Latimer, Glover, Sanders, Philpot, Reynolds, Whittaker, Cartwright, Brightman, Bayne, Bradshaw, Bolton, Ball, Hildersham, Pemble, Twisse, Ames, Preston, Sibbs, Brooke, Pym, Hampden. Which of these the man knew to be in hell, I cannot conjecture : it is likely those who differed from him in judgment ; but till he prove his revelation, I shall not believe him.

“ This makes me remember how, this last year, one Dr. Mason, a great preacher against Puritans,^f preached against me publicly in London ; saying, that when a justice was sending me to prison, and offered to let me stay till Monday, if I would promise not to preach on Sunday, I answered, ‘ *I shall not,* ’ equivocating ; meaning, I shall not *promise*, when he thought I meant, I shall not *preach*. O, these, say the malignants, are your holy men ! and was such a falsehood fit for a pulpit ? Yet such men never spake one word to my face in their lives ! The whole truth is this ; Ross and Phillips, being appointed to send me to prison, for preaching at Brentford, shut the chamber doors, and would neither show nor tell me who was my accuser or witness, or let any one living be present but themselves. It being Saturday, I requested to stay at home to set my house in order till Monday. Ross asked me, whether I would promise not to preach on Sunday ? I answered, ‘ No ; I shall not : ’ the man not understanding me, said, ‘ Well, you promise not to preach. ’ I replied, ‘ No, Sir, I tell you ; I will not promise any such thing : if you hinder me, I cannot help it, but I will not otherwise forbear. ’ Never did I think of equivocation. This was my present answer, and I went straight to prison upon it ; yet did this Ross send this false story behind my back, and among courtiers and prelatists it passed for current, and was worthy Dr. Mason’s pulpit impudency. Such were the men that we were persecuted by, and had to do with. Dr. Mason died quickly after.

“ Being denied forcibly the use of the chapel which I had built, I was obliged to let it stand empty, and pay thirty pounds

^f The person of whom Baxter gives this account was, I apprehend, Charles Masou, who was made rector of St. Mary Woolchurch, in 1661, a prebendary of St. Paul’s in 1663, and collated to the rectory of St. Peter Le Poor, in 1669. He was author of two or three sermons, of which I know nothing. He died in 1677.

per annum for the ground-rent myself, and glad to preach for nothing, near it, at a chapel built by another for gain, in Swallow-street.^s It was among the same poor people who had no preaching, the parish having sixty thousand souls in it more than the church could hold. When I had preached there awhile, the foresaid Justice Parry, with one Sabbes, signed a warrant to apprehend me, and on the 9th of November, six constables, four beadles, and many messengers, were set at the chapel doors to execute it. I forbore that day, and afterwards told the Duke of Lauderdale of it, and asked him what it was that occasioned their wrath against me. He desired me to go and speak with the Bishop of London.^h I did so, and he spake fairly, and with peaceable words; but presently, he having spoken also with some others, it was contrived that a noise was raised, against the bishop at court, that he was treating of a peace with the Presbyterians. But after awhile, I went to him again, and told him it was supposed that Justice Parry was either set at work by him, or at least a word from him would take him off; I desired the bishop, therefore, to speak to him, or provide that the constables might be removed from my chapel doors, and their warrant called in. I offered also to resign my chapel in Oxendon-street to a Conformist, if so be he would procure my continued liberty in Swallow-street, for the sake of the poor multitudes that had no church to go to. He did as good as promise me, telling me that he did not doubt to do it, and so I departed, expecting quietness the next Lord's day; but instead of that, the constable's warrant was continued, though some of them begged to be excused; and against their will they continued guarding the door for above four-and-twenty

^s There has been a Scots church in Swallow-street for a great many years: but I believe neither the present building, nor the congregation, arose from the labours of Baxter. The English Presbyterian congregation formed by Baxter's preaching, was dissolved about the beginning of last century.—*Wilson's Diss. Churches*, vol. iv. pp. 44—46.

^h Compton was raised to the see of London, on the death of Hinchman. He had formerly been a soldier, and did not take orders till he was past thirty. He was not a man of learning, or of much talent. According to Burnet, he was humble and modest; but weak, wilful, and strangely wedded to a party. Yet he applied himself diligently to the business of the diocese, and was considered decidedly opposed to Popery.—*Own Times*, vol. ii. p. 144. He did not entirely forget his martial character after he wore lawn sleeves; for, on the landing of the Prince of Orange, he carried off the Princess Anne to Nottingham, and marched into that town at the head of a fine troop of gentlemen and their attendants, as a guard for her highness.

Lord's days after. So I came near the bishop no more when I had tried what their kindnesses and promises signify.

"It pleased God about this time to take away that excellent, faithful minister, Mr. Thomas Wadsworth, of Southwark. Just when I was thus kept out at Swallow-street, his flock invited me to fill his place, where, though I refused to be their pastor, I preached many months in peace, there being no justice willing to disturb us. This was in 1677. When Dr. William Lloyd became pastor of St. Martin's in the Fields, upon Lamplugh's preferment,¹ I was encouraged by Dr. Tillotson, to offer my chapel in Oxendon-street* for public worship, which he accepted, to my great satisfaction; and now there is constant preaching there; be it by Conformists or Nonconformists, I rejoice that Christ is preached to the people in that parish, whom ten or twenty such chapels cannot hold."¹

This account of the transaction was some time afterwards publicly and shamelessly contradicted. Baxter, in the memoir of his wife, had stated that "Dr. Lloyd and his parishioners had accepted the chapel for public worship on the offer of himself and his wife."^m The author of 'The Complete History of England,' after Calamy's 'Abridgment of Baxter' was published, stated "that this part of the relation, as to the offer of a chapel, is known to be false;" thus giving the lie direct to Baxter's own declaration. Lloyd, however, then bishop of Worcester, being applied to for an explanation of the circumstance, stated "that Mr. Baxter being disturbed in his meeting in Oxendon-street by the king's drums, which Mr. Secretary Coventry caused to be

¹ Dr. Lamplugh, formerly rector of St. Martin's, was raised to the bishoprick of Exeter, in 1676; and after the Revolution, was made archbishop of York. Judging from an anecdote of him told by Baxter, 'Life,' part iii. pp. 178, 179, he must have been both a high and a fierce man. While rector of St. Martin's, he met old Mr. Sanger, a Nonconformist, at the house of one of his parishioners, who was sick, and accosted him, "Sir, what business have you here?" "To visit and pray with my sick friend, who sent for me," was the answer. The doctor then fiercely laid hold of his breast, and thrust him to the door, saying, "Get out of the room, Sir;" to the great dismay of the sick woman, who had shortly before buried her husband.

* After the chapel in Oxendon-street, built by Baxter, had been a chapel of ease to the parish of St. Martin for more than a century, it fell again into the hands of the dissenters. The lease of it was taken, in 1807, by the Scots secession church, then under the ministry of the late Rev. Dr. Jerment, who has been succeeded by my respected friend, the Rev. William Broadfoot, its present minister.—*Wilson's Diss. Churches*, vol. iv. p. 56.

¹ Life, part iii. pp. 176—179.

^m Breviate of the Life of Mrs. Baxter, 4to, p. 57.

beat under the windows, made an offer of letting it to the parish of St. Martin for a tabernacle, at the rent of forty pounds a year; and that his lordship hearing it, said he liked it well. That therefore Mr. Baxter came to him, and proposed the same thing. He then acquainted the vestry with it, which took it upon those terms."^a Thus the veracity and disinterestedness of Baxter were satisfactorily vindicated. Lloyd, who became successively bishop of St. Asaph and Worcester, was one of the best informed men of his profession, and, on the whole, more moderate in his principles than most of them.

"About March, 1677, fell out a trifling business, which I will mention, lest the fable pass for truth when I am dead. At a coffee-house, in Fuller's Rents, where many Papists and Protestants used to meet together, one Mr. Dyet, son to old Sir Richard Dyet, chief justice in the north, and brother to a deceased, dear friend of mine, the wife of my old, dear friend, Colonel Silvanus Taylor,^o one that professed himself no Papist, but was their familiar, said openly that I had killed a man with my own hand; that it was a tinker, at my door, who, because he beat his kettle and disturbed me in my studies, I went down and pistoled him. One Mr. Peters occasioned this wrath, by oft challenging, in vain, the Papists to dispute with me; or answer my books against them. Mr. Peters told Mr. Dyet that this was so shameless a slander, that he should answer for it. Mr. Dyet told him that a hundred witnesses would testify it was true, and that I was tried for my life at Worcester for it. To be short, Mr. Peters ceased not till he brought Dyet to my chamber to confess his fault, and ask my forgiveness. With him, came one Mr. Tasbrook, an eminent, sober, prudent Papist; I told him that these usages to such as I, and far worse, were so ordinary, and I had long suffered so much more than words, that it must be no difficulty to me to forgive them to any man; but especially to one whose relations had been my dearest friends; and that he was one of the first gentlemen who ever showed so much ingenuity as to confess and ask forgiveness. He told me, he

^a Calamy's Abridgment, vol. i. p. 348.

^o Colonel Taylor was an officer in the parliamentary army, and served some years under Colonel Massey. He was an active man in the county of Hereford. He appears, however, to have obtained favour after the Restoration, and was appointed keeper of the king's stores at Harwich, where he died in 1678. He was a great antiquary; a distinguished amateur in music, having published 'Court Ayres or Pavins,' 'Almaine's Corants and Sarabands,' and a good mathematician and linguist.—*Athen, Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 1175; *Aubrey*, vol. iii. p. 555.

would hereafter confess and unsay it, and vindicate me as openly as he had wronged me ; I told him, to excuse him, that perhaps he had that story from his late pastor at St. Giles', Dr. Boreman, who had printed that such a thing was reported ; but I never heard before the particulars of the fable. Shortly after, at the same coffee-house, Mr. Dyet openly confessed his fault." ^p

" In November, 1677, died Dr. Thomas Manton, to the great loss of London, being an able, judicious, faithful man, and one that lamented the intemperance of many self-conceited ministers and people, who, on pretence of vindicating free-grace and Providence, and of opposing Arminianism, greatly corrupted the Christian doctrine, and schismatically impugned Christian love and concord, hereticating and making odious all who spake not as erroneously as themselves. Many of the Independents, inclining to half Antinomianism, suggested suspicions against Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Mr. Howe, myself, and such others, as if we were half Arminians. On which occasion, I preached two sermons on the words of Jude, ' They speak evil of what they understand not.' " ^q

These discourses, which were preached at the merchants' Tuesday morning lecture, at Pinner's Hall, were never, I believe, printed. Baxter had rashly carried some idle reports into the pulpit, and thus occasioned a considerable flame both among the lecturers and the people. The preachers consisted of four Presbyterians and two Independents. I believe the whole matter was, the Independents were more thorough systematic Calvinists than the Presbyterians, though there was no difference of importance between them. They finally separated in 1695, in consequence of the mischievous dispute about Dr. Crisp's sentiments.^r

" About October, 1678, fell out the murder of Sir Edmund Burry Godfrey, which made a very great change in England. One Dr. Titus Oates had discovered a plot of the Papists, of which he wrote out the particulars very largely, telling how they fired the city, and were contriving to bring the kingdom to Popery, and in order thereto to kill the king. He named the lords,

^p Life, part iii. p. 179. I have not quoted the tail-piece of this foolish story. It is very odd to find such a man as Baxter accused twice of killing persons. Dr. Boreman's story, to which he alludes, is the affair of Major Jennings, of which we have given an account, with its refutation, in pp. 69—71. They must have been greatly at a loss for scandal, when it was found necessary to accuse Baxter of murder.

^q Life, part iii. p. 162.

^r Neal's Purit. vol. v. p. 414.

Jesuits, priests, and others, who were the chief contrivers, and said that he himself had delivered to several of the lords their commissions : that Lord Bellasis was to be general, Lord Petre lieutenant-general, Lord Stafford major-general, Lord Powis lord chancellor, and Lord Arundel, of Warder, (the chief,) to be lord treasurer. He told who were to be the archbishops, bishops, &c., and at what meetings, and by whom, and when all was contrived, and who were designed to kill the king. He first opened all this to Dr. Tongue,^a and both of them opened it to the king and council. He mentioned a multitude of letters, which he himself had carried or seen, or heard read, that contained all these contrivances. But because his father and he had once been Anabaptists, and when the bishops prevailed, had turned to be conformable ministers, and, afterward, the son turned Papist, and confessed that he long had gone on with them under many oaths of secrecy,^t many thought that a man of so little conscience was not to be believed. His confessions however were received by some justices of the peace. None was more forward in the search than Sir Edmund Burry Godfrey, an able, honest, and diligent justice. While he was following this work, he was suddenly missing, and could not be heard of. Three or four days after, he was found killed 'near Mary-le-bonne Park. It was plainly found that he was murdered.^u The parliament took the alarm upon it, Oates was now believed; and, indeed, all his large confessions, in every part, agreed to admiration. Hereupon the king proclaimed pardon and reward to any one that would confess, or discover the murder. One Mr. Bedlow, that had fled to Bristol, began, and confessed that he knew of it,

^a Dr. Israel Tongue was one of the city divines, whose head was full of all sorts of fancies about Romish plots and conspiracies. According to Wood, "he understood chronology well, and spent much time and money in the art of alchemy. He was a person cynical and hirsute, shiftless in the world, yet absolutely free from covetousness.—*Athen. Oxon.* vol. iii. p. 1260. It seems more probable that he was imposed on by Oates, than that he was a party to a scheme of deception.—*Burnet*, vol. i. pp. 424, 425.

^t From Crosby's 'History of the Baptists,' it appears that this account of Oates is substantially correct. He was a Baptist in his youth, and, after running the round of religious professions, was, in the latter part of his life, received among them again, after a separation of thirty years. In a short time, however, the church with which he connected himself was obliged to exclude him. He seems to have been a consummate hypocrite and villain.—*Crosby*, vol. iii. pp. 166, 182.

^u The death of Sir Edmund Burry Godfrey is a subject involved in great obscurity. Burnet gives a very minute account of his disappearance, and of the state in which his body was found, but throws no light on the manner in which he came by his death.

and who did it, and named some of the men, the place, and time; it was at the queen's house, called Somerset House, by Fitzgerald and Kelly, two Papist priests, and four others, Berry, the porter, Green, Pranse, and Hill. The priests fled: Pranse, Berry, Green, and Hill, were taken. Pranse first confessed all, and discovered the rest aforesaid, more than Bedlow knew of, and all the circumstances, and how he was carried away, and by whom; and also how the plot was laid to kill the king. Thus Oates' testimony, seconded by Sir Edmund's murder, and Bedlow's and Pranse's testimonies, came to be generally believed. Ireland, a Jesuit, and two more, were condemned, as designing to kill the king. Hill, Berry, and Green, were condemned for the murder of Godfrey, and executed; but Pranse was, by a Papist, first terrified into a denial again of the plot to kill the king, and took on him to be distracted, but quickly recanted of this, and had no quiet till he told how he was afflicted, and renewed all his testimony and confession.*

"Coleman, the Duchess of York's secretary, and one of the Papists' great plotters and disputers, being surprised, though he made away all his later papers, was hanged by the former ones that were remaining, and by Oates's testimony;† but the parliament kept off all aspersions from the duke: the hopes of some, and the fears of others of his succession prevailed with many.

"At last, the lord treasurer, Sir Thomas Osborne, made Earl of Danby, came upon the stage, having been before the object of the parliament's and people's jealousy and hard thoughts. He being afraid that somewhat would be done against him, knowing that Mr. Montague, his kinsman, late ambassador in France, had some letters of his in his keeping, which he thought might endanger him, got an order from the king to seize on all Mr. Montague's letters; who suspecting some such usage, had

* The character of Oates was such that no dependence could be placed upon his testimony. He appears to have been a finished scoundrel, who was afterwards sent to the pillory for perjury in this affair, though he seems to have risen a little in credit after the Revolution. There is reason to believe much of this plot was contrived entirely by him, though some circumstances gave a colour of truth to his statements. Baxter's account shows the degree of credit which it then generally obtained. They who would examine the subject fully must examine the histories of the period.

† There is little doubt but that Oates perjured himself, though it is equally certain that Coleman was a great knave, and had acted often in the most unprincipled manner. He served masters who made no scruple of sacrificing their servants, after they had accomplished their own ends by them.—*Burton*, vol. ii. pp. 214—216.

conveyed away the chief letters; and telling the parliament where they were, they sent and fetched them. On the reading of them they were so irritated against the lord treasurer, that they impeached him in the Lords' House of high treason. But not long after, the king dissolved the long parliament, which he had kept up about seventeen or eighteen years.^a

"About thirty Scotchmen, of which three were preachers, were by their council sentenced to be not only banished, but sold as slaves, to the American plantations. They were brought by ship to London, where divers citizens offered to pay their ransom. The king was petitioned for them; and I went to the Duke of Lauderdale, but none of us could prevail for one man. At last the ship-master was told, that by a statute it was a capital crime to transport any of the king's subjects out of England, where they now were, without their consent, and so he set them on shore, and they all escaped for nothing.^a A great number of Hungarian ministers had before been sold for galley slaves, by the emperor's agents, but were released by the Dutch admiral's request, and some of them largely relieved by collections in London.^b

^a The best account which I have met with of the Earl of Danby's administration, and of the circumstances relating to his fall, is Hallam's. That able writer, though he does not approve of Danby's principles and conduct, nevertheless vindicates him from charges, which much more belong to his royal master than to him. Danby escaped from the charge of impeachment, and took out a pardon from the king. To this the two Houses would not submit. After a great deal of altercation between the king and parliament, he was committed to the Tower, where he remained till 1684, when he was released on bail. He was created Duke of Leeds in 1694.

^b The persons here referred to by Baxter were banished from Scotland, for the high crime of attending conventicles contrary to law. Severe as the sufferings of the Nonconformists in England were at this period, they were nothing compared with what was endured by the poor Presbyterians of Scotland. The Highland Watch, as it was called, was let loose upon the country: its inhabitants were spoiled of their goods, cast into prisons, banished, and sold as slaves; and multitudes of them shot in cold blood, and otherwise butchered, sometimes with, and sometimes without, form of law. Woodrow's 'History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland,' contains recitals of the most horrible deeds ever perpetrated in a civilized country.

^b The Hungarian ministers referred to by Baxter, were driven out of their country, or sold for slaves, by the Emperor of Austria. The contest which produced this result was rather for civil than for religious privileges, though the Protestants of Hungary were treated with the utmost barbarity, chiefly on account of their religion. Their churches were seized, their estates and houses sequestered, their persons imprisoned, and dragged to public execution. Two hundred of their ministers were, at one time, in the Spanish galleys, coupled with Turks, Moors, and malefactors. It was for the relief of such sufferers that British benevolence was excited.—*De Foe's Life and Times*, vol. i. p. 91,

"The long and grievous parliament, which silenced about two thousand ministers, and did many works of such nature, being dissolved on the 25th day of January, 1678, a new one was chosen, and met on the 6th day of March, following. The king refusing their chosen speaker, Mr. Seymore, raised in them a great displeasure against the lord treasurer, thinking him the cause; but after some days they chose Serjeant Gregory. The Duke of York removed, a little before, out of England by the king's command; who yet stands to maintain his succession. The parliament first impeached the aforesaid Papist lords for the plot or conspiracy, the Lord Bellasis, Lord Arundel, Lord Powis, Lord Stafford, and Lord Petre, and after them the Lord Treasurer.

"Upon Easter day the king dissolved his privy council, and settled it anew, consisting of thirty men, most of the old ones, the Earl of Shaftesbury being president, to the great joy of the people then, though after all was changed. On the 27th day of April, 1679, though it was the Lord's day, the parliament sat, excited by the confession of Stubbs, that the firing plot went on, and the French were to invade us, and the Protestants to be murdered by the 28th day of June. They voted, that the Duke of York's declaring himself a Papist, was the cause of all our dangers by these plots, and sent to the Lords to concur in the same vote. But the king, that week, by himself and the chancellor, acquainted them that he should consent to any thing reasonable to secure the Protestant religion, not alienating the crown from the line of succession; and particularly that he would consent, that till the successor should take the test, he should exercise no acts of government, but the parliament in being should continue, or if none then were, that which last was should be in power, and exercise all the government in the name of the king. This offer took much with many, but most said that it signified nothing. For Papists easily obtain dispensations to take any tests or oaths; and Queen Mary's case showed how parliament will serve the prince's will.

"On the Lord's day, May 11th, 1679, the Commons sat extraordinarily, and agreed in two votes, first, that the Duke of York was incapable of succeeding to the imperial crown of England; secondly, that they would stand by the king and the Protestant religion with their lives and fortunes; and if the king came to a violent death, which God forbid, they would be revenged on the Papists. The parliament was shortly after-

wards dissolved while it insisted on the trial of the lord treasurer.^c

The bill of exclusion afterwards passed the House of Commons, and was carried to the House of Lords, where it was lost on the second reading, by a majority of thirty, of whom fourteen were bishops. This fact clearly shows the leaning of many of the dignitaries of the church to the arbitrary and Popish principles which were well known to characterise the Duke of York. In the same session of parliament, which passed the exclusion bill, another business occupied their attention, which also brought to light the unprincipled conduct to which the court could resort. By an act of the 25th of Elizabeth, it was provided that those who did not conform to the church, should abjure the kingdom upon pain of death; and for some degrees of nonconformity, they were adjudged to die, without the favour of banishment. Both Houses passed a bill to repeal this act. It went heavily indeed in the Lords, for many of the bishops, though they were not for putting the law in execution, thought the terror of it was of some use, and that the repeal of it would make the party more insolent. On the day of the prorogation, when the bill should have been presented to the king, the clerk of the crown, by the king's own particular order, withdrew it. He could not publicly refuse it, but he would not pass it; and therefore resorted to this infamous method to destroy it. On the morning of the prorogation, however, as if the Commons anticipated something, they passed two resolutions:—That the laws made against recusants, ought not to be executed against any but those of the church of Rome; and that in the opinion of the House, the laws against dissenters ought not to be executed. This was thought a great invasion of the rights of the other branches of the legislature; and as it was understood to be the wish of the House that courts and juries should regulate their proceedings by this resolution, it gave great offence; so that instead of operating as kindness to the Nonconformists, it raised a fresh storm against them all over the nation.^d

“There came from among the Papists more and more converts, that detected the plot against religion and the king. After Oates, Bedlow, Everard, Dugdale, and Pranse, came Jervison, a gentleman of Gray's Inn, Smith, a priest, and others; but nothing stopped them more than a plot designed to have

^c Life, part iii. pp.183—186.

^d Burnet, vol. ii. pp. 300, 301.

turned all the odium on the Presbyterians and the Protestant adversaries of Popery. They hired one Dangerfield, to manage the matter; but by the industry of Colonel Mansel, who was to have been first accused, and Sir William Waller, the plot was fully detected; and Dangerfield confessed all, and continueth a steadfast convert and Protestant to this day.*

"But my unfitness, and the torrent of late matter here, stop me from proceeding to insert the history of this age. It is done, and likely to be done so copiously by others, that these shreds will be of small signification. Every year of late hath afforded matter for a volume of lamentations. But that posterity may not be deluded by credulity, I shall truly tell them, that lying most impudently in print against the most notorious evidence of truth, in the vending of cruel malice against men of conscience, and the fear of God, is become so ordinary a trade, that it is likely with men of experience, to pass ere long for a good conclusion, *dictum vel scriptum est à malignis, ergo falsum est*. Many of the malignant clergy and laity, especially L'Estrange, 'The Observer,' and such others, do with so great confidence publish the most notorious falsehoods, that I must confess it hath greatly depressed my esteem of most history, and of human nature. If other historians be like some of these times, their assertions, whenever they speak of such as they distaste, ought to be read like Hebrew, backward; and are so far from signifying truth, that many for one are downright lies. It

* The above paragraph refers to the infamous Meal-tub plot, as it was called, from the pretended scheme being found in a small book concealed in a meal-tub. The object of this sham plot, which caused great trouble to some of the Non-conformists, was to throw the whole blame of the Popish plot on the dissenters. It was by the good providence of God completely defeated. Dangerfield, of whom Baxter, by a strange mistake, speaks as a good Protestant, was an infamous liar. He was tried for his conduct, in King James's reign, sentenced to be whipped at the cart's tail, from Newgate to Tyburn; and while undergoing the punishment, was struck on the head by a student, which caused his death, and for which the fellow was justly hanged.—*Burnet's Own Times*, vol. iii. p. 29.

'The Observer,' was a political pamphlet of three or four sheets, which L'Estrange published weekly. Having lived during all the troubles of the country, and possessing an exhaustless *copia verborum*, which he poured forth without any restraint, he was one of the most efficient instruments of a corrupt court which then existed. His great object was to defame the men of principle, whether out of, or in, the church; and especially to produce a belief among the clergy, that their ruin was intended. He never failed to consult his own interests, and obtained considerable sums for the service which he did. Henry Care was one of the ablest of L'Estrange's opponents, and his 'Weekly Packet from Rome,' was intended as a set-off against 'The Observer,' and other productions of the same stamp.

is no wonder perjury hath grown so common, when the most impudent lying hath so prepared the way." ^s

Such were the sombre reflections with which Baxter concludes his brief notices of this period of his history. It is not surprising that he was deeply pained, or that he cherished the most gloomy forebodings respecting his country. Religion was in a very perilous and oppressed condition. The best men had been driven out of the church, and their places too generally supplied by persons who cared little for the terms on which they entered, provided they could secure the emoluments. The doctrines of the Gospel were no longer heard in the vast majority of the pulpits; and even the more respectable clergy preached in a cold and inefficient manner. The Nonconformists were continually harassed and persecuted; many of them had died, or left the country, while few were rising up to fill their places, or share in their tribulations. The immoralities and profligacy of the court, were shocking to every sober and well-constituted mind. Its principles and policy were every day more apparently at variance with the constitution, freedom, and prosperity of the country. Under the influence of France, to which Charles had basely sold his country to support his mistresses, the dissenters were oppressed or eased, persecuted or protected, as the interests of Popery, and the caprices of despotism or licentiousness, might dictate. When they suffered severely, they had not the consolation to think, that it was for their own attachment to truth and principle they suffered. They were afflicted, oppressed, or deprived of their privileges, by parliament, chiefly that Roman Catholics might be punished. When they were relieved by the king, it was not that he cared for them, or had become concerned for their wrongs, but that he might promote the interests of a party, which, while it pretended to kiss them as fellow sufferers, was preparing to stab them as soon as it had the power. In such circumstances, vain was the help of man; appeals to justice or to mercy were alike unavailing. Prayer and patience were the only refuge; and to these the Nonconformists betook themselves, not without hope in Him, "who has engaged to hear the prayer of the destitute, and not to despise their prayer."

That Baxter, "though cast down, was not destroyed" in spirit, appears from the number of books which he published during this period, and which seem to have chiefly occupied his

^s Life, part iii. p. 187.

time. These related mostly, though not exclusively, to the Popish and Nonconformist controversies. He published *Select Arguments against Popery*; *His Sermon in the Morning Exercises, on the same subject*; *his Roman Tradition Examined*; *his Naked Popery*; *Which is the True Head of the Church?* —and, *On Universal Roman Church Supremacy*. All these works were on that subject which then so deeply engaged the minds of men.

On the other topic, he brought out in 1676, *The Judgment of the Nonconformists*; a thick quarto volume, containing several tracts; *The Nonconformist's Plea for Peace*; the Second and Third Parts of the Plea; the Defence of it; the True and only way of Concord; *his Church History of Bishops*; *his Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet*; *his Treatise of Episcopacy*; *his Apology for the Nonconformists' Ministry*; *his Dissent from Dr. Sherlock*; *his Search for the English Schismatic*; and, *his Second True Defence of the Mere Nonconformists*. All these, beside his Latin *Methodus*, and various other pieces of a miscellaneous nature, were the production of four or five years only; and those, years of sorrow, affliction, and persecution. They evince the unsubdued ardour of Baxter's mind, and what importance he attached to the principles for which he and his brethren were called to contend and to suffer. When it is considered that he had only to affix his name to a document containing little that in itself he objected to, but implying his sanction of some wrong principles, with his approbation of unchristian exactions; by doing which he would not merely have escaped from reproach and suffering, but have risen to worldly honour and distinction; his conduct and consistency entitle him to an honourable place among those, who have counted it a privilege, not only to believe, but also to suffer for the sake of Christ. Compared with this honour, how poor are all the distinctions, which wealth and rank can bestow! None of the lords, spiritual and temporal, of his day, will be known over so great a portion of the world, or remembered so long, as Richard Baxter.

During this period, he lost many of his most valued friends, for several of whom he preached and published funeral sermons. Of some of these excellent individuals, it may be proper to give a short account.

His excellent and attached friend, Sir Matthew Hale, whose character has already been given at length, took his departure, after a long and severe illness, on Christmas day, 1676. He

went into the churchyard, and chose his grave, a few days before his death. As a token of his love for Baxter, he left him forty shillings in his will ; with which, says Baxter, "I purchased the largest Cambridge Bible, and put his picture before it, as a monument to my house. But waiting for my own death, I gave it Sir William Ellis, who laid out about ten pounds to put it into a more curious cover, and keep it for a monument in his honour."^b

The Rev. Henry Stubbs was born at Upton, on an estate that was given to his grandfather by King James I., with whom he came from Scotland. After a private education in country schools, he was sent to Wadham College, Oxford, where he staid till he took his degrees. He first was minister of St. Philip's, Bristol, and afterward of Chew-Magna. In 1654, he was of the city of Wells, and assistant to the commissioners, appointed by the parliament to eject ignorant and scandalous ministers. The Act of Uniformity found him in Dursley ; though he was not incumbent there, but assistant to Mr. Joseph Woodward, who died of a consumption before Bartholomew day. After he was silenced, he preached from place to place, with unwearied diligence and great success.

On his arrival in London, he preached nearly every day ; and some days twice. More than once he fell down in the pulpit in a fit ; but recovering, went on again ; till at last he was quite disabled by fever and dysentery. What much emboldened him was, that he had often gone into the pulpit ill, and come out of it better. This holy and peaceable man, who lived, Baxter says, "like an incarnate angel," was a minister of the Gospel about fifty years ; and dying in London, July 7th, 1678, aged 73, was interred in the new burying-place, Bunhill-fields. Being of a charitable disposition, he devoted the tenth part of his income to pious uses, with which was purchased four pounds per annum for Dursley and Horsley, for teaching poor children, and buying them books. He also gave 200*l.* to Bristol, and a like sum to London, to be annually laid out for the good of the poor, to buy them Bibles, and to assist poor ministers' widows in their necessities.¹

^b Life, part ii. p. 181.

¹ Calamy, vol. ii. p. 318—320. It would be very gratifying to know what has become of these legacies ; whether they are applied for the benefit of the poor, either in Bristol or London.

Baxter preached his funeral sermon, from Acts xx. 24; in the course of which he speaks very strongly of the eminent spirituality and devotedness of this excellent man. "He was the freest," he says, "of most that ever I knew, from that deceit of the serpent, mentioned in 2 Cor. xi. 3, who corrupteth men by drawing them from the simplicity which is in Christ. His breath, his life, his preaching, his prayers, his conference, his conversation, were Christian simplicity and sincerity. Not as the world calleth simplicity, folly; but as it is contrary to hypocrisy, to a counterfeit zeal, to mere affectation, to a divided heart. He knew not how to dissemble or wear a mask; his face, his mouth, his whole conversation, laid bare his heart. While he passed by all quarrels, few quarrelled with him; and he had the happiness to take up head, heart, and time, with only great, sure, and necessary things."^k

The Rev. John Corbet was born and brought up in the city of Gloucester, and a student in Magdalen Hall, Oxon. He began his ministry in his native city of Gloucester, and lived for some years, under Dr. Godfrey Goodman, a Popish bishop of the Protestant church. Here he continued in the time of the civil wars, of which he was an observant but mournful spectator. His account of the siege of Gloucester, gives a good view of the rise and springs of the war, in a narrow compass.^l He afterward removed to Chichester, and thence to Bramshot,

^k Works, vol. xviii., p. 71.

^l The little work referred to is, 'An Historical Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester, from the Beginning of the Civil War to the Removal of Colonel Massie, 1645.' He wrote also a 'Vindication of the Magistrates of Gloucester, from the Calumnies of Robert Bacon; 1647.' Clarendon has given a long account of the siege of Gloucester, which is honourable to the courage and perseverance of the besieged. His representation of the ambassadors of the people, and their reply to the king's summonses, is very graphic, but very ludicrous. "Within less than the time prescribed, together with the trumpeter, returned two citizens from the town, with lean, pale, sharp, and bad visages; indeed, faces so strange and unusual, and in such a garb and posture, that at once made the most severe countenances merry, and the most cheerful hearts sad; for it was impossible such ambassadors could bring less than a defiance. The men, without any circumstances of duty or good manners, in a pert, shrill, undismayed accent, said, 'They had brought an answer from the godly city of Gloucester to the king;' and were so ready to give insolent and seditious answers to any question, as if their business were chiefly to provoke the king to violate his own safe conduct."—*Hist. of the Rebel.* vol. ii. p. 315. Their answer, notwithstanding this caricature, was firm and respectful; and Charles, after exerting his utmost strength, was at last obliged to raise the siege.

a living of more than 200*l.* a year, from which he was ejected in 1662, He lived privately in and about London, till the king's indulgence, in 1671, when a part of his old flock invited him to Chichester, where he continued his labours with great assiduity and success.

God afflicted him many years with the stone, but while the pain was tolerable to nature, he endured it, and continued to preach, till within a fortnight of his being brought up to London to be cut ; but before that could be done, he left this for a better life, December 26th, 1680.^m His funeral sermon was preached by Baxter, who represents him, as a man of great clearness and soundness in religion, and blamelessness of conversation. " He was of so great moderation and love of peace, that he hated all that was against it, and would have done any thing for concord in the church, except sinning against God, and hazarding his salvation. He was for catholic union and communion of saints, and for going no further from any church or Christians than they force us, or than they go from Christ. He was for loving and doing good to all, and living peaceably with all, as far as was in his power. Something in Episcopacy, Presbytery, and Independency, he liked, and some things he disliked in all. He was true to his conscience, and valued not the interest of a party or faction. If all the Nonconformists in England had refused, he would have conformed alone, if the terms had been reduced to what he thought lawful. He managed his ministry with faithfulness and prudence. He had no worldly designs to carry on, but was eminent in self-denial. He was not apt to speak against those by whom he suffered, nor was he ever pleased with ripping up their faults. He was very careful to preserve the reputation of his brethren, and rejoiced in the success of their labours, as well as of his own ; and a most careful avoider of all divisions, contentions, or offences. He was very free in acknowledging by whom he profited ; and preferring others before himself. He was much employed in the study of his own heart ; as is evident from the little thing of his that is published, called, ' Notes of Himself,' &c. He had good assurance of his own sincerity ; and yet was not altogether without his mixture of fears. He had the comfort of sensible growth in grace : he easily perceived a notable increase in his faith and holiness, heavenliness, humility, and contempt of the world, especially in his latter years, and under his affliction, as the fruit of

^m Calamy, vol. ii. pp. 332—336.

God's correcting rod ; and died at last in great serenity and peace."ⁿ

Of another man of the same school and character, Baxter has left the following memorial:—"The Rev. Thomas Gouge was a wonder of industry in works of benevolence. It would make a volume to recite at large the charity he used to his poor parishioners at St. Sepulchre's, before he was ejected and silenced for nonconformity. His conjunction with Alderman Ashurst and some others, in a weekly meeting, to take account of the honest, poor families in the city that were in grêat want, he being the treasurer and visitor ; his voluntary catechising the Christchurch boys when he might not preach ; the many thousand Bibles printed in Welsh, that he dispersed in Wales ; 'The Practice of Piety ;' 'The Whole Duty of Man ;' 'My Call,' and many thousand of his own writings given freely all over the principality ; his setting up about three or four hundred schools in it, to teach children to read, and the catechism ; his industry, to beg money for all this, besides most of his own estate laid out on it ; his travels over Wales once or twice a year, to visit his schools, and oversee the execution. This was true Episcopacy in a silenced minister, who went constantly to the parish churches, and was authorised by an old university license to preach occasionally ; yet for so doing he was excommunicated even in Wales, while doing all this good. He served God thus to a healthful age, seventy-four or seventy-six. I never saw him sad, but always cheerful. About a fortnight before he died, he told me that sometimes in the night, some small trouble came to his heart, he knew not what : and without sickness, or pain, or fear of death, they heard him in his sleep give a groan, and he was dead. Oh, how holy and blessed a life, and how easy a death !"^o

Henry Ashurst, esq., was one of the most valued friends of

ⁿ Funeral Sermon. Works, vol. xviii. pp. 185—192. The sermon is founded on 2 Cor. xii. 1—9, and is one of the most beautiful of Baxter's discourses. It is full of striking thoughts and pathos. Corbet was a man altogether to Baxter's taste, and of his own mode of thinking.

^o Life, part iii. pp. 190, 191. A full account of this excellent man, who seems to have been quite an apostle of benevolence, is given in Clark's 'Lives.' Archbishop Tillotson, then dean of Canterbury, preached his funeral sermon, in which he speaks in the highest terms of his piety, philanthropy, and moderation.

Baxter, as well as one of the most distinguished lay Nonconformists of that period. He was the third son of Henry Ashurst, of Ashurst, in Lancashire, by Casandra, daughter of John Bradshaw, of Bradshaw, in the same county. His father was a man of great wisdom and piety, and very zealous for the reformed religion in a county where Popery greatly abounded. Henry came to town when he was only fifteen years of age, where he was bound apprentice to a man void of religion, by whom he was rather severely treated. During his apprenticeship, however, he became decidedly religious, spent most of his spare time in devotion, and of his spare money in procuring religious books. He commenced business as a draper, with 500*l.*, in partnership with a Mr. Row, who left him the whole business in about three years. By his wife, he had a fortune of about 1500*l.* From this commencement, with diligence and economy, he acquired a very ample fortune. His generosity and zeal to relieve distress during the plague and fire of London, and to the distressed Nonconformist ministers, were very great, as has been already noticed; but they were not limited to this country.

So great was his desire of doing good, that not only England, Scotland, and Ireland, experienced the benefit of it, but America also. His active services for the interests of New England, both during the Commonwealth, and after the Restoration, have been elsewhere narrated. For nineteen years after the settlement of the affairs of the New England Society, when he was made treasurer, he had, along with the Honourable Robert Boyle, the chief management of the whole business. Through their instrumentality, Elliot was enabled to carry on his evangelical labours among the poor Indians, and to translate the Scriptures into their language. Mr. Ashurst left in his will a hundred pounds to Harvard College, and fifty to the society. He was universally beloved and respected for active benevolence, and unwearied zeal in doing good. Among the Nonconformists, he acted as a father and a counsellor, while his purse was ever open to relieve their wants, and his house for a refuge to them when persecuted and oppressed. He paid the fine, rather than serve the office of alderman, avoiding as much as possible all connexion with public affairs. "He was," says Baxter, "my most entire friend, and commonly taken for the most exemplary saint of public notice in the city. So sound in judgment, of such admirable meekness, patience, and universal

charity, that we knew not where to find his equal. After much suffering and patience, he died with great quietness of mind, and hath left behind him the perfume of a most honoured name, and the memorials of a most exemplary life, to be imitated by all his descendants."^p

Baxter preached his funeral sermon, in which he expatiates largely on his character and many virtues, from a very appropriate passage, John xii. 26. He entitles it 'Faithful Souls shall be with Christ,' and dedicates it in a most affectionate address to his widow; to his son Henry, who, as well as his father, was the devoted friend of Baxter, and a lover of all good men; and to all his brothers and sisters.^q

"Near the same time," he says, "died my father's second wife, Mary, the daughter of Sir Thomas Hunks, and sister to Sir Fulke Hunks, the king's governor of Shrewsbury, in the wars. Her mother, the old Lady Hunks, died at my father's house, between eighty and one hundred years old; and my mother-in-law died of a cancer, at ninety-six, in perfect understanding; having lived, from her youth, in the greatest mortification, austerity to her body, and constancy of prayer and all devotion, of any one that ever I knew. She lived in the hatred of all sin, strictness of universal obedience, and, for thirty years, longing to be with Christ; in constant, acquired infirmity of body, got by avoiding all exercise, and long, secret prayer, in the coldest seasons, and such-like. Being of a constitution naturally strong, she was afraid of recovering whenever she was ill. For some days before her death she was so taken with the ninety-first Psalm, that she would get those who came near her to read it to her over and over; which Psalm, also, was a great means of comfort to old Beza, even against his death."^r

But the greatest loss which Baxter sustained was that of his wife, which took place, after a short but painful illness, on the 14th of June, 1681. She was buried on the 17th of the same month, in Christchurch, then still in ruins, in her own mother's tomb. "The grave," he says, "was the highest, next the old altar, or table, in the chancel, on which her daughter had caused a very fair, rich, large marble-stone to be laid, about twenty years ago, on which I caused to be written her titles, and some Latin verses, and these English ones:

^p Life, part iii. p. 189.

^q Works, xviii. p. 121.

^r Life, part iii. p. 189.

‘ Thus must *thy* flesh to silent dust descend,
Thy mirth and worldly pleasure thus will end ;
 Then, happy, holy souls !—but wo to those
 Who heaven forgot, and earthly pleasures chose.
 Hear, now, this preaching grave :—without delay,
 Believe, repent, and work while it is day.’

But Christ’s church on earth is liable to those changes of which the Jerusalem above is in no danger. In the doleful flames of London, 1666, the fall of the church broke the marble all to pieces ; so that it proved no lasting monument. I hope this paper monument, erected by one who is following even at the door, in some passion indeed of love and grief, but in sincerity of truth, will be more publicly useful and durable than that marble stone was.” *

Howe preached the funeral sermon, and dedicated it to her husband. The text is, 2 Cor. v. 8 ; and the discourse is worthy of the talents and piety of the author ; but it contains little about Mrs. Baxter. He appears to have known something of her before her marriage, when she displayed “ a strangely-vivid and great wit, with very sober conversation.” † He commends the greatness of her mind, and her disinterestedness in choosing Baxter for a husband, as well as her amiable conduct after she became his wife.

Of this excellent woman, so remarkably fitted to be the wife of such a man as Richard Baxter, we have already spoken at some length. The attachment, as may be guessed at from allusions occurring in certain parts of his *Breviate of her Life*, commenced on her part, and had almost killed her in consequence of her effort to conceal it. Throughout, it seems to have been exceedingly ardent ; and her husband often hints that she had expected more from him than she found. He also tells us, however, that she confessed she expected more sourness and bitterness than she experienced. She was active, benevolent, and intelligent ; devoted to the service of Christ ; and disposed, in every possible way, to aid her husband in his unwearied labours. He has said little about her in the account of his own life, owing to having given a full account of her in a separate biography. In that little work he has drawn her portrait at full length, detailing, with his usual minuteness and fidelity, both her

* *Mrs. Baxter’s Life*, p. 99. Mrs. Baxter’s mother died in 1661. He preached a funeral sermon for her at St. Mary Magdalene, Milk-street, where he then occasionally officiated. She appears to have been an excellent, devoted Christian.—*Works*, xviii. 1—56.

† *Howe’s Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Baxter*, pp. 40, 41.

faults and virtues. A few passages from this work, will illustrate her personal character and piety.

“As to religion, we were so perfectly of one mind, that I know not that she differed from me in any one point, or circumstance, except in the prudential management of what we were agreed in. She was for universal love of all true Christians, and against appropriating the church to a party; and against censoriousness and partiality in religion. She was for acknowledging all that was of God in Conformists and Nonconformists; but she had much more reverence for the elder Conformists than for most of the young ones, who ventured upon things which dissenters had so much to say against, without weighing or understanding the reasons on both sides; merely following others for worldly ends, without a tender fear of sinning. If any young men of her own friends were inclined merely to swim with the stream, without due trial of the case, it greatly displeased her, and she thought hardly of them.

“The nature of true religion, holiness, obedience, and all duty to God and man, was printed, in her conceptions, in so distinct and clear a character, as made her endeavours and expectations still look at greater exactness than I, and such as I, could reach. She was very desirous that we should all have lived in a constancy of devotion and a blameless innocency; and in this respect she was the meetest helper that I could have had in the world, that ever I was acquainted with. For I was apt to be overcareless in my speech and too backward to my duty, and she was still endeavouring to bring me to greater readiness and strictness in both. If I spake rashly or sharply, it offended her. If I carried it (as I was apt) with too much neglect of ceremony or humble compliment to any, she would modestly tell me of it. If my very looks seemed not pleasant, she would have me amend them (which my weak, pained state of body indisposed me to do). If I forgot any week to catechise my servants, and familiarly instruct them personally, beside my ordinary family duties, she was troubled at my remissness. And whereas of late years my decay of spirits, and diseased heaviness and pain, made me much more seldom and cold in profitable conference and discourse in my house than I had been when I was younger, and had more ease, and spirits, and natural vigour, she much blamed me, and was troubled at it, as a wrong to herself and others. Yet her judgment agreed with mine, that too much and often table talk of the best things, doth but tend to dull the

common hearers, and harden them under it, as a customary thing; and that too much good talk may bring it into contempt, or make it ineffectual.”^a

The death of such a woman, in the prime of life (for she was little more than forty when she died), was an irreparable loss to Baxter. She had tenderly nursed him for many years, and now, with increased age and infirmity, he was left to sorrow over her tomb, though not without hope. The decision of her character, the fervency of her piety, the activity and disinterestedness of her Christian benevolence, left no doubt remaining that her spirit rested with God, where it has long since been joined by that of her much-loved companion and husband.

^a Life of Mrs. Baxter, pp. 76—80.

CHAPTER XII.

1681—1687.

The continued Sufferings of Baxter—Apprehended and his Goods distrained—Could obtain no Redress—General Sufferings of the Dissenters—Mayot's Legacy—Baxter again apprehended and bound to his good behaviour—Trial of Rosewell for High Treason—Baxter brought before the Justices, and again bound over—His concluding Reflections on the State of his own Times—Death of Charles II.—Fox's notice of the Treatment of the Dissenters, and of the Trial of Baxter—Apprehended on a Charge of Sedition—Brought to Trial—Indictment—Extraordinary Behaviour of Jefferies to Baxter and his Counsel—Found Guilty—Endeavours to procure a New Trial, or a mitigated Sentence—His Letter to the Bishop of London—Fined and imprisoned—Remarks on the Trial—Conduct of L'Estrange—Sherlock—Behaviour while in Prison—The Fine remitted—Released from Prison—Assists Sylvester in the Ministry.

WHILE friend after friend was consigned to the tomb, and Baxter was left alone to endure what he justly describes as a living death, in the constant and increasing sufferings of his diseased and emaciated body, his enemies would allow him no rest. Bonds and imprisonment still awaited him. With an account of a series of these vexations and trials, this chapter is chiefly occupied. The reader will probably find it difficult to determine whether he ought more to feel indignant at the treatment which an aged, infirm, and most respectable minister of Christ endured, from a professedly Christian government, or admiration of the principles and temper by which it was sustained. The first of the iniquitous proceedings is thus described by himself. The latter part of the statement must touch the heart of every feeling individual.

He had retired into the country, from July, 1682, to the 14th of August following, when he returned in great weakness. "I was able," he says, "to preach only twice; of which the last was my usual lecture, in New-street, and which fell out to be

the 24th of August, just that day twenty years that I, and near two thousand; more, had been by law forbidden to preach. I was sensible of God's wonderful mercy that had kept so many of us twenty years, in so much liberty and peace, while so many severe laws were in force against us, and so great a number were round about us, who wanted neither malice nor power to afflict us. I took, that day, my leave of the pulpit and public work in a thankful congregation : and it was like, indeed, to be my last.

" But after this, when I had ceased preaching, and was newly risen from extremity of pain, I was suddenly surprised by a poor, violent informer, and many constables and officers, who rushed in, apprehended me, and served on me one warrant to seize my person for coming within five miles of a corporation, and five more warrants to distrain for a hundred and ninety pounds for five sermons. They cast my servants into fears, and were about to take all my books and goods, when I contentedly went with them towards the justice to be sent to jail, and left my house to their will. But Dr. Thomas Cox meeting me, forced me in again to my couch and bed, and went to five justices, and took his oath, without my knowledge, that I could not go to prison without danger of death. On that the justices delayed a day, till they could speak with the king, and told him what the doctor had sworn : so the king consented that, for the present, imprisonment should be forborne, that I might die at home.* But they executed all their warrants on my books and goods, even the bed that I lay sick on, and sold them all. Some friends paid them as much money as they were prized at, which I repaid, and was fain to send them away. The warrant against my person was signed by Mr. Parry and Mr. Phillips; the five warrants against my goods, by Sir James Smith and Sir James Butler. I had never the least notice of any accusation, or who were the accusers or witnesses, much less did I receive any summons to appear or answer for myself, or ever saw the justices or accusers. The justice that signed the warrants for execution, said, that the two Hiltons solicited him for them, and one Buck led the constables who distrained.

" But though I sent the justice the written deeds, which proved that the goods were none of mine, nor ever were ; and

* The king said, "*Let him die in his bed.*"—*Baxter's Penitent Confessions*, p. 39.

sent two witnesses whose hands were to those conveyances, and offered their oaths of it ; and also proved that the books I had many years ago alienated to my kinsman, this signified nothing to them, they seized and sold all nevertheless ; and both patience and prudence forbade us to try the title at law, when we knew what charges had lately been given to justices and juries, and how others had been used. If they had taken only my cloak, they should have had my coat also ; and if they had smitten me on one cheek, I would have turned the other : for I knew the case was such, that he that will not put up with one blow, one wrong, or slander, shall suffer two ; yea, many more.

“ But when they had taken and sold all, and I had borrowed some bedding and necessities of the buyer, I was never the quieter ; for they threatened to come upon me again, and take all as mine, whosoever it was, which they found in my possession. So that I had no remedy, but utterly to forsake my house and goods and all, and take secret lodgings at a distance, in a stranger’s house ; but having a long lease of my own house, which binds me to pay a greater rent than now it is worth, wherever I go, I must pay that rent.

“ The separation from my books would have been a greater part of my small affliction, but that I found I was near the end both of that work and that life which needeth books, and so I easily let go all. Naked came I into the world, and naked must I go out ; but I never wanted less what man can give, than when men had taken all away. My old friends, and strangers, were so liberal, that I was fain to restrain their bounty. Their kindness was a surer and larger revenue to me than my own. But God was pleased quickly to put me past all fear of men, and all desire of avoiding suffering from them by concealment ; by laying on me more himself than man can do. Then imprisonment, with tolerable health, would have seemed a palace to me ; and had they put me to death for such a duty as they persecute me for, it would have been a joyful end of my calamity : but day and night I groan and languish under God’s just afflicting hand. The pain which before only tried my reins, and tore my bowels, now also fell upon my bladder, and scarce any part, or hour, is free. As waves follow waves in the tempestuous seas, so one pain followeth another in this sinful, miserable flesh. I die daily, and yet remain alive. God, in his great mercy, knowing my dulness in health and ease, doth make it much easier to repent and hate my sin, loathe myself, contemn the world, and sub-

mit to the sentence of death with willingness, than otherwise it was ever likely to have been. O, how little is it that wrathful enemies can do against us, in comparison of what our sin and the justice of God can do ! and, O, how little is it that the best and kindest of friends can do for a pained body, or a guilty, sinful soul, in comparison of one gracious look or word from God ! Wo be to him that hath no better help than man : and blessed is he whose help and hope are in the Lord ! ” 7

While we execrate the tyranny which doomed this righteous man to so much undeserved suffering, every Christian must unfeignedly bless God for the illustration of the principles and power of religion, which Baxter was enabled to afford in such trying circumstances. Those who think of him only as a sectarian, or a wrangling controversialist, must now regard him with admiration, exercising the faith and patience of the saints ; braving danger, enduring pain, despising life, and rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God. In his case, tribulation, indeed, wrought patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, which made him not ashamed.

Notwithstanding the resolutions of the House of Commons, mentioned in the former chapter, the dissenters continued to be exceedingly molested in every part of the country. Orders and directions were issued from the king and the Council Board, to suppress all conventicles ; which were zealously obeyed by the justices of Hicks' Hall, in Southwark, and by some of the city justices. The dissenters were tried by mercenary judges, before packed juries, on Irish evidence. Their meetings were often interrupted and broken up, and their ministers imprisoned and fined.* Distress and dismay were every where experienced, and no end seemed approaching of the sufferings which they were doomed to endure. The employment of informers, the invention of plots, and the variety of schemes adopted to entrap and ensnare men, produced almost universal mistrust and suspicion. It was dangerous to give utterance to the expression of fear, or hope, and far more, to indulge in the language of complaint or censure. Every advantage was taken, and every dishonourable method resorted to, to ensnare the innocent, and to crush the influential. God, alone, could deliver his people and the country from the woes which already distressed, and the greater woes which promised to follow.

With the statement of Baxter's case, in reference to his late

7 *Life*, part iii. pp. 191, 192.

* *Calamy*, vol. i. pp. 356, 357.

treatment, had he been allowed to present it in court, it is unnecessary to occupy these pages. It is a satisfactory defence of himself, even as the law then stood ; and his own view of it was supported by the opinion of eminent counsel. But what signifies law, when they who occupy the seat of judgment, are determined to oppress, and act unjustly. As an evidence of this, take the following example : “ About this time, one Mr. Robert Mayot,^a of Oxford, a very godly man, that devoted all his estate to charitable uses, a Conformist, whom I never saw, died, and, beside many greater gifts to Abingdon, &c., gave, by his last will, 600*l.*, to be by me distributed to sixty poor, ejected ministers, adding, that he did it not because they were Nonconformists, but because many such were poor and pious. But the king’s attorney, Sir Robert Sawyer,^b sued for it in Chancery, and the Lord Keeper North^c gave it all to the king ; which made many resolve to leave nothing to charitable uses after their death, but do what they did while they lived.”^d

Providence mercifully interposed to defeat this unrighteous measure. The money was paid into Chancery by order of the court, to be applied to the maintenance of a chaplain for Chelsea College. It was there kept safely till after the Revolution, when the commissioners of the great seal restored it to Baxter, to be applied according to the will of the testator ; which was done accordingly.^e It is remarkable in how many instances God

^a Mr. Mayot was a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England. His will was made in 1676. He died in 1683. His legacy is a striking proof of the estimation in which Baxter was held, not only among the Nonconformists, but among the respectable part of the Church.

^b Sawyer, the attorney-general, was a dull, hot man ; and forward to serve all the designs of the court.—*Burnet*, ii. 353.

^c Roger North, the biographer of this noble family, has given a particular account of the Lord Keeper Guildford ; from which it would seem that he was a man of parts and learning, though he did not appear to great advantage in the court of Chancery. He was considered to be too much inclined to favour the court, though he seems to have been often sick of its measures. Burnet speaks of him as a crafty and designing man ; guilty of great mal-administration of justice ; and who died despised and ill-thought of by the whole nation.—*Own Times*, vol. iii. pp. 67, 68.

^d Life, part iii. p. 193.

^e Calamy, vol. ii. p. 361. Some account of this affair is given in Vernon’s ‘ Reports ;’ in which Baxter is unjustly represented as swearing that he was a Conformist. Whereas he only swears to his answer given in to the attorney-general’s bill of complaint. That answer merely alleges Baxter’s moderation in the matters of controversy with the Church, and his joining, from time to time, in the worship of the Church, which it is well known he often did. Baxter’s answer, with some appropriate remarks on Vernon, by Calamy, is given in the continuation of his ‘ Account of the Ejected Ministers,’ vol. ii. pp. 922—932.

thwarts the designs of the wicked, and accomplishes the object which his servants have contemplated with a view to his glory. A wicked and unjust policy may succeed for a time ; but it generally defeats its own purpose, and furnishes the means by which its designs are entirely frustrated. We are thus supplied with continued marks of the footsteps of a Divine Providence in the world ; so that, long before the final consummation, men may draw the conclusion, that there is an essential difference between the righteous and the wicked, and “ that verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth.”¹

“ In 1694, while I lay in pain and languishing, the justices of the sessions sent warrants to apprehend me, about a thousand more being in catalogue to be all bound to their good behaviour. I thought they would send me six months to prison for not taking the Oxford oath, and dwelling in London, and so I refused to open my chamber door to them, their warrant not being to break it open : but they set six officers at my study door, who watched all night, and kept me from my bed and food, so that the next day I yielded to them, who carried me, scarce able to stand, to the sessions, and bound me in four hundred pounds bond to my good behaviour. I desired to know what my crime was, and who were my accusers ; but they told me it was for no fault, but to secure the government in evil times, and that they had a list of many suspected persons that they must do the like with, as well as me. I desired to know for what I was numbered with the suspected, and by whose accusation ; but they gave me good words, and would not tell me. I told them I had rather they would send me to jail than put me to wrong others, by being bound with me in bonds that I was likely to break to-morrow ; for if there did but five persons come in when I was praying, they would take it for a breach of good behaviour. They told me not if they came on other business unexpectedly, and not to a set meeting, nor yet if we did no-

¹ There is another curious case of a will, which is connected with Baxter. Sir John Gayer, who died a good while after him, left 5000*l.*, “ to poor ministers, who were of the pious and charitable principles of the late Rev. Richard Baxter.” His peculiar manner of devising the legacy gave rise to doubts, as to whether the money should be distributed among Churchmen or Dissenters. The executrix and the trustees differed between themselves. But after a considerable delay the question was brought into the court of Chancery, when the master of the rolls, Sir Joseph Jekyl, in a very handsome manner, decided in favour of the Dissenters.—*Calumny's Own Life*, vol. ii. pp. 476—478.

thing contrary to law and the practice of the church. I told them our innocency was not now any security to us. If two beggar women did but stand in the street, and swear that I spake contrary to the law, though they heard me not, my bonds and liberty were at their will; for I myself, lying on my bed, heard Mr. J. R. preach in a chapel, on the other side of my chamber, and yet one Sibil Dash, and Elizabeth Cappell, two miserable, poor women who made a trade of it, swore to the justices that it was another that preached, and they had thus sworn against very many worthy persons, in Hackney, and elsewhere, on which their goods were seized for great mulcts or fines. To all this I had no answer, but that I must give bond, when they knew that I was not likely to break the behaviour, unless by lying in bed in pain.”⁸

The trial of the Rev. Thomas Rosewell, at this time, created a great sensation in the country. He was minister of Rotherhithe, and was imprisoned in the Gate-house, in Westminster, by a warrant from Sir George Jefferies, for high treason. A bill was found against him at the quarter sessions at Kingston, in Surrey; upon which he was arraigned on October the 25th, and tried November the 18th following, at the King's Bench by a Surrey jury, before Chief Justice Jefferies and three other judges of that court, Withins, Holloway, and Walcot. The high treason, as laid in the indictment and sworn to by the witnesses, was, that in a sermon which he preached on September the 14th, he said these words:—‘That the people,’ meaning the subjects of our sovereign lord the king, ‘made a flocking to the said’ sovereign lord the king, ‘upon pretence of healing the king’s evil, which he,’ meaning our said sovereign lord the king, ‘could not do; but that we,’ meaning himself and other traitorous persons, subjects of our said lord the king, ‘are they to whom they,’ meaning the subjects of our said lord the king, ‘ought to flock, because we,’ meaning himself and the said other traitorous persons, ‘are priests and prophets, that, by our prayers, can heal the dolours and griefs of the people. We,’ meaning the subjects of our said sovereign lord the king, ‘have had two wicked kings,’ meaning the most serene Charles the First, late king of England, and our said sovereign lord the king that now is, ‘whom we can resemble to no other person but to the most wicked Jeroboam.’

⁸ Life, part iii. p. 198, 199.

And 'that if they,' meaning the said evil-disposed persons, then and there, so, as aforesaid, with him, unlawfully assembled and gathered together, would stand to their principles, 'he,' meaning himself, 'did not fear but they,' meaning himself and the said evil-disposed persons, 'would overcome their enemies,' meaning our said sovereign lord the king and his subjects, 'as in former times, with rams' horns, broken platters, and a stone in a sling.' The witnesses were three women, who swore to the words as they stand, without the inuendos. The trial lasted about seven hours. Roswell made a full and luminous defence of himself, very modestly, and yet strenuously, vindicating his innocence, to the satisfaction of those who were present, and so as to gain the applause of many gentlemen of the long robe. The jury, however, after they had been out about half an hour, brought him in guilty. The women who were the witnesses were infamous persons, laden with the guilt of many perjuries, which might easily have been proved against them before the trial, could justice have been obtained; but they were screened by the recorder, who was the person that laid the whole scheme, and patched up the indictment, in terms suited to his known abilities. But such of them as could be met with were afterwards convicted of perjury; and Smith, the chief witness, was pilloried before the Exchange. Sir John Talbot, who was present, represented to the King the state of the case as it appeared on the trial, who ordered Jefferies to find some evasion. Whereupon he assigned him counsel afterwards to plead to the insufficiency of the indictment, in arrest of judgment, and the king gave him his pardon, after which he was discharged. §

The issue of Roswell's trial, though a kind of triumph, led to no mitigation of the treatment of others. Baxter still continued to lie under bond, and even that did not satisfy his persecutors. "On the 11th of December, 1684," he says, "I was forced, in all my pain and weakness, to be carried to the sessions-house, or else my bonds of four hundred pounds would have been judged forfeit. The more moderate justices, who promised my discharge, would none of them be there, but left the work to Sir William Smith and the rest; who openly declared that they had nothing against me, and took me for innocent; but that I must continue bound lest others should expect to be discharged also; which I openly refused. My sureties, however, would be bound;

§ Calamy, vol. i. pp. 363—365.

against my declared will, lest I should die in jail, and so I must continue. Yet they discharged others as soon as I was gone. I was told that they did all by instructions from ——— and that the main end was to restrain me from writing; which now should I do with the greatest caution, they will pick out something that a jury may take for a breach of my bonds.

“January 17th, I was forced again to be carried to the sessions, and after divers good words, which put me in expectation of freedom, when I was gone, one Justice Deerham said, that it was likely these persons solicited for my freedom that they might hear me in conventicles. On that they bound me again in a four hundred pound bond for above a quarter of a year; and so it is like it will be till I die, or worse; though no one ever accused me for any conventicle or preaching since they took all my books and goods about two years ago, and I for the most part keep my bed.

“Mr. Jenkins died in Newgate this week, January 19th, 1684-5, as Mr. Bampfield, Mr. Raphson, and others, died lately before him. The prison where so many are, suffocateth the spirits of aged ministers; but blessed be God, that gave them so long time to preach before, at cheaper rates. One Richard Baxter, a Sabbatarian Anabaptist, was sent to jail for refusing the oath of allegiance, and it went current that it was I. As to the present state of England,—the plots; the execution of men high and low; the public counsels and designs; the qualities and practice of judges and bishops; the sessions and justices; the quality of the clergy, and the universities and patrons; the church government by lay civilians; the usage of ministers and private meetings for preaching or prayer; the expectations of what is next to be done, &c. :—the reader must expect none of this sort of history from me. No doubt there will be many volumes of it transmitted by others to posterity; who may do it more fully than I can now do.”^a

Thus Baxter concludes the interesting memorials which he has left of his own age and life. The darkness was now increased till it had spread universal gloom and despondency. Private meetings were occasionally held to consider whether any hope remained, or what could be done to prevent the entire ruin of the religion and liberties of the country. But though these were managed with the greatest possible caution, and the parties

^a Life, part iii. pp. 199, 200.

generally proceeded no farther than to mourn over the past, and dwell in gloomy forebodings over the prospect of the future, the consequences to some of them were most disastrous. Plots and conspiracies were hatched to ensnare the innocent and terrify the timid. The death, or rather murder, of Lord William Russell, the Earl of Essex, and Algernon Sydney, to which Baxter probably alludes, seemed like putting the extinguisher on the last hopes of freedom, and preparing the country for the most absolute despotism. The corporation of London was deprived of its charter, and other towns shared in its fate. Enormous and ruinous fines were levied. The judges prostituted their authority and influence to promote the corrupt designs of the court. Juries were browbeaten, and frightened into verdicts which were neither according to law nor justice. The clergy in general, were either timid and truckling, or destitute of sufficient influence to resist the rapid advances which were making towards Rome. The Nonconformists, oppressed and dispirited, finding complaint unavailing, and redress hopeless, surrendered themselves to suffering, till, if it were the will of God, deliverance should be afforded them. The reign of Charles, as it approached its termination, only increased in gloom and oppression, while the prospect of his successor filled all men's hearts with dismay and terror. It was indeed a period of "trouble and darkness, and dimness of anguish."

In these circumstances, Charles II. was called, unexpectedly, to give in his account, on the 6th of February, 1684-5. His character is familiar to every reader of English history; most of whom will agree, that he was one of the greatest curses to the nation that ever occupied the throne. His father and brother had some redeeming qualities in their character, while their fate will always render them objects of pity. The former was a good husband and father; the latter sacrificed his throne to his superstition. But Charles the Second had neither the personal virtues of the one, nor the superstitious regard to religion of the other. He was as worthless as a man as he was unprincipled as a sovereign. He was gay, affable, and witty; but he was heartless, profane, and licentious: equally regardless of his own honour, as of his country's good. What had happened to his father, and all he had suffered during his own exile, seem to have produced no salutary influence on his principles or dispositions. Every thing was made subservient to the love and enjoyment of pleasure. His ambition was directed solely against

his own subjects ; and his desire of power was unmingled with the love of glory. His court was little better than a brothel. He sacrificed the morals, the honour, and the happiness, of his country, to his mistresses and his licentious courtiers. Such a man's pretension to religion, in any form, is offensive to decency and common sense. He was an infidel while he lived in pleasure ; and only the fear of death drove him to that system of iniquity which pretends to provide a healing balsam, but which is only a poisonous opiate to the soul of a dying profligate. The mind turns away with sickness and horror from such a death-bed scene as that of Charles II.¹

The prospects of the poor Nonconformists on the ascension of James to the vacant throne, were far from flattering. His well-known attachment and devotedness to Popery, promised nothing but ruin to what remained of the religion and liberty of the country ; while the decided part which the Nonconformists had taken in every measure which tended to limit his power, or to exclude him from the throne, marked them out to be the objects of his implacable hatred and revenge. Pretexts would not be wanting, and he was already furnished with instruments prepared to carry forward and execute any oppressive and cruel measure. Here I cannot deny myself the pleasure of introducing the account given by Mr. Fox, of the conduct of the court towards the dissenters ; his character of Jefferies, and his remarks on the character and trial of Baxter. It does great credit to the discernment and candour of that eminent man.

"Partly from similar motives, and partly to gratify the natural vindictiveness of his temper, James persevered in a most cruel persecution of the Protestant dissenters, upon the most frivolous pretences. The courts of justice, as in Charles's days,

¹ There are two accounts of the death-bed of Charles ; the one by Protestants, the other by Roman Catholics. The former may be called his Protestant death, when he was attended by the bishops, who spoke to him as the Lord's anointed, and requested his blessing. Bishop Ken absolved him from his sins in the presence of his mistress and his illegitimate offspring. The Catholic death is described by Father Hudleston, who attended and officiated in the last ceremonies of the church. From this it is very certain that Charles died a Roman Catholic ; which in fact he had been before the restoration, whatever he had pretended to be to the Nonconformists and the Church of England. Both the Popish and the Protestant death of Charles are recorded by Burnet, ii. pp. 456—460. Ellis, in the first series of his letters on English history, has given an account of the Protestant death of the king, by the chaplain to the Bishop of Ely, who was then in the room. Vol. iii. p. 333. In the second series he has given Hudleston's account of the Popish death. Vol. iv. pp. 78, 80.

were instruments equally ready, either for seconding the policy, or for gratifying the bad passions, of the monarch; and Jefferies, whom the late king had appointed chief justice of England a little before Sidney's trial, was a man entirely agreeable to the temper, and suitable to the purposes, of the present government. He was thought not to be very learned in his profession; but what might be wanting in knowledge, he made up in positiveness; and, indeed, whatever might be the difficulties in questions between one subject and another, the fashionable doctrine which prevailed at that time, of supporting the king's prerogative in its full extent, and without restriction or limitation, rendered, to such as espoused it, all that branch of law which is called constitutional, extremely easy and simple. He was as submissive and mean to those above him, as he was haughty and insolent to those who were in any degree in his power; and if, in his own conduct, he did not exhibit a very nice regard for morality, or even for decency, he never failed to animadvert upon, and to punish, the most slight deviation in others, with the utmost severity, especially if they were persons whom he suspected to be no favourites of the court.

"Before this magistrate was brought for trial, by a jury sufficiently prepossessed in favour of tory politics, the Reverend Richard Baxter, a dissenting minister, a pious and learned man, of exemplary character, always remarkable for his attachment to monarchy, and for leaning to moderate measures in the differences between the church and those of his persuasion. The pretence of this prosecution was a supposed reference of some passages in one of his works to the bishops of the church of England; a reference which was certainly not intended by him, and which could not have been made out to any jury that had been less prejudiced or under any other direction than that of Jefferies. The real motive was the desire of punishing an eminent dissenting teacher, whose reputation was high among his sect, and who was supposed to favour the political opinions of the whigs."^{*}

Thus far Mr. Fox. That Baxter was not a whig was well known at court; and that his sentiments as a dissenter were considered to be very moderate, can as little be doubted. The design unquestionably was to strike terror into all the Nonconformists, by severely punishing one of their leading ministers, who might be regarded, in point of sentiment, as less obnoxious than most of his brethren. If Baxter must be thus treated, who

^{*} Fox's 'History of the Reign of James II.' pp. 101—103.

can be safe; if a harmless, uncontroversial paraphrase on the Scriptures be construed into a libel, it must be impossible either to state our sentiments or defend them, without bringing down upon us the heavy arm of the law. These must have been the views of the court, and the reasonings of the dissenters respecting this affair. The malignant designs of the one, however, and the fears of the other, were finally disappointed.

As the trial of Baxter, for the sentiments expressed in his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,'¹ is among the most extraordinary circumstances of his life, and one of the most curious specimens of the style in which justice was administered by the monster who then presided over the justice of his country, it is much to be regretted that we have not an account of it, either by Baxter himself, or more correctly reported by those who were present. No printed report of the trial exists, except what is contained in Calamy's abridgment of Baxter's life. The report in the 'State Trials' is merely a copy of that. Among the Baxter MSS. in Redcross Street Library, however, there is a letter from a person who was present at the trial, which was sent to Sylvester, with a view to its being used by him. From this document, and Calamy together, I have endeavoured to give a fuller account, though it is still imperfect, than has hitherto been laid before the public, of this remarkable affair.

That he was designed for jail before the death of Charles, was intimated by the Duke of York; so, to secure him till they could find matter of accusation against him, he was bound to his good behaviour. They declared, at the same time, that they considered him innocent, but did this for security, and till they were prepared.^m

On the 28th of February, Baxter was committed to the King's-Bench prison, by warrant of Lord Chief Justice Jefferies, for his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,' which had been printed a little before; and which was described as a scandalous and seditious book against the government. On his commitment by the chief justice's warrant, he applied for a *habeas corpus*, and having obtained it, he absconded into the country to avoid imprisonment, till the term approached. He was induced to do this from the constant pain he endured, and an apprehension that he could not bear the confinement of a prison.

On the 6th of May, which was the first day of the term,

¹ A particular account of the 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,' will be found in the second part of this work.

^m Penitent Confessions, p. 40.

he appeared in Westminster Hall, and an information was then ordered to be drawn up against him. On the 14th of May, he pleaded not guilty, to the information. On the 18th of the same month, being much indisposed, it was moved that he might have further time given him before his trial, but this was denied him. He moved for it by his counsel ; but Jefferies cried out, in a passion, ' I will not give him a minute's time more, to save his life. We have had to do,' said he, ' with other sorts of persons, but now we have a saint to deal with ; and I know how to deal with saints as well as sinners. Yonder,' said he, ' stands Oates in the pillory' (as he actually did at that very time in the New Palace Yard), ' and he says he suffers for the truth, and so says Baxter ; but if Baxter did but stand on the other side of the pillory with him, I would say, two of the greatest rogues and rascals in the kingdom stood there.' °

The following is a copy of the indictment, which, from its singular nature, I have preferred giving in its original state to a translation. Even the mere English reader will have little difficulty in understanding its scope, and the substance of its meaning, as it is so much interlarded with quotations from the Paraphrase :—

" Quod Richardus Baxter, nuper de, &c., Clericus existens person' seditiosa et factiosa, pravæ mentis, impiæ, inquietæ, turbulent' disposition' et conversation', ac machinans, practicans et intendens, quantum in ipso fuit, non solem pacem et communem tranquillitat' dict' Dom' Regis infra, hoc regnum Angl' inquietare, molestare et perturbare, ac seditionem, discord' et malevolent' int' ligeos et fideles subdit' dict' Dom' Regis movere, p'curare et excitare, verum etiam sinceram, piam, beatam, et pacificam Protestan' Religion' infra hoc regn' Angl' usitat', ac Prelat', Episcopos, aliosq ; Clericos in Ecclesia Anglicana legibus hujus regni Angl' stabilit', ac Novum Testamentu' Dom' Salvator' nostri Jesu Christi in contempt' et vilipend' inducere et inutile reddere ; quodq ; p'd' R. B. ad nequissimas, nefandissimas et diabolicas intention' suas, pred' perimplend' perficiend' et ad effect' redigend' 14 die Febr', anno regni dict' Dom' Jacobi Secundi, &c. primo, vi et armis, &c. apud, &c. falso illicite, injuste, nequit', factione, seditiose et irreligiose fecit, composuit, scripsit, impressit et publicavit, et fieri, componi,

• Colonel Dangerfield had been tried before Jefferies, and condemned to be whipped that morning at Westminster Hall, for the Meal-Tub plot ; so that Jefferies was quite in a whipping humour.

scribi, imprimi et publicari causavit, quendam falsum, seditiosum, libellosum, factiosum et irreligiosum librum, intitulat' *A Paraphrase on the Testament, with Notes doctrinal and practical*: In quo quidem, falso, seditioso, libelloso, factioso et irreligioso libro int' al' content' fuer' hæ falsæ, factiosæ malitiosæ scandalosæ, et seditiosæ sententiæ de eisdem Prelat' Episcopis, aliisq; Clericis Ecclesiæ hujus regn' in his Anglican' verbis sequen', videl't, Note, *Are not these Preachers and Prelates* (Ep'ds aliosq; Clericos, præd' Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuend') *then the least and basest that preach and tread down Christian love of all that dissent from any of their presumptions, and so preach down not the least, but the great command?* Et ult' idem Attorn' dict Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in p'd' falso, scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro, int' al' content' fuer' hæ al' falsæ, libellosæ, scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ sentent' sequent' de Clericis Ecclesiæ hujus regn', videl't, Note, *It is folly to doubt whether there be Devils, while Devils incarnate live here amongst us* (Clericos pred' hujus regni Angl' innuendo); *What else but Devils, sure, could make ceremonious hypocrites* (Clericos pred' innuendo) *consult with Politic Royalists* (ligeos et fidel' subdit' dict' Dom' Regis hujus regni Angl' innuendo) *to destroy the Son of God for saving men's health and lives by miracle?* Quære, *Whether, if this withered hand had been their own, they would have plotted to kill him, that would have cured them by a miracle, as a Sabbath-Breaker?* *And whether their successors* (Prelat', Episcopos, Aliosq; Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regni Angl' qui deinceps fuerint innuendo) *would silence and imprison godly ministers* (seipsum R. B. et al' factiosas et seditias as p'son' infra hoc regn' Angl' contra leges hujus regni ac Liturg' Ecclesiæ infra hoc reg' stabilit' p'dican' innuendo) *if they could cure them of all their sicknesses, and help them to preferment, and give them money to feed their lusts?* Et ult' idem Attorn' dict Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in pred' falso, libelloso, scandaloso et irreligioso libro inter al' content' fuer' hæ al' falsæ, libellosæ, scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ Anglican' sentent' sequen' de et concernen' Ep'is p'd' et Ministris Justitiæ hujus regn' Angl', videl't, Note, *Men that preach in Christ's name* (seipsum R. B. et al' factiosas et seditiosas p'son' infra hoc regn' Angl' contra leges hujus regn' Angl' et Liturg' Ecclesiæ hujus regn' per legem stabilit' pred'

innuendo) *therefore are not to be silenced, though faulty, if they* (pred malæ dispo' it factiosas et seditiosas person' pred' iterum innuendo) *do more good than harm; dreadful, then, is the case of them* (Episcopos et Ministros Justitiæ infra hoc regn' Angl' innuendo) *that silence Christ's faithful ministers* (seipsum R. B. et al' seditiosas et factiosas person' pred' innuendo). Et ulterius idem Attorn' dict' Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod ad excitand' popul' hujus regn' Angl' in illicit' Conventicul convenire et defamand' Justit' hujus regn' impuniendo illicit' Conventicul', in al' loco in pred' falso, scandaloso, seditioso, et irreligioso libro, nit' al' content' fuer' hæ al' falsæ, scandalosæ, libellosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ Anglican' sentent' sequen', videl't, (1) *Note, It was well that they considered what might be said against them, which now most Christians do not in their disputes.* (2) *These Persecutors, and the Romans, had some charity and consideration, in that they were restrained by the fear of the people, and did not accuse and fine them as for Routs, Riots, and Seditions.* (3) *They that deny necessary premises are not to be disputed with.* Et ulterius idem Attorn' dict' Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari quod in al' loco in pred' falso, scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro, intal' content' fuer' hæ al' falsæ, libellosæ, scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ Anglican' Sententiæ sequent' de et concernen' Episcopis et al' Clericis hujus regn' Angl', videl't, (3) *Let not those proud hypocrites* (Episcopos et al' Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *deceive you* (subdit' dicti Dom' Regis hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *who by their long Liturgies and Ceremonies,* (Liturg' et Ceremon' Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo,) *and claim of Superiority, do but cloak their Worldliness, Pride, and Oppression, and are religious to their greater Damnation.* Et ulterius idem Attorn' dicti Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in pred' falso, scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro int'al' content' fuer' hæ al' falsæ, libellosæ, scandalosæ, seditiosæ, et religiosæ, Sentent' Anglican' sequent' de et concernen' Clericis hujus regn' Angl', (2) *Note, Priests now are many* (Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *but Labourers few; what men are they that have and do silence the faithfullest labourers* (seipsum R. B. et al' facti' as et sedit' as p' son' pred' innuendo) *suspecting that they are not for their Interest?* (interesse Clericor' Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo). Et ulterius idem Attorn' dicti' Dom' Regis nunc gene-

ral' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Cur' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in præd' falso scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro, inter al' content' fuerunt hæ al' falsæ, libellose scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ sentent' sequen' de et concernen' Clericia hujus regn' Angl', videl't, (3) Note, *Christ's Ministers use God's ordinances to save Men, and the Devil's Clergy* (Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *use them for Snares, Mischief, and Murder.* (2) *They* (Clericos Ecclesiæ hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *will not let the people be Neuters between God and the Devil, but force them* (subdit hujus regn' Angl' innuendo) *to be informing Persecutors.* Et ulterius idem Attorn' dicti Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege dat Car' hic intelligi et informari, quod in al' loco in præd' falso, scandaloso, seditioso et irreligioso libro, int' al' content' fuerunt hæ aliæ falsæ, libellose, scandalosæ, seditiosæ et irreligiosæ sententiæ Anglicanæ sequen' de et concernen' legibus hujus regn' Angl' contra illicit' Conventicul', et ad excitand' popul' convenire in illicit' Conventicul', videl't, (2) Note, *To be Dissenters and Disputants, against errors and tyrannical impositions, upon conscience* (leges et statut' hujus regn' Angl' contra person' factios' et Liturg' Eccl' hujus regn' Angl' adversar' Anglice), *against Dissenters* (edit' et provis' innuendo), *is no Fault, but a great Duty.* In magnam Dei omnipotent' displicent' in contempt' leg' hujus regn' Angl' manifest' in malum et pernitiosissim exemplum omniu' al' in tali casu delinquen' ac contra pacem dicti Dom' Regis nunc, coron' et dignitat' suas, &c. Unde idem Attorn' dicti Dom' Regis nunc general' pro eodem Dom' Rege pet' advisament' Cur' hic in premiss' et debit' legis process' versus ipsum prefat R. B. in hac parte fieri ad respond' dicto Dom' Regi de et in premiss, &c."

On May the 30th, in the afternoon,^a Baxter was brought to trial, before the lord chief justice, at Guildhall. Sir Henry Ashurst, who would not forsake his own and his father's friend, stood by him all the while. Baxter came first into court, and, with all the marks of sincerity and composure, waited for the coming of the lord chief justice, who appeared quickly after, with great indignation in his face.

"When I saw," says an eye-witness, "the meek man stand before the flaming eyes and fierce looks of this bigot, I thought of Paul standing before Nero. The barbarous usage which he

^a Hargreaves' State Trials, vol. x. App. p. (37). The Editor expresses his regret that no account of this trial exists, except what is given by Calamy. He says, "It shows the temper of the chief justice, and the cruel usage of the prisoner."

received drew plenty of tears from my eyes, as well as from others of the auditors and spectators: yet I could not but smile sometimes, when I saw my lord imitate our modern pulpit drollery, which some one saith any man engaged in such a design would not lose for a world. He drove on furiously, like Hannibal over the Alps, with fire and vinegar, pouring all the contempt and scorn upon Baxter, as if he had been a link-boy or knave; which made the people who could not come near enough to hear the indictment or Mr. Baxter's plea, cry out, 'Surely, this Baxter had burned the city or the temple of Delphos.' But others said, it was not the custom, now-a-days, to receive ill, except for doing well; and therefore this must needs be some good man that my lord so rails at."^p

Jefferies no sooner sat down than a short cause was called and tried; after which the clerk began to read the title of another cause. 'You blockhead, you,' said Jefferies, 'the next cause is between Richard Baxter and the king:' upon which Baxter's cause was called.

On the jury being sworn, Baxter objected to them, as incompetent to his trial, owing to its peculiar nature. The jurymen being tradesmen, and not scholars, he alleged they were incapable of pronouncing whether his 'Paraphrase' was, or was not, according to the original text. He therefore prayed that he might have a jury of learned men, though the one-half of them should be Papists. This objection, as might have been expected, was overruled by the court.^q

The passages contained in the indictment, were, it is understood, picked out by Sir Roger L'Estrange and some of his associates: and a certain noted clergyman, who is supposed to have been Dr. Sherlock, put into the hands of his enemies some accusations out of Rom. xiii., &c. as against the king, which might have affected his life; but no use was made of them. The great charge was, that, in these several passages, he reflected on the prelates of the church of England, and so was guilty of sedition.^r

^p Baxter MSS.

^q Ibid.

^r As the 'Paraphrase' is not in every body's hands, I have extracted the passages and notes referred to in the indictment, and placed them together, that the readers may have fairly and fully before them the grounds on which the charge of sedition was preferred. Some of the phraseology is pointed and severe, characteristic of Baxter's style, but all justly called for by the treatment which he and others had experienced.

Matt. v. 19. "If any shall presume to break the least of these commands, because it is a little one, and teach men so to do, he shall be villified as he villified God's law, and not thought fit for a place in the kingdom of the Messiah;

The king's counsel opened the information at large, with its aggravations. Mr. Pollexfen, Mr. Wallop, Mr. Williams, Mr. Rotherham, Mr. Atwood, and Mr. Phipps, were Baxter's counsel, and had been fee'd by Sir Henry Ashurst.

Pollexfen then rose and addressed the court and the jury. He stated that he was counsel for the prisoner, and felt that he

but he shall be there greatest that is most exact in *doing* and *teaching* all the law of God."

Note.—"Are not those preachers and prelates, then, the *least* and *basest*, that preach and tread down Christian love of all that dissent from any of their presumptions, and so preach down, not the *least*, but the *great* command."

Mark iii. 6. "It is fully to doubt whether there be devils, while devils incarnate dwell among us. What else but devils, sure, could ceremonious hypocrites consult with politic royalists to destroy the Son of God, for saving men's health and lives by miracle? Query: Whether this withered hand had been their own, they would have plotted to kill him that would have cured them by miracle, as a sabbath-breaker? And whether their successors would silence and imprison godly ministers, if they could cure them of all their sicknesses, help them to preferment, and give them money to feed their lusts?"

Mark ix. 39. *Note.*—"Men that preach in Christ's name, therefore, are not to be silenced, though faulty: if they do more good than harm, dreadful, then, is the case of them that silence Christ's faithful ministers."

Mark xi. 31. *Note.*—"It was well that they considered what might be said against them, which now most Christians do not in their disputes. These persecutors, and the Romans, had some charity and consideration, in that they were restrained by the fear of 'the people, and did not accuse and fine them, as for routs, riots, and seditious.'"

Mark xii. 38—40. *Note.*—"Let not these proud hypocrites deceive you, who, by their long liturgies and ceremonies, and claim of superiority, do but cloak their worldliness, pride, and oppression, and are religious to their greater damnation."

Luke x. 2. *Note.*—"Priests now are many, but labourers are few. What men are they that hate and silence the faithfullest labourers, suspecting that they are not for their interest?"

John xi. 57. *Note.*—"1. Christ's ministers are God's ordinances to save men, and the devil's clergy use them for snares, mischief, and murder. 2. They will not let the people be neutrals between God and the devil, but force them to be informing persecutors."

Acts xv. 2. *Note.*—"1. To be dissenters and disputants against errors and tyrannical impositions upon conscience is no fault, but a great duty. 2. It is but a groundless fiction of some that tell us that this was an appeal to Jerusalem, because it was the metropolis of Syria and Antioch, as if the metropolitan church power had been then settled; when, long after, when it was devised, indeed, Antioch was above Jerusalem; and it is as vain a fiction that this was an appeal to a general council, as if the apostles and elders at Jerusalem had been a general council, when none of the bishops of the gentile churches were there, or called thither. It is notorious that it was an appeal to the apostles, taking in the elders, as those that had the most certain notice of Christ's mind, having conversed with him, and being intrusted to teach all nations whatever he commanded them, and had the greatest measure of the Spirit; and also, being Jews themselves, were such as the Judaizing Christians had no reason to suspect or reject."—*Baxter's New Testament in locis.*

had a very unusual plea to manage. He had been obliged, he said, by the nature of the cause, to consult all our learned commentators, many of whom, learned, pious, and belonging to the church of England, too, concurred with Mr. Baxter in his paraphrase of those passages of Scripture which were objected to in the indictment, and by whose help he would be enabled to manage his client's cause. "I shall begin," said he, "with Dr. Hammond; and, gentlemen, though Mr. Baxter made an objection against you, as not fit judges of Greek, which has been overruled, I hope you understand English, common sense, and can read." To which the foreman of the jury made a profound bow, and said, "Yes, sir."

On this his lordship burst upon Pollexfen, like a fury, and told him he should not sit there to hear him preach. "No, my lord," said Pollexfen, "I am counsel for Mr. Baxter, and shall offer nothing but what is *ad rem*." "Why, this is not," said Jefferies, "that you cant to the jury beforehand." "I beg your lordship's pardon," said the counsel, "and shall then proceed to business." "Come, then," said Jefferies, "what do you say to this count: read it, clerk:" referring to the paraphrase on Mark xii. 38—40. "Is he not, now, an old knave, to interpret this as belonging to liturgies?" "So do others," replied Pollexfen, "of the church of England, who would be loth so to wrong the cause of liturgies as to make them a novel invention, or not to be able to date them as early as the Scribes and Pharisees." "No, no, Mr. Pollexfen," said the judge: "they were long-winded, extempore prayers, such as they used to say when they appropriated God to themselves: 'Lord, we are thy people, thy peculiar people, thy dear people.'" And then he snorted, and squeaked through his nose, and clenched his hands, and lifted up his eyes, mimicking their manner, and running on furiously, as he said they used to pray. But old Pollexfen gave him a bite now and then, though he could hardly get in a word. "Why, my lord," said he, "some will think it is hard measure to stop these men's mouths, and not let them speak through their noses." "Pollexfen," said Jefferies, "I know you well; I will set a mark upon you: you are the patron of the faction. This is an old rogue, who has poisoned the world with his Kidderminster doctrine. Don't we know how he preached formerly, 'Curse ye Meroz; curse them bitterly that come not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' He encouraged all the women and maids to bring their bodkins

and thimbles to carry on their war against the king of ever blessed memory. An old schismatical knave, a hypocritical villain!"

"I beseech your lordship," said Pollexfen, "suffer me a word for my client. It is well known to all intelligent men of age in this nation, that these things do not apply to the character of Mr. Baxter, who wished as well to the king and royal family as Mr. Love, who lost his head for endeavouring to bring in the son long before he was restored. And, my lord, Mr. Baxter's loyal and peaceable spirit, King Charles would have rewarded with a bishoprick, when he came in, if he would have conformed."

"Aye, aye," said the judge, "we know that; but what ailed the old blockhead, the unthankful villain, that he would not conform? Was he wiser or better than other men? He hath been, ever since, the spring of the faction. I am sure he hath poisoned the world with his linsey-woolsey doctrine." Here his rage increased to an amazing degree. He called Baxter a conceited, stubborn, fanatical dog. "Hang him," said he; "this one old fellow hath cast more reproach upon the constitution and discipline of our church than will be wiped off this hundred years; but I'll handle him for it: for, by G——, he deserves to be whipped through the city."

"My lord," said Pollexfen, "I am sure these things are not *ad'rem*. Some persons think, my lord, it is very hard these men should be forced against their consciences from the church. But that is not my business, my lord. I am not to justify their nonconformity, or give here the reasons of their scruples to accept beneficial places, but rather to suffer any thing. I know not, my lord, what reasons sway other men's consciences; my business is to plead for my client, and to answer the charge of dangerous sedition, which is alleged to be contained in his 'Paraphrase of the New Testament.'"

* Baxter MSS. Pollexfen, who acted as first counsel in the trial of Baxter, is not mentioned at all in Calamy's account of the trial. The whole that I have given above is contained in the manuscript account furnished by a person who was present. As far as it proceeds in the remainder of the narrative it agrees with Calamy. Pollexfen was descended from a good family in Devonshire, and rose to the highest rank in his profession. He was counsel for the Earl of Danby, in 1679, was employed by the Corporation of London, in the affair of their charter, and was one of the counsel retained for the bishops. He was knighted after the Revolution, and made chief justice of the Common Pleas. He died in 1692.—*Noble's Continuation of Granger*, vol. i. p. 170.

Mr. Wallop said, that he conceived, the matter depending being a point of doctrine, it ought to be referred to the bishop his ordinary; but if not, he humbly conceived the doctrine was innocent and justifiable, setting aside the inuendos, for which there was no colour, there being no antecedent to refer them to (i. e. no bishop or clergy of the church of England named); he said the book accused, i. e. the 'Comment on the New Testament,' contained many eternal truths: but they who drew the information were the libellers, in applying to the prelates of the church of England, those severe things which were written concerning some prelates who deserved the characters which he gave. "My lord," said he, "I humbly conceive the bishops Mr. Baxter speaks of, as your lordship, if you have read church history, must confess, were the plagues of the church and of the world."

"Mr. Wallop," said the lord chief justice, "I observe you are in all these dirty causes: and were it not for you gentlemen of the long robe, who should have more wit and honesty than to support and hold up these factious knaves by the chin, we should not be at the pass we are." "My lord," replied Wallop, "I humbly conceive that the passages accused are natural deductions from the text." "You humbly conceive," said Jefferies, "and I humbly conceive. Swear him, swear him." "My lord," said he, "under favour, I am counsel for the defendant, and if I understand either Latin or English, the information now brought against Mr. Baxter upon such a slight ground, is a greater reflection upon the church of England, than any thing contained in the book he is accused for." "Sometimes you humbly conceive, and sometimes you are very positive," said Jefferies; "you talk of your skill in church history, and of your understanding Latin and English; I think I understand something of them as well as you; but, in short, must tell you, that if you do not understand your duty better, I shall teach it you." Upon which Mr. Wallop sat down.

Mr. Rotherham urged, "that if Mr. Baxter's book had sharp reflections upon the church of Rome by name, but spake well of the prelates of the church of England, it was to be presumed, that the sharp reflections were intended only against the prelates of the church of Rome." The lord chief justice said, "Baxter was an enemy to the name and thing, the office and persons, of bishops." Rotherham added, "that Baxter frequently

attended divine service, went to the sacrament, and persuaded others to do so too, as was certainly and publicly known; and had, in the very book so charged, spoken very moderately and honourably of the bishops of the church of England."

Baxter added, "My lord, I have been so moderate with respect to the church of England, that I have incurred the censure of many of the dissenters upon that account." "Baxter for bishops!" exclaimed Jefferies, "that is a merry conceit indeed: turn to it, turn to it." Upon this, Rotherham turned to a place where it is said, "that great respect is due to those truly called to be bishops among us;" or to that purpose: "Aye," said Jefferies, "this is your Presbyterian cant; truly called to be bishops: that is himself, and such rascals, called to be bishops of Kidderminster, and other such places. Bishops set apart by such factious, snivelling Presbyterians as himself: a Kidderminster bishop he means. According to the saying of a late learned author—And every parish shall maintain a tithe pig metropolitan."

Baxter beginning to speak again, Jefferies reviled him; "Richard, Richard, dost thou think we'll hear thee poison the court? Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, every one as full of sedition, I might say treason, as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing trade forty years ago, it had been happy. Thou pretendest to be a preacher of the Gospel of peace, and thou hast one foot in the grave: it is time for thee to begin to think what account thou intendest to give. But leave thee to thyself, and I see thou'lt go on as thou hast begun; but, by the grace of God, I'll look after thee. I know thou hast a mighty party, and I see a great many of the brotherhood in corners, waiting to see what will become of their mighty Don, and a Doctor of the party (looking to Dr. Bates) at your elbow; but, by the grace of Almighty God, I'll crush you all. Come, what do you say for yourself, you old knave; come, speak up. What doth he say? I am not afraid of you, for all the snivelling calves you have got about you:" alluding to some persons who were in tears about Mr. Baxter. "Your lordship need not," said the holy man; "for I'll not hurt you. But these things will surely be understood one day; what fools one sort of Protestants are made, to persecute the other." And lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, "I am not concerned to an-

swer such stuff; but am ready to produce my writings for the confutation of all this; and my life and conversation are known to many in this nation.”¹

Mr. Rotherham sitting down, Mr. Atwood began to show, that not one of the passages mentioned in the information ought to be strained to the sense which was put upon them by the inuendos; they being more natural when taken in a milder sense: nor could any one of them be applied to the prelates of the church of England, without a very forced construction. To prove this, he would have read some of the text: but Jefferies cried out, “You shan’t draw me into a conventicle with your annotations, nor your snivelling parson, neither.” “My lord,” said Mr. Atwood, “that I may use the best authority, permit me to repeat your lordship’s own words in that case.” “No, you shan’t,” said he: “you need not speak, for you are an author already; though you speak and write impertinently.” Atwood replied, “I can’t help that, my lord, if my talent be no better, but it is my duty to do my best for my client.”

Jefferies then went on inveighing against what Atwood had published; and Atwood justified it as in defence of the English constitution, declaring that he never disowned any thing that he had written. Jefferies, several times, ordered him to sit down; but he still went on. “My lord,” said he, “I have matter of law to urge for my client.” He then proceeded to cite several cases wherein it had been adjudged that words ought to be taken in the milder sense, and not to be strained by inuendos. ‘Well,’ said Jefferies, when he had done, ‘you have had your say.’

Mr. Williams and Mr. Phipps said nothing, for they saw it was to no purpose. At last, Baxter himself said, “My lord, I think I can clearly answer all that is laid to my charge, and I shall do it briefly. The sum is contained in these few papers, to which I shall add a little by testimony.” But he would not hear a word. At length, the chief justice summed up the matter in a long and fulsome harangue. “It was notoriously known,” he said, “there had been a design to ruin the king and the nation. The old game had been renewed; and this person had been the main incendiary. He is as modest now as can be; but time was, when no man was so ready at, ‘Bind your kings in chains, and your nobles in fetters of iron;’ and ‘To your tents, O Israel.’ Gentlemen, for God’s sake, don’t let us be gulled

¹ Baxter’s MSS.

twice in an age." And when he concluded, he told the jury; "that if they in their consciences believed he meant the bishops and clergy of the church of England, in the passages which the information referred to, and he could mean nothing else; they must find him guilty. If not, they must find him not guilty." When he had done, Baxter said to him, "Does your lordship think any jury will pretend to pass a verdict upon me upon such a trial?" "I'll warrant you, Mr. Baxter," said he; "don't you trouble yourself about that."

The jury immediately laid their heads together at the bar, and found him *guilty*. As he was going from the bar, Baxter told the lord chief justice, who had so loaded him with reproaches, and still continued them, that a predecessor of his, had had other thoughts of him; upon which he replied, "that there was not an honest man in England but what took him for a great knave." Baxter had subpoenaed several clergymen, who appeared in court, but were of no use to him, through the violence of the chief justice. The trial being over, Sir Henry Ashurst led him through the crowd, and conveyed him away in his coach.^a

Between the time of his trial, and of his being brought up for sentence, Baxter employed what influence he possessed, to procure a more favourable result than he had reason to expect from the temper of Jefferies. He addressed himself to a nobleman of influence at court, whose name does not appear, and also to the Bishop of London, entreating them to interpose on his behalf. His letter to the bishop, is worthy of being inserted entire. It gives a calm and correct view of his case, shows his attachment to the church, the labour he had bestowed to promote its interests; and entreats that he might yet be heard before a more impartial and competent tribunal.

^a Sir Henry Ashurst, who acted in this truly Christian and noble manner to Baxter, seeing his counsel, standing by him at his trial, and conveying him home in his own carriage, was the son of one of his oldest and best friends, and in all respects worthy of the family whose honours he sustained and increased. He married Lady Diana, the fifth daughter of William Lord Paget, by whom he had several children. She died in August, 1707, when a funeral sermon was preached on the occasion by the Rev. Richard Mayo. Sir Henry was the intimate friend and correspondent of the Rev. Philip Henry. He published a short life of the Rev. Nathaniel Heywood, the ejected minister of Ormskirk, which shows that he was not ashamed of his connexion with that despised race of confessors. Sir Henry died at his seat at Waterstoke, near Coventry, on the 13th of April, 1710-11.—See the Lives of Philip and Mathew Henry, by Mr. Williams.

"My Lord,

"Being by episcopal ordination vowed to the sacred ministry, and bound not to desert it, when by painful diseases and debility I waited for my change, I durst not spend my last days in idleness, and knew not how better to serve the church than by writing a 'Paraphrase on the New Testament,' purposely fitted to the use of the most ignorant, and the reconciling of doctrinal differences about texts variously expounded. Far was it from my design to reproach the church, or draw men from it, having therein pleaded for diocesans as successors of the apostles over many churches; though I confute the overthrowing opinion which setteth them over but one church, denying the parishes to be churches. But some persons offended, it is like, at some other passages in the book, have thought fit to say that I scandalised the church of England; and an information being exhibited in the King's Bench, at a trial before a common jury, on my owning the book, they forthwith found me guilty without hearing my defence, and I have cause to expect a severe judgment, the beginning of the next term. All this is on a charge that my unquestionable words were meant by me to scandalise the church, which I utterly deny. If God will have me end a painful, weary life, by such a suffering, I hope I shall finish my course with joy; but my conscience commandeth me to value the church's strength and honour before my life, and I ought not to be silent under the scandal of suffering as an enemy to it. Nor would I have my sufferings increase men's prejudice against it. I have lived in its communion, and conformed to as much as the Act of Uniformity obliged one in my condition; I have drawn multitudes into the church, and written to justify the church and ministry against separation, when the Paraphrase was in the press: and my displeasing writings (whose eagerness and faults I justify not) have been my earnest pleadings for the healing of a divided people, and the strengthening of the church by love and concord on possible terms. I owe satisfaction to you that are my diocesan, and therefore presume to send you a copy of the information against me, and my answer to the particular accusations; humbly entreating you to spare so much time from your weighty business as to peruse them, or to refer them to be perused for your satisfaction. I would fain send with them one sheet, (in vindication of my accused life and loyalty, and of positive proofs that I meant not to accuse the church of England, and of the danger of exposing the clergy to charges of thoughts

and meanings as prejudice shall conjecture,) but for fear of displeasing you by length. For expositions of Scripture to be thus tried by such juries, as often as they are but called seditious, is not the old way of managing church differences; and of what consequence you will easily judge. If your lordship be satisfied that I am no enemy to the church, and that my punishment will not be for its interest, I hope you will vouchsafe to present my petition to his majesty, that my appeal to the church may suspend the sentence till my diocesan, or whom his majesty shall appoint, may hear me, and report their sense of the cause. By which your lordship will, I doubt not, many ways serve the well-fare of the church, as well as

“Oblige your languishing

“Humble Servant.”^x

It does not appear that these applications, or any other influence employed, was of much avail. It will not be thought that he received a mitigated sentence, though perhaps this was the case.

On the 29th of June, he had judgment given against him. He was fined five hundred marks, condemned to lie in prison till he paid it, and bound to his good behaviour for seven years. It is said that Jefferies proposed a corporal punishment, namely, whipping through the city; but his brethren would not accede to it. In consequence of which, the fine and imprisonment were agreed to.^y

Thus ended this strange, comic tragedy; for such it must have appeared to be, even to the parties most deeply interested in the result. Had Jefferies intended to bring all law and justice into contempt, or to render judicial proceedings the object of disgust throughout the kingdom, he could not have adopted a more effectual method than the conduct he pursued at Baxter's trial. The apology which has sometimes been offered for this unjust judge, that his cruelties were perpetrated to please his royal master, will not, I am afraid, stand the test of a rigid examination. That James was cold, and cruel too, cannot be doubted; but the conduct of Jefferies on this and similar occasions, seems evidently to have arisen from his own nature, which was savage, vulgar, and unrelenting. He was a fit instrument for doing the work of a despotic government; but he was also admirably qualified for rendering that government an object of universal

^x Baxter's MSS.

^y Ibid.

hatred and loathing. Nothing, probably, contributed more effectually to the downfall of James's authority, and the utter extinction of his influence in the country, than the brutal outrages of this man. They may be said to have commenced with his treatment of Baxter, and to have terminated with his western campaign. His track was marked with blood and murder, which at last brought down the vengeance of Heaven on his infatuated employers, and led to the final deliverance of his oppressed and injured country.

On the legal merits of Baxter's trial, there can now be but one opinion. It is highly probable, as has been already remarked, that he was singled out to be the first victim, and with a view of striking terror into all his brethren. His services to the church, by his writings in her defence, and by the division which he mainly contributed to keep up among the dissenters, were very considerable. If such a man, therefore, must be severely punished, and that for one of the least offensive of his publications, what might others expect? The notes fastened on, certainly contain no sedition. They do not even name the bishops, the constitution, or the services of the church of England. It was therefore entirely by *inuendo*, or insinuation, as the counsel alleged, that his words were construed to be an attack on the prelates and liturgy of the church. As he was a believer in bishops, and no enemy to a liturgy, he could only refer to unsuitable persons holding the office, or to the abuse of the forms of the church. To constitute allusions to such things in a commentary on the Scriptures, high legal offences, endangering the liberty or lives of the subjects, shows either that the court was at a loss for grounds of prosecution, or that even at this early period of James's reign, a deep-laid plot had been formed to ruin the dissenters, and, with them, the liberties of England.

At the end of the second edition of the Paraphrase, he left the following note to be inserted: "Reader,—It's like you have heard how I was, for this book, by the instigation of Sir Roger L'Estrange and some of the clergy, imprisoned nearly two years, by Sir George Jefferies, Sir Francis Wilkins, and the rest of the judges of the King's Bench, after their preparatory restraints, and attendance under the most reproachful words, as if I had been the most odious person living, and not suffered at all to speak for myself. Had not the king taken off my fine, I had continued in prison till death. Because many desire to know what all this was for, I have here written the eight accusations

which (after the great clergy search of my book) were brought in as seditious. I have altered never a word accused, that you may know the worst. What I said of the murderers of Christ, and the hypocrite Pharisees and their sins, the judge said I meant of the church of England, though I have written for it, and still communicate with it." Then follow the passages of Scripture, which have been given in a preceding note. "These," he adds, "were all, by one that knoweth his own name, put into their hands, with some accusations out of Rom. xiii., as against my life; but their discretion forbade them to use or name them."

The conduct of L'Estrange, in promoting the prosecution of Baxter, is only in harmony with other parts of his character.⁵ He was one of the most unprincipled, mercenary scribblers of the age to which he belonged; a man who stuck at nothing which the interests of arbitrary power and high-church politics required. To such a man, Richard Baxter afforded delicious food: he had often before attacked him by his pen; he now employed a more formidable and dangerous weapon, the attorney-general and Lord Chief Justice Jefferies.

The conduct of the clergyman referred to, understood to be Dr. Sherlock, who suggested a charge of treason, founded on the annotations on the 13th chapter of the Romans, is more difficult to be accounted for. There was not sufficient ground for the charge, otherwise it would doubtless have been adopted. But what could instigate Sherlock to such a proceeding, affecting the life of a venerable servant of Christ, must be left to the disclosures of another day. We would hope Baxter may have

⁵ Echard relates a curious anecdote of Baxter and L'Estrange. "When Dr. Sharp, afterwards archbishop of York, was rector of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, L'Estrange, Baxter, and the notorious Miles Pranse, who was convicted of perjury in the affair of Sir Edmund Godfrey, all approached the communion table, on a sacrament day; L'Estrange at one end, Pranse at the other, and Baxter in the middle. Baxter and Pranse, from their situation, received before L'Estrange, who, when it came to his turn, taking the bread in his hand, asked the doctor if he knew who that man was, pointing to Pranse. To which the doctor answering in the negative, L'Estrange replied, 'That is Miles Pranse; and I here challenge him, and solemnly declare, before God and this congregation, that what that man hath sworn or published concerning me is totally and absolutely false; and may this sacrament be my damnation if all this declaration be not true.' Pranse was silent; Mr. Baxter took special notice of it; and Dr. Sharp declared he would have refused Pranse the sacrament, had the challenge been made in time."—*Echard's Church Hist.* What a scene this was for a communion table! I am surprised it did not for ever disgust Baxter at occasional conformity, and teach him the importance of knowing something about the persons with whom he held religious fellowship in this sacred ordinance.

been under some mistake, and that Sherlock was not guilty of such base and atrocious conduct.

Baxter being unable to pay the fine, and aware that, though he did, he might soon be prosecuted again, on some equally unjust pretence, went to prison. Here he was visited by his friends, and even by some of the respectable clergy of the church, who sympathised with his sufferings, and deplored the injustice he received. He continued in this imprisonment nearly two years; during which he enjoyed more quietness than he had done for many years before.

An imprisonment of two years would have been found very trying and irksome to most men. To Baxter, however, it does not appear to have proved so painful, though he had now lost his beloved wife, who had frequently before been his companion in solitude and suffering. His friends do not appear to have neglected or forgotten him. The following extract of a letter from the well-known Matthew Henry, presents a pleasing view of the manner in which he endured bonds and afflictions for Christ's sake. It is addressed to his father, and dated the 17th of November, 1685, when Baxter had been several months confined. Mr. Williams justly remarks, "It is one of those pictures of days which are past, which, if rightly viewed, may produce lasting and beneficial effects: emotions of sacred sorrow for the iniquity of persecution; and animating praise, that the demon in these happy days of tranquillity, is restrained though not destroyed."

"I went into Southwark, to Mr. Baxter. I was to wait upon him once before, and then he was busy. I found him in pretty comfortable circumstances, though a prisoner, in a private house near the prison, attended on by his own man and maid. My good friend, Mr. S[amuel] L[awrence], went with me. He is in as good health as one can expect; and, methinks, looks better, and speaks heartier, than when I saw him last. The token you sent, he would by no means be persuaded to accept, and was almost angry when I pressed it, from one outed as well as himself. He said he did not use to receive; and I understand since, his need is not great.

"We sat with him about an hour. I was very glad to find that he so much approved of my present circumstances. He said he knew not why young men might not improve as well, as by travelling abroad. He inquired for his Shropshire friends, and observed, that of those gentlemen who were with him at

Wem, he hears of none whose sons tread in their fathers' steps but Colonel Hunt's. He inquired about Mr. Macworth's, and Mr. Lloyd's (of Aston) children. He gave us some good counsel to prepare for trials; and said the best preparation for them was, a life of faith, and a constant course of self-denial. He thought it harder constantly to deny temptations to sensual lusts and pleasures, than to resist one single temptation to deny Christ for fear of suffering: the former requiring such constant watchfulness; however, after the former, the latter will be the easier. He said, we who are young are apt to count upon great things, but we must not look for them; and much more to this purpose. He said he thought dying by sickness usually much more painful and dreadful, than dying a violent death; especially considering the extraordinary supports which those have who suffer for righteousness' sake."^a

When it was seen that Baxter would neither pay the fine, nor petition for his release, a private offer appears to have been made through Lord Powis, that the king would grant it as matter of favour.^b A person of the name of Williams, at the end of 1686, offered to assist him, through that nobleman, in procuring his liberty. Baxter appears to have had some suspicion, either of the man, or of his design; whose object at last appeared to be to get money, as he afterwards made a demand of 38*l.* for his trouble. Baxter resisted this demand, and applied to Lord Powis to know what influence he had in procuring his release. His lordship declared solemnly, as in the presence of God, he had had no influence whatever, and deserved no reward.^c Lord Powis, however, appears to have been the person who managed this affair, and obtained Baxter's deliverance from prison, though not his release from the bond of his good behaviour. It is probable that Baxter owed the favour he experienced to the change in the disposition of the court towards the dissenters generally at this time, owing to the difficulties experienced from the opposition to Popery on the part of the church, and the hope that by courting the dissenters, their fears might be quieted, and the object more easily secured.

^a For this letter I am indebted to the 'Memoirs of the Rev. Matthew Henry,' p. 22, by my respected friend Mr. Williams, of Shrewsbury. Both in this, and in his enlarged 'Life of Philip Henry,' he has conferred great obligations on all the lovers of truly Christian and evangelical biography. Both works are replete with matter calculated to produce the most salutary influence on all classes of our religious community.

^b Penitent Confession, p. 40.

^c Baxter's MSS.

On the 24th of November, 1686, Sir Samuel Astrey sent his warrant to the keeper of the King's Bench prison, to discharge him. He gave sureties, however, for his good behaviour, his majesty declaring for his satisfaction, that it should not be interpreted a breach of good behaviour for him to reside in London, which was not consistent with the Oxford act. After this release, he continued to live some time within the rules of the Bench ; till, on the 28th of February, 1687, he removed to his house in the Charter-house-yard ; and again, as far as his health would permit, assisted Mr. Sylvester in his public labours.^d

^d Calamy, vol. i. p. 375.

CHAPTER XIII.

1687—1691.

Baxter's Review of his own Life and Opinions, and Account of his matured Sentiments and Feelings—Remarks on that Review—The Public Events of his last Years—The Revolution—The Act of Toleration—Baxter's sense of the Articles required to be subscribed by this Act—Agreement of the Presbyterian and Independent Ministers of London—Last Years of Baxter—Preaches for Sylvester—His Writings—Visited by Dr. Calamy—Account of his last Sickness and Death, by Bates and Sylvester—Calumnious Report respecting the State of his Mind—Vindicated by Sylvester—Buried in Christ-church—His Will—William Baxter—Funeral Sermons by Sylvester and Bates—Sketch of his Character by the latter—Concluding Observations on the Characteristic Piety of Baxter.

HAVING brought down the narrative of this venerable man's life and times nearly to the close of his active career, I apprehend this is the proper place to introduce his own review of the progress of his mind and character. He who was so attentive to others, and who drew the character of many, was not indifferent about himself, and exercised a much more rigid scrutiny into his own principles and conduct than he ever employed on those of his fellow men. He strongly recommended self-examination and self-judgment; it will now appear how conscientiously he practised them. The virtue of candour he ever enforced, with all the energy and eloquence of which he was master; and in the development, which he furnishes of the state of his own mind, and of his most secret thoughts, he shows how he was trained to practise it.

In his case, we have an advantage which is not frequently enjoyed in writing the lives of distinguished individuals. We are furnished with his own views at length, not merely of his life and labours, but of the gradual and successive changes of his mind. Had this been the production of a weak, self-con-

ceited man, or of one little accustomed to trace the workings of his intellectual and moral principles, it would have been worth very little ; but being the work of a man of deep piety, unfeigned humility, and of the most discriminating powers of mind ; of one who studied himself, as well as others, with the profoundest attention, and who was more ready to disclose his own failures and imperfections, than to speak of his own virtues, it is exceedingly valuable. As he has left it with the express view of enabling posterity to form a correct idea of himself ; of a man who was warmly applauded by one party, - and not less maligned by another, it would be altogether wrong to withhold it, or to give it in any other words than his own. It was written towards the latter part of his life, and comprises an extensive review of his experience, opinions, and writings. I omit only what I conceive to be extraneous or now unnecessary, and reserve his opinion of his writings, with a few other passages, for the second part of this work. If the reader make a little allowance for a slight appearance of egotism and garrulity, he will probably find this among the most instructive parts of the life of Baxter. It is the summary of his matured views, after a long and busy career, in which he had seen much both of the world and of the church.

“ Because it is soul experience which those who urge me to this kind of writing expect, that I should, especially, communicate to others ; and I have said little of God’s dealings with my soul since the time of my younger years, I shall only give the reader so much satisfaction as to acquaint him truly what change God hath made upon my mind and heart since those unriper times, and wherein I now differ in judgment and disposition from myself. For any more particular account of heart occurrences, and God’s operations on me, I think it somewhat unsavoury to recite them, seeing God’s dealings are much the same with all his servants in the main, and points wherein he varieth, are usually so small, that I think such not fit to be repeated. Nor have I any thing extraordinary to glory in, which is not common to the rest of my brethren, who have the same spirit, and are servants of the same Lord. The true reasons why I do adventure so far upon the censure of the world as to tell them wherein the case is altered with me, is, that I may take off young inexperienced Christians from over confidence in their first apprehensions, or overvaluing their first degrees of grace, or too much applauding and following unfurnished, inexperi-

enced men ; and that they may be directed what mind and course of life to prefer, by the judgment of one that hath tried both before them.

“The temper of my mind hath somewhat altered with the temper of my body. When I was young I was more vigorous, affectionate, and fervent, in preaching, conference, and prayer, than, ordinarily, I can be now. My style was more extemporate and lax, but, by the advantage of warmth, and a very familiar moving voice and utterance, my preaching then did more affect the auditory, than it did many of the last years before I gave over preaching. But what I delivered then was much more raw, and had more passages that would not bear the trial of accurate judgments ; and my discourses had both less substance and less judgment than of late.

“My understanding was then quicker, and could more easily manage any thing that was newly presented to it upon a sudden ; but it is since better furnished, and acquainted with the ways of truth and error, and with a multitude of particular mistakes of the world, which then I was the more in danger of, because I had only the faculty of knowing them, but did not actually know them. I was then like a man of a quick understanding, that was to travel a way which he never went before, or to cast up an account which he never laboured in before, or to play on an instrument of music which he never saw before. I am now like one of somewhat a slower understanding, who is travelling a way which he hath often gone, and is casting up an account which he hath ready at hand, and that is playing on an instrument which he hath frequently used : so that I can very confidently say my judgment is much sounder and firmer now than it was then : for though I am now as competent a judge of the actings of my own understanding as then, I can judge better of the effects. When I peruse the writings which I wrote in my younger years, I can find the footsteps of my unfurnished mind, and of my emptiness and insufficiency : so that the man that followed my judgment then, was likelier to have been misled by me than he that should follow it now.

“In my younger years, my trouble, for sin was most about my actual failings ; but now I am much more troubled for inward defects and omissions, for want of the vital duties or graces of the soul. My daily trouble is so much for my ignorance of God, weakness of belief, want of greater love to God, strangeness to him and to the life to come, and for want of a greater

willingness to die, and more longing to be with God in heaven, that I take not some immoralities, though very great, to be in themselves so great and odious sins, if they could be found separate from these. Had I all the riches of the world, how gladly should I give them for a fuller knowledge, belief, and love, of God and everlasting glory ! These wants are the greatest burden of my life, which oft maketh my life itself a burden. I cannot find any hope of reaching so high in these enjoyments, while I am in the flesh, as I once hoped before this time to have attained ; which maketh me the wearier of this sinful world, that is honoured with so little of the knowledge of God.

“ Heretofore, I placed much of my religion in tenderness of heart, grieving for sin, and penitential tears ; and less of it in the love of God, in studying his goodness, and engaging in his joyful praises, than now I do. Then I was little sensible of the greatness and excellency of love and praise, though I coldly spake the same words as now I do. I am less troubled for want of grief and tears (though I value humility, and refuse not needful humiliation), but my conscience now looketh at love and delight in God, and praising him, as the top of all my religious duties ; for which it is that I value and use the rest.

“ My judgment is much more for frequent and serious meditation on the heavenly blessedness than it was in my younger days. I then thought that a sermon on the attributes of God, and the joys of heaven, was not the most excellent ; and was wont to say, ‘ Every body knoweth that God is great and good, and that heaven is a blessed place ; I had rather hear how I may attain it.’ Nothing pleased me so well as the doctrine of regeneration and the marks of sincerity, because these things were suitable to me in that state ; but now I had rather read, hear, meditate, on God and heaven, than on any other subject. I perceive that it is the object which altereth and elevateth the mind ; which will resemble that which it most frequently feedeth on. It is not only useful to our comfort to be much in heaven in believing thoughts ; it must animate all our other duties, and fortify us against every temptation and sin. ‘ The love of the end is the poise or spring which setteth every wheel a-going, and must put us on to all the means ; for a man is no more a Christian indeed than he is heavenly.

“ Formerly I knew much less than now, and yet was not half so much acquainted with my ignorance : I had a great delight in the daily, new discoveries which I made, and of the light which

shined in upon me, like a man that cometh into a country where he never was before ; but I little knew either how imperfectly I understood those very points whose discovery so much delighted me, or how much might be said against them, or how many things I was yet a stranger to. I now find far greater darkness in all things, and perceive how very little we know in comparison of that of which we are ignorant. I have, therefore, far meaner thoughts of my own understanding, though I must needs know that it is better furnished than it was then.

“ I now see more good and more evil than heretofore I did. I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were, but have more imperfections ; and that nearer approach and fuller trial do make the best appear more weak and faulty than their admirers at a distance think. I find that few are so bad as either malicious enemies or censorious, separating professors do imagine. In some, indeed, I find that human nature is corrupted into a greater likeness to devils than I once thought any on earth had been ; but even in the wicked, usually, there is more for grace to make advantage of, and more to testify for God and holiness, than I once believed there had been.

“ I less admire gifts of utterance and the bare profession of religion than I once did ; and have much more charity for many who by the want of gifts do make an obscurer profession. I once thought that almost all who could pray movingly and fluently, and talk well of religion, had been saints. But experience hath opened to me what odious crimes may consist with high profession ; while I have met with divers obscure persons, not noted for any extraordinary profession or forwardness in religion, but only to live a quiet, blameless life, whom I have after found to have long lived, as far as I could discern, a truly godly and sanctified life ; only their prayers and duties were, by accident, kept secret from other men’s observation. Yet he that upon this pretence would confound the godly and the ungodly, may as well go about to lay heaven and hell together.

“ I am not so narrow in my special love as heretofore : being less censorious, and taking more than I did for saints, it must needs follow that I love more as saints than I did formerly. I think it not lawful to put that man off with bare church communion, and such common love which I must allow the wicked, who professeth himself a true Christian, by such a profession as I cannot disprove. I am not so narrow in my principles of church communion as once I was. I more plainly perceive the

differences between the church as congregate, or visible, and as regenerate, or mystical. I can now distinguish between sincerity and profession; that a credible profession is proof sufficient of a man's title to church admission; and that the profession is credible *in foro ecclesiæ*, which is not disproved. I am not for narrowing the church more than Christ himself alloweth us; nor for robbing him of any of his flock. I am more sensible how much it is the will of Christ, that every man be the chooser or refuser of his own felicity, and that it lieth most on his own hands whether he will have communion with the church or not, and that if he be an hypocrite, it is himself that will bear the loss.

“ Yet I am more apprehensive than ever of the great use and need of ecclesiastical discipline; what a sin it is in the pastors of the church to make no distinction, but by bare names and sacraments, and to force all the unmeet, against their wills, to church communion: though the ignorant and erroneous may sometimes be forced to hear instruction. What a great dishonour to Christ it is, when the church is as vicious as Pagan and Mahometan assemblies, and differs from them only in ceremony and name!

“ I am much more sensible how prone many young professors are to spiritual pride, and self-conceitedness, and unruliness, and division, and so to prove the grief of their teachers, and fire-brands in the church; and how much of a minister's work lieth in preventing this, and humbling and confirming such young inexperienced professors, and keeping them in order in their progress in religion. Yet I am more sensible of the sin and mischief of using men cruelly in matters of religion, and of pretending men's good and the order of the church, for acts of inhumanity or uncharitableness. Such know not their own infirmity, nor yet the nature of pastoral government, which ought to be paternal and by love; nor do they know the way to win a soul, or to maintain the church's peace.

“ My soul is much more afflicted with the thoughts of this miserable world, and more drawn out in desire of its conversion, than heretofore. I was wont to look but little further than England in my prayers, not considering the state of the rest of the world; or if I prayed for the conversion of the Jews, that was almost all. But now, as I better understand the case of the world, and the method of the Lord's prayer; there is nothing in the world that lieth so heavy upon my heart, as the thought

of the miserable nations of the earth. It is the most astonishing part of all God's providence to me, that he so far forsaketh almost all the world, and confineth his special favour to so few; that so small a part of the world hath the profession of Christianity, in comparison of heathens, Mahometans, and other infidels; that among professed Christians there are so few that are saved from gross delusions, and have any competent knowledge; and that among those there are so few that are seriously religious, and who truly set their hearts on heaven. I cannot be affected so much with the calamities of my own relations or the land of my nativity, as with the case of the heathen, Mahometan, and ignorant nations of the earth. No part of my prayers are so deeply serious as that for the conversion of the infidel and ungodly world, that God's name may be sanctified, and his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Nor was I ever before so sensible what a plague the division of languages is, which hindereth our speaking to them for their conversion. Nor what a great sin tyranny is, which keepeth out the Gospel from most of the nations of the world. Could we but go among Tartars, Turks, and heathens, and speak their language, I should be but little troubled for the silencing of eighteen hundred ministers at once, in England, nor for all the rest that were cast out here, and in Scotland, and Ireland; there being no employment in the world so desirable in my eyes as to labour for the winning of such miserable souls; which maketh me greatly honour Mr. John Elliot, the apostle of the Indians in New England, and whoever else have laboured in such work.

"I am more deeply afflicted for the disagreements of Christians than I was when I was a younger Christian. Except the case of the infidel world, nothing is so bad and grievous to my thoughts as the case of divided churches: and therefore I am more deeply sensible of the sinfulness of those prelates and pastors of churches who are the principal cause of these divisions. Oh! how many millions of souls are kept by them in ignorance and ungodliness, and deluded by faction, as if it were true religion! How is the conversion of infidels hindered by them, and Christ and religion heinously dishonoured! The contentions between the Greek church and the Roman, the Papists and the Protestants, the Lutherans and the Calvinists, have wofully hindered the kingdom of Christ.

"I am farther than ever I was from expecting great matters of unity, splendour, or prosperity, to the church on earth, or

that saints should dream of a kingdom of this world, or flatter themselves with the hope of a golden age, or of reigning over the ungodly, till there be a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. On the contrary, I am more apprehensive that suffering must be the church's most ordinary lot; and true Christians must be self-denying cross-bearers, even where there are none but formal, nominal Christians to be the cross-makers: for though, ordinarily, God would have vicissitudes of summer and winter, day and night, that the church may grow externally in the summer of prosperity, and intensively and radically in the winter of adversity; yet, usually, their night is longer than their day, and that day itself hath its storms and tempests.

"I do not lay so great a stress upon the external modes and forms of worship, as many young professors do. I have suspected myself, as perhaps the reader may do, that this is from a cooling and declining of my former zeal, though the truth is, I never much complied with men of that mind; but I find that judgment and charity are the causes of it, as far as I am able to discover. I cannot be so narrow in my principles of church communion as many are, that are so much for a liturgy, or so much against it; so much for ceremonies, or so much against them, that they can hold communion with no church that is not of their mind and way.

"If I were among the Greeks, the Lutherans, the Independents, yea, the Anabaptists, owning no heresy, nor setting themselves against charity and peace, I would sometimes hold occasional communion with them as Christians; if they would give me leave, without forcing me to any sinful subscription or action, though my most usual communion should be with that society which I thought most agreeable to the word of God if I were free to choose. I cannot be of their opinion, that think God will not accept him that prayeth by the Common Prayer-book; and that such forms are a self-invented worship, which God rejecteth; nor yet can I be of their mind that say the like of extempore prayers.

"I am much less regardful of the approbation of man, and set much lighter by contempt or applause, than I did long ago. I am oft suspicious that this is not only from the increase of self-denial and humility, but partly from my being glutted and surfeited with human applause. All worldly things appear most vain and unsatisfactory when we have tried them most: but

though I feel that this hath some hand in the effect, yet, as far as I can perceive, the knowledge of man's nothingness, and God's transcendent greatness, with whom it is that I have most to do, and the sense of the brevity of human things, and the nearness of eternity, are the principal causes of this effect; which some have imputed to self-conceitedness and moroseness.

"I am more and more pleased with a solitary life, and though in a way of self-denial, I could submit to the most public life for the service of God, when he requireth it, and would not be unprofitable, that I might be private, yet I must confess it is much more pleasing to myself to be retired from the world, and to have very little to do with men, and to converse with God and conscience and good books.

"Though I was never much tempted to the sin of covetousness, yet my fear of dying was wont to tell me that I was not sufficiently loosened from the world: but I find that it is comparatively very easy to me to be loose from this world, but hard to live by faith above. To despise earth, is easy to me; but not so easy to be acquainted and conversant with heaven. I have nothing in this world which I could not easily let go; but to get satisfying apprehensions of the other world is the great and grievous difficulty.

"I am much more apprehensive than long ago of the odiousness and danger of the sin of pride. Scarcely any sin appeareth more odious to me, having daily more acquaintance with the lamentable naughtiness and frailty of man, and of the mischiefs of that sin; and especially in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical. I think so far as any man is proud, he is kin to the devil, and utterly a stranger to God and to himself. It is a wonder that it should be a possible sin to men that still carry about with them, in soul and body, such humbling matter to remedy as we all do.

"I am much more sensible than heretofore, of the breadth, and length, and depth, of the radical, universal, odious sin of selfishness, and therefore have written so much against it; and of the excellency and necessity of self-denial, and of a public mind, and of loving our neighbours as ourselves.

"I am more solicitous than I have been about my duty to God, and less solicitous about his dealings with me; being assured that he will do all things well; acknowledging the goodness of all the declarations of his holiness, even in the punishment of man; and knowing that there is no rest but in the will and goodness of God.

“ Though my works were never such as could be any temptation to me to dream of obliging God by proper merit in commutative justice, yet one of the most ready, constant, undoubted evidences of my uprightness and interest in his covenant, is, the consciousness of my living devoted to him. I the more easily believe the pardon of my failings through my Redeemer, while I know that I serve no other master, and that I know no other end, or trade, or business, but that I am employed in his work, and make it the object of my life to live to him in the world, notwithstanding my infirmities. This bent and business of my life, with my longing desires after perfection, in the knowledge and love of God, and in a holy and heavenly mind, are the two standing, constant, discernible evidences which most put me out of doubt of my sincerity. I find that constant action and duty are what keep the first always in sight; and constant wants and weaknesses, and coming short of my desires, do make these desires the more troublesome, and so the more easily still perceived.

“ Though my habitual judgment, resolution, and scope of life, be still the same, yet I find a great mutability as to the actual apprehensions and degrees of grace; and consequently find that so mutable a thing as the mind of man, would never keep itself if God were not its keeper. When I have been seriously musing upon the reasons of Christianity, with the concurrent evidences methodically placed in their just advantages before my eyes, I am so clear in my belief of the Christian verities, that Satan hath little room for a temptation; but sometimes when he hath on a sudden set some temptation before me, when the foresaid evidences have been out of the way, or less upon my thoughts, he hath, by such surprises, amazed me, and weakened my faith in the present act. So also as to the love of God, and trusting in him, sometimes when the motives are clearly apprehended, the duty is more easy and delightful; and at other times I am merely passive and dull, if not guilty of actual despondency and distrust.

“ Thus much of the alterations of my soul since my younger years, I thought best to give the reader, instead of all those experiences and actual motions and affections, which I suppose him rather to have expected an account of. And having transcribed thus much of a life which God hath read, and conscience hath read, and must further read, I humbly lament it, and beg pardon of it, as sinful, and too unequal and unprofitable. I warn

the reader to amend that in his own, which he findeth to have been amiss in mine; confessing, also, that much hath been amiss which I have not here particularly mentioned, and that I have not lived according to the abundant mercies of the Lord. But what I have recorded hath been especially to perform my vows, and declare his praise to all generations, who hath filled up my days with his invaluable favours, and bound me to bless his name for ever. I have done it also to prevent the defective performance of this task by some overvaluing brethren, who I know intended it, and were unfitter to do it than myself; and for such reasons as Junius, Scultetus, Thuanus, and many others, have done the like before me. The principal of which are these three: 1. As travellers and seamen use to do after great adventures and deliverances, I hereby satisfy my conscience, in praising the blessed Author of all those undeserved mercies which have filled up my life. 2. Foreseeing, by the attempts of Bishop Morley, what Prelatists and Papists are likely to say of me, when they have none to contradict them, and how possible it is that those who never knew me may believe them, though they have lost their hopes with all the rest, I take it to be my duty to be so faithful to that stock of reputation which God hath entrusted me with, as to defend it at the rate of opening the truth. Such as have made the world believe that Luther consulted with the devil, that Calvin was a stigmatised sodomite, that Beza turned Papist, &c., to blast their labours, I know are very likely to say any thing respecting me, which their interest or malice tell them will any way advantage their cause, to make my writings unprofitable when I am dead. 3. That young Christians may be warned by the mistakes and failings of my unriper times, to learn in patience, live in watchfulness, and not be fierce and proudly confident in their first conceptions; to reverence ripe, experienced age, and to beware of taking such for their chief guides, as have nothing but immature and inexperienced judgments, with fervent affections and free and confident expressions; but to learn of them that have with holiness, study, time, and trial, looked about them, as well on one side as on the other, and attained to clearness and impartiality in their judgments.

“Having mentioned the changes which I think were for the better, I must add, that as I confessed many of my sins before, so I have been guilty of many since which, because materially

they seemed small, have had the less resistance, and yet on the review, do trouble me more than if they had been greater, done in ignorance. It can be no small sin formally, which is committed against knowledge and conscience and deliberation, whatever excuse it have. To have sinned while I preached and wrote against sin, and had such abundant and great obligations from God, and made so many promises against it, doth lay me very low : not so much in fear of hell, as in great displeasure against myself, and such self-abhorrence as would cause revenge upon myself, were it not forbidden. When God forgiveth me, I cannot forgive myself ; especially for my rash words or deeds, by which I have seemed injurious and less tender and kind than I should have been to my near and dear relations, whose love abundantly obliged me. When such are dead, though we never differed in point of interest, or any other matter, every sour or cross, provoking word which I gave them, maketh me almost irreconcilable to myself, and tells me how repentance brought some of old to pray to the dead whom they had wronged, to forgive them, in the hurry of their passion.

“That which I named before, by-the-by, is grown one of my great diseases ; I have lost much of that zeal which I had to propagate any truths to others, save the mere fundamentals. When I perceive people or ministers to think they know what indeed they do not, which is too common, and to dispute those things which they never thoroughly studied, or expect that I should debate the case with them, as if an hour’s talk would serve instead of an acute understanding and seven years’ study, I have no zeal to make them of my opinion, but an impatience of continuing discourse with them on such subjects, and am apt to be silent or to turn to something else ; which, though there be some reason for it, I feel cometh from a want of zeal for the truth, and from an impatient temper of mind. I am ready to think that people should quickly understand all in a few words ; and if they cannot, to despair of them, and leave them to themselves. I know the more that this is sinful in me, because it is partly so in other things, even about the faults of my servants or other inferiors ; if three or four times warning do no good to them, I am much tempted to despair of them, turn them away, and leave them to themselves.

“I mention all these distempers that my faults may be a warning to others to take heed, as they call on myself for repentance and watchfulness. O Lord ! for the merits, and sacrifice, and

intercession of Christ, be merciful to me, a sinner, and forgive my known and unknown sins !”*

Thus far Baxter's review of his own experience and opinions. —If ever a human being was made transparent by its own simplicity and integrity, we may be justified in saying it was Richard Baxter. In this lengthened and rigid description of himself, he may be regarded as furnishing us with that window in the breast, for which the philosopher so ardently, but vainly, sighed, and by which he has enabled us to see all its movements and hidden springs. Making every allowance for the deceitfulness of the human heart, and that partiality to ourselves, which constitutes one of the leading evils of our nature, no reasonable doubt can be entertained that Baxter has given a very fair and full view of his principles and character. It is evident that his judgment of himself leaned to the severe rather than to the lax side ; and that while he properly wished to be acquitted before men of evils and crimes of which he had not been guilty, and the admission of which would have fixed reproach on the Gospel, he was chiefly desirous that no over estimate should be formed of his attainments as a Christian.

His solemn warnings to the young and inexperienced, against being led away by novelties, and by rash, inexperienced teachers, are not to be regarded as the doting of an old man, peevish from his own waning popularity, or from being overshadowed by the splendid attractions of others. He had had much experience among the professors of religion, over many of whom he had been compelled to mourn. His instructions are as applicable now as ever, when so many are injured by want of sobriety of mind, and are ready to be tossed about by every wind of doctrine ; when Christianity has come to be regarded as a new discovery, which nobody has understood till lately, and the Bible considered as a book of enigmas, capable of the wildest solutions, and the most fanciful combinations. To follow truth, wherever it may lead, is the duty of all Christians ; to have the fortitude to stop where its evidence ceases ; not to substitute our own fancies in the place of the revelation of God ; to be ready to receive from all, and to refuse submitting to the dictation of any, ought no less to be our study and our aim.

The love of controversy is hateful, the fear of it is pusillani-

* Life, part i. pp. 124—138.

mous. Both ought to be avoided by every rightly constituted mind. No man of his age engaged in it to so great an extent as Baxter, and yet no man spoke more against it. In both he was sincere. He loved not controversy for its own sake; but he was frequently impelled by regard to truth, or that which he considered as truth, to engage in what was most unpleasant to his Christian feelings. He sometimes erred in his judgment in these matters, but never was influenced by unworthy motives, or guilty of disingenuous conduct. He loved peace, and he loved his friends; but he loved truth more.

It is instructive to observe the deep humility of his mind, and the tenderness of his conscience. As he approached the world of glory, and appeared to others to be eminently fitted for its enjoyments, the contemplation of its light and splendour only made his own darkness and pollution more apparent to himself. The increasing clearness of his perceptions had not only a direct, but a reflex, operation. If it increased his knowledge of heaven, and inflamed his desire of its blessedness, it also filled him with a deeper consciousness of his own unmeetness for its pure and perfect felicity. He rejoiced, but he also trembled; he exulted in hope, but he also feared as a sinner. While the Divine Character attracted him by its infinite love and compassion, it awed him by the majesty of its holiness, and its peerless glory.

The importance which he attached to the enjoyment of God as the main spring and principle of genuine religion, and the degree in which he appears to have experienced it, are delightful proofs of the ripeness of his own soul for that blessedness for which he so earnestly panted. The expansion of his love to God, increased his love to men; led him to bear with their infirmities, to mourn over their evils, and to pity their miseries. As he approached nearer to heaven, he seemed to breathe more of its spirit, and to carry its very atmosphere, an atmosphere of holy love, about him. He felt he had little more to do on earth, than to pray for its guilty inhabitants, and supplicate God to establish his own kingdom. Thus did he continue to bless that world in which he had experienced so much ingratitude and affliction, and prepare for the mansions of his Father's house, in which he is now occupying a distinguished place.

The public transactions of the nation, during the last years of Baxter's life, were of the highest interest, but it does not

appear, from any thing I can discover, that he took much part in them. During the whole of the reign of James, with occasional intermissions, the dissenters continued to be oppressed and persecuted. The declaration for general liberty of conscience, which was issued by the king, in April 1687, was not intended to benefit them, but to promote the interests of Popery. Still it was a mercy to conscientious men, to enjoy an interval of repose from suffering. The dissenters accepted the boon, though they hated the principle on which it was conferred. Addresses to the court were expected from them, and some were accordingly presented; but in these Baxter, and several of his brethren, refused to join; though he availed himself of the privilege, which was justly, though unconstitutionally bestowed.^f

What his views were of the Revolution, I am unable to state. No man would more heartily rejoice in the deliverance of his country, and the overthrow of Popery, than Baxter: though it is not improbable that his conscientiousness, and his peculiar principles on the subject of legitimate monarchy, might cause some doubt in his mind respecting the right of William and Mary to the throne of England. This, however, is merely conjecture. The dissenting ministers of London, to the number of ninety, soon after the arrival of the Prince of Orange in London, waited on him, to congratulate him on his success, and to assure him of their hearty concurrence in his enterprise. I suppose Baxter was not of the number, his age and infirmities rendering him unequal to such a service, though he had fully approved of it.

In that ever-memorable event, no class of persons had greater reason to rejoice than the Protestant dissenters. On the part of William, there was the disposition as well as the interest to protect and encourage them. A thorough Protestant himself, and bred in a country of religious freedom, he was the natural friend of all true Protestants, while he was superior to those narrow prejudices which an exclusive system is apt to create and to foster. Had his own views and wishes been realised, he would have put an end to the most invidious of the distinctions between churchmen and dissenters, and would not have left it to the present parliament of George IV., to perform an act of tardy justice to a large body of men who have always deserved well of their country.

All the efforts of William, and of the few enlightened men by

^f Calamy, vol. i. p. 377.

whom he was surrounded, failed to induce the houses of parliament to repeal the Test act, or to adopt measures for comprehending the Nonconformists within the pale of the established church. An act of toleration, however, was passed, by which the dissenters, on taking the oaths to government, and subscribing thirty-five and a half of the thirty-nine articles, should be placed under the full protection of the law. This, though an imperfect measure, was an unspeakable blessing to men who had long been oppressed and persecuted for righteousness' sake. It was the last public measure, also, in regard to which Baxter appears to have taken some active part. To relieve his own mind, and to assist his brethren in coming to such conclusions as might at once satisfy their consciences, and enable them to avail themselves of the benefit of this act, he drew up a paper containing his sense of the articles which he was called to subscribe. The substance of this paper deserves to be communicated, as it shows what were the sentiments of Baxter on some important points, towards the close of his life, the construction which he put on some doubtful expressions in the articles, and the principle on which he thought it lawful to subscribe according to the act of parliament, that he might enjoy the benefit of a tolerated ministry.

The last clause of the second article, originally contained an expression in Latin, which, though left out in the English, led Baxter to demur about the sense. It stated that Christ died to be a sacrifice for all (*omnibus*) the actual sins of men. This, he supposed, was not meant to include final impenitence, but all sorts of sin which had been forsaken. Christ's descent into hell, in the third article, he explained of the state of separate souls. That Christ, on his resurrection, "took again his body with flesh and bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, and therewith ascended into heaven," he understood as signifying that Christ sitteth in heaven with the same body, glorified, rendered spiritual, and incorruptible, which on earth had consisted of flesh and bones. In the strict interpretation of the article, the words would be contradictory to 1 Cor. xv. 50, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" it would also give us a degrading idea of his body, as inferior to what his people will possess, who are to rise incorruptible and immortal. He agreed to the sixth article, as "containing all things necessary to salvation, if the ministry, sacraments, and

church communion, came under this description : and if, under the title of "canonical books," were included the Epistles to the Hebrews, the 2d of Peter, and the 2d and 3d of John, Jude, and the Revelation. He entered his protest against the clause in the seventh article, "That the civil precepts of the law given from God by Moses, ought not of necessity to be received in any commonwealth," unless it referred only to the particular civil laws peculiar to the Jewish commonwealth, and not to those moral laws included in the Mosaic dispensation ; which are of universal obligation, and common to all Christian nations. He assented to the eighth article on the three creeds, provided he was not understood to admit two Gods, by subscribing the clause in the Nicene creed, "God of God, very God of very God;" or to assent to the damnable clause of the Athanasian creed. He explained the infection of nature remaining even in the regenerate, according to the ninth article, to be so, not in predominant force or unpardoned, but in a modified and subdued degree. The language of the tenth article, that "we have no power to do good works," he softened into an acknowledgment that "our natural powers or faculties are not sufficient without grace." That the eleventh article might not be construed as giving countenance to a disregard of righteousness of life, he enters at large into it. He was anxious to be understood as expressing, by the twelfth article, that "good works do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith," an hypothetical necessity, consistent with freedom ; and he expounded the last clause, "that by them," i. e. good works, "a lively faith may be as evidently expressed, as a tree discerned by the fruit," to mean a truth of evidence, not an equal degree. His explanation of the thirteenth article, "Of works before justification," seems to set it aside, by asserting the existence of common grace, preparatory to special grace ; and to contradict it, by referring to the texts, which declare, that "to him that hath by improvement shall be given, and, in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him ;" and by observing, that believing in the being of God, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, is, "better than nothing, and than mere sin." He supposed that the phrase, "voluntary works," in the fourteenth article, or work of supererogation, was not designed to stigmatise, as arrogant and impious, voluntary canons, impositions, oaths, and church offices.

The sixteenth article, "Of sin after baptism," he supposes to refer only to the unpardoned sin against the Holy Ghost, and a total departure from common grace, and some degree of habit and act of some special grace; but that it does not determine the controversy concerning a total and final falling away from such an unconfirmed grace as would otherwise save.

On the eighteenth article, "Of obtaining eternal salvation only by the name of Christ," he observes, that God judgeth men by no other law than that which they were under: that the Jewish peculiarity did not repeal the gracious law made to fallen mankind in Adam and Noah: that God had more people of old than the Jews and proselytes. On these principles he conceives that the article could not mean to denounce a curse on all who thought that the spirit and grace of Christ extended beyond the knowledge of his name, and who hoped that some who never heard it would be saved. If it were intended to apply to such, he declares that he would not curse them; adding, all were not accursed who hoped well of Socrates, Antoninus, Severus, Cicero, Epictetus, Plutarch, and such characters. He appeals to the case of the Jews of old, as having more imperfect notions of the character of Christ, than the apostles before his resurrection; and to the erroneous sentiments of even the apostles themselves before that event, who did not, till afterwards, believe in the death of Christ for our sins, in his rising again, in his ascension and intercession. "Though faith," he considered, "in these facts not to be essential to Christianity," he declares, "If I durst curse all the world, who now believe no more than the ancient Jews and the apostles then did, yet I durst not curse all Christians that hope better of them. The twenty-third article, "of ministering in the congregation," he interprets so as to make it comprehensive of the holy orders of the Nonconformist. The article itself describes and judges those to be lawfully called to preach and administer the sacraments, "who are chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." He declares he understood public authority to mean "authority given by Christ in his Scripture institution, and by those whom Christ authorises under him." This was a latitude of interpretation beyond the intention of the compilers, who certainly had in view the exclusive authority of bishops. On the twenty-fifth article, of "The Sacraments," in which they are represented, "not as badges and

tokens only of the Christian profession," he explains himself as holding them to be "certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and of God's goodwill:" that they signify what God offers, invest the true believing receiver in the right of pardon, adoption, and salvation; and are morally operative." On the twenty-sixth article, "Of the unworthiness of ministers, which hinders not the effect of sacraments," he says, "That though the ignorance and wickedness of the minister do not make void the sacraments, yet the prayers, preaching, and example of able and godly men, are usually more effectual, since 'God heareth not sinners,' as the blind man argued: 'but if any be a worshipper of him, and doth his will, him he heareth;' and to the wicked God saith, 'What hast thou to do to take my covenant into thy mouth?'" He observes also, on this article, "That to prefer a bad man before a better, was sin; and that it was dangerous to encourage in daily sin those, who, though destitute of the essential qualifications, usurped the sacred office of bishops or pastors."

Baxter concludes his sense of the subscribed articles, by saying, "If I have hit on the true meaning, I subscribe my assent; and I thank God that this national church hath doctrine so sound. I pity those who write, preach, or practise, contrary to the articles which they subscribe; and that accuse those who refuse to subscribe them, take those for sinners who take not them for pastors, alleging that their wickedness nulleth not their sacramental administrations."*

When he subscribed, he produced this explanation of the thirty-five articles and a half, that his views in doing so might not be misunderstood. Eighty of the dissenting ministers in London concurred with him in his explanations and objections; and thus satisfied themselves that they had done what was right. It was probably the best thing which the government could do at the time, so that the dissenters were glad to accept of it. But such a subscription was found to be a poor protection, 'either to church or state, and has long since been entirely done away. Baxter's objections to many of the clauses in the subscribed articles, discover both his conscientiousness, and, on some points, the peculiarity of his sentiments. The number who united with him in this paper, shows the extent to which his views were then held among the dissenters, as well as the great influence which he had among his brethren.

* Calamy's 'Abridgment,' vol. i. pp. 469—476.

The affair of the agreement of the London Presbyterian and Independent ministers, must have interested Baxter much, though he does not appear to have taken any active part in it. Union was an object always so dear to his heart, that every scheme for promoting it would meet with his cordial concurrence, as long as he was capable of thinking or speaking. The articles were published in 1692, but they had all been agreed to before Baxter's death. Howe was the leading manager of the agreement, the object of which was rather to discountenance useless contentions about matters of ecclesiastical discipline among the dissenters, than to form a corporate body, or to convey the idea of entire agreement on doctrinal points. The style of these articles shows, I think, that Baxter's judgment and feelings had been consulted.^b From the date of this agreement, Presbyterianism may be said to have existed but in name in England.

If we have followed Baxter through a long life of painful trials, and contention for peace and liberty, it is delightful that its closing scenes should be tranquil and cheering. He lived not only till the dawn of a brighter day, but after it had considerably advanced. The church, it is true, had not comprehended the Nonconformists, or relaxed the rigidity of her terms. On the contrary, after she had completely secured her own chartered rights and privileges, and had little to fear from the common enemy, she began to look on the dissenters with more sternness and severity than before the Revolution. But though she had the power and the disposition to frown and to threaten, the ability to injure was lost. The security and repose of the government, required that all parties should be protected; Baxter and his brethren, therefore, were left to pursue their labours, whether of the pulpit or the press, without molestation. No longer hunted by spies and informers, traduced by malicious and interested enemies, dragged before packed juries and unprincipled judges, to be condemned to ruinous fines, or still more injurious imprisonments and confiscation, they were enabled, with comfort and joy, to "make full proof of their ministry." If they no longer worshipped in splendid and consecrated edifices, or enjoyed the emoluments of the state as the rewards of their ministry, in their quiet, sequestered meetings, sustained by the voluntary benevolence of their flocks, they were honoured to turn

^b Calamy's 'Abridgment,' vol. i. pp. 476—483.

many sinners to righteousness, and to fit many a saint for the inheritance above. In this delightful work were the few remaining years of Baxter chiefly employed.

From the time of his release from imprisonment, he lived in Charter-house Square, near the meeting-house then occupied by his friend Sylvester. He preached gratuitously for him on the Lord's-day mornings, and every alternate Thursday morning, as long as his strength permitted.

"When he had continued about four years and a half with me," says Sylvester, "he was then disabled from going forth any more to his ministerial work; so that what he did all the residue of his life was in his own hired house, where he opened his doors morning and evening, every day, to all that would come to join in family worship with him; to whom he read the holy Scriptures, from whence 'he preached the kingdom of God, and taught those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him,' even as one greater than himself had done before him. But at last, his growing distempers and infirmities took him off from this also, confining him first to his chamber and then to his bed. There, though pain and sickness wasted his body, his soul abode rational, strong in faith and hope; arguing itself into, and preserving itself in, patience and joy, through grace; which gave him great support, and kept out doubts and fears concerning his eternal welfare."¹

The latter years of his life, though full of bodily suffering and sorrow, and less occupied with the public service of God, were not years of idleness. Between the year 1682 and his death, he wrote many, and some of the most useful, of his works. Without giving a minute detail of single sermons and tracts, it is enough to mention, that, during this period, he wrote his 'True History of Councils, enlarged and defended;' his 'Treatises on the Immortality of the Soul, and the Nature of Spirits;' his 'Compassionate Counsel to Young Men,' and his 'Family Catechism;' his 'Dying Thoughts;' his 'Dangerous Schismatic detected;' his 'Catholic Communion defended;' his 'Paraphrase on the New Testament;' his 'English Nonconformity;' his Treatises on 'Knowledge and Love Compared, and Cain and Abel Malignity;' several pieces on the Antinomian and Millenarian Controversies, &c. &c. The very last productions of his pen

¹ Sylvester's 'Funeral Sermon,' p. 16:

show, that, if his eyes had waxed dim, and his natural force had abated, the vigour and ardour of his mind had scarcely, if at all, been impaired.

Dr. Calamy, who visited him during the last year of his life, tells us, "He talked in the pulpit with great freedom about another world, like one that had been there, and was come as a sort of an express from thence, to make a report concerning it. He delivered himself in public as well as in private, with great vivacity and freedom, and his thoughts had a peculiar edge."¹

Dr. Bates has furnished the most minute and most interesting account of the last trying scene of Baxter's pilgrimage. His funeral sermon for him is one of the best specimens of the preaching of that truly excellent man. He had closely studied the character of his friend, to whom he appears to have been most tenderly attached, and on whom he has pronounced an eulogium, not more deserved by his character, than it is beautiful in itself. At present, I shall restrict myself entirely to his account of Baxter's sickness and death.

"He continued to preach so long, notwithstanding his wasted, languishing body, that the last time he almost died in the pulpit. It would doubtless have been his joy to have been transfigured in the mount. Not long after, he felt the approaches of death, and was confined to his sick bed. Death reveals the secrets of the heart; then words are spoken with most feeling and least affectation. This excellent saint was the same in his life and death; his last hours were spent in preparing others and himself to appear before God. He said to his friends that visited him, 'You come hither to learn to die; I am not the only person that must go this way. I can assure you, that your whole life, be it ever so long, is little enough to prepare for death. Have a care of this vain, deceitful world, and the lusts of the flesh; be sure you choose God for your portion, heaven for your home, God's glory for your end, his word for your rule, and then you need never fear but we shall meet with comfort.

"Never was penitent sinner more humble, never was a sincere believer more calm and comfortable. He acknowledged himself to be the vilest dunghill worm ('twas his usual expression) that ever went to heaven. He admired the divine condescension to us, often saying, 'Lord, what is man; what am I, vile worm, to the great God!' Many times he prayed, God be merciful to me a sinner, and blessed God that this was left upon record in

¹ Calamy's own Life, vol. i. pp. 220, 221.

the Gospel as an effectual prayer. He said, God may justly condemn me for the best duty I ever did; all my hopes are from the free mercy of God in Christ, which he often prayed for.

“After a slumber, he waked, and said, ‘I shall rest from my labour.’ A minister then present, said, ‘And your works will follow you.’ To whom he replied, ‘No works; I will leave out works, if God will grant me the other.’ When a friend was comforting him with the remembrance of the good many had received by his preaching and writings, he said, ‘I was but a pen in God’s hands, and what praise is due to a pen?’

“His resigned submission to the will of God in his sharp sickness was eminent. When extremity of pain constrained him earnestly to pray to God for his release by death, he would check himself: ‘It is not fit for me to prescribe—when thou wilt, what thou wilt, how thou wilt.’

“Being in great anguish, he said, ‘O! how unsearchable are his ways, and his paths past finding out; the reaches of his providence we cannot fathom!’ And to his friends, ‘Do not think the worse of religion for what you see me suffer.’

“Being often asked by his friends, how it was with his inward man, he replied, ‘I bless God I have a well-grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within.’ But it was his trouble he could not triumphantly express it, by reason of his extreme pains. He said, ‘Flesh must perish, and we must feel the perishing of it; and that though his judgment submitted, yet sense would still make him groan.’

“Being asked by a person of quality, whether he had not great joy from his believing apprehensions of the invisible state, he replied, ‘What else, think you, Christianity serves for?’ He said, the consideration of the Deity in his glory and greatness, was too high for our thought; but the consideration of the Son of God in our nature, and of the saints in heaven, whom he knew and loved, did much sweeten and familiarise heaven to him. The description of it, in Heb. xii. 22, was most comfortable to him; ‘that he was going to the innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.’ That scripture, he said, deserved a thousand thousand

thoughts. Oh ! how comfortable is that promise ; ‘ Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things God hath laid up for those who love him.’ At another time, he said, that he found great comfort and sweetness in repeating the words of the Lord’s Prayer, and was sorry some good people were prejudiced against the use of it, for there were all necessary petitions for soul and body contained in it. At other times, he gave excellent counsel to young ministers that visited him ; earnestly prayed to God to bless their labours, and make them very successful in converting many souls to Christ ; expressed great joy in the hopes that God would do a great deal of good by them ; and that they were of moderate, peaceful spirits.

“ He often prayed that God would be merciful to this miserable, distracted world, and that he would preserve his church and interest in it. He advised his friends to beware of self-conceit, as a sin that was likely to ruin this nation ; and said, ‘ I have written a book against it, which I am afraid has done little good.’ Being asked, whether he had altered his mind in controversial points, he said, ‘ Those that please, may know my mind in my writings ; and that what he had done, was not for his own reputation, but for the glory of God.’

“ I went to him, with a very worthy friend, Mr. Mather, of New England, the day before he died ; and speaking some comforting words to him, he replied, ‘ I have pain ; there is no arguing against sense, but I have peace, I have peace.’ I told him, You are now approaching to your long-desired home ; he answered, ‘ I believe, I believe.’ He said to Mr. Mather, ‘ I bless God that you have accomplished your business ; the Lord prolong your life.’ He expressed great willingness to die ; and during his sickness, when the question was asked, ‘ How he did ? ’ his reply was, ‘ *Almost well.*’ His joy was most remarkable, when, in his own apprehensions, death was nearest ; and his spiritual joy was at length consummated in eternal joy.”^{*}

“ On Monday,” says Sylvester, “ about five in the evening, death sent his harbinger to summon him away. A great trembling and coldness extorted strong cries from him, for pity and redress from Heaven ; which cries and agonies continued for some time, till at length he ceased, and lay in patient expectation of his change.¹ Being once asked, by his faithful friend, and

^{*} Bates’ Works, pp. 820, 821.

¹ The bodily sufferings of Baxter must have been intensely great in the VOL. I. D D

constant attendant in his weakness, Mrs. Bushel, his house-keeper, whether he knew her or not, requesting some sign of it if he did; he softly cried, 'Death, death!' He now felt the benefit of his former preparations for the trying time. The last words that he spake to me, on being informed I was come to see him, were, 'Oh I thank him, I thank him,' and turning his eye to me, he said, 'The Lord teach you how to die.'^m

"As to himself, even to the last, I never could perceive his peace and heavenly hopes assaulted or disturbed. I have often heard him greatly lament, that he felt no greater liveliness in what appeared so great and clear to him, and so very much desired by him. As to the influence thereof upon his spirit, in order to the sensible refreshments of it, he clearly saw what ground he had to rejoice in God; he doubted not of his right to heaven. He told me, he knew it should be well with him when he was gone. He wondered to hear others speak of their sensible, and passionately strong desires to die, and of their transports of spirit, when sensible of their approaching death; when, though he thought he knew as much as they, and had as rational satisfaction as they could have that his soul was safe, he could never feel their sensible consolations. I asked him, whether much of this was not to be resolved into bodily constitution, he told me that he thought it might be so.

"He expired, on Tuesday morning, about four o'clock, December 8, 1691. Though he expected and desired his dissolution to have been on the Lord's-day before, which, with joy to me, he called a *high day*, because of his desired change then expected by him."ⁿ

A wicked and groundless report appears to have been circulated shortly after his death, that his mind had been greatly troubled with sceptical doubts before he died. It was brought to Sylvester on such authority that he found it necessary to give it a formal refutation. After quoting a letter from Worcester-shire, referring to it, he thus replies to it:

latter part of his life. It appears from his own narrative, that he considered the stone one great cause of the acute pains which he experienced. In part iii. p. 179, is given a long and singular account of himself, in reference to this. At the conclusion, he says, "Whether it be schyrus, or stone, which I doubt not of, I leave them to tell who shall dissect my corpse." He appears to have formed a correct opinion of his own case; for though we have no account of any *post-mortem* examination of his body, a stone extracted from him is still preserved in the British Museum. It is very large, of a bluish colour, and resembling in shape the kidney itself.

^m Funeral Sermon, p. 16.

ⁿ Preface to Baxter's Life,

"*Audax facinus!*" says Sylvester; "What will degenerate man stick at! We know nothing here that could, in the least, minister to such a report as this. I that was with him all along, have ever heard him triumphing in his heavenly expectation, and ever speaking like one that could never have thought it worth a man's while to be, were it not for the great interest and ends of godliness. He told me that he doubted not, but that it would be best for him when he had left this life and was translated to the heavenly regions.

"He owned what he had written, with reference to the things of God, to the very last. He advised those that came near him carefully to mind their souls' concerns. The shortness of time, the instancy of eternity, the worth of souls, the greatness of God, the riches of the grace of Christ, the excellency and import of an heavenly mind and life, and the great usefulness of the word and means of grace pursuant to eternal purposes, ever lay pressingly upon his own heart, and extorted from him very useful directions and encouragements to all that came near him, even to the last; insomuch that if a polemical or casuistical point, or any speculation in philosophy or divinity, had been but offered to him for his resolution, after the clearest and briefest representation of his mind, which the proposer's satisfaction called for, he presently and most delightfully fell into conversation about what related to our Christian hope and work."*

Baxter was buried in Christ-church, where the ashes of his wife and her mother had been deposited. His funeral was attended by a great number of persons of different ranks, especially of ministers, Conformists as well as Nonconformists,^p who were eager to testify their respect for one of whom it might have been said with equal truth, as of the intrepid reformer of the North, "There lies the man who never feared the face of man."

His last will is dated July 7, 1689. The beginning of it deserves to be quoted.

"I, Richard Baxter, of London, clerk, an unworthy servant of Jesus Christ, drawing to the end of this transitory life, having, through God's great mercy, the free use of my under-

* Preface to Baxter's Life.

^p Dr. Earl informed Mr. Palmer that he was one of the spectators, and that the train of coaches reached from Merchant Taylors' Hall, from whence the corpse was carried, to the place of burial.—*Noncon. Mem.* vol. iii. p. 400.

standing, do make this my last will and testament, revoking all other wills formerly made by me. My spirit I commit, with trust and hope of the heavenly felicity, into the hands of Jesus my glorified Redeemer and Intercessor; and, by his mediation, into the hands of God my reconciled Father, the infinite eternal Spirit, light, life, and love, most great and wise, and good, the God of nature, grace, and glory; of whom and through whom and to whom are all things; my absolute Owner, Ruler, Benefactor, whose I am, and whom I, though imperfectly, serve; seek, and trust; to whom be glory for ever, amen. To him I render most humble thanks, that he hath filled up my life with abundant mercy, and pardoned my sin by the merits of Christ, and vouchsafed by his Spirit to renew me and seal me as his own, and to moderate and bless to me my long sufferings in the flesh, and at last to sweeten them by his own interest and comforting approbation, who taketh the cause of love and concord as his own," &c.

He ordered his books to be distributed among poor scholars.¹ All that remained of his estate, after a few legacies to his kindred, he disposed of for the benefit of the souls and bodies of the poor; and he left Sir Henry Ashurst, Rowland Hunt, of Boraton, esq., Mr. Thomas Hunt, merchant, Edward Harley, Esq., Mr. Thomas Cook, merchant, Mr. Thomas Trench, merchant, and Mr. Robert Bird, gentleman, his executors.²

His principal heir was his nephew, William Baxter, a person of considerable attainments as a scholar, and an antiquary. He was born in Shropshire, in 1650. His early education, it would seem, was neglected; which can be accounted for only on the ground that there was something in his situation or disposition that prevented his uncle from affording him that assistance, which he would doubtless have given. From some letters between him and Mrs. Baxter, still preserved, however, it appears that a measure of aid was afforded him. He surmounted the difficulties of his early circumstances, and made very considerable classical attainments. He kept an academy for some years at Tottenham Cross, Middlesex, which he gave up on being chosen master of Mercers'-school, London, where he continued for twenty years, and resigned a short time before his death, which took place in 1723. He published several works,

¹ These were distributed by Mr. Sylvester. Among the Baxter MSS. are receipts addressed to him from various individuals who received them.

² Calamy's 'Abridgment,' vol. i. p. 404.

which brought him considerable fame as a scholar ; among others—a Critical Edition of Anacreon—and one of Horace—a Dictionary of British Antiquities—and a Glossary of Roman Antiquities. This last was a posthumous publication. It appeared in 1726, with the title of ‘*Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*,’ &c. Prefixed to it is a fragment of a Latin life of himself, in which he gives a short character of his uncle ; which I have inserted for the amusement of the learned reader, in the note below.*

Funeral sermons were preached for Baxter, by his excellent friend, and companion in labour, Sylvester ; and also by Dr. Bates ; both of which have been published. The former was preached in Charter-house-yard, to what might be considered in part Baxter’s own congregation. It is entitled ‘*Elisha’s Cry after Elisha’s God*,’ and is founded on 2 Kings ii. 14. The latter was preached, by Bates, at Baxter’s own desire, at the funeral, though it is not said in what place. The text is Luke xxiii. 46. “And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” The dedication of this discourse to Sir Henry Ashurst, is a piece of beautiful composition, expressive of the respect entertained for that excellent individual, and commemorative of the ardent attachment which subsisted between him and the deceased minister of Christ. He mentions that, to the work on the Saint’s Rest, Sir Henry had been indebted for his first religious impressions. He speaks of the love of Baxter, being “directing, counselling, and exciting,” and that of Ashurst, “observant, grateful, and beneficent.” It was no small eulogium on such a man that Baxter said, on his death-bed, “he had been the best friend he ever had.”

Baxter’s person, according to Sylvester, was tall and slender ; and in the latter part of his life, stooped very much.

* *Biographia Britannica*, vol. ii. p. 33. Edit. Kippis. “*Hic vir siquis alius erat et in vita celebris et superstiti fama decessit. Siquidem ingenio erat acerrimo, doctrina haudquaquam mediocri, extemporanea dicendi facultati incredibili, zelo plano apostolico (quem tamen scurræ nostrorum temporum cantum dicunt) morum etiam simplicitate nimis Britannicæ, contemptuque rerum humanarum incognito suo sæculo hic tantus vir ab incunabilis proba educatus in domo, et purissimis institutus exemplis, non ferme provincialium sui temporis sacerdotum inscitiam atque impuros mores (quod vel ipse in schedis reliquit) sponte quadam indolis sua ad Calvinianos, puritatis eo tempore damnatos, deflexit, etsi ab Episcopo tunc temporis Brannogeniensi in sacerdotem Anglicanum locutus. In matrimonio hic habuit Margaritam minorem natu filiam iuclyti viri probati Charlottui de Castello dicto Appeleio in Cornuariis. Verum me instituto hærede, importis decessit.*”—*Reliquiæ Baxterianæ, Pref. Autoris Vita.*

His countenance was composed and grave, somewhat inclining to smile. He had a piercing eye, a very articulate speech, and his deportment was rather plain than complimentary. He had a great command over his thoughts, and had that happy faculty, according to the character which was given of him by a learned man dissenting from him, that "he could say what he would, and he could prove what he said."¹

"He was a man of clear, deep, fixed, thought; of copious and well-digested reading: of ready, free, and very proper elocution, and aptly expressive of his own thoughts and sentiments. He was most intent upon the weightiest and most useful parts of learning, yet a great lover of all kinds and degrees thereof. He could, in preaching, writing, conference, accommodate himself to all capacities, and answer his obligations to the wise and unwise. He had a moving *παθος*, and useful acrimony in his words; neither did his expressions want that emphatical accent, which the matter did require. When he spoke of weighty soul concerns, you might find his very spirit drenched therein. He was pleasingly conversible, save in his studying hours, wherein he could not bear with trivial disturbances. He was sparingly facetious; but never light or frothy. His heart was warm; his life was blameless, exemplary, and uniform. He was unmovable where convinced of his duty; yet affable and condescending where there was a likelihood of doing good. His personal abstinence, severities, and labours, were exceeding great. He kept his body under, and always feared pampering his flesh too much. He diligently, and with great pleasure, minded his Master's work within doors, and without, whilst he was able. His charity was very great in proportion to his abilities. His purse was ever open to the poor; where the case required it, he never thought great sums too much. He suited what he gave to the necessities and character of those he gave to: and his charity was not confined to parties or opinions."²

As Dr. Bates' sermon comprises some notices of Baxter's life, which have been anticipated and more fully given already, I shall only therefore extract a few passages, in which he describes some of the leading features and qualities of his friend.

"I am sensible," he says, "that in speaking of him I shall be under a double disadvantage: for those who perfectly knew

¹ 'Funeral Sermon,' by Sylvester, pp. 16, 17.

² Ibid. p. 14.

him will be apt to think my account of him to be short and defective, an imperfect shadow of his resplendent virtues ; others, who were unacquainted with his extraordinary worth, will, from ignorance or envy, be inclined to think his just praises to be undue and excessive. Indeed, if love could make me eloquent, I should use all the most lively and graceful colours of language, to adorn his memory : but this consideration relieves me in the consciousness of my disability, that a plain narrative of what Mr. Baxter was and did, will be a most noble eulogy ; and that his substantial piety no more needs artificial oratory to set it off, than refined gold wants paint to add lustre and value to it.

“ His prayers were an effusion of the most lively, melting expressions, of his intimate, ardent affections to God : from the abundance of the heart, his lips spake. His soul took wing for heaven, and wrapt up the souls of others with him. Never did I see or hear a holy minister address himself to God with more reverence and humility, with respect to his glorious greatness ; never with more zeal and fervency, correspondent to the infinite moment of his requests, nor with more filial affiance in the divine mercy.

“ In his sermons there was a rare union of arguments and motives, to convince the mind and gain the heart : all the fountains of reason and persuasion were open to his discerning eye. There was no resisting the force of his discourses, without denying reason and divine revelation. He had a marvellous felicity and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style ; for his great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words. He despised flashy oratory ; but his expressions were clear and powerful, so convincing the understanding, so entering into the soul, so engaging the affections, that those were as deaf as adders, who were not charmed by so wise a charmer. He was animated with the Holy Spirit, and breathed celestial fire, to inspire heat and life into dead sinners, and to melt the obdurate in their frozen tombs.

“ He that was so solicitous for the salvation of others, was not negligent of his own ; but, as regular love requires, his first care was to prepare himself for heaven. In him, the virtues of the contemplative and active life were eminently united. His time was spent in communion with God, and in charity to men : he lived above the sensible world, and, in solitude and silence, conversed with God. The frequent and serious meditation of eternal things, was the powerful means to make his heart holy

and heavenly, and from thence his conversation. His life was a practical sermon, a drawing example: there was an air of humility and sanctity in his mortified countenance; his deportment was becoming a stranger upon earth and a citizen of heaven. Humility is to other graces as the morning star is to the sun, that goes before it, and follows it in the evening. Humility prepares us for the receiving of grace: 'God gives grace to the humble.' And it follows the exercise of grace: 'Not I,' says the apostle, 'but the grace of God in me.'

"In Mr. Baxter there was a rare union of sublime knowledge, and other spiritual excellencies, with the lowest opinion of himself. He wrote to one, that sent to him a letter full of expressions of honour and esteem, 'You admire one you do not know; knowledge will cure your error. The more we know God, the more reason we see to admire him; but our knowledge of the creature discovers its imperfections, and lessens our esteem.' To the same person, expressing his veneration of him for his excellent gifts and graces, he replied with heat, 'I have the remainder of pride in me; how dare you blow up the sparks of it?' He desired some ministers, his chosen friends, to meet at his house, and spend a day in prayer, for his direction in a matter of moment: before the duty was begun, he said, 'I have desired your assistance at this time, because I believe God will sooner hear your prayers than mine.' He imitated St. Austin both in his penitential confessions and retractions. In conjunction with humility, he had great candour for others. He could willingly bear with persons of differing sentiments; he would not prostitute his own judgment, nor ravish another's. He did not over-estimate himself, nor undervalue others. He would give liberal encomiums of many conforming divines. He was severe to himself, but candid in excusing the faults of others; whereas the busy inquirer and censurer of the faults of others, is usually the easy neglecter of his own.

"Self-denial and contempt of the world, were shining graces in him. I never knew any person less indulgent to himself, and more indifferent to his temporal interest. The offer of a bishoprick was no temptation to him; for his exalted soul despised the pleasures and profits which others so earnestly desire; he valued not an empty title upon his tomb.

"His patience was truly Christian. God does often try his children by afflictions to exercise their graces, to occasion their victory, and to entitle them to a triumphant felicity. This

saint was tried by many afflictions. We are very tender of our reputation; his name was obscured under a cloud of detraction. Many slanderous darts were thrown at him; he was charged with schism and sedition. It is true the censures and reproaches of others whom he esteemed and loved, touched him in the tender part; but he, with the great apostle, accounted it a small thing to be judged by men. He was entire to his conscience, and independent on the opinions of others; but his patience was more eminently tried by his continual pains and languishing. Martyrdom is a more easy way of dying, when the combat and the victory are finished at once, than to die by degrees every day. His complaints were frequent, but who ever heard an unsubmitive word drop from his lips? He was not put out of his patience, nor out of the possession of himself. In his sharp pains, he said, 'I have a rational patience, and a believing patience, though sense would recoil.'

"His pacific spirit was a clear character of his being a child of God. How ardently he endeavoured to cement the breaches among us, which others widen and keep open, is publicly known. He said to a friend, 'I can as willingly be a martyr for love, as for any article of the creed.'

"Love to the souls of men was the peculiar character of Mr. Baxter's spirit. In this he imitated and honoured our Saviour, who prayed, died, and lives, for the salvation of souls. All his natural and supernatural endowments were subservient to this blessed end. It was his meat and drink, the life and joy of his life, to do good to souls. His industry was almost incredible in his studies. He had a sensitive nature, as desirous of ease as others, and faint faculties, yet such was the continual application of himself to his great work, as if the labour of one day had supplied strength for another, and the willingness of the spirit had supported the weakness of the flesh."

After this extended view of the character of Baxter, by those who knew him so intimately as Sylvester and Bates, and which is so amply sustained by the history of his life and his numerous writings, little remains to be said by me. They had the advantage of drawing from the life, I can only paint from a copy. This, with the disadvantage of coming after such a master as Bates, and with so difficult a subject as Baxter, is enough to deter me

¹ Bates's Works, pp. 814—820.

from employing my unskilful pencil. Besides, much yet remains to be said of Baxter and his writings, before he can be considered as fully and fairly before the reader. Reserving, therefore, any general view of him which I may be able to give, for the conclusion of the second part, I will at present notice only what I conceive to have been one grand leading feature of his character.

In describing this, I have no better or more appropriate term which I can employ than the word *unearthly*; and even that does not give a full view of all that was absent from, and all that belonged to, his character as a Christian, a minister, and a divine. Among his contemporaries there were men of equal talents, of more amiable dispositions, and of greater learning. But there was no man in whom there appears to have been so little of earth, and so much of heaven; so small a portion of the alloy of humanity, and so large a portion of all that is celestial. He felt scarcely any of the attraction of this world, but felt and manifested the most powerful affinity for the world to come.

The strength and operation of this principle, appeared in all the workings of his mind, and in every part of his personal conduct as a Christian. It was manifested in the intense ardour of his zeal; and the burning fervour of his preaching. It was displayed in his triumph over the weakness and infirmities of his diseased body; in his superiority to the blandishments and charities of life, when they interfered with his work, and in his equal regardlessness of shame and suffering, reward or honour, where the service of Christ and the good of men were concerned.

Influenced by this principle, he threw himself into the army, to check what he considered its wild career. He reproved Cromwell; he expostulated with Charles; and dared the frown of both. The same motive induced him to abstain from marriage, while his work required all his attention. To him a bishoprick had no charms, and a prison no terrors, when he could not enjoy the one with a good conscience, and was doomed to the other for conscience' sake. He stood unappalled before the bar of Jefferies, listening with composure to his ribaldry, and would have gone to the gibbet or the stake without a murmur or complaint.

His very imprudences seem to have arisen from the excess in which, compared with others, this principle existed in him. He seems scarcely to have understood the meaning of the word

prudence ; and in so far as it is allied to worldly wisdom, he certainly knew it not. To him, conscience and the law of God, were the rule of duty, not utility, or the hope of success. There was no possibility of influencing him by the promise of reward, or the fear of disappointment. Consequences seldom entered into his calculations. He would not be deterred from preaching a sermon, from writing a book, or making a speech, if duty seemed to require, by all the entreaties of his brethren, or the threatenings of his enemies. The favour and the frown of God he alone regarded, and by their irresistible influence he was carried fearlessly onward to eternity.

The nicety of many of his distinctions, and the scrupulosity of his conscience, arose, not merely from the metaphysical character of his mind, but from its high spirituality. His conscience, like the sensitive plant, shrunk from every touch that was calculated, however remotely, to affect it. On this account, he could not subscribe what he did not understand ; he could not profess to believe where he had not sufficient evidence ; he could not promise to obey if he did not intend to perform, or if he questioned the right to command. He was not a quibbling sophist who delighted to perplex and entangle, but a Christian casuist, alive to the authority of God, and concerned only to know and to do his will.

In the high-toned character of Baxter's religion, we are furnished with an illustrious instance of the efficacious grace of God. It was this which made him all that he was, and effected by him all that he did. No man would have been more disposed than himself to magnify its richness, its freeness, and its power. Whatever mistakes may be supposed to belong to his theological creed, they affected not his view of this principle in the divine administration, or his experience of its power. But grace blessed him not only in bestowing pardon, and inducing its acceptance, but by producing conformity of character to God, and meetness for the enjoyment of heaven ; this he cultivated and experienced in an eminent degree. During more than half a century, he adorned, by every Christian virtue, the doctrine of God, his Saviour, and died cherishing the deepest humility and self-abasement, yet rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

In studying the character of Richard Baxter, then, while I would do honour to the man, and justice to his talents ; while I would speak in the strongest terms of his genius and his elo-

quence ; while I would venerate him as the leader of the noble army of Nonconformist confessors, whose labours and sufferings have secured for them a deathless renown, I would above all contemplate him as the MAN OF GOD, strong in faith, rich in the fruits of love, and adorned with the beauties of holiness. In these respects he had probably few equals, and no superiors, even in an age when eminent characters were not rare. But what God did for him he can do for others ; and what a world might this be, were every country furnished with but a few such men as RICHARD BAXTER !

THE END OF PART FIRST.