

WILLIAM LYFORD, B. D.—This worthy divine was born at Peysmore, near Newbury, in Berkshire, about the year 1598, and educated in Magdalen college, Oxford, where he was chosen fellow. While at the university, he entered upon the ministerial function, and in the year 1631 was admitted to the reading of the sentences in the college. Afterwards, by favour of the Earl of Bristol, he became minister of Sherborn in Dorsetshire, where he continued the rest of his days. Upon the commencement of the civil wars he espoused the cause of the parliament; and in 1648 was nominated one of the assembly of divines; but choosing rather to continue in his stated ministerial exercises, he did not sit among them. He was zealous and laborious in the work of the Lord, taking unspeakable pleasure in every duty of the pastoral office. He fed the lambs in Christ's flock, and possessed an excellent talent for catechizing youth, wherein he was eminently useful.

Mr. Lyford was a divine of an excellent spirit, and an avowed advocate of peace and moderation. He took no active part in the public broils of the nation; but drew up his thoughts in writing, in a work entitled, "Cases of Conscience propounded in the Time of Rebellion." This work, according to Bishop Kennet, was written with plainness, modesty, and impartiality, in discussion of the three following questions:—"1. Whether it be lawful to keep days of public rejoicing and thanksgiving for victories in a civil war?—2. Whether it be lawful for the civil magistrate to impose an act of worship in itself unlawful, or esteemed to be so, on men of a different judgment, especially on a minister, who must needs be not only a passive hearer, but an actor in the business, under temporal pains of sequestration, imprisonment, deprivation, &c.?—3. Whether a minister performing such an act of worship, upon such a force or fear, or for temporal ends, does perform an acceptable service unto God?"* He answered each of these questions in the *negative*, in which he discovered his sentiments relative to the controversies of the day.

Mr. Lyford, during his last sickness, "looked for the appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." This supported and comforted his mind under a long and painful illness. During the whole of it, his confidence was fixed on Jesus Christ, the rock of ages. In his letters written at this period, he thus expressed himself: "However

* Kennet's Chronicle, p. 349.

it may please God to dispose of my health, I rest comfortably assured of his everlasting love to me in his Son Jesus Christ; who loved me and gave himself for me. In the use of the means, I wait to see what the Lord will do with me. I know it will be well with me at last, having so many pledges of his everlasting love to support me. My wasting continues, and my appetite faileth; but my God faileth not. In him, and in contemplation of the great things he hath done for me, and the far greater things he will yet do, I find refreshment." A few days previous to his dissolution, his friends desiring him to give them some account of his hopes and comforts, he cheerfully replied, "I will let you know how it is with me, and on what ground I stand. Here is the grave, the wrath of God and devouring flames, the great punishment of sin, on the one hand; and here am I, a poor sinful creature, on the other: but this is my comfort, the covenant of grace, established upon so many sure promises, hath satisfied all. The act of oblivion passed in heaven is, *I will forgive their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more, saith the Lord.* This is the blessed privilege of all within the covenant, of whom I am one. For I find the spirit which is promised bestowed upon me, in the blessed effects of it upon my soul, as the pledge of God's eternal love. By this I know my interest in Christ, who is the foundation of the covenant; and therefore, my sins being laid on him, shall never be charged on me." As the earthly house of his tabernacle was dissolving, with great difficulty, he said, "My dissolution is more comfortable to me than my marriage-day. Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And when the trying moment arrived, he cheerfully surrendered his soul into the hands of his dear Redeemer, October 3, 1653, aged fifty-five years, when his remains were interred in the chancel of Sherbourn church.*

Fuller observes, that Mr. Lyford was "a man of a pleasant countenance, a courteous carriage, a meek spirit, great modesty, and that his memory is still preserved in his learned works."† Wood says, "he joined the presbyterians, was much followed for his edifying and practical preaching, and that his works savour much of piety, zeal, and sincerity, but shew him to have been a *zealous Calvinist.*"‡ Dr. Walker affirms, "that he suffered much from the faction, both in his

* Memorials of Mr. Lyford, prefixed to his "*Plain Man's Sense Exercised.*" Edit. 1655.

† Fuller's Worthies, part i. p. 96.

‡ Wood's Athenæ Oxon. vol. ii. p. 96.

name and ministry; and they wondered," says he, "that so holy a man as he was, should doat so much on kings, bishops, the Common Prayer, and ceremonies."* He bequeathed, in his last will and testament, the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds to Magdalen college, Oxford, "in gratitude for the advantages which he had there enjoyed; and in restitution for a sum of money, which, according to the corrupt custom of these times, he had received for the resignation of his fellowship."† Mr. Francis Bamfield, afterwards ejected in 1662, was his successor at Sherborn.‡

HIS WORKS.—1. Principles of Faith and a Good Conscience, 1642.—2. An Apologie for our Public Ministrie and Infant-Baptism, 1642.—3. The Plain Man's Senses Exercised to discern both Good and Evil; or, a Discovery of the Errors, Heresies, and Blasphemies of these Times, 1655.—4. A Legacy; or, an Help to Young People to prepare them for the Sacrament, 1656.—5. Cases of Conscience, proposed in the time of Rebellion, Resolved, 1661.—6. Conscience illustrated, touching our late Thanksgivings, 1661.—7. Sermons on various Occasions.

JOHN LATHORP.—This excellent person was minister of Egerton in Kent; but, renouncing his episcopal ordination, was chosen pastor of the independent church, under the care of Mr. Henry Jacob, London, upon Mr. Jacob's retiring to America. This little society, which had hitherto assembled in private, moving from place to place, began about this time to assume courage, and ventured to shew itself in public. It was not long, however, before the congregation was discovered by Tomlinson, the bishop's pursuivant, at the house of Mr. Humphrey Barnet, a brewer's clerk, in Blackfriars; when, April 29, 1432, forty-two of them were apprehended, and only eighteen escaped. Of those who were taken, some were confined in the Clink, some in New Prison, and others in the Gatehouse, where they continued about two years. They were then released upon bail, except Mr. Lathorp, for whom no favour could for some time be obtained. He, at length, petitioned the king, and his numerous family of children laid their lamentable case at the feet of Archbishop Laud, requesting that he might go into banishment in a foreign land; which being granted, he went to New England, in the year 1634, when he was accompanied by about thirty of his

* Walker's Attempt, part ii. p. 419. † Memorial of Mr. Lyford.

‡ Wood's Athenæ, vol. ii. p. 571.—Palmer's Noncon. Mem. vol. ii. p. 419.