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# THE LIFE

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REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

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ABRIDGED FROM ORME'S LIFE OF BAXTER.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

IN making this abridgement, no change has been made in the facts, as stated by the original author, but often in the reflexions and inferences from these facts, others have been substituted in the place of those made by Mr. Orme, and many of his have been entirely omitted. When his language is used to any extent, notice is given of it to the reader, and marks of quotation prefixed; but often in condensing the narrative his words are retained without any particular acknowledgment.

LIFE OF  
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

RICHARD BAXTER, was born in the county of Salop, Nov. 12th, 1615. In his earliest years, while he was chargeable with faults common to children, he was the subject of many serious impressions. He lived for years with his grandfather, but at the age of ten returned to the house of his father, who then resided at a village within five miles of Shrewsbury. He was extremely unfortunate in his teachers, some of whom were shamefully immoral, and others incompetent; while all of them greatly neglected his instruction. He also missed the advantages of a University education, by a proposal made to his parents to place him with Mr. Richard Wickstead, chaplain to the Council at Ludlow, with whom he remained above a year, and then returned to his father. After this,

at the request of Lord Newport, he went to Wroxeter, where he taught in the free school, for six months, during the illness of one of his former schoolmasters.

When he had reached his eighteenth year, Mr. Wickstead prevailed on him to relinquish his studies, and seek his fortune at court. He accordingly went to Whitehall, with a recommendation to Sir Henry Herbert, then Master of the Revels, by whom he was kindly received. But after a month's attendance, finding the kind of life which he must there live, little to his taste, and still feeling a strong inclination to the holy ministry, he returned home, and resumed his studies with great diligence; until at the instance of Sir Richard Foley, he was made teacher of the free school at Dudley. While in this situation he had the opportunity of perusing several practical treatises, by which means he was brought to a deep sense of religion. This seems to have been kept up by the ill state of health in which he then was; for he had the impression, that he should live not more than a year. Feeling now a strong desire to be useful in the conversion of sinners, he resolved to enter on

the ministry, and applied to Dr. Thornborough, Bishop of Worcester, for ordination. At this time he entertained no scruples about conformity to the Church of England. But after he began to preach at Dudley, he became acquainted with several non-conformists, who put into his hands several books in favour of their opinions, and among the rest, Dr. Ames's "Fresh Suit against Ceremonies." This he read with attention; and it was the first means of changing his views, on this subject. From Dudley he removed to Bridgenorth, and there officiated as assistant to Mr. Mastard, the minister of the place, who treated him with great kindness and respect, and did not press upon him conformity, in those points, concerning which he now entertained scruples. About this time, what was called the *et cætera oath*, was introduced, which led him to study with still more attention the subject of conformity; and the result was, an increased dislike of many things in the Church. Though not opposed to every form of episcopacy, he thought it very unreasonable to take it for granted, that the English Church was so immaculate, as to justify a solemn oath, that he

would never consent to have it altered. He had observed, that the imposition of this oath, which was designed to subject the nation unalterably to their bishops, produced the effect of alienating the minds of many from them, much more than they had been before.

When the Long Parliament appointed a committee to hear complaints against scandalous and incompetent clergymen, the town of Kidderminster, in Worcestershire, drew up a petition against their vicar, Mr. Danse, and his two curates, as insufficient. The living was then worth about £200 per annum; and the vicar as a compromise with the people, offered to give from his income £60, to any person who might be chosen by fourteen trustees, appointed by the people. An occasional sermon from Mr. Baxter gave such universal satisfaction, that he was immediately called, and went to reside at Kidderminster in 1640. He found the place overspread with ignorance and profaneness; but by a divine blessing on his faithful labours, a great reformation was produced; for though at first he met with much opposition, by perseverance and fidelity in the discharge of

his pastoral duties, extraordinary success attended his labours, in the conversion of many souls, and the establishment of religion in almost every family of the place.

In the civil contest between the king and parliament, Baxter sided with the latter, in consequence of which, he was obliged to leave Kidderminster; for the rabble became very riotous, and their fury seems to have been particularly directed against him; so that his life was in danger. His friends, therefore, advised him to withdraw for a season from the scene of his labours. On leaving Kidderminster, he went to Gloucester, where he found the people civil and religious; as different from those of Kidderminster, as if they lived under a different government. Here he remained for a month, during which short period, several pamphlets were published; and public disputations were held by the ministers, with various sects, and particularly with the Baptists.

At these religious tournaments, the victory was commonly claimed by both parties; but if the justice of the cause were to be judged of from the spirit and weapons of the combatants, it would have been granted to

neither. About a dozen young men in Gloucester had been re-baptized, and laboured, as was very natural, to draw others after them. Mr. Winnel, the minister of the place, wrote a book against the Baptists; but being of a hot and impatient spirit, he rather excited than calmed the minds of the people; and while he produced little effect on the Baptists, he brought upon himself the censure of the public for his asperity and violence. This was the commencement, Baxter says, of much evil at Gloucester.

After a month's absence from his charge, his friends at Kidderminster solicited his return; and he complied, but found affairs in a state little better than when he went away; for the fury of the rabble and the insolence of the King's troops were such, that he was again forced to withdraw. The war was now in active operation in that part of the country; the royal forces being under the command of Prince Rupert, and the Parliament's under the Earl of Essex. Upon the Lord's day, October 23, 1642, while he was preaching for his friend, Mr. Samuel Clark, at Alcester, it became evident the armies were engaged, for the report of cannon was



distinctly heard during the sermon. This was the battle of Edgehill, in which though both armies suffered much, the success was not decisive on either side, for although Prince Rupert defeated the Earl of Essex's left wing, the other part of his army suffered a defeat, while his men were engaged in plundering the wagons.

Baxter went on the ground next morning, and found the Earl of Essex encamped on the field of battle, and the King's army facing them on a hill about a mile off. There were about a thousand dead bodies on the field between them; and some, he supposes, had been already buried. But neither of the armies seemed disposed to renew the conflict, and gradually removed from each other.

Baxter now found himself in an embarrassing situation. Driven from his home, and destitute of money and friends, he knew not whither to betake himself. After some consideration, he resolved to go to Coventry, where an old acquaintance, Mr. Simon King, was minister. Accordingly, he went thither, and remained a month; but there appeared no more probability of a termination of the war now than before. While he was consi-



dering what course he should pursue, he received an invitation from the governor and committee of the city, to remain and preach to the soldiers. This suited well with his present urgent necessities, but he was resolved not to accept a commission as chaplain to a regiment; yet he was willing to preach once or twice a week to the garrison. Here then, he took up his abode in the Governor's house, and lived in as much quietness as if it had been a time of peace; preaching to the soldiers once a week, and once on the Lord's day to the people, receiving nothing from either but his food.

The war having spread over almost every part of the country, and great agitation and confusion ensuing, there was safety scarcely any where. For two months he retired from Coventry, and went into Shropshire; and having got his father out of prison, he returned to Coventry, where he spent another year in studying the Scriptures and preaching to the soldiers. Among his hearers, he informs us, there were many godly and judicious persons. There were also at Coventry, about thirty worthy ministers, who had taken refuge there from the popular fury, and from

the brutal insolence of the soldiers, though they had never meddled in the contest which was going on.

At Coventry, Mr. Baxter took the solemn league and covenant, and administered it to another, of which he afterwards bitterly repented. The garrison at Coventry consisted of both citizens and countrymen. The latter were such as had been forced from their own dwellings, and were among the most religious persons in all that country. A few fanatical persons of Sir Henry Vane's party, who had come over from New England, got into the garrison, and with an Anabaptist tailor, greatly disturbed the peace of the garrison, by infecting the honest soldiers with their opinions; but they were not so successful here as in Cromwell's army. Mr. Baxter preached in public on the Anabaptist controversy, and against the Separatists. Some of his Worcester friends, and even some of the foot soldiers were able, he informs us, to baffle the Separatists, Anabaptists, and Antinomians; and so the garrison was kept sound.

The Anabaptists now sent for one Benjamin Cox, an old minister of their persuasion,

from Bedford, who was no contemptible scholar, and with whom Baxter had much controversy, first by word of mouth, and afterwards in writing. Cox was desired to leave the city; but returning again he was imprisoned. Some ascribed this to Baxter, but he declares that he had nothing to do with putting him in, though he used his influence to get him out of prison.

Naseby being not far from Coventry, he, upon the report of the battle and victory at that place, had a desire to go over and see whether some of his dear friends, who were in Cromwell's army, were dead or alive. Accordingly, two days after the battle, he went and saw his friends, and learned many particulars respecting the state of the army. He found abundance of sober, honest, orthodox men among the troopers and officers; others were tractable and ready to hear the truth; but there were a few proud, self-conceited, hot-headed sectaries, who had got into the high places, and were Cromwell's chief favourites, and who 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 was in Cromwell's, Whalley's, and Rich's regiments of horse. These men were resolved to put down king, nobles, and bishops. Cromwell and his council preferred to join themselves to no party, but they were constantly casting odium on the Scots and the Presbyterians. Baxter was now convinced that all was lost, by the sound ministers forsaking the army, and leaving it a prey to fanatics. At first every regiment had a good chaplain, but after the battle of Edgehill they returned home; and as the sectaries increased, they were more averse to going into the army. He also blamed himself for refusing an invitation from Cromwell, who intended to form his troop into a regular church, and who, in their name, requested Baxter to be their pastor; but he reproved them for their design, and would not comply with their invitation. Now these very men, afterwards became the leaders of the army, and some of them were active in all the changes which took place.

About this time he was again invited by Colonel Whalley to join the army, and after consultation with the ministers at Coventry,

he consented to go; but the Governor and garrison so strenuously opposed it, that it was with difficulty he could get away. After considerable altercation, and after parting with his friends in some displeasure, he went to Cromwell's army. When he arrived, Oliver Cromwell coolly bade him welcome, but never afterwards spoke one word to him, or ever gave him any opportunity of meeting with the councils and officers; so that his chief purpose in joining the army was frustrated. Cromwell's secretary gave out, jeeringly, that a reformer had come to the camp to save church and state. Having joined the army, however, he set himself to find out the errors of the soldiers, and to argue them out of their mistakes. His life among them was spent in a continual contention with seducers, or in reasoning gently with the more tractable. A spirit of disputation on religious points, at this time pervaded the army. The opinion which he found most prevalent, and for which all the sectaries contended most strenuously, was religious liberty, or the right of every man to judge for himself in matters of religion; and that the civil magistrate ought to exercise no authority over matters

of faith, but should leave every man to the liberty of worshipping God agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience.

Baxter's indefatigable zeal led him to seek an acquaintance with the leaders of the sectaries, who, he found, were old separatists, proud, self-conceited men, and he made it his object to expose their weakness and inconsistency. But there was in the army a more dangerous party than these; those who rejected all external worship, cried down the ministry, spoke against the translation of the Bible, allowed of no arguments from Scripture but in express words, and were vehement against the government of church and state. These men treated Baxter with scorn; but when they disputed with him, they drowned all reason in fierceness, vehemency, and multitude of words. They greatly strove for places of power, and were ready to mutiny when important places were given to such as were not of their party. These were the men who were afterwards called *Levelers*, who rose up against Cromwell, and were surprised at Burford, and were entirely defeated and scattered. Thompson, their



general, had been a corporal in Bethel's troop.

No man could have been better adapted to the place which he occupied than Baxter. His extraordinary talents, his versatility of mind, and his fondness for disputation, singularly qualified him for the work which he had now to perform. Probably such an army as that of the Parliament, the world never saw. Baxter attempts to account for the spirit with which they were actuated, and attributes it to a few leading characters; but the causes were various and manifold. His attempts to check the progress of error, fanaticism and anarchy, were as ineffectual as would be attempts to check a volcano, by throwing stones into the crater. The materials for the tempest which now burst upon the land, had been long gathering and preparing in secret; and although, for a while, it spread desolation and dismay all around, yet it cleared the atmosphere, political and religious; so that it has been rendered more salubrious for Christians and freemen.

About this time a strange report was circulated against Baxter; as that he had

murdered a man in cold blood; or, that he was present when one Lieutenant Hurdman inhumanly ran a certain Major Jennings through the body, and that he took from his neck the king's picture; and while he was swimming in his gore, told him he was a popish rogue, and the like. To which Baxter answered, "I solemnly protest, that to my knowledge, I never saw Major Jennings; that I never saw the man wound or touch him," &c.

For two years he accompanied the army in its various movements, but was able to accomplish little in the way which he had contemplated, when he joined himself to it. Thus disappointed in his expectation of usefulness, and with his health much impaired, he found it necessary to withdraw from a station so arduous. The people of Kidderminster, moreover, having renewed their complaint against their old vicar, and having obtained his dismissal, offered the place to Baxter; but he positively declined having any thing to do with the parish, except as regarded the lecture. This he was willing to take upon the same terms as to salary, which had been accepted before; that is, £60



and a house; he expected to receive £40 more from a neighbouring place. This was all he asked or wished; and the engagement being made, he recommenced his labours. Formerly, he had preached twice on each Lord's day; but he was now able to preach but once on the Sabbath, and as often in the week, besides occasional sermons. Every Thursday evening such of his neighbours as were desirous of it, met at his house for conversation and religious exercises; each one having liberty to propose his doubts, or to ask any questions. To these he gave suitable answers; and before they separated, it was his custom to call first upon one and then another to lead in prayer, besides praying with them himself. This, with the singing of a psalm, was all that was done. On another evening, some younger persons met and spent two or three hours in prayer. On every Saturday evening it was customary to meet at each other's houses, to repeat the sermon of the preceding Sabbath, and to prepare for the duties of the next day. Once in a few weeks they had, on one occasion or another, a day of humiliation and prayer. Every religious woman who escaped the

dangers of child-birth, kept, with a select company of her neighbours, a day of thanksgiving for God's mercy in her safe deliverance. Every week he and his assistant took fourteen families each, for catechising and conference; the assistant going into the country, and Mr. Baxter attending to such as were in the town. He first heard them recite the words of the catechism, and then examined them about the sense; and lastly, urged upon them the state of mind and practice which corresponded with the truths recited. He was careful not to press them hard, when, through ignorance, they were unable to answer, but passed them by, or said something by way of exhortation. He spent about an hour with each family, and permitted no other persons to be present, lest through bashfulness, any should be embarrassed and prevented from answering freely, or lest one should be led to speak of the ignorance or mistakes of his neighbours. Every Monday and Tuesday afternoon was spent in these family visitations; and the mornings of the same days were spent by his assistant in the same exercise. For five or six years he was under almost a necessity of

practising physic, for on one occasion, when sickness prevailed, he was led to prescribe, and afterwards he was applied to and sent for continually. But for these services he never took a penny from any one, on which account many came to him; so that as many as twenty persons would often be at his door in one day. And though God gave him more success than he expected, yet he found it necessary to relinquish the practice, because it interfered so much with his studies, and from an apprehension that he might do harm for want of skill. To prevent the necessity of pursuing this course, he induced a pious and attentive physician to settle there, binding himself to give up the practice altogether, except when requested, in some difficult cases, to consult with the regular physician.

During all this period, the writing of books to be printed was his principal business: his preaching, and preparation for the pulpit, he says, were mere recreations. He wrote every thing with his own hand, and never made an hour's use of an amanuensis. He lost much time in attending to his bodily complaints. On account of the extreme

weakness of his stomach, he could not rise very early, and his infirmities were often such that an hour sometimes elapsed before he was dressed. He took also an hour to walk before dinner, and another before supper; and after supper he could seldom study. All which, with family duties, prayer, and meals, left but little time for study; which he considered the greatest personal affliction of his life.

Every first Wednesday in the month, a meeting was held for parish discipline; and every first Thursday of the month, was the minister's meeting for discipline and disputation. In these disputations Mr. Baxter was almost uniformly appointed moderator; and he commonly delivered a written opinion on the subject discussed. Besides, every Thursday, he had the company of divers pious ministers, after the lecture, with whom he spent the afternoon, until the time for the meeting of the weekly conference. For fourteen years he was thus usefully and happily occupied, in the midst of times of great difficulty and trouble. For this kindness of a benignant Providence, he expresses the warmest gratitude, and even wonder,

that in those days of licentiousness and confusion, under a usurper, such a mercy should have been vouchsafed to him.

His public preaching met with an attentive, diligent auditory. Before he entered the ministry, God blessed his private conversation to the conversion of some, who continued to be exemplary Christians. Those, in the beginning of his ministry, he was wont to number as his jewels; yet after a while, they so increased that he could not keep count. The church was commonly very full; and the hearers so increased, that it was found necessary to erect several additional galleries for the accommodation of the people. On the Lord's day, there was no disorder to be seen in the streets; and as one passed along, he might hear a hundred families singing psalms, or engaged in repeating sermons. When Baxter first came to Kidderminster, there might, perhaps be found one family in a street, who worshipped God: when he left the place, there were some whole streets in which there could not be found a single family in which the worship of God was not maintained. Even in those houses which were the worst, such as taverns

and ale-houses, there were commonly found one or more, who feared God, and called upon his name. Such as conducted themselves scandalously were excommunicated; and of six hundred communicants, there were not twelve of whose piety he did not entertain a good hope.

Some of the poor men of the congregation competently understood the body of divinity, and were able to judge in difficult controversies: and some of them were so able in prayer, that very few ministers were equal to them, in order and fulness. Abundance of them were able to pray in a very proper manner with their families, or others; possessing a remarkable gift, and lively utterance which rendered it edifying to hear them; and the innocency of their lives and temper of their minds were such, as to call forth the praises of all who regarded the truth. The professors of religion were generally of humble minds and carriage, of meek and quiet behaviour to others, and of blameless conversation. His labours also, in the surrounding towns, were eminently blessed, especially at Dudley and Shiffnal; when he preached there, the nailers and other labour-



ers would crowd the house, and hang upon the boards and windows, without.

His labours also with his brethren, in the ministry, were not ineffectual. Their clerical, weekly meetings for conference and disputation, were not unprofitable; and though contentious, were comfortable. They took great delight in each other's company; and the remembrance of those meetings was pleasant to all who took part in them. And when he laboured to bring his brethren to the work of catechising, and instructing every family by itself, he found a ready consent in most, and performance in many.

The account which Mr. Baxter gives of the means and reasons of his success, deserves the attention of every pastor.

The people to whom he came had not previously grown hard under the faithful preaching of the gospel. They had never before enjoyed an awakening ministry; but only a few formal, cold sermons. Baxter himself was then young, and full of animation. His voice too was naturally penetrating and moving, which with common hearers is a great matter. He preached also as a dying man; for on account of his bodily infirmities, he

had the prospect of death continually before him. Another great advantage which he had, was, that the most of those who on his first coming, had bitterly opposed him, and risen in tumults against him, on account of their hatred to the Puritans, went out to the wars, in the king's army, and were quickly killed or never returned again; so that on his second coming, there were few disposed to make any open opposition to the power of godliness.

The usurpation of Cromwell served to remove much of that odium, which, under the bishops, had followed all serious piety. He gave liberty, indeed, to all sects, and attempted to establish none; and by this very liberty, of which many complained, as believing that toleration was a connivance at error, there was a door opened for the gospel, in many places, where before it was closed.

Baxter found also, that his having a good report among the people, as an honest and sincere man who really sought their good, was of unspeakable advantage in promoting the success of his ministry. If the people of the place had suspected the purity and benevolence of his motives; if they had



believed him to be erroneous, scandalous, worldly or covetous, his ministry would have been hindered. A bishop must have a good report with those who are without. He was greatly assisted also, by the zeal of the godly in the place. They thirsted after the salvation of their neighbours, and being dispersed all over the town, they were every where ready to discountenance error and vice, to justify piety, and to convince, reprove, and exhort men, as occasion offered, and as there was need. They also inculcated the duty of prayer, and the sanctification of the Lord's day; and it was a custom for those who were intelligent and serious, when they had a meeting at their houses, to repeat sermons, &c., they invited their ignorant neighbours to attend, so that often the houses of the better sort of people, on such occasions, would be crowded with poor people. Their holy, humble, and exemplary lives were of the greatest advantage to the success of his ministry. Nothing so convinces men of the truth and reality of vital religion, as the living example and meek and humble spirit of its professors; while, on the other hand there is no greater obstruction to the gospel, than the inconsis-

tent lives and unsavoury spirit of many, who are in the communion of the Church. The unity and concord which were preserved among the pious were also a great benefit. The place was also in a good degree exempt from those sects and heresies, which abounded at this time in most places in the land.

Private meetings were found to be an effectual help to the progress of piety, in the place, for, thereby, truths that had slipped away, were recalled, and serious impressions which were in danger of being worn away by intercourse with the world, were renewed, and good desires cherished. These meetings were found also greatly to increase the religious knowledge of the people; and by the continual exercise of the gift of prayer, many improved in this exercise, and the younger learned to pray, by hearing those that were older. They furnished the preacher also, with an opportunity of knowing the persons, who were beginning to be serious; for if any one was wounded by the arrows of truth, in the public dispensation of the word, he would be sure to drop into these meetings. By the means of these also, idle meetings and the loss of time, were prevent-

ed; and so far were these religious societies from promoting schism, that they were the chief means of preventing every thing of the kind; for the pastor was commonly there in the midst of them, solving their doubts, silencing their objections, and moderating them in all things. Some controversies which the pastor had with gainsayers, particularly with the Quakers, greatly confirmed the people in the belief of the truth. These people endeavoured to set up a meeting in the town. Baxter invited them to meet in the church, and there to hold a public disputation, when he so exposed their errors and deceits before all the people, that they received no countenance from them, and gained not so much as one proselyte in the town.

Baxter mentions as one means of his extraordinary success, in his pastoral labors, the honesty and diligence of his assistants; and the presence and countenance of vigilant and faithful justices of the peace, who for the most part, were men of piety, and were always ready to use their authority to suppress vice, and promote good order, and virtuous conduct. It gave him no small advantage, that, being a single man, and spending

little on himself, he was able to distribute the larger part of his income among the poor. And when he found any of their children possessed of promising talents, he would by means of his own funds and the aid of his friends, send them to be educated at the University. Several of these became useful preachers, and with their brethren were ejected by the act of uniformity; while others conformed, and remained in the ministry. In giving charitable relief to the indigent, he never made it a question whether they were good or bad; for, he thought, the bad had souls and bodies that needed charity most. And for the encouragement of liberality, Mr. Baxter makes this remark, *that what little funds he ever acquired, were obtained, when he gave most away*; and that when he has been able to give little, his increase has been also diminished.

Another furtherance of the good work was, the books which he wrote and gave away among the people. Of some small books he gave every family one, which came to about eight hundred; of the larger size, he gave fewer; and to every poor family destitute of a Bible, he gave one. He considered it a

great advantage, that the business which most of the people followed, allowed them time to read, and to talk of divine things. This business was the weaving of the Kidderminster stuffs; and as they stand in their looms, the men can set a book before them, or discourse with one another; whereas, ploughing and many other kinds of work leave the labourers so weary, that they have little inclination to read, and while occupied with their business no opportunity. In connexion with this subject, Baxter remarks, "that freeholders and tradesmen are the strength of religion and of the community; while gentlemen and beggars, and servile tenants, are the strength of iniquity." He found that his *single life* afforded much advantage; for he needed little for his support; and as he had no children of his own, he could bestow his undivided attention and affections upon his people; and living free in a great measure, from family cares, he had more time to devote to his sacred calling.

He was of opinion also, that God made his practising physic a great advantage to his ministry; for they that cared not for their souls, loved their lives, and cared for their

bodies; and by this they were rendered very tractable and obedient. When he looked over his people, he saw multitudes whose lives or health, God had made him the means of preserving; and as it cost them nothing, a sense of gratitude led them to seek to gratify him, by attending on his ministry.

In most cases, where there were irreligious and vicious people, there were some of their connexions brought under the saving influence of the gospel. Many children did God work upon, at fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen years of age; and this had a powerful effect to reconcile their parents, and older people to religion. They that would not hear him, would hear their own children, and some who had been wont to talk against godliness, would not hear it spoken against, when it was their own children's case. Some who disregarded religion as a personal concern, seemed to be proud that they had understanding, religious children; and there were some of seventy or eighty years of age, who had lived without God all their lives, but were now hopefully reconciled to God, in consequence of the conversion of their own children. Another great help to



his success was, the custom already mentioned, of dealing with every family apart, catechising and instructing them. That which was spoken to them personally seemed to awaken their attention, and affect them much more than public preaching.

The faithful exercise of church discipline also, was no small furtherance of the people's good; for Baxter found, that without discipline, he never could have kept the religious part of the church from divisions and separations. Pious people have, from their very character, an inclination to separate from the profane and irreligious; and if they had not seen a determination to separate such from the communion, they would have been disposed to withdraw from the society. Many abstained from coming to the Lord's table for fear of discipline; for out of sixteen hundred of proper age to come to the Lord's table, there were no more than six hundred communicants. It was the custom, however, for all to come that would, so that their exclusion was their own act. And as to the posture in partaking of the ordinance, every one was permitted to follow his own judgment, or inclination.

He baptized the children of all sorts, but he required the parents to *give him*, privately or publicly, an account of their faith; and if any father was a scandalous sinner, he made him confess his sin openly, with apparent penitence, before he would baptize his child. If he refused, the administration of the ordinance was postponed until the mother brought the child; for he says, he rarely found both father and mother so destitute of knowledge and faith, as in a church-sense, to be incapable thereof.

Another advantage which he found to contribute to his success was, ordering his doctrine in such a manner, that while he kept in view the main end of preaching, he adapted it to the peculiar circumstances and diseases of his flock. The things which he continually inculcated were the fundamental principles of Christianity; which were so frequently brought to view, that they became the matter of their daily cogitations, and discourses. But to keep them humble, under a conviction of their own ignorance, he would commonly put something in every sermon which was above their own discovery, and which they had not known before. By this



means, they were kept in a learning state, and their thirst for knowledge was both excited and gratified. For he thought, if ministers tell their people no more than they already know, they will be tempted to turn preachers themselves, and suppose that they have learned all that the minister can teach them, and have become as wise as he is. Ministers will be despised if they do not possess knowledge superior to that of their people; but if he communicates to them things which they did not know before, by a daily addition to their former light, they will be led on with desire and delight. He never thought it expedient to take up their time with unprofitable controversies, which could not produce edification; nor did he affect novelties in doctrine, contrary to the received opinions of the universal church; but such things as tended to illustrate the great doctrines before mentioned, or about the right way of methodizing them.

One important circumstance connected with the success of this eminent pastor was, *that he kept himself free from all worldly entanglements*; so that he had his whole time, except what sickness deprived him of,

for his pastoral duties. Personally, he had nothing to do with the tithes of the parish; but every thing of this kind he committed into the hands of others, of whom he never took any account. And if any one refused to pay his tithes and was poor, he directed his agents not to exact them, but to remit the debt.

In domestic concerns, he was freed from all care, by his father and step-mother, and by an aged housekeeper, of eminent piety, who took all the care of the family, and laid out all the money needed for housekeeping, so that he never had one hour's trouble about it; and for fourteen years, that he remained at Kidderminster, he never took any account of her transactions, as being certain of her fidelity, providence, and skill.

He attended, as often as he could, the weekly lectures, which were set up in the surrounding country; and united with the zealous ministers in the neighbouring towns, to have the gospel preached occasionally in every destitute place. A plan was also adopted of sending zealous, popular ministers to visit the congregations which had pastors, and to stir them up to do their duty. They

chose four men to engage in this work, Andrew Tristram, Henry Oasland, Thomas Baldwin, and Joseph Treble, who were 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 offence, they went sometimes to the congregations of abler men, and wherever they came, they made it an object, always to say something to draw the people to the honour and special regard of their own pastors; that, however weak some of them might be, they might see that they came not to draw away the people's hearts from them, but to strengthen their hands, and help them in their work. This circulating lecture, in the opinion of Mr. Baxter, did a great deal of good, and the ministers who laboured in it were compensated by some benevolent persons in London. Although it was at first an experiment, for one year, yet all were so convinced of its utility, that it was continued until these godly ministers were turned out, when all these benevolent works went down together.

The preceding account of Baxter's labours

is taken from his own narrative. Few men have been so fully and heartily devoted to pastoral duties, and few have been blessed with such abundant success. There seems to have been a remarkable suitableness in the means used to produce the effects recorded, and a manifest proportion between the labour employed, and the fruit produced.

The simplicity, and intense ardour of his preaching demand special notice. It was admirably adapted to instruct the ignorant, to arouse the careless, and to build up the pious in their most holy faith. He sought out acceptable words; but he had neither time nor taste for making what are called fine sermons. He studied not brilliancy, but point. 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 should have "wooed a soul," nor 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* and *the things to be done*. These were the leading and, 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 tones, his every word were expressive of deep and impassioned earnestness, that his hearers might be saved. His eloquence was 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 may often be found in his 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 highly deserving attention in the ministerial conduct of Baxter, was his careful avoidance of every thing which might prejudice his hearers against him, and his diligent cultivation of whatever was likely to gain their esteem, or secure their impartial attention. No one could be less a man of pleasure than he. Except as they might promote 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 so long unmarried; his practising physic; his liberality to the poor; his distribution of the Bible, and other good books, 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 people in 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, 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 Mr. Baxter; the energy and point of his pulpit addresses, with the assiduousness, the perseverance, and the variety of 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 superhuman; yet he seemed to accomplish all with a considerable degree of ease and comfort to himself. He never seems to have been bustled, 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, 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 above just and striking portraiture of Baxter is chiefly in the words of the late lamented William Orme, who has given to the public an admirable abridgement of "Bax-

ter's Life and 'Times,' accompanied with "A critical Examination of his Writings."

The effects of Baxter's labours, at Kidderminster, were lasting, as well as extensive. He never lost his affection for his beloved flock, when separated from them; but often refers to them, and to the comfort which he had in ministering unto them. Many of them continued to adorn the doctrine of God, their Saviour, till they finished their mortal course; and now, doubtless, constitute their pastor's crown of rejoicing, in the presence of their Redeemer.

Nor did the effects of his ministry expire with that generation. Mr. Fawcett, who abridged "The Saint's Rest," in 1759, says, "that religious spirit thus happily introduced by Baxter, is yet to be traced in the town and neighbourhood, in some degree." He represents professors of that place as "possessing an unusual degree of candour and friendship for each other;" thus evincing, that Kidderminster had not lost the amiable spirit it had imbibed more than a century before.

When the gospel was removed from the Church it was received and cherished in the

Dissenters' meeting; though at what time a separate congregation was set up there is not known. Mr. Baxter whilst he served there, always opposed an entire separation from the established Church; and carried his opposition so far, as seriously to offend some of his congregation. But in process of time a separation did take place which laid the foundation of a large Dissenting congregation; for although the people could be persuaded to remain in the Church, while they had such a pastor as Baxter; they could not endure some of his successors. When Mr. Baxter removed, he advised the people to be guided by Mr. Sergeant, minister of Stone, who had formerly been his assistant in pastoral labours; and Mr. Thomas Baldwin, who had acted as school-master in Kidderminster during his residence there; a good scholar and a man possessed of respectable ministerial qualifications. This Mr. Baldwin was minister of the parish of Chadesley, until ejected by the Bartholomew act; after which he removed to Kidderminster, and became the minister of those non-conformists who then left the church. His ministry was frequently interrupted, but he died in Kidder-

minster, 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. The sermon is honourable alike to the preacher and the deceased. He was succeeded at Kidderminster by Mr. Francis Spilsbury, son of the Rev. John Spilsbury, the ejected minister of Broomsgrove, 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 used to visit him, and not only make his house his home, but met his clergy in it, while his nephew was the pastor of the Dissenting congregation. Dr. Hall was at the same time, master of Pembroke College, and Margaret professor of Divinity at Oxford. Mr. Spilsbury was succeeded by Mr. Bradshaw, who married his daughter; and was a man of similar sentiments and spirit, and laboured in the congregation until 1745, when he was succeeded by Mr. Benjamin Fawcett, a favourite pupil of Dr. Doddridge, and who abridged several of Baxter's works. His death occurred in 1780. After his de-

cease a division took place in the congregation, which led to the erection of another meeting-house, of which the Rev. Robert Gentleman was the preacher, who edited Orton's Exposition of the Old Testament. In the original congregation, Mr. Barrett became the successor of Mr. Fawcett. He was a man of respectable talents. He was followed by Mr. Steill, of Lancashire; on whose removal Mr. Kelmore, educated at Gosport, was ordained to the pastoral office in 1810. He was succeeded by Mr. Joseph John Freeman, afterwards a missionary in Madagascar; whose place has been supplied by Doctor James Ross, formerly a missionary at Karass, in Russian Tartary.

Mr. Orton, in his letters to Dissenting clergymen, informs us, "that the pulpit in which Mr. Baxter preached is still preserved. A few years ago it, together with the pews, was sold for a trifle. A gentleman anxious to preserve it, purchased it from the person who had it in possession, for five pounds, and placed it in the new meeting-house. It is rather a handsome production of its kind. In form it is octagonal. The panels have long carved flowers on them, and are paint-

ed different colours; and some of the gilding still remains. It has a large sounding board surmounted by a crown upon a cushion. Around the top is this inscription; "And call upon his name, declare his works among the people." It appears, that this pulpit was not built for Baxter, but was the gift of Alice Dawks, in the year 1621."

Baxter having spent two years in the parliament's army, had the opportunity of thoroughly understanding the characters of all the leading men on that side; and, in particular, he seems to have been acquainted with the true character of Oliver Cromwell. Perhaps no man was better qualified to transmit to posterity an impartial history of that great and much misrepresented man. They never were friends; and Baxter had a strong dislike of Cromwell's usurpation. He was of opinion, that he at first encouraged and patronized the sectaries of every description; but that when he got the reins of government into his own hands, he set himself to undermine and suppress them. On one occasion, Baxter was sent for to preach before Cromwell; and according to his usual freedom and fidelity, he insisted on a subject,



which he believed ought to affect the conscience of the usurper. After the sermon Oliver sent for Baxter, and for five hours they disputed, respecting the lawfulness of the existing government. Baxter expressed his opinions without restraint, and perhaps, with too little respect for the man whose talents, courage, and policy had placed him at the head of the British government. It is certainly much to the credit of the Protector, that he bore with Baxter's plain speaking. The same things spoken to any of the Stuarts would have cost him his head; but Cromwell bore with him, although he knew that Baxter had denounced him as a usurper. Cromwell was a professed friend of religious liberty; and accordingly, persecuted none for their religious opinions. On this subject his opinions were much more correct than those of Baxter. No man was ever more reviled and abused than Cromwell; and none more highly extolled by his partisans and friends. By the soldiers and sectaries he was almost adored; while by the Royalists, the Episcopalians, and many of the Presbyterians, he was abhorred, as a perfidious hypocrite. Baxter thinks that he meant honestly, in the

main; and that he was pious and conscientious in the chief course of his life, till prosperity and success corrupted him. And although he believed him to be a usurper, and as good as told him so to his face, he was of opinion that both church and state derived great benefits from his administration. As a large part of the parishes were burdened with an ignorant and immoral clergy, he appointed "Triers," to cast out such men, and to introduce others of better character in their place. This has been railed at as a tyrannical measure; and, perhaps cannot be easily justified, in principle; yet the effects were very beneficial to the people; as by this means, many parishes received able and pious ministers, in the place of men of the lowest character. In estimating the character of Cromwell, Baxter probably ascribes too much to selfishness and ambition; and too little to conscience and religion; under the influence of which undoubtedly he acted, in a considerable degree. No doubt he had great faults; but he had also splendid virtues, which if they had been found in any other than a usurper, would have been em-

blazoned by his friends, and eulogized, even by his enemies.

Since Baxter may be considered as intelligent and impartial a witness of the effect of Cromwell's administration, as can readily be found, it may not be amiss to set down a summary of his testimony. "I do not believe," said he, "that ever England had so able and faithful a ministry since it was a nation, as it hath this day; and few nations on earth, if any, have the like. The change is so great within these twelve years, that it is one of the greatest joys I ever had in the world, to behold it. O, how many congregations are now plainly, and frequently taught, that lived then in obscurity! How many able and faithful men are now in the country 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 these troubles, so that they now eclipse most of their seniors. I hope I shall rejoice in God while I have a being for the change that I have lived to see, that so many hundreds of faithful men are so hard at work for the saving of souls," &c.

But it is a lamentable reflection, that Baxter lived to see most of these godly ministers ejected from their ministry and shut out from a field of usefulness; while multitudes of incompetent men were put in their place.

In the political changes which followed the death of Cromwell, until the restoration of Charles II., Baxter concurred in the sentiments of the Presbyterians, to whom he was attached, and who had a principal hand in bringing back the king to his throne. But these men were completely deceived by the promises, and the hypocritical protestations of the king; and the consequence was, that with him they brought in upon the nation, a desolating flood of irreligion; and fell themselves under a heavy yoke of ecclesiastical tyranny. Out of mere zeal for *legitimacy*, they exchanged the mild and tolerant government of the Protector, for the domination of a proud ecclesiastical hierarchy, who would be satisfied with nothing less than complete uniformity. Baxter and his friends who contributed so essentially to the restoration of the king, during their whole lives were crushed under the yoke of high-church au-

thority. No doubt they acted from principle; but their integrity was greater than their wisdom. They might have foreseen, that, whoever might be active in restoring the king, when once firmly established, he would be disposed to favour those who had always adhered to his cause, and who had suffered much on his account.

Baxter, through the whole revolution, acted conscientiously; but his course was by no means characterized by enlightened wisdom. He sided with the Parliament, but maintained the rights of the king: enjoyed the liberty and immunities afforded by the protectorate; and yet spoke and preached against the Protector. He hailed the return of Charles; but yet doubted, whether he was free from allegiance to Richard. He first took the solemn league and covenant, and then preached against it, and prevented all he could from taking it. Though the evidence of Charles's dissimulation towards the Presbyterians, was soon manifested, and the evidence of it as strong as the light of day; yet it was long before Baxter could be persuaded to believe it. It was in him a fault that

abstract principles, and refined destinations often influenced him more than plain matters of fact.

Immediately before the restoration he was called to London, and preached before the parliament. After that event, he did not return to reside at Kidderminster, the beloved field of his pastoral labours, for more than fourteen years. During this long residence, his labours were not confined to pastoral duties. He endeavoured also to serve his generation, and future generations, by means of the press; and published a number of volumes, intended to defend the Christian religion; all of which show the indefatigable diligence of this extraordinary man; for the books quoted and referred to in these publications, seem enough to have occupied a lifetime, in perusing. It must be admitted that he wrote and published too many books. Less than one half the number, and of half the bulk would have been far more useful to his own generation, and to those that came after. But we ought not to complain. The "Saint's Rest," and the "Call to the Unconverted," give him a claim to be considered a rich benefactor to all who can read the Eng-

lish language. And although very few pastors have ever been so successful as Baxter, by his personal labours, I think, it may at this time be safely asserted that all the effects of his preaching in the pulpit, and instructing in a more private way, were but as a drop in the bucket, when compared with the extensive and growing influence of his practical writings; for at this day, there are ten readers of these popular works, where there was one in the age in which they were published; and we see not but that this increase will go on in a ratio which cannot be calculated. How blessed is that man who is honoured to write a book, which shall serve for the instruction of millions of souls, and of generations innumerable?

About the time of the king's return, Baxter had his heart full of the benevolent scheme of propagating the gospel among the American Indians. During the period of the commonwealth a collection had been made by order of government, in every parish in England, to assist Mr. Eliot, celebrated as the Apostle of the Indians, and others, in carrying on this truly Christian work.

The money thus contributed was laid out,



partly in the purchase of stocks, and partly in land, to the amount of seven or eight hundred pounds per annum; and this fund was vested in a corporate body, to be employed in extending Christianity among the Indians. The land had been purchased from Colonel Beddingfield, who upon the king's return seized it again; upon the unjust pretext, that all transactions and engagements which had taken place in Cromwell's time, were null and void in law, and that the corporation had no longer any existence. The corporation, of which Mr. Ashurst was treasurer, knowing that Mr. Baxter was deeply interested in this enterprise, requested him to attend their meeting and give them his counsel; and upon consultation it was agreed that he should endeavour to obtain a new charter from the king. This through the influence of the Lord Chancellor, he happily obtained. His lordship also decided a suit in chancery against the claims of Beddingfield. Mr. Ashurst and Mr. Baxter had the nomination of the new members of the corporation, and they agreed to recommend the Honourable Robert Boyle, as President; Mr. Ashurst was reappointed treasurer; and the whole matter was put into

a state of excellent and efficient operation. This affair brought Mr. Baxter into intimate correspondence with Eliot, Norton, governor Endicot, and other excellent men, who were engaged in this good work. The correspondence between Eliot and Baxter continued through a principal part of the remainder of their lives. It is pleasing to see, with what ardour he entered into this missionary enterprise, when the spirit of missions was rare in England. One of his letters to Eliot contains so much evidence of a right spirit on this interesting subject, that our readers will be gratified with an extract from it; though it was written some time after the period of which we are now speaking.

“ Though our sins have separated us from the people of our love and care, and deprived us of all the public liberty of preaching the Gospel of our Lord, I greatly rejoice in the liberty, help, and success which Christ hath so long vouchsafed to 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 that you have access to no greater number of Indians, than 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 unto 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 those that would be rid of them; partly fearing, that when the money is gathered, the work may be frustrated by the alienation 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 especially,

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 any where, to the Persians, Tartarians, Indians, or any unbelieving nation, if they thought they would be serviceable: but the difficulty of their language is their greatest discouragement. . . . . 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 Gospel, here are many that would be willing to lay out, where they have liberty and a call. 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 to a few scattered neighbours, who cannot 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 Assembly's Catechism should be, next to the Holy Scriptures, most worthy of your labours." This admirable letter shows how deeply Baxter entered into the philanthropic views which were then rare, but which have been since 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 trial, is no doubt exulting in much that is now going forward.

While he lived at Kidderminster, his correspondence must have been very great and laborious; the existing remains of it show that it was very extensive and multifarious.

Dr. Manton consulted him in 1658, respecting a plan for calling a General Assembly of the ministers of England, to determine certain matters, and arrange their ecclesias-

tical affairs. To this he returned an answer, expressive of his doubts respecting the practicability and expediency of the scheme. He was friendly to such associations, but from the state of the country he thought nothing could be effected. Indeed, there is no reason to think that Cromwell would have permitted such an assembly of Presbyterian ministers to meet, since he would not permit the people of Scotland to hold their assemblies.

Besides his concern in public affairs, he was consulted by multitudes respecting their affairs; and especially he was requested to solve many doubtful cases of conscience; in answer to which he often returned long and minute answers.

In such labours and exercises as have been described above, did Baxter spend fourteen of the most useful and happy years of his life.

After the king's return, the leading Presbyterian ministers were, for a while, treated with attention and apparent respect; and several of them were appointed his chaplains, among whom was Baxter. They were so far deceived, as to believe that it was really intended to comprehend them in the religious



establishment about to be formed. The offer of a bishopric was made to Baxter, Calamy and Reynolds: of whom only the last accepted the offer. Baxter excused himself in a very respectful letter to the Lord Chancellor.

A conference was proposed to the king by some of his advisers, to which the leading Presbyterian ministers should be called. The object was to consider of some plan of agreement, which should unite all moderate men, whether Episcopalians or Presbyterians. At this conference Baxter was the chief speaker, and addressed the king in a long and able speech, in which he explained the views and feelings of the great body of those with whom he acted. He showed how the existing differences might be settled or disposed of; and how much his government would be strengthened by the union of all sober minded Christians. He assured him that he did not speak for the Presbyterians as such, or for any party, but for the religious part of his subjects in general; and he represented to him how large a part of his subjects he would find them to be; and that all that was requisite to secure a union of all good people,



was to insist on agreement only in things necessary.

He even went so far as to hold up as an example, the course pursued in regard to religion by the late usurper; and entreated his majesty not to pursue a system of policy which should induce any part of his subjects to look back with regret upon the privileges enjoyed under the administration of a usurper. In this connexion he adverted to two evils which ought to be deprecated: the one was the depriving the people of their faithful pastors, and taking away from them their liberty of worshipping God, which religious privileges they prized above all earthly blessings; the other evil to be dreaded and avoided, was the indulgence of and connivance at vice, which had been restrained and suppressed by the usurper. He, moreover, urged upon him the exercise of a salutary discipline in the church, by which unworthy and incapable ministers might be kept out of the church.

This long address to the king is replete with wisdom, and is a noble example of fidelity, and at the same time manifests a

respectfulness and delicacy in the expression of the author's opinions, which are never the attendants of a fanatical spirit. The whole address is as good a model of faithful counsel to a monarch, as can any where be found; and happy would it have been for Charles, and for the nation, if he had listened to the advice now so respectfully given to him. But from what we know of his duplicity and profligacy, it is probable that he was at this very time secretly laughing at the simplicity of the venerable men who were pleading before him, for the rights of God and their fellow subjects. He so far dissembled his real sentiments, however, as to give a very gracious answer to the ministers who attended on him, and even went so far as to promise that he would do every thing he could to bring about the union of all good men; and if it was not accomplished, it would be their own fault; but that he was resolved to see it accomplished. Old Mr. Ash, one of the Presbyterian ministers present, was so overcome with this favourable reception, and the prospect of peace and concord, that he burst into tears in the royal presence; and in words expressed the great joy which these

promises of his majesty had put into his heart.

It cannot now be ascertained whether Charles, at this time, might not have had a desire to unite all his subjects, for the sake of the strength and peace which it would afford to his kingdom; and it may be, that, contrary to his own opinions now expressed, he was afterwards influenced by the high church party, to pursue other measures. This is the most charitable construction which can be put on his conduct. But, whatever policy might have dictated, there can be no doubt of his deadly hatred to all the Puritans, whom he considered the murderers of his father, and the cause of all his sufferings. And there were those about him whose hatred was not less, and who were fully determined to make their yoke heavier than before.

The king now called upon the Presbyterian ministers to give their views of a plan of union; to which they objected that they were a few persons, and had no authority to act in behalf of their brethren, and begged time to lay the matter before them. But this the king thought would be too tedious: it

was therefore determined to hold a meeting at Sion College, to which all ministers should be freely invited to come and aid them by their counsels. The result of this meeting was, that certain papers were drawn up to be presented to the king. It was agreed to adopt Archbishop Usher's form of church government, and the papers were mostly prepared by Dr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds; but Baxter drew up the abstract which was laid before the king. The papers now agreed on show that the non-conformists were not rigidly bigotted to their own notions. They were willing to concede many things, and to yield to many for the sake of peace. The paper against ceremonies was drawn up by Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Worth, both of whom afterwards conformed, and were made bishops. Indeed the only ceremonies which they specified as offensive to the consciences of many, were, the use of the surplice, the sign of the cross in baptism, bowing at the name of Jesus, and kneeling at the altar. The form of church government was presented in Usher's own words. This was a sort of Presbyterian Episcopacy, in which the bishop was a perpetual moderator of

the presbytery; a *primus inter pares*; but clothed with no independent authority. They also agreed to a liturgy, but objected to a rigid enforcement of conformity to it. As the object of the meeting was to make concessions, and agree on some principles of compromise, they had reason to expect some advances of a similar kind, from the other party; but they never moved a step, nor manifested the least disposition to promote union and concord. When the king heard the papers read, he seemed pleased, as he said, that he was glad to find that they had declared in favour of a liturgy, and of the substance of Episcopacy. He said, that he would see that the bishops should come down, and make reasonable concessions on their part; and he had no doubt that an agreement would take place.

Already, however, many worthy ministers were turned out of their places, and those restored, whom the parliament had ejected. The Presbyterian ministers would not have objected, if all should have been restored who were competent to instruct the people and of good character, but they complained of the restoration of ignorant and scandalous

ministers, by the ejection of able and godly men, whom the people loved, and who were a blessing to the flock.

The Presbyterian ministers waited long for the proposals of the bishops, but they waited in vain, for any condescension from them, for the only communication which they received from this quarter was, a paper expressive of bitter opposition to their plan. They felt that they were treated unworthily, and Baxter was requested to prepare an answer to this paper; which, however, was never used; it is preserved in his life, as written by himself, together with the paper to which it is an answer.

The king, however, that he might not seem totally regardless of his promises, so often repeated, published a "Declaration" of what he was disposed to do to satisfy all parties, as it related to religion. This paper, while it seemed in words to grant much, and even recognised and renewed the engagements entered into, at Buda, contained so many exceptions and evasive clauses, that it was in reality worth nothing. When this document was considered by the Presbyterian ministers, they saw, at once, that

such a scheme as there proposed, would never answer the purpose of promoting concord. Baxter was, therefore, requested to prepare a paper containing their views. As he had penetration to see now, that all hopes of a compromise were at an end, and that all they had to do was to keep a good conscience, and set an example of probity to posterity, he judged it proper to come out, and speak their sentiments plainly; but when his "Remarks" were read, both Dr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds were dissatisfied with his plainness, and said, it would not be endured. They particularly objected to the prediction, which it contained, of evils that might be expected, if the agreement was not entered into; which they said the king would interpret into a threat. Baxter, however, defended what he had written; upon which a reference was made to the Earl of Manchester and the Earl of Anglesea, and Lord Hollis, when all of these persons joined with Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Calamy, in advising that alterations should be made. Without being convinced of its propriety, Baxter yielded to their opinion.

A little before this paper was presented, a



meeting took place between Dr. Morley, Dr. Hinchman, and Dr. Cosins, on the one side; and Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Calamy, and Mr. Baxter, on the other; but after much rambling conversation, nothing was agreed upon.

When the petition, spoken of above, was presented to the Lord Chancellor, it was so ungrateful, that they never called to present it to the king. But as the king had published his "Declaration," containing the plan of ecclesiastical government which he designed to establish, it was now the proper time to petition his majesty for any alterations which were desired. Accordingly, another paper was prepared, which merely specified the alterations which the subscribers wished in the plan proposed in the "Declaration." When this was presented, the King came to the Lord Chancellor's house, where were convened a number of persons, of both parties; not called together to discuss the articles of the "Declaration," but as it was read over, they were permitted to object to any particular part. The divines on the part of the bishops, who were present, were, Dr. Hinchman, bishop of Salisbury; Dr. Cosins, bishop of Durham; Dr. Gauden, afterwards

bishop of Exeter; Dr. Seldon, bishop of London; Dr. Morley, then bishop of Worcester, Dr. Barwick, dean of St. Paul's; Dr. Hacket, bishop of Coventry; and several others, among whom Dr. Gunning was most notable. On the other side, were, Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Calamy, Mr. Ash, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Manton, Dr. Spurstow, and Mr. Baxter. When the Lord Chancellor had finished reading the king's "Declaration," he proposed of his own accord, to change some words; but they were not material. Much conversation now took place respecting re-ordination, and the right of presbyters to control the bishop, &c. The speakers on one side were, Dr. Gunning, and Dr. Morley, and on the other, Mr. Calamy, and Mr. Baxter.

When this was ended, the Lord Chancellor read a petition from the Independents and Anabaptists, and then drew out of his pocket an addition to the "Declaration,"—"That others also be permitted to meet for religious worship, so that they do not do this to the disturbance of the peace." To this not a word was said. The Presbyterians perceived, at once, that there was a snare laid for them, for this would secure the liberty of the

Papists; and if they opposed it, use would be made of it against their petition. Dr. Wallis whispered to Mr. Baxter, and entreated him "not to say any thing, for it was an odious business;" and the bishops remained silent also. At length, Baxter fearing that their very silence might be construed into an approbation, made a few remarks, which were answered by the king himself. Before the meeting was dissolved, the king committed the "Declaration" to four divines, to alter any expressions which might appear to them objectionable. The persons selected by his majesty were Bishop Morley, Bishop Hinchman, Dr. Reynolds, and Mr. Calamy. When the "Declaration" was published, it appeared that several unimportant alterations had been made in it, to render it more acceptable to moderate men among the non-conformists. These alterations were exceedingly gratifying to Baxter, and he expressed his feelings to the Lord Chancellor, and said it was his purpose to persuade all his brethren to conform. Upon this the Lord Chancellor made him the offer of a bishopric, of which a more particular account will be given hereafter. Baxter was not long in discovering, however,

that the policy of the king was merely to amuse the Presbyterians, until affairs were in that condition that he could crush them. To carry the scheme through, it was agreed to weaken the party by making some of their leading men 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. The plan succeeded with some, but not with Baxter.

A confidential agent was employed to sound Baxter, and learn whether he would accept the bishopric of Hereford. He gave no encouragement, but did not think it expedient, at that time, to return a positive answer. After the publication of the king's declaration, the same messenger was sent privately to negotiate with him, and also with Mr. Calamy and Dr. Reynolds; to each of whom a bishopric was also offered. These three distinguished men freely conferred together on the subject; and it was agreed among them, that according to the "Declaration," as now altered, there was no obstacle, from conscientious scruples of the lawfulness of the thing, in the way of their

acceptance, provided they should judge it to be expedient. Mr. Calamy was solicitous that they should all act in unison in this business, and either all accept or all refuse; but by this time the rumour of the thing had spread through the city, and public opinion made a difference between the parties. The people decided that Reynolds and Baxter might consistently accept of bishoprics, as they had uniformly advocated a modified episcopacy; but that Mr. Calamy could not, without departing from the principles which he had always held, and in favour of which he had published. This feeling in regard to Calamy was so strong, that Mr. Newcomen, his brother-in-law, and many others, wrote to him on the subject, to dissuade him from accepting the office. Baxter determined, for prudential reasons, to decline; and when consulted by his two friends, would give no advice to Calamy; but he advised Reynolds to accept, on the condition that things should be regulated according to the king's "Declaration," and that he might be permitted to resign it, when he could not exercise it on those terms. When Baxter next visited the Lord Chancellor, he suddenly asked him

what his purpose was in regard to the bishopric; finding it necessary to make known his decision, he informed the chancellor that he could not accept; but that he would prefer giving his reasons in writing, to which his lordship consented.

The following is an extract from his letter:

“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 bishopric as unlawful. But 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 duty to do my best with myself and others, as far as I had interest and opportunity, to suppress all sinful discontents: and having now competent materials put into my hand, without which I could do 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 get a commission for those persons who are to be deputed to review the 'Common Prayer,' as soon as possible. 3. If you will further effectually, the restoration of able ministers, who are lately removed. 4. If you will open some way for the ejection of the scandalous and insufficient. 5. If you will put as many of our persuasion as you can into bishoprics—more than three, if it may be. 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 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 this very week to disperse the seeds of satisfaction, in many counties in England; my conscience commanding me to make this my very work and business, unless the things granted should be



reversed, which God forbid. I must inform your lordship, that I am utterly against accepting of a bishopric, 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 effectually disable me from promoting the church's peace. And 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 shame speak half so freely as I now can and will, if God enable me, for obedience and peace. I therefore humbly crave that your lordship will put some able man of our persuasion into the place which you intend, though I now think that Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Calamy may better accept of a bishopric than I, which I hope your lordship will promote."

He then proceeds to name more than a dozen ministers, any one of whom, he thinks, would answer well for this high station. He then expresses his thanks for the honour

which had been intended for him; and says, that he feels as grateful for the favour as if he had accepted it. And he concludes this remarkable letter, by modestly requesting that some humble station of usefulness might be provided for him. His heart, however, was evidently in Kidderminster. He therefore hints, that as the vicar of his old parish was unwilling to resign, if a prebend, or some other place could be given him, he might then, without loss, resign the vicarage to him. But the conscientious man is careful to say, that he dares not recommend this man to any pastoral charge, or other place where preaching is required. "If," says he, "there be any great inconvenience or difficulty in the way, I can well be content to be his curate." Perhaps history cannot furnish a parallel to this; a man in the same letter in which he declines a bishopric, humbly solicits the place of a curate to a vicar who had not the gift of preaching!

Mr. Calamy blamed Mr. Baxter for giving in his declinature alone; before there was a mutual understanding what course should be pursued. Baxter, however, explained to him, how he had been led to give an answer,

by the unexpected demand of the Lord Chancellor. Dr. Reynolds was almost as quick, in accepting, as Baxter was, in refusing; and gave out by way of apology, that some friend had taken out the *congé d'élire* for him, without his knowledge. Baxter informs us, that Dr. Reynolds read to him a "profession" directed to the king, in which he declared that he took a bishop and presbyter to differ not *ordine* but *gradu*; that a bishop was no more than a chief presbyter; and that he was not to ordain or govern, but with his presbyters' assistance and consent; that he accepted the place as described in the king's "declaration," and not as it stood before in England; and that he would not hold or exercise it on any other terms. Whether he ever presented it to the king is uncertain. Such resolutions, in one who accepts the dignity of a bishopric, are of very little value, however sincerely made, at the time. In the case of Dr. Reynolds, we know, that his office was not held and exercised in accordance with the principles professed, in this paper; and we know, that he did not resign or abdicate his office, even when most of his brethren were, in an iniquitous manner eject-

ed from their livings. Whether he exerted himself to prevent these tyrannical proceedings, we know not; but it is certain that he continued to be the bishop of Norwich until his death, which event occurred, in 1676.

Mr. Calamy remained long in suspense, and did not speedily return an answer, and his bishopric was not filled; until at length the issue of the negotiation with the Presbyterians was brought to a close; when he did not hesitate to decline. The deanery of Rochester was offered to Dr. Manton, and that of Coventry and Litchfield to Dr. Bates; but they refused, on the same account, as Mr. Calamy. It has also been said, that Mr. Edward Bowles was offered the deanery of York, which he refused. Baxter's promptitude and decision in refusing, on the most disinterested considerations, this splendid offer, does him infinite credit. He towers, on comparison, far above his compeers.

After the royal "Declaration" was published, the ministers of London met, and returned thanks to the king for his moderation and goodness. This paper was presented November 16th, 1660, by a number of the London ministers, not including Mr. Baxter. The

next day, the king sent for him to come to him. He supposed it probable that his majesty had been displeased with the plainness and earnestness with which he spoke, when in his presence; but the king assured him that he had not been offended, and that in his freedom and warmth he saw evidence of his honesty. He was led, therefore, to conclude, that it was hoped that some further use might be made of him, in promoting the designs of the court. As the king had in his "Declaration" promised that the liturgy should be revised and reformed, and certain alterations adopted to meet the feelings of the non-conformists, Baxter frequently importuned the Chancellor to carry this engagement into effect. At last, Dr. Reynolds and Mr. Calamy were authorized to name the persons, on their side, to manage the conference; and then a commission, under the great seal was issued, empowering these persons to meet for this purpose. The persons chosen on the other side, included the archbishop of York, with twelve bishops, and eleven non-conformist ministers, with a provision of other persons to supply the place of any who might be prevented from attending.

A meeting was accordingly appointed, and Savoy, the residence of the bishop of London, was selected as the place of the conference. The bishops, beside Dr. Frewen, the archbishop of York, were Dr. Sheldon, Dr. Morley, Dr. Saunderson, Dr. Cosins, Dr. Hinchman, Dr. Walton, Dr. Lany, Dr. King, Dr. Stern, and Dr. Gauden. The ministers on the other side were, Dr. Reynolds, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Clark, Dr. Spurstow, Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Wallis, Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Dr. Jacob, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Rawlinson, and Mr. Case.

The bishop of London said, that the Conference was called at the suggestion and request of the non-conformists, and that the bishops had nothing to do until they brought in their exceptions, and proposed alterations to the liturgy. The Presbyterian ministers were not generally pleased with this method of proceeding; but to Mr. Baxter it seemed best to comply with the bishop's proposal, as they ought to bring forward nothing in which they were not all agreed. It would also save them from almost endless altercation, to exhibit their views in writing. And he alleged, that upon this plan, whatever



they said would not be liable to be misrepresented, and would all come before the public; and that, perhaps, they would never have again such an opportunity of giving their testimony in favour of a moderate reformation of the liturgy. By such considerations as these, Baxter prevailed on his brethren to consent to the plan proposed: only they asked leave to bring in their exceptions, at one time, and their additions at another, which was granted. To us it appears, however, that the Presbyterians were fully caught in the trap laid for them. The whole burden of the conference was by this plan laid upon them, while the bishops merely stood upon the defensive. By agreeing to exhibit all their exceptions at once, the number appeared so great that the impression would be made that they were captious, discontented men, who could not be satisfied. And upon this plan, things great and small would, as it were, be placed on a level, by being promiscuously exhibited in the same paper.

The plan being agreed upon, the non-conformist ministers divided the business, as well as they could among themselves. The additions, however, or new forms, to be pro-



posed, they committed to Baxter alone; and at the end of a fortnight, this indefatigable man had completed a new liturgy. Finding his brethren unprepared with their exceptions, he turned his hand to this also, and drew up a paper containing such exceptions as occurred to him. Both his "liturgy" and "exceptions," have been printed in his life, and it is scarcely necessary to pass any judgment on them at present. The time allowed was too short for judicious compilation of such a work. It is found by experience, that no compositions are more difficult than prayers, adapted to a promiscuous congregation. Baxter undertook more than any man could perform well, in a fortnight. Indeed, no one man is competent to form a liturgy. It requires the combined resources of a number of minds. Prayers may be scriptural and correct, and may yet be defective in several qualities which are requisite in forms of this kind. Besides, he aimed at too great a change from the old liturgy. Other things being equal, prayers to which the people have been long accustomed are greatly preferable to new ones; and if we must have a liturgy, we see no good reason for objecting to that

of the Church of England. There is, indeed, a want of order in the service, and too much repetition; but on the whole, the prayers possess much simple dignity in their conception, and style. They are also comprehensive, and the petitions so general in their character, that they are adapted to a promiscuous congregation. We are inclined to think, therefore, that Baxter's undertaking was injudicious, and are not surprised that it failed of success. All the prejudices and associations of the people were strongly in favour of the prayers which had been long in use; and most of those who were opposed to the English liturgy, would have been equally opposed to any other liturgy. They objected to the principle, and not to the execution. The whole scheme of attempting to introduce a new liturgy, appears to us to have been ill judged; and its failure might have been predicted upon the common principles of human nature.

During the sitting of this Conference, the members of the convocation were chosen; and things were so managed by the bishops, that a majority of their friends were returned. Had there been a fair expression of the opin-

ion of the existing clergy at the restoration, there would have been a great majority against diocesan episcopacy; but by the ejection of several hundred, who had been put in the place of such ministers as were judged incompetent, who had been turned out by the parliament, or by the *Triers* of Cromwell; and because none were permitted to vote, who had not received episcopal ordination, the convocation consisted, mainly, of the friends of the bishops. But, in London, by a small majority of votes, Mr. Baxter and Mr. Calamy were returned among others. The bishop of London, however, having the right to select six out of the whole number returned, was pleased to leave out these two distinguished men. Baxter greatly rejoiced in this; for he knew, that he could accomplish nothing in the convocation, and he felt happy to escape the contention and conflict to which he must have been subject, had he been a member; for he was not a man that could remain silent when he saw things going wrong.

The new liturgy, prepared by Baxter, after being read over frequently by the brethren, was adopted with no other alteration,

than leaving out some things which were thought unnecessary; and the litany, on account of its length, was thrown into an appendix. Dr. Wallis was requested to prepare the prayer for the king, which he did; and this was the only prayer in the new liturgy, of which Baxter was not the author. The non-conformists foreseeing, however, what would be the result, in regard to the alterations proposed by them, resolved to offer an earnest petition to the bishops to propose such alterations, as to them appeared necessary or expedient. Baxter was requested to draw up this petition: which he did, and it was accepted by his brethren, with only one or two verbal alterations. He was then requested to present it, and to seek an opportunity of reading it in a full meeting. When the reading of the paper was proposed, some were against it, and so would all of them have been, says Baxter, had they known what it contained. After it was read, Dr. Gunning delivered a long and vehement speech against it; to which Baxter commenced an answer, but was interrupted in the midst of it. He was content to bear this, since he had been permitted to read the

whole of the petition. He now delivered the petition to the bishops, and also a fair copy of the "Reformed Liturgy." They received both, and so they separated.

The time of the commission authorizing the conference was limited to three months, and that time was nearly expired, and yet nothing done to promote the peace of the Church. It was now evident, that the bishops were determined to yield nothing. Instead of returning an answer to parts of the reformed liturgy, and proposed alterations, they handed in a paper, in opposition to any alteration. The brethren were now determined to give a plain answer to their paper, and Mr. Baxter was requested to draw it up. He went to Spurstow's in Hackney, for the sake of retirement, and in eight days finished his answer. This the brethren read, and approved; except, that they wished it had been more full at the close; but the author had occupied so much time in the beginning, in establishing his principles, that he had not room to enlarge on particulars, in the close. This answer was handed in at the next meeting; and it was evident, they were not pleased with the

length of it. Baxter says he had good reason for believing that the majority of the bishops never read the papers handed in by the ministers, and knew nothing of their contents, except such things as were publicly read. These papers were folded up and carried away, and were probably seen by none but those whose business it was made to answer them. All the efforts made to induce them to say what concessions they were willing to make, or what alterations to propose, were utterly ineffectual. They alleged, that the king's "Declaration" only spoke of necessary alterations; but that until it was shown that any alterations were *necessary*, they could not agree to make them. Much time was spent in contending about this matter. The object of the conference was to promote peace and concord, but to enter now into a dispute about the liturgy and ceremonies would defeat every hope of this kind; and the ministers saw that if they declined all discussion, they would be considered as shrinking from the contest, through fear. Baxter urged his brethren to agree to enter into a disputation, after declaring, that the failure of the primary end of the king's com-



mission, did not rest with them. It was finally agreed, that three persons should be chosen, on each side, to conduct the debate. On the one side were, Doctors Gunning, Pearson, and Sparrow; and on the other, Baxter, Bates, and Jacomb. They met accordingly in the presence of many of the Episcopal party; but the non-conformists, except the three advocates, all absented themselves. The debate, as might have been anticipated, partook more of the nature of a personal altercation, than of a grave religious argument. The following account of the conference, and the principal actors is taken from Baxter.

“Dr. Sheldon, the Bishop of London, and since Archbishop of Canterbury, only appeared the first day of each conference, which beside that before the king, was twice in all, and meddled not in any disputations; but all men supposed, that he and Bishop Morley, and Bishop Hinchman, were the doers and disposers of all such affairs.

“Frewen, the Archbishop of York, spoke very little; and came but once or twice in all. Bishop Morley was often there, and with free and fluent words, with much ear-



ness, was the chief speaker of all the bishops, and the greatest interrupter of us. Bishop Cosins was there constantly, and had a great deal of talk, but so little logic, natural or artificial, that no one was much moved by any thing he said—but he was excellently well versed in canons, councils, and fathers; and he was more familiar and affable than the rest. Hinchman, since Bishop of London, was one of the most grave, comely, reverend aspect of any of them; and had a good insight into the fathers and councils. He spake calmly and slowly, but not often; but was as high in principles as any of them. Bishop Saunderson was sometimes there, but never spoke, except a very little.

“Bishop Gauden was seldom absent; and bitter as is his pen, he was the only moderate man among the bishops, except our Bishop Reynolds. He showed no learning nor logic, but had a calm, fluent, rhetorical tongue. Bishop Lucy, of St. David’s, spoke once or twice, a few words, calmly; and so did Bishop Nicholson of Gloucester, and Bishop Griffith of St. Asaph’s; though they were not commissioners. King, Bishop of Chichester, I never saw there; Bishop Warner, of Rochester,

was present once or twice. Lany, of Peterborough, was once or twice there; and also Walton, Bishop of Chester, but neither of them spoke much. Of all the bishops, none 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 to cast out so many of their brethren through the *nation*, he turned to the other 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*.

"Bishop Reynolds spoke much the first day to bring them to moderation; afterwards he spoke occasionally, in the same spirit. 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 spoke a few impertinent, passionate words, confuting the opinion we had formed of him from his writings. Dr. Earle, Dr. Heylin, and Dr. Bar-

wick, never came. Dr. Hacket, since bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, said nothing by which he could be distinguished. Dr. Sparrow said but little, but that little was with a spirit to produce division. Dr. Gunning and Dr. Pierce, did all their work beside Dr. Morley's discourses; but with a great difference in the manner.

“Dr. Pierce was their true logician and disputant; but Dr. Gunning's passionate invectives, with some argumentation, were not so agreeable. Dr. Pierce, however, 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 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. He was also, as I hear and believe, of very temperate life also, as to all carnal excesses,

whatsoever. But so vehement for his high and imposing principles, and so over-zealous for Arminianism, and formality, and church pomp; and so 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 discourses. Of Dr. Pierce, I will say no more, because he hath said so much of me."

It is probable from what is here said, that Baxter and Pierce were brought into direct collision; and were probably both sore with the wounds received from each other. Jeremy Taylor says, in one of his letters, speaking of Baxter, "But I suppose he has met with his match, for Mr. Pierce has attacked him, and they are joined in the lists."

"On our part," says Baxter, "Dr. Bates spoke very solidly, judiciously, and pertinently, when he did speak. As for myself, the reason why I spoke so much was, because it was the desire of my brethren, and I was loth to expose them to the hatred of the bishops, and 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 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 I could comfortably suffer for, and should as willingly be a martyr, for *charity* as for *faith*.”

Thus ended the Savoy Conference, the last of the attempts to reconcile churchmen and dissenters, in which the court, and the authorities of the church took any active part. The issue might have been foreseen even at the beginning, from the disposition of the leading Episcopal commissioners, and from the conduct of Sheldon at the very first meeting.

Burnet says, not without 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 the respondent, who was afterwards advanced first to the see of 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 never could be brought to an end, or to any good effect."

The Presbyterian ministers having completely failed, as they believed, in the object of this conference, drew up a correct account of the whole affair, and presented it to the king in the form of a petition. 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 gave a short history of the conference and its unsuccessful issue, and concluded by praying, that the benefit of the king's "Declaration" might be continued to the people, and that the additions promised in it might be bestowed. It does not appear that the king said any thing of importance 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."

For a while hopes were entertained, that the parliament might pass the "Declaration" into a law; but in this they soon found themselves in a mistake; and instead of having their burdens made lighter than before, they were made ten times heavier. The convocation made the Prayer Book more grievous than ever, and the parliament passed a new act of conformity, with a new form of subscription, and a new declaration to be made against the covenant. So that the king's declaration not only died before it came into execution, but a weight more grievous than a thousand ceremonies was added to the old conformity, with a heavy penalty,

We have seen that Baxter's highest ambition was to be restored to Kidderminster. For this he petitioned, and would have been content, even to be the curate of the old vicar; a man of no talents or worth, and totally unqualified for the place which he occupied. He did attempt once a quarter to read some sort of a discourse, which however, only caused the people to laugh at him.



Both the king and Lord Chancellor appear to have been willing for Baxter to return; but the thing was effectually prevented by the opposition of Sir Ralph Clare, an old courtier, who resided there, and was the patron of the old vicar. This man did not like to have Baxter so near to him; and by representing to bishop Morley, that the people of Kidderminster were disposed to be factious and schismatic, and that Baxter had a complete ascendancy over them, he effected it, that every overture made for Baxter's restoration to his people was rejected; although the Lord Chancellor himself wrote a kind and entreat- ing letter to Sir Ralph Clare in favour of Baxter. When all plans had failed, Baxter paid a visit to Kidderminster, and begged the vicar to permit him to take the lecture, which he had before had; but he refused. He then offered to be his curate, but this he also re- fused; and finally he offered to preach with- out any compensation, whatever, but even this was not permitted. There can be no doubt, that the old vicar in the whole affair, acted under the influence of Clare and Mor- ley, who had hitherto so effectually hindered the return of Baxter to his beloved people.

In carrying his end, Sir Ralph Clare was in no way scrupulous about the truth and correctness of his reports. In several instances, Baxter convicted him of manifest falsehood. On one occasion he represented, that out of sixteen hundred communicants, only six hundred were for Baxter; and that he had refused when he lived there to administer the communion to any person kneeling; whereas, he had published from the pulpit, repeatedly, that they were permitted to receive the eucharist, in any posture which they chose; and to show how false was the report, that most of the people were opposed to him, his friends carried about a paper in which the subscribers expressed their earnest desire for his return, to which sixteen hundred out of eighteen hundred persons put their names; and the greater part of the remainder, were from home or could not be seen. And instead of a general disaffection, which Clare had asserted, he declares, that he had heard of but one man who was opposed to his return, and that was a man who had lately come to the town, and was a bigotted Roman Catholic. Although all prospect of returning to Kidderminster was gone,

yet Baxter seemed unwilling to take any other charge, and for a while, preached in London, wherever he found an opportunity; but after some time he judged it best to have a place of stated preaching, and he united with Dr. Bates, in the lecture of St. Dunstan in the West, where he preached once a week, and the people gave him some maintenance.

While preaching here, one day, some bricks and dust fell down in the steeple or belfry, on which the people thought the steeple was falling, and as is usual on such occasions, a dreadful rush and tumult took place; and the noise in the gallery led the people below to think, that the church was falling. While the people were thus thrown into horrible confusion; so that some precipitated themselves from the gallery into the body of the church, Baxter sat down composedly in the pulpit, until the whole disturbance was over. The people were scarcely quietly seated again, before a bench on which many were sitting near the communion table, broke, and a second rush and tumult took place, even worse than the first. On this second disturbance, an old woman was heard to ask God

forgiveness for not taking the first warning, and promising, if God would deliver her, this once, to take heed of coming hither again. When the people were composed, Baxter resumed his discourse, by saying, "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." While the church of St. Dunstan's was repairing, he preached at St. Bride's, at the other end of Fleet street, where the curate read the Common Prayer regularly before sermon. He was therefore, the occasion of many attending on this service, who were not in the habit of doing so.

Mr. Ashurst and about twenty others invited him to preach on a week day, in Milk street, for which service he received £40; and he did so until he was silenced the next year. That he might, as far as possible, act consistently with the laws, he went to the Archbishop of Canterbury and requested a license to preach, which the archbishop very readily granted. But as Baxter was uniformly attended by crowded audiences, the envy of the regular clergy was excited, and

the spies of the bishops often reported him as a dangerous and seditious man; so that frequently he thought it necessary to publish the sermons which they misrepresented. Even his private letters to his family were intercepted, and though found to contain nothing factious or treasonable, were sent round among the bishops, which shows what a jealousy they entertained of his influence. Frequently he was threatened with an arrest; and on a certain occasion, a knight offered the Bishop of Worcester his troop of horse to apprehend him. At length Bishop Morley prohibited him from preaching in his diocese, although Baxter offered to promise that he would confine his preaching to the creed, commandments, and Lord's prayer.

Baxter was now completely shut out from his old flock, to whom he had, till this time, occasionally ministered. They parted, as may be supposed, with great reluctance, and much grief and many tears. Their situation was more distressing, from the fact that Mr. Baldwin, who had succeeded Mr. Baxter in the lecture, and of whom, as a scholar and good preacher, we have already spoken, was

also forbidden to preach, by the bishop; yet he remained at Kidderminster as a private person, and visited the people in their houses. The minister brought in was a man altogether insufficient, not being capable of teaching even the fundamental points of religion; and would often preach in direct opposition to the articles of the church, and in his applications did what he could to bring an odium on a holy life, to keep men from it, and to promote the interests of Satan.

But now the fatal day of St. Bartholomew arrived, when the act of conformity was to go into operation. This memorable day, which witnessed above two thousand of the most learned and pious ministers of England ejected from their charges, and cast, without resources, upon the wide world, was August 24th, 1662, being the very day of the year in which the Huguenots, a century before, were so cruelly murdered by the Papists, in France. Baxter, as soon as the act passed, ceased from preaching, for the present, as he wished to let it be seen that he did not conform; and as he did not wish that the enemies of the non-conformists should have any



occasion against them, for disobedience to the laws.\*

Many of the silenced ministers were equal in learning and abilities to any of the Episcopalians. Baxter, Calamy, Owen, Bates, and Howe, were as capable of forming enlarged and comprehensive views of truth and duty, as Pearson, Gunning, Morley, or any others of the high church party; while, as it regards the evidences of Christian character and devotedness, there were few of the class from which they seceded, who can compare with them.

Baxter informs us that good old Simeon Ashe died on the eve of St. Bartholomew's day; and was thus taken away from the evil to come.

As they were forbidden to preach, so they were privately watched, that they might not exhort one another, or pray together; and every meeting for prayer was considered a seditious meeting, and was called by the

\* That the non-conformist ministers had justifiable grounds for separating from the Church of England, is a point which we do not mean to discuss; but whoever wishes to see the reasons of their conduct clearly set forth, may consult the tenth chapter of Calamy's Abridgement.



odious name of a "Conventicle." In regard to the vigilance and jealousy exercised over the ejected ministers, Mr. Baxter relates the following fact: "One Mr. Beale, in Hatton Garden, having a son, his only child, sick of a fever, and brought so low that the physicians thought he would die, desired a few friends to meet at his house to pray for him. As it pleased God to hear our prayers, and to restore the child, and his mother shortly after falling sick of a fever, we were again requested to meet at the house and pray for her recovery, the last day when she was near to death. It happened that Dr. Bates and myself were not able to attend; but it being understood that we were to be there, two justices were procured from the other end of the town, to come with the serjeant-at-arms of the Parliament, to apprehend us. When they came, most of the company were dispersed, except a few of their kindred, and three ministers who remained to pray. These officers came into the very room where the sick woman was dying, and took down the names of such as were present; but were evidently disappointed. What an occasion would it have been to them that reproached

us as Presbyterian, seditious schismatics, to have found us praying with a dying woman, that they might cast us into prison!"

In the year 1663, Dr. Juxon, archbishop of Canterbury, died, and was succeeded by Sheldon. About this time there were frequent rumours of an *indulgence* or *comprehensive*, to be granted to the silenced ministers: but instead of liberty, their yoke was made heavier; for a bill against private meetings passed the House of Commons, and shortly after became a law. The sum of it was "that every person above sixteen years old, who should be present at any meeting under colour or pretext 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 misery of the people under this act was, that no one could

tell what it meant; for the liturgy intermeddles not with the interior of families; and in this diversity of family customs, no one knew what the practice of the Church was. Besides it was a tyrannical law, as it gave power to justices to record, fine, and imprison a man, without a jury, for the first and second offence. This trial fell upon the people, as well as the ministers; but they were very courageous, and exhorted them to stand it out and preach until they were sent to prison, while the whip was off their back; but when it came to their own case, and some of them had been seized and sent to prison, their tone was greatly changed, and they now thought it better for the ministers to preach often to a few in secret, than but once or twice in public to many. Indeed, the people were now in a great strait to know what to do. Some thought that if they met in separate but contiguous houses, the law could not take hold of them; but then it was remarked, that the sole power of judging was given to the justices to determine what constituted an unlawful meeting. Great lawyers gave their opinion, that persons coming to a house on business, could

not fall under the penalty of this law; but this was all wind; for still the justices had the power of determining every thing.

Some division in favour of the non-conformists now took place, by reason of the fanatical and extravagant behaviour of the Quakers, who seemed to glory in their sufferings; and assembled boldly at public places, and were daily dragged away to prison.

Baxter and Bates were in the habit of attending the common prayer, in the parish churches; but this was so far from mitigating the opposition to them, that it increased it. And there was in this the appearance of inconsistency; for if it was not sinful to conform one day, it would not be to conform altogether. The reason why the Episcopalians disliked them the more on this account, was, that they feared their influence would be greater. No doubt they acted conscientiously, but the expediency of their conduct may well be doubted; and it is certain, that by this course they offended both churchmen and dissenters.

The great plague in London was a memorable event, which drove from the city, nearly all the parochial clergy; but a number of the

non-conformist ministers remained and occupied the deserted pulpits, and preached with extraordinary effect. Among these Mr. Vincent deserves the first place. Baxter had retired to Acton, on account of his health, and for the sake of leisure, before the plague broke out. Here, he spent several years diligently occupied in the composition of religious books. Here he composed his great work of practical divinity, called, "THE CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY," which will remain a monument of his piety, sagacity, and knowledge of the Scriptures and of the human heart. To learn whether he could get it licensed, he offered a single treatise to Mr. Grig, who had been a non-conformist, but was now chaplain to the Bishop of London; and who professed a great regard for Baxter. He informed him, that he durst not license it. But some practical tracts which he sent without a name to the Archbishop of Canterbury, were licensed; although accidentally, they were known to be his.

So vigilant was the watch over these silenced ministers that they were scarcely permitted to preach to their own families if a few others happened to be present. One day an

ancient gentlewoman came to Baxter's house while he was engaged in worship; but her knock not being heard or attended to, she did not get in until the service was over; when she expressed so strong a desire to hear him, that he appointed a day, on which she might attend; but before it arrived, he received an intimation that she was actuated by the most malignant motives, and was acting as a spy upon him; and so that danger was avoided. Several learned theologians, in foreign parts, wished to carry on a literary correspondence with Baxter; among whom were Amyraut, and Zollikoffer, but he durst not engage in such a correspondence, lest his motives should be misrepresented.

The judgments of God by the plague did not lead the English government to exercise justice towards the suffering Dissenters. The parliament, being driven from London, retired to Oxford, where the king, removed from the personal danger of the plague, was busy in contriving an act, to make the case of the silenced ministers incomparably harder than it was before, by imposing upon them an 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 parliament; or to any place where they had preached since the act of oblivion." The promoters of this most iniquitous law, are said to have been Sheldon, archbishop of Canterbury, and Ward, bishop of Salisbury. It was promoted also by Lord Chancellor Hyde; but was strenuously opposed in the House of Lords, by the Earl of Southampton, Lord Treasurer of England; for although he had always adhered to the king, he knew what good policy required, and what was due to humanity. The act passed however into a law.

The oath prescribed was in the following words, "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."

It is hard to tell, whether the impiety, the folly, or the cruelty of this oath is the great-



est. Baxter submitted a number of queries to Sergeant Fountain, respecting the true construction of this oath, to which he received learned and detailed answers; but after all explanations he could not agree to take it. Sheldon determined to execute this act rigorously; and his orders to the bishops were issued accordingly; requiring among other things, the names of all the ejected ministers, in their several dioceses, with the place of their abode, and manner of life. Many, however, received such an interpretation of this oath, that they were induced to take it, among whom was Dr. Bates. His reasons may be seen in a letter addressed to Baxter, on the occasion. The reasons of the latter for declining are far stronger. The oath was a wicked device to ensnare or injure the silenced ministers; and the taking of it, in no case added to the reputation of those who did it.

The plague having ceased, Baxter returned to Acton, from which he had been driven by this dreadful scourge: when he came back the burying ground appeared like a plowed field so great was the number of fresh graves.

In the year 1666, September 2d, after midnight, London was set on fire, when, for three days, the conflagration raged with increasing violence, until almost all the city within the walls, and much without them, was burnt. The people for want of organization could do nothing to resist the raging element. The engines were out of order, or could not be worked for want of skill. Most of the booksellers brought their books into the vaults under St. Paul's church, where it was thought almost impossible the fire should come. But when the church itself was burnt all the books were destroyed, which was not only a great private, but an irreparable public loss. The burning leaves of some of these books were picked up at the distance of twenty miles from London. The fire met with no check, until some of the seamen taught them to blow up some of the houses with gunpowder; though in some directions it is said to have stopped, as it began, without any known cause. Baxter fully believed that the city was set on fire by the Papists; and that this was the common belief, is manifest from the inscription on the monument; built on purpose to commemo-

rate this event; but of the fact there exists not a particle of evidence; and what incendiary could have calculated upon the devastation of this fire before hand? But some good arose out of this great disaster; for the churches being now burnt, and the parish ministers scattered, the non-conformists, were determined to go on and preach to the people, until they were imprisoned. Dr. Manton had his rooms full in Covent Garden, Mr. Thomas Vincent, Mr. Thomas Doolittle, Dr. Samuel Annesley, Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Jane-way, Mr. Chester, Mr. Franklin, Mr. Turner, Mr. Grimes, Mr. Nathaniel Vincent, Dr. Jacomb, and Mr. Thomas Watson, with many others, kept their meetings open, and fitted up large rooms for the accommodation of the hearers; and some who were able erected chapels, furnished with pulpits, galleries, seats, &c. The Independents also set up their meetings. Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Caryl, Mr. Barker, Dr. Owen, Mr. Philip Nye, and Dr. Thomas Goodwin, all came to the city of London. It was also a favourable circumstance that those churches which remained had the best of the conformist ministers, for their pastors; such as Dr. Stilling-

fleet, Dr. Tillotson, Mr. White, Dr. Outram, Dr. Patrick, Mr. Gifford, Dr. Whitecot, Dr. Horton, Dr. Nest, &c. Persons of moderate principles heard the conformists and non-conformists indifferently, but the high church party declaimed against all meetings not under the wing of Episcopacy, as seditious, schismatic, and unlawful conventicles; while some on the other extreme would hear none of the ministers who conformed to the established Church.

Some new rumors were again afloat respecting religious liberty and toleration; but the leaders of the Episcopal party wrote vehemently against it; and began now not to wish to have the non-conformist ministers in the church, on any terms. Several pamphlets were published for and against toleration. Some too, who were for free discussions in philosophy, and especially such as were admirers of Des Cartes, and were at first called Latitudinarians and Cambridge Arminians, being not so strict in their theology or way of piety, as some, thought that conformity was too small a matter to keep them out of the ministry. "But afterwards they grew," says Baxter, "into a distaste of the weakness

of many Christians, who used some harsh phrases in prayer, preaching, and discourse. Hence they contracted a dislike to the doctrines and mode of worshipping pursued by their more serious brethren." The men to whom he refers as Latitudinarians, were such as Dr. More, Worthington, Whitchot, Cudworth, Wilkins, who were mostly of Cambridge, and about this time introduced a cold, philosophical, inefficient mode of preaching into the English pulpit.

It was a remarkable dispensation of Providence, that Chancellor Hyde who had been so powerful an instrument in the persecution of the non-conformists, should now fall entirely into disgrace with his own party. As soon as the Duke of Buckingham came into power, he began to show indulgence to all Dissenters; and pursued a policy, the reverse of that which Hyde had considered necessary. The ministers of London were now connived at, and held their religious meetings without disturbance. Some attributed this change to the king, some to the Duke of Buckingham, and others to a wish to favour the papists.

About this time, a proposal was received of a plan of comprehending the non-confor-

mists in the church. This was communicated from the Lord Treasurer, through Sir John Babor, who wished to know what terms would satisfy the Dissenters. They proposed that two moderate and learned men should be appointed to confer with Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, and Mr. Baxter. Accordingly, bishop Wilkins and his chaplain, were sent to the non-conformist ministers. The bishop was an open hearted, generous man, and the whole thing had proceeded from him. He requested them to state their terms; which he pronounced to be altogether incapable of being received; and then he proposed his own plan of a *comprehension*. After this conference, he disclosed the plan to Dr. Ward, in the hope of bringing him into the scheme; but he revealed it to the other bishops, who immediately set themselves to defeat it. A bill had been prepared, and judge Hales was to have introduced it into the House of Lords. As soon as the parliament met, this plan of an *indulgence* and *comprehension*, was rumoured among the members; and to crush the affair in the bud, a resolution was proposed, that no man should bring such a bill into the house. And Dr. Sheldon, the more



effectually to crush the non-conformists, sent a circular to all the bishops, calling on them to send up an account of the conventicles, in their respective dioceses, and how many attended them, and whether they could easily be suppressed by the magistrate. When he received the information which he wanted, he went to the king, and got a proclamation issued to put the laws in force against all non-conformists, and especially, against the preachers, according to the statute, which forbade their living in corporate towns. The treaty for a comprehension amused for a while, but like all similar plans came to nothing. Although bishop Wilkins' plan did not come fully up to the wishes of the ministers; yet they would have very gladly availed themselves of it. "How joyfully," says Mr. Baxter, "would fourteen hundred at least of the non-conformist ministers of England have yielded to these terms if they could have got them. But alas! all this labour was in vain! For the prelates and prelatists so far prevailed, that as soon as ever the parliament met, they prevented all talk or motion of such a thing." "In April 1663, Dr. Creighton, dean of Wells, the loquacious



and ready tongued court preacher, who was used to preach Calvin to hell, and Calvinists to the gallows, and by his scornful revilings and jests, to set the court on 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, 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 fluent extempore speaker, but one that was never known to want words, especially, to express his satirical, or bloody thoughts."

The Presbyterian ministers were informed that the king would now very gladly receive an address from them, as he was much inclined to favour them. They were informed that the address must be a thankful acknowledgment of his majesty's clemency, and of the liberty which, under his gracious administration, they were permitted to enjoy. Such an address was accordingly prepared, and was presented by Dr. Manton, Dr. Bates, Dr. Jacomb, and Mr. Ennis. Mr. Baxter

excused himself from taking any part in this business, on account of ill-health; because, in all former cases, whatever he had touched of this kind, had utterly failed, and disappointed all their hopes.

The address was most graciously received, and Charles played the hypocrite with consummate art. After all, things remained as they were before. Much discussion took place, and many pamphlets were written against toleration. The writers gathered out of the writings of Baxter, and other non-conformists, all that they had ever written against the toleration of Papists and Quakers, and now turned their own weapons against themselves. These thrusts were hard to parry by all those who, like Baxter, advocated a half-way toleration.

While Baxter lived at Acton, he preached to his own family, but few of the inhabitants showed any inclination to attend; first, because they did not wish to involve him in difficulty; and secondly, because they were afraid of bringing themselves under the lash of the Conventicle law. They were, moreover, an ignorant people, who knew very little of the value of the gospel. But when

the Conventicle act had expired, by its own limitation, and he preached publicly, many came, so that his house was insufficient to contain them. When they had come once, they appeared to desire to come again; and a great number of them seemed to be seriously affected with the things which they heard. Many came from Brentford and the neighbouring towns; and in all the town, there were not found any who showed themselves adversaries to the preacher. Here Mr. Baxter became acquainted with Chief Justice Hale, one of the best and greatest men that England ever produced. Baxter has given a portraiture of his character, with a bold but just pencil.

Having incidentally mentioned Baxter's family, we are admonished that we have omitted, in its proper place, an account of a very extraordinary event in his life. We refer to his marriage. The report of it, before it occurred, was rung about through the country, as though it had been a great wonder, or a great crime; so that the king's marriage was hardly more talked of than his. This is not very wonderful, when it is considered that he had written earnestly against

ministers' marrying; which, indeed, he seemed to consider as barely lawful in any case. He had remained single through his earlier and middle age; and now, at the age of forty-seven, to marry a young wife, not half as old as himself, seemed to be a strange thing. But it is not to be marvelled at, of any man, that, once in his life, he should play the fool. This would here appear to be the fact, in regard to Baxter; for it was scarcely to be expected that, considering the peculiarity of his temper, and that his habits were now fixed, any person could be found, with whom an alliance could be formed, likely to be productive of lasting comfort to both parties. But such a person was found, who appears to have been eminently fitted to promote the happiness and aid the usefulness of this great and excellent man. The reader will not deem an account of this matter from Baxter's own pen, tedious.

“We were born,” says he “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 ancestor's sake. Her father, Francis Charlton,

was one of the best justices of the peace in the county, a grave and worthy man, who did not marry until he was aged and gray, and died while his children were very young." . . . After the death of the father, the mother took a house in Kidderminster, whither her daughter followed her. Baxter's preaching produced a deep and abiding impression on the mind of Miss Charlton, and he was called to aid in relieving her mind from the distress under which she laboured. In time she became an eminent Christian, and though young, was in all respects, fitted to be the wife of Richard Baxter. But he must be permitted to give his own account of the transaction. "The unsuitableness of our age, and my former known purposes 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 would take away the wonder of her friends and mine, that knew us—viz. the many strange occurrences which brought it to pass; and the notice of it would much conduce to the understanding of many other passages in our lives; yet wise friends, by

whom I am advised, think it better to omit such personal particularities. Both in her case and mine there was much extraordinary, which it doth not concern the world to be acquainted with. From the first thought of it, many changes and stoppages intervened, and long delays, till I was silenced and ejected: at last on September 10th, 1662, we were married in Bennet-Fink church, by Mr. Samuel Clark, having been before contracted, by Mr. Simeon Ash, in the presence of Henry Ashurst and Mrs. Ash."

He proposed, before their marriage, that she should agree to the following conditions: 1. That he should possess nothing which was hers, before marriage. 2. That she should so order her affairs, that he should be entangled in no law-suit. 3. That she should expect none of his time, which his ministry required.

"When we were married," says he, "her sadness and melancholy left her. Counsel did something to it, and contentment something; and being taken up with our household affairs, did something. We lived in inviolated love, and mutual complacency, sensible of the benefit of mutual help, nearly

nineteen years. I know not that we ever had any breach in point of love, or point of interest, save only that she grudged, that I had persuaded her to surrender so much of her estate, to the disabling her from helping others.”

The married life of Baxter was a very unsettled one, so that for most of the time, he might be said to have, “no certain dwelling place.” About the year 1670, Baxter was imprisoned for holding conventicles, at Acton. The prosecutor was a certain Dr. Ryves, the parson of that parish, who was also one of the king’s chaplains. He was brought before the justices, at Brentford, and treated very indecorously, on the trial. He was sent by mittimus to Clerkenwell prison, for holding a conventicle; not having taken the Oxford oath. Serjeant Fountain advised him to have recourse to *habeas corpus*, and to apply for it to the court of Common Pleas. He did so, and the judges released him on the ground that the mittimus was not in legal form, but announced to the multitude who attended the trial, that if the mittimus had not been defective in point of law, they could not have released the reverend gentle-



man; as no doubt he had violated the law which forbade the holding of conventicles.

When the justices saw that he was discharged, not satisfied to have driven him from Acton, they made out a new mittimus, naming the fourth of June, as the day on which he had preached. And this mittimus they put into an officer's hands, in London, to bring him, not to Clerkenwell, but to Newgate prison, which, since the best part of it was burnt down, was the most noisome prison in the whole country, the dungeon of the Tower excepted.

From 1665 to 1670, Baxter produced some of his most considerable works, as his "Reasons for the Christian Religion;" "Directions to weak Christians how to grow in grace;" and the latter part of the "Christian Directory;" the "Life of Faith;" the "Cure of Church Divisions;" and some others.

During this period also, he had a long discussion, orally 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 the failure, Mr. Baxter lays upon Owen. These two great men differed,

not in essential matters, but in many minor points; and more in disposition. Owen was calm, dignified, and firm, but respectful and courteous; Baxter was keen and cutting in his reproofs, sanguine in his expectations, and so confident of his own sincerity, as often to push matters too far.

In the year 1670, the act against conventicles was renewed, and made more severe than ever: several new clauses being added, which Baxter believed had special reference to his own case. This new law was executed with great rigour, so that it appeared to be the design of the government to extirpate the non-conformists. Dr. Manton was imprisoned for six months, for preaching in his own house, and within the very parish of which he had been the rector.

After Baxter's release from prison, he resided at Totteridge. While here he was sent for to Barnet, to meet Lauderdale, who was then proceeding to Scotland, to make some alterations in the affairs of that country. By the king's permission he consulted Baxter, and offered him, if he would go to Scotland, a bishopric, a church, or the management of some of the colleges. Baxter

was too discerning to be caught in this trap; for such it seems to have been. Lauderdale no sooner went to Scotland, than he became one of the greatest persecutors of the Presbyterian Church. Baxter, in declining the proposals of Lauderdale, wrote him a letter, which, as it is characteristic of the man, will be here inserted.

“ My Lord,

“ Being deeply sensible of your Lordship’s favours, I humbly return to you my hearty thanks; but the following considerations forbid me to entertain any hopes 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 a little while in Scotland, and that in a disabled and 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 in the world—a Latin ‘*Methodus Theolo-*

*giae.*' Indeed, I can scarcely hope to live so long, as it requires yet nearly a year's labour. Now if I should spend that half year or year, which should finish this work, in travel, 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 I could hope for would be, the 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 can probably 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 past, 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.

“ 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 wants preferment, his way is to preach, or write a book against the non-conformists, 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 matters of fact, as such writings contain. They cry 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 superiors should cure this; but if I might be heard speak before I be judged by them, I would request that I might be allowed to live quiet-

ly, 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 at Kidderminster, where they are eaten by worms and rats; having no security for my quiet abode, 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.

“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 that 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 would think, would not be against the preaching of the gospel, not recall my license, I could preach occasional sermons, which would absolve my conscience of 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 when there is a notorious necessity," &c.

This touching letter was followed by another to the same nobleman, on the divided state of the country; and proposes that moderate divines should meet and debate matters, in order to some plan of concord. It is wonderful, that after all his experience, he



should have placed any confidence in such a measure.

In the year 1671, died his very particular friend, Serjeant Fountain, who gave Baxter £10 every year, from the time of his being silenced until his death. "He was a man," says Baxter, "of quick understanding, and upright and impartial in his life; of serious fervency towards God, and open zealous owning of true piety and holiness."

The only respite which the non-conformist ministers received, was from the king's connivance; not enforcing the severe laws against them.

By the shutting up of the King's Exchequer this year, Baxter lost £1000 which he had deposited there; for though it was only intended to keep it closed for one year, it does not appear that he ever recovered the money.

In 1672, the king published a "Declaration," dispensing with the penal laws against non conformists. This document declares, "that the king, in 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, and do not preach seditiously, nor against the Church of England." The evident design was not to secure liberty to the non-conformists, but to the Roman Catholics; consequently, the London ministers were not harmonious in their sentiments of the use which should be made of this just, but illegal privilege. They were all glad, however, to avail themselves of the opportunity of promoting the interests of true religion. And it is probable, that had it not been for the favour entertained towards the Romanists by the king and his family, and some of his court, the non-conformists would have been entirely crushed. Providence has, on many occasions, favoured the Dissenters, by means of the struggles of party, until now their body has arrived at such a measure of strength, as, under God, constitutes its best security.

In October of this year, Baxter fell into a dangerous fit of sickness, from which however, God, in his wonted mercy, recovered him. Having received a license by means of Sir Thomas Player, chamberlain of Lon-

don, he preached his first sermon, in a tolerated place, on the 19th of November.

Some merchants now set up a lecture at Pinners' Hall in London, to be supplied by six ministers, allowing them twenty shillings a piece for each sermon; of these they chose him to be one. But after preaching four sermons, he found much complaint made, by the Independents, as though he had preached against them, every time he spoke of the sin of making division, or unnecessary separation. He was also charged with preaching up Arminianism, and free will, and man's power.

In January 1673 he set up a lecture, at Mr. Turner's church in New Street, near Fetter Lane, which was attended with encouraging evidences of God's special blessing; but for these labours he never took a penny from any one.

The Parliament met on the 20th of February, and voted the king's "Declaration" to be illegal. The king promised, that it should not be drawn into a precedent: and there was some talk of a law for the relief of the non-conformists, but nothing was done; and

all the old laws remained in full force, although they were not rigorously executed.

Baxter now took a house in Bloomsbury, in London, where he removed with his family after Easter; having previously spent three quiet years at Totteridge.

The Parliament now grew into great jealousy of the prevalence of popery. As the Duke of York was the commander of the army, fears began to be entertained, that the Papists were designing to establish themselves, by force. A law was therefore enacted, that no person should hold any office of trust, who did not take the oath of allegiance and supremacy, and receive the sacrament according to the order of the Church of England. This was the origin of the celebrated Test Act, concerning which so much has been said and written; and which now only forms a part of the history of religious tyranny, in the years that are past. The Dissenters with more conscience than wisdom, at first acquiesced in this measure, although afterwards they struggled hard to throw off the yoke; but did not succeed until within a few years, when it was repealed. It was in all respects an iniquitous law, because a so-

lemn religious ordinance was prostituted to state policy; and men of infidel sentiments and profane lives, were brought to bow at the altar, for the sake of office. And although it was designed to be a bulwark against the Papists, it was doubtless as acceptable to a majority in both houses, because it kept out the Dissenters.

In 1674 the health of Baxter was much impaired, but he still continued his labours in London, with hopeful success. Satan however contrived new hinderances, and raised fresh persecutions against this destroyer of his kingdom. He was arrested and brought before Sir William Pulteney, but this worthy magistrate found the warrant illegal, and thus the malignant informer was defeated. This seizure was under the Conventicle Act.

New schemes of comprehension and peace were every year talked of. At length, a conference was proposed by some of the leading bishops, Stillingfleet, Tillotson, Morley, and Ward; which like all the former attempts at reconciliation, proved abortive. Indeed, the two last mentioned bishops had no real desire for any such thing, as appeared by the course afterwards pursued. Under their in-

fluence he was again prosecuted before Sir Thomas Davis, where the accusation against him was preaching in an unconsecrated place, not using the common prayer, &c. Though at first permission to speak was denied him yet at length liberty was given, when he so confounded the informers, and perplexed the alderman, that the latter suspended the order which he had just made, to distrain upon his goods. But he afterwards executed this order, and warrants were sent to distrain, upon two judgments, for preaching in New street.

The room in which he preached had once sunk, when pressed by the audience which crowded it, and more recently the whole building had fallen in ruins over the heads of the people. Many henceforward would not come to this place; Baxter, therefore, encouraged by his friends, set about building a house of worship in Oxenden street. By the zeal and influence of his wife another place of meeting was prepared for Mr. Read in Bloomsbury, in which Baxter engaged to help him occasionally.

But it was his lot to be followed by persecutors. As warrants were out to distrain upon his property for preaching, he first kept

his door shut for a while, and then resolved to sell off his books and his goods. The first time he preached in the meeting-house which he had prepared, was the occasion of a plot to send him for six months to prison on account of the Oxford oath. But by a turn of providence their design was frustrated.

At this time Baxter was troubled with an extraordinary complication of diseases, of which in his life he gives a minute and rather disgusting detail.

Being driven from home, he availed himself of his old license to preach in various parishes; and multitudes attended, who were not accustomed to go to the house of God. In some places where scarcely a hundred had been wont to come, his audience consisted of two or three thousands. One of the places where he preached was Rickmersworth, abounding with Quakers, because William Penn, their leader had his residence here. Baxter felt anxious that the people should have an opportunity of hearing what could be said for their recovery. William Penn was not backward to give him the opportunity which he desired: upon which he continued



speaking to two rooms full of people, from ten o'clock till five, fasting. One lord, two knights, and four ministers of the established church were present.

His friends at home had got one Mr. Seddon to preach the second sermon in his new chapel. He was a non-conformist of Derbyshire, and was fully warned of the danger which threatened him. While he was preaching, three justices waited, expecting to see Baxter, and the artless man had every opportunity of escaping, but when he came to the justices, and some one told them, that he was the preacher, they put his name in the warrant, and sent him to prison, where he remained three months. His persecutors were the more exasperated because he had escaped the snare laid for him; and they waited for an opportunity to seize him. Several of the justices however died; and about the same time he lost his most excellent friend, Judge Hale, to whom he had often been indebted; and of whose death he speaks in a most affecting manner.

From 1671 to 1675 he wrote and published a number of books. Among these was, "The Christian Directory" on which he had

been employed for some years. In this time also, he published his "Poor Man's Family Book;" "The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day;" and the "Catholic Theology;" besides a number of other treatises. This, therefore, seems to have been one of the busiest periods of his life, as a writer. Though he preached less, and was much affected in body; yet he laboured incessantly with his pen. The mere supervision of the press for the printing so many volumes would have been occupation enough for a common man.

When he had been kept a whole year out of the chapel which he had built, he resolved to erect another in the parish of St. Martin, where there were sixty thousand who had no church to which they could go. But in 1676, strict orders were given by the king to enforce the laws against non-conformists. The people, however, were reluctant to see them executed. Mr. Joseph Read was the first now committed to prison; but he had been such a friend to the poor, that they crowded round him, when called before the justice, and strongly manifested their affection. About this time several of the high

church clergy spoke against Baxter in their sermons, as Mr. Jane, and Dr. Mason, the latter of whom charged him with equivocation; a thing of which he was utterly incapable. The whole ground of the attack was the misapprehension of one Ross, who endeavoured to extort from him a promise that he would not preach again. Mason died soon after his public attack on this venerable man.

Being hindered from preaching in his own chapel, he was obliged to let it lie idle, and had to pay yearly £30, ground-rent; and was glad to preach for nothing near it in a chapel built by another for gain. But he had not preached here long before a warrant was issued to apprehend him. He asked the Earl of Lauderdale, what occasioned this work against him. He was advised to call on the Bishop of London, which he did, and was courteously treated, but the warrant was not withdrawn; and for more than four and twenty days, his door was watched by the constables; so he went no more to the bishops.

In 1677, upon the death of Thomas Wadsworth, of Southwark, Baxter was invited to

take his place, where, though he refused to become the pastor, he preached for several months in peace, when Dr. Lloyd became the pastor of St. Martin's in the Fields. Baxter was encouraged by Dr. Tillotson to offer him his chapel in Oxenden street, which to his great satisfaction he accepted; but even this simple and public transaction was shamefully misrepresented to his discredit. Dr. Lloyd, however, when applied to, confirmed the statement which Baxter gave of the matter. Of several years towards the close of Baxter's life we have few particulars. He needed rest. His constitution was completely broken, but his courage and the ardour of his mind were invincible; and as long as he could move his hand, he persisted in writing.

In 1676, he brought out, "The Judgment of the Non-conformists;" "The Non-conformist's Plea for Peace," in three parts, with a "Defence," the "True and only Way of Concord;" "Church History of Bishops;" "Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet;" "Treatise of Episcopacy;" "Apology for the Non-conformist's Ministry;" "Dissent from Dr. Sherlock;" and the "Search for the English Schismatic." All these, besides his "Methodus

Theologiae," were the production of five years. His most valued friends began now to drop off: Judge Hale, and Dr. Manton he missed exceedingly, and lamented much. He also mentions the Rev. Henry Stubbs, whose custom was to preach every day, and often twice in the day. Frequently he fell down in the pulpit in a fit, and would get up and go on again. He alleged that he had often gone ill into the pulpit, and come out better. When he died, he left £200 to Bristol, and a like sum to London, to buy Bibles for the poor, also a fund to educate poor children, and to assist poor ministers' widows in their necessities. Another of his dear friends, now taken away from him, was the Rev. John Corbet, born and brought up in the city of Gloucester, and a student of Magdalen-Hall, Oxford; a man of singular excellence. He also gives the character of Rev. Thomas Gouge and Henry Ashurst.

But the greatest loss which Baxter sustained in his old age, was that of his wife, which took place after a short and painful illness, June 14th, 1681. Considering the constitutional temperament of Baxter, and his advanced age, when this union was form-

ed, it cannot but be considered very remarkable, that the mutual attachment between them was so ardent and uninterrupted. Her funeral sermon was preached by John Howe, and though he dwells little on her character, we can learn from his discourse that he considered her an extraordinary woman. Baxter wrote a memoir, which he called, "A Breviate" of her life, in which he says, "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 not appropriating the Church to a party; and was against all censoriousness and partiality in religion. She was for acknowledging all that was of God in conformists and non-conformists; but she had much more reverence for the elder conformists, than for the younger ones; who ventured upon things merely 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 manner, 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 I could have had in this world, that ever I was acquainted with. For I was apt to be over careless 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. 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 discourse and conference 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 table talk and too often, 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."

The death of such a woman in the very 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 husband and companion.

Baxter's sufferings seemed to increase with his years. Old and almost bereft of

friends, he was moreover exceedingly diseased in body; so that the wonder is how his life was protracted so long. His enemies and persecutors likewise seem to have increased in number and virulence.

In July, 1682, he retired a while into the country, and returned in August in great weakness. He met his congregation, however, in New-street, and preached to them in such debility that he fully expected it would be his last sermon there. He had no sooner finished preaching, than he was arrested by many constables and other officers, led by a violent and greedy informer. By one warrant his person was seized for coming within five miles of a corporate town; and five other warrants, to distrain for one hundred and ninety pounds, for preaching five sermons. He gave himself up, and they began to seize his books, and household goods, even to the very bed from which he had lately risen. While they were hurrying him to the magistrate, to be sent to jail, he was met by Dr. Thomas Cox, who forced him back to his couch and bed, and went and took his oath before five justices, that Mr. Baxter could not go to prison without

danger of death. The justices, after consulting with the king, consented that for the present imprisonment should be forborne, that he might die at home. But they executed all their warrants on his books and goods. Some friends paid them as much money as they were appraised at. Although he sent two witnesses to prove that the goods were not his own, they proceeded to sell every thing. And when afterwards, he borrowed a bed and some necessaries, they threatened to come upon him again, and take these articles as his; so that he had no remedy but to forsake his house and goods, and take secret lodgings at a distance, in a stranger's house. Of this house, which he was obliged thus to forsake, he had taken a long lease, and was obliged to pay the rent, while it remained unoccupied. His old friends, however, were so liberal, that he was obliged to restrain their bounty. His greatest suffering however, was from disease, which now seized upon him with terrible violence. He endured all these extreme sufferings with Christian fortitude and patience; for his trust was firmly fixed in God.

The injustice with which the Dissenters

were now treated may be learnt from a single fact. A Mr. Robert Mayot, a godly man, and a conformist, in his last will left six hundred pounds to Mr. Baxter, to be distributed to sixty poor ejected ministers, adding, "that he did it, not because they were non-conformists, but because they were poor and pious. But the king's attorney sued for it in chancery, and the Lord Keeper North, gave it all to the king. But Providence defeated this unrighteous sentence; for the money was directed to be applied to the maintenance of a chaplain at Chelsea College: it was kept till after the revolution, when the Commissioner of the Great Seal restored it to Baxter, to be applied according to the will of the testator; which was done accordingly.

Again, in 1684, while he lay languishing in pain, the justices of the sessions sent warrants to apprehend him. He refused to open his chamber; and not having authority to break it open they set six officers at his study door, who watched all night, and kept him from his bed and food; so that, the next day, he was obliged to give himself up to them; when they carried him before the sessions,

though he was scarcely able to stand. They then bound him over to his good behaviour in a bond of four hundred pounds. Upon demanding to know of what crime he was accused, it was answered, None; that this was merely a measure of precaution. He inquired, why he was suspected, and by whose information; but he received no satisfactory answer. He was continued under this bond, and on the 11th of December, 1684, was forced to be carried to the sessions-house, in all his weakness and pain, or else his bond would have been forfeited. The justices informed him that he must continue bound, lest others should expect to be discharged. On another occasion he was forced in the same manner to the sessions-house, and obliged again to enter into a bond for his good behaviour, with a penalty of four hundred pounds, as before.

On the 8th of February, 1685, God was pleased to call out of the world Charles II. His character is too well known to every reader, to be required to be given here. Most will agree, that he was one of the greatest curses with which the English nation was ever visited. His father and brother had

some redeeming qualities in their character; but he had neither the personal virtues of the one, nor the conscientious regard to religion of the other.

The most extraordinary circumstance, in the eventful life of Baxter, was his trial before Judge Jefferies, for something published in his "Paraphrase of the New Testament," which had been printed a little before. In May he appeared, in obedience to a summons, in Westminster Hall, where an information was ordered to be entered against him. He moved for longer time, to prepare himself for his trial; but this was refused. Jefferies said, "I will not give him a minute's time to save his life." The trial took place in Guildhall, on the 30th of May. Sir Henry Ashurst stood by him during the whole time. Baxter appeared to be humbly composed when he came into court, and while he waited for the judge. When the jury was sworn, Baxter objected to them as being incompetent to try such a cause; as they were tradesmen and not scholars, he alleged that 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; even though the one half of them should be Papists. This objection, as might have been expected, was overruled by the court. The words picked out as the ground of accusation, and, as is supposed by Dr. Sherlock, were construed as reflecting on the prelates of the Church of England; and therefore as seditious. The passages may be seen in Orme's *Life of Baxter*. After the king's counsel had opened the cause, and brought forward the charges with their aggravations, the counsel for Baxter, employed by Sir Henry Ashurst, defended him with ability; but were in the most uncourteous manner interrupted or set down by the judge.

Baxter attempted to say something for himself, when the judge became outrageous, and reviled him in the most opprobrious terms.

“Richard, Richard,” said he, “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 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 towards 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 about you"—alluding to some persons who were in tears, about Baxter.

“Your lordship need not,” replied Baxter, “for I'll not hurt you. But these things will surely be understood one day; what fools one set of Protestants are to persecute the other.” And lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, “I am not concerned to answer 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.”

The attorneys, counsel for Baxter, were now prevented from saying any thing further; and when he himself would have spoken, he was prevented, and the unjust judge addressed the jury in a long and fulsome charge. When he had done, Baxter said, “Does your lordship think that any jury will pass a verdict against me, on such a trial as this?” “I’ll warrant you, Mr. Baxter,” said he; “don’t you trouble yourself about that.” Accordingly, the jury, without leaving the bar, laid their heads together and found him *guilty*.

As Baxter left the court he said to the judge, that one of his predecessors in office had entertained very different thoughts of him from his lordship. Jefferies answered, “That there was not an honest man in England, but what took him for a great knave.” When the trial was over, Sir Henry Ashurst, who had never left him, led him through the crowd, and conveyed him away in his coach. Baxter exerted himself to obtain a more favourable decision than he could expect from Judge Jefferies. He wrote to a nobleman at

court, whose name does not appear, requesting him to use his influence to have him delivered out of the hands of Jefferies; and he wrote a long and temperate letter to the Bishop of London, to obtain for him a more impartial trial. This letter has been preserved, and is worthy of a careful perusal.

It does not appear that these applications were of any avail to him; though it is possible that the sentence might have been heavier, if no one had interposed in his behalf. On the 29th of June he had the judgment of the court, which was, that he should pay five hundred marks, and lie in jail until the money was paid; and that he should be bound to his good behaviour for seven years. It is said that Jefferies proposed that he should be publicly whipped through the city; but his brethren would not accede to it.

The strange, outrageous conduct of the Chief Justice of England, on this occasion, is a thing almost unaccountable. If he had intended to render all judicial proceedings contemptible, he could not have taken a course more effectual than the one pursued at Baxter's trial. It has been doubted whether his cruel behaviour, ought to be at-

tributed to his desire to gratify a royal master, or to his own savage disposition. The latter has, however, been the common opinion. For this was but the commencement of a series of atrocious actions, by which the disgust and indignation of all honest people was aroused.

There was never perhaps an instance of more bare-faced injustice, than this condemnation of Baxter. In the passages cited as the ground of the information, there is not even a mention made of bishops; and not a word respecting the Church of England, in particular. But in consequence of the unrighteous verdict, now obtained against him, he was dragged to prison, where he was confined for two years; and would have been until his death, unless the fine had been remitted.

The man who seems to have been most officious in these persecutions, was L'Es-trange, one of the most unprincipled, and mercenary scribblers of the age; a man who stuck at nothing which the interests of arbitrary power and high-church politics required. To such a man, Richard Baxter's sufferings afforded a delicious repast. He had

often before attacked him by his pen: he had now seized a more formidable and dangerous weapon. The conduct of Dr. Sherlock is more difficult to be accounted for. He is said to have suggested, that a charge of treason might be founded on Baxter's exposition of the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. But it was not thought by legal men that there was sufficient foundation for the charge; otherwise it would have been adopted. Mr. Mathew Henry, in a letter to his father, dated the 17th of November, 1685, has given us an affecting picture of this suffering saint. "I went," says he, "to 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. L. went with me. He is in as good health as we 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 my present circumstances. He said he knew not why young men might not improve as well as by traveling abroad. He inquired for the Shropshire friends, and observed, that of those gentlemen who were with him at Wem, he hears of none whose sons tread in their father's steps, but Colonel Hunt's. . . . He gave us some good counsel to prepare for trials; and said the best preparation for them was a life of faith, and 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 much more painful and dreadful than

dying a violent death; especially considering the extraordinary supports which those have, who suffer for righteousness' sake."

When it was seen that Baxter would neither pay the fine nor petition for a release, a private offer appears to have been made to him through Lord Powis, that the king would grant it as a matter of favour. A man by the name of Williams offered to assist him, in procuring his liberty. Baxter appears to have had some suspicion of him; and his object at last appeared to be to get money; as he afterwards made a demand of £38, for his trouble. Baxter resisted this demand, and sent to Lord Powis, who solemnly declared, that this man had no influence whatever, and deserved no reward. Lord Powis himself appears to have been the man who managed this affair, and obtained Baxter's deliverance from prison, though not his release from the bond by which he was bound over to his good behaviour. 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 signified that it should



not be interpreted as a breach of good behaviour, to reside in London, though that was inconsistent with the Oxford act. For some time after his release he continued to live 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.

Towards the close of his course, Baxter took a solemn review of his life, opinions, and writings, and much benefit may be derived from these mature reflections. He does not profess to give an account of God's various dealings towards him as an individual, either in his providence or grace. "For any 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 reason 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, and from overvaluing their first degrees of grace, or too much applauding, or following unfurnished, inexperienced 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 loose, 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 judgment; 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 presented to it on a sudden; but it is since better acquainted with the ways of truth and error, and with a multitude of mistakes of the world, which I then did not actually know. I was then like a man of quick understanding, who was to travel where he never went before, or to cast up an account which he had not before examined, or to play on an instrument of music which he never saw before: so that I am very confident that my judgment is much sounder and firmer now than it was then. . . . .

“In my younger years, my trouble for sin was more about my actual failings; but now I am much more troubled for inward defects for want of the vital graces of the soul. My daily trouble is 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. . . . Had I all the riches of the world how gladly would I give them for a fuller knowledge, belief, and love of God and everlasting glory! These wants are the greatest burden of my life and which make my life itself a burden.

“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 in engaging in his joyful praises, than now I do . . . . .

“My judgment is much more for frequent and serious meditation, on the heavenly blessedness than it was in my younger days, I then thought a sermon on the attributes of God and the joys of heaven not the most excellent.—Nothing pleased me so well as the doctrine of regeneration and the marks of sincerity; because these things were suitable to my own state; but now I had rather hear, read, and meditate on God and heaven than on any other subject. I perceive it is the object which altereth and elevateth the mind; which will resemble that 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.

“Formerly I knew much less than now, and yet was not half so much acquainted with my own ignorance. I had a great de-

light 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. . . 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 it is better furnished than it was then.

“ I now see more good and evil than heretofore I did. I see that good men are not so good as I once thought them, but have more imperfections, and that a nearer approach and fuller trial do make the best appear more faulty than their admirers at a distance think. I find that few are so bad as 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, make an obscure 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 discover, a truly godly and sanctified life; only their prayers and duties were, by accident, kept secret from other men's observation. Yet he that would, upon this pretence, confound the godly and ungodly, may as well go about to lay heaven and hell together.

“I am not so narrow in my special love as formerly, 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 am not so narrow in my principles of church communion as once I was. I more plainly perceive the difference between the church as congregate and 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 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 a hypocrite, it is himself that will bear the loss.

“ Yet I am more sensible 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! 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 firebrands in the church; and how much of a minister's work lieth in preventing this, and in humbling and confirming such young and 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 the 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 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 on 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 ignorant nations of the earth; that among Christians there are so few that are saved from gross delusions, and have any competent knowledge; and that among these there are so few that are seriously religious, and set their hearts on heaven. No part of my prayers is so deeply serious as that for infidels, and for the conversion of an 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 Eliot, the apostle of the Indians in New England, and whoever else have laboured in such a 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 causes of such divisions. O 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 Protestants, the Lutherans and the Cal-

vinists, have woefully hindered the kingdom of Christ.

“ I am further than ever I was from expecting great matters of unity, splendour and 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 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.

“ I do not lay so great a stress on the external modes and forms of worship, as many young professors do. 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 no communion with any church not of their way. If I were among the Greeks, the Lutherans, the Independents, 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 that 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, who 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; yet, though I feel this may have some hand in the effect, as far as I can perceive, the principal causes are, the knowledge of man’s nothingness,

and God's transcendent greatness, and a sense of the brevity of human things, and the nearness of eternity; 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 never much tempted to the sin of covetousness, my fear of dying, was wont to tell me that I was not sufficiently loosened from the world; but now I find it much easier to be loose from this world, than to live by faith above. To despise earth is easy to me, but not so easy to be conversant with heaven. I have nothing in the 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 conscious of the odi-

ousness of the sin of pride; scarcely any sin appeareth more odious to me; 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 himself.

“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, 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, but 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 constant, standing evidences which put me out of doubt of my sincerity.

“ Though my habitual judgment, resolution, and scope of life, be still the same, yet I find 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.

“ 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 be 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.

“ 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. To have sinned, while I wrote and preached 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 against 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.

“That which I have named 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 ministers or people to think they know what 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 rea-

son 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 warnings do not do them good, 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.”

“If ever a human being,” says Orme, “was made transparent by its own simplicity and integrity, we may be justified in saying, it was Richard Baxter. In the lengthened and rigid description which he has given of himself, he may be regarded as furnishing us with that window in the breast, for which the philosopher so ardently, but vainly, sigh-

ed; 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 full and very fair view of his principles and character. It is certain, that his judgment of himself leaned to the severe rather than the lax side; and that while he wished before men to be acquitted 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 are not to be considered 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 called 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 to submit 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 pusillanimous. Both ought to be avoided by every rightly constituted mind. No man of his age engaged more in it than 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 a love of truth, or that which he considered as truth, to engage in what was most unpleasant to 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 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, 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 this spirit, and to carry its very atmosphere, an atmosphere of holy love, about him. He felt he had little more to do upon 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 in his Father's house, in which he is, no doubt, now enjoying a distinguished place.

During the reign of James II. Baxter seems to have mingled but little in public affairs. His bodily afflictions were great, and he was cruelly persecuted, the greater part of the time. What his opinion was of the revolution, we have no opportunity of knowing. When the prince of Orange arrived in London, the dissenting ministers to the number of ninety, waited on him with a congratulatory address; but it is probable, Baxter

was not of the number. His age and infirmities disqualified him for such a service.

When the act of toleration was passed and a qualified subscription to the articles of religion, required of all who would avail themselves of the privilege which this law conferred, Baxter drew up a long paper of explanations and exceptions, in which he explicitly declared in what sense he received the articles, and expressing his dissent from other constructions which might be put upon them. Eighty of the dissenting ministers of London concurred with him in his explanations and objections; and upon these principles they were contented to subscribe.

The affair of the agreement of the London Presbyterian and Independent ministers, must have interested Baxter much, as union was always dear to his heart; and every scheme for promoting it, would meet with his cordial concurrence, as long as he was capable of writing or speaking. These articles of agreement were adopted before Baxter's death, although they were not published till 1692.

From the time of his release from im-

prisonment, Baxter lived in Charter-house square, near the meeting-house then occupied by his friend Sylvester; for whom he preached gratuitously on the Lord's day mornings, and every alternate Thursday morning, as long as his strength permitted. When he had assisted his friend in this manner for four years and a half, he was no longer able to go on with public preaching; but during the residue of his life he opened the doors of his own house twice every day, to all that would come to join him in family worship, 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 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 remained 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. 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 of his works, and some of these the most useful. During this period, not to mention single sermons and tracts, he published, his "True History of Councils enlarged and defended;" "On the Immortality of the soul, and the Nature of Spirits;" "Compassionate Counsels to young men;" "Family Catechism;" "Dying Thoughts;" "Dangerous Schismatic detected;" "Catholic Communion defended;" "Paraphrase on the New Testament;" "English Nonconformity;" "Knowledge and Love compared;" "Cain and Abel's malignity"—Several pieces on the Antinomian and Millennarian Controversies. The very last productions of his pen show, that though his eyes had waxed dim, and his natural force had abated, the 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 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."

Dr. Bates, however, has furnished the most minute and most interesting account of the last trying scene of Baxter's pilgrimage. His funeral sermon, on occasion of his death, is one of the best specimens of the preaching of that 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. But it will be sufficient in this place to extract what relates to Baxter's sickness and death.

"He continued to preach so long, notwithstanding his wasted and 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 affec-

tation. 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 who visited him, 'Ye 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 (it was 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 on record in 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 present said, ‘And your works shall 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, and how thou wilt.’

“Being in great anguish he said, ‘O! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out: the reaches of his providence we cannot fathom.’ And to his friends, ‘Do not think the worse of religion for what ye see me suffer.’

“Being often asked by his friends, how it was with his inward man, he replied, ‘I



have a well grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within.' But it was his trouble he could not express it triumphantly, 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 greatness and glory 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 loved, did much sweeten and familiarize heaven to him. The description 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. O 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 that love him.' At another time, he said, 'that he found great comfort and sweetness in repeating the Lord's Prayer, and was sorry some good people were prejudiced against the use of it, for there were all necessary petitions, for the soul and the body, contained in it.'

"At other times he gave excellent counsels to young ministers that visited him; earnestly prayed to God to bless their labours, and make them very successful in turning many souls to Christ; expressed great joy in the hopes that God would do a great deal of good by them; and that their spirits might be moderate and peaceful.

"He often prayed that God would be merciful to this miserable and 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 the nation. . . .

“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 said to him, ‘You are now approaching your long desired home,’ he answered, ‘I believe, I believe.’ He said to Mr. Mather, ‘I bless God you have accomplished your business—the Lord prolong your life.’ He expressed great willingness to die; and during his sickness, when asked how he did, his reply was, ‘*almost well.*’ His joy was most remarkable, when in his own apprehension death was nearest; and his spiritual joy was at length consummated in eternal joy.”

“On Monday,” says Sylvester, “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!”

“Being once asked by his faithful friend, and constant companion, Mrs. Bushel, his housekeeper, 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 said, 'The Lord teach you how to die.'"

"As to himself, even to the last, I could never 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. 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 comforts 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 never could 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, December 8th, 1691, though he had desired and expected his dissolution to be on the Lord’s day, which with joy he called a *high day*, because of his desired change, then expected by him.”

A wicked and groundless report was circulated after his death, that he had been greatly troubled with skeptical doubts before he died. In regard to which Mr. Sylvester thought it expedient to contradict it. He said, “We know nothing here that could in the least minister to such a report as this. I that was with him all along, have even heard him triumphing in his heavenly expectation, and ever speaking like one that could never have thought it worth man’s while to be, were it not for the great interests and ends of godliness. He told me that he doubted not but 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 soul’s concerns.” “The shortness of time, the importance of eternity, the worth of souls, the riches of the grace of

Christ, the excellency of a heavenly mind and life, and the great usefulness of the word and means of grace, pursuant to his eternal purposes, ever lay pressingly on his own heart, and extorted from him very useful directions and encouragements to all that came near him, even to the last.”

Baxter was buried in Christ-church, where the remains of his wife and her mother had been deposited. His funeral was attended by great numbers of different ranks; especially, of ministers, conformists and non-conformists, 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 7th, 1689. The beginning 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 understanding, do make this my last will and testament, revoking all other wills formerly made by me. My spirit I commit with hope and trust 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, wise, and good, the God of nature, grace, and glory; of whom, 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 merit of Christ, and vouchsafed by his Spirit to renew 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. &c.

He ordered his books to be distributed among poor scholars. 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.

His principal heir was his nephew, William Baxter, a person of considerable attain-



ments as a scholar, and an antiquary. He published several works, which brought him considerable fame as a scholar.

Baxter's person, according to Sylvester, was tall and slender; and in the latter part of his life he stooped very much. His countenance was composed and grave, but somewhat inclining to smile. He had a piercing eye, a very articulate speech, and his manners were rather plain than complimentary. He had a great command over his thoughts. As one expressed it, "He could say what he would, and he could prove what he said."

"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. He had a moving *pathos*, and useful acrimony in his words; neither did his expressions want that emphatical accent, which the matter did require. When he spoke of weighty and soul concerns, you might find

his very spirit drenched therein. He was pleasingly conversible, save in his study hours, when 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 unmoveable when convinced of his duty; yet affable and condescending where there was an opportunity 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. His charity was very great in proportion to his abilities. His purse was ever open to the poor; when the case required it, he never thought great sums too much; and his charities were not confined to parties or opinions."

A few other particulars we will extract from Dr. Bates' funeral sermon, which will assist in giving us a full view of this eminent man.

"His prayers were an effusion of the most lively, melting expressions, of his intimate, ardent affections to God. From the abundance of his heart, his lips spoke. His soul took wing for heaven, and rapt 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 of 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 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 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 sanctity in his mortified countenance: his deportment was becoming a stranger on 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. To one who had sent him a letter full of

expressions of honour and esteem, he said, 'You admire one whom you do not know; knowledge will cure your error. The more we know God, the more reason we see to admire him; but the knowledge of the creature lessens our esteem.' To the same person, expressing his veneration for his excellent gifts and graces, he replied with warmth, 'I have the remainder of pride in me; how dare you blow up the sparks of it?' He desired some ministers 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 Augustine, both in his penitential confessions and retractions. In conjunction with humility, he had great candour for others. He was severe to himself, but candid in excusing the faults of others; whereas the busy inquirer into 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 bishopric 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 on his tomb.

“His patience was truly Christian. God does often try his children by affliction, to exercise their graces, to occasion their victory, and to entitle them to a triumphant felicity. This saint was tried with 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. But his patience was more 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 un-submissive word drop from his lips? In his sharp pains he said, ‘I have a rational pa-



tience and a believing patience, though sense would recoil.'

"His peaceful spirit was a clear character of his being a child of God. How ardently he desired 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 made subservient to this end. It was his meat and drink, the life and joy of his life, to do good to the souls of men. His industry in his studies was almost incredible. He had a sensitive nature, as desirous of ease as others, and faint faculties, yet such was his continual application 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 description of his character, by such a man as Bates, who had been



long and intimately acquainted with him, there is need of little to be added. "I will notice only," says the judicious Orme, "what I conceive to have been one great leading feature of his character. In describing this, I have no better or more appropriate term to employ, than the word *unearthly*; and even this is inadequate to express all that was absent from, and all that belonged to his character as a Christian, a pastor, 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 perfect affinity for the world to come.

The strength and operations of his principles 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 mani-

fest 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 reprov'd Cromwell; 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. For him a bishopric 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 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 hope of reward, or the fear of disappointment. Consequences seldom entered into his calculations. He would not be deterred from preaching a sermon, writing a book, or making a speech, if duty seemed to require it, by all the entreaties of his brethren, or the threatening 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, when 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 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 what 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 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 eloquence; while I would venerate him as the leader of the noble army of non-conformist confessors, whose labours and sufferings have secured to 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!

After giving so high a character of Mr. Baxter, as a Christian, a pastor, and a practical writer, it is proper to admonish the reader, that in doctrinal theology he is by no means a safe guide. He attempted what others before him had essayed, but which is incapable of being accomplished; the reconciliation of the Arminian and Calvinistic theories; or rather, to take a stand between

these two systems and to secure the advantages of each. This theory, for a while had many admirers; and also was much opposed under the name of *Baxterianism*. But those who have studied this subject most profoundly, have been convinced, that Calvinism is a system complete in itself; so that the consistent theologian must adopt it entire, or reject it wholly; and that the principles on which Arminianism is adopted, must, if pursued, lead to pure Pelagianism. There is, however, very little in Baxter's practical writings, which is not consistent with orthodoxy; and these are the only works of this great man which are likely to be read hereafter, as no others are included in the new edition of his works, lately published, in octavo, and extending to more than twenty volumes. There are, however, in parts of these, some curious and strange opinions; but they are not such as are likely to be adopted in the present age. This edition may therefore be recommended to the pious reader, as comprehending a vast body of practical and casuistical theology, suited to Christians in every condition of life.

The judicious and very interesting "Re-



view which Orme has given of the writings of Baxter, and which forms the second part of his work, occupies nearly four hundred pages in large Svo. Of this we have no room for even a compend; but will insert the catalogue of Baxter's writings, furnished by Mr. Orme, and annexed to his "Review."

#### CATALOGUE OF BAXTER'S WRITINGS.

1. Aphorisms of Justification, 1649.
2. The Saint's Everlasting Rest, 1649.
3. Plain Scripture Proof of Infantile Church-membership and Baptism, 1650.
4. Animadversions on a Tract, by Mr. Thomas Bedford, 1652.
5. A Friendly Accommodation of the Controversy with Mr. Bedford, 1652.
6. Tombs' Precursor, Stayed and Examined, 1652.
7. Letters between Mr. Baxter and Mr. Tombs, 1652.
8. The right Method for Peace of Conscience, 1653.
9. Richard Baxter's judgment of the Perseverance of Believers, 1653.
10. Christian Concord; or the Agreement of the Associated Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire, 1653.
11. The Worcester Petition to Parliament, 1653.
12. The Petition Defended, 1653.
13. True Christianity. Two Assize Sermons, 1654.
14. Richard Baxter's Apology—Reasons of Dissent from Mr. Blake, &c. 1654.



15. Richard Baxter's Reduction of a Digressor in Reply to Kendal, 1654.
16. Admonition to Eyre, 1654.
17. Crandon Anatomized, 1654.
18. Confutation of Lewis Molinaeus, 1654.
19. Confession of Faith, 1655.
20. Humble advice to the Members of Parliament, 1655.
21. Making light of Christ, 1655.
22. Of Judgment. A Sermon, 1655.
23. The Quaker's Catechism, 1655.
24. The Unreasonableness of Infidelity, 1655.
25. Gildas Salvianus; or the Reformed Pastor, 1656.
26. The Agreement of the Worcestershire Ministers for Catechising, 1656.
27. Certain Disputations of Right to the Sacraments, 1656.
28. The Safe Religion—Three Disputations against Popery, 1657.
29. A Treatise of Conversion, 1657.
30. A Winding Sheet for Popery, 1657.
31. A Sheet for the Ministry against Malignants, 1657.
32. A Sheet against the Quakers, 1657.
33. A Second Sheet for the Ministry, 1657.
34. A Sheet—Of the Duties of Justices in Corporations, towards God.
35. A Call to the Unconverted, 1657.
36. Crucifying the World by the Cross, 1658.
37. A Saving Faith, 1658.
38. Confirmation and Restoration, 1658.
39. Directions and Persuasions to a Sound Conversion, 1658.
40. Disputations of Church Government, 1658.
41. The Judgment, &c. of the Associated Mem-

- bers of Worcestershire, in reference to Dury, 1658.
42. Four Disputations on Justification, 1658.
  43. Universal Concord, 1658.
  44. The Grotian Religion Discovered, 1658.
  45. Key for Catholics, 1659.
  46. Holy Commonwealth, 1659.
  47. A 'Treatise of Death. A Funeral Sermon, 1659.
  48. A 'Treatise of Self-denial, 1659.
  49. Catholic Unity, 1659.
  50. 'True Catholic, and Catholic Church, 1659.
  51. A Sermon of Repentance, before the House of Commons, 1659.
  52. A Sermon of Right Rejoicing, before the Lord Mayor, 1659.
  53. Life of Faith. A Sermon before the King, 1659.
  54. Successive Visibility of the Church, 1659.
  55. Vain Religion of the Hypocrite, 1659.
  56. 'The Fool's Prosperity, 1659.
  57. 'The Last Work of a Believer, 1659.
  58. The Petition to the Bishops for Peace, 1661.
  59. 'The Reformed Liturgy, 1661.
  60. Mischiefs of Self-ignorance, &c. 1662.
  61. Baxter's Account to the Inhabitants of Kidderminster, of the cause of his being forbid to preach, 1662.
  62. A Saint or a Brute, 1662.
  63. Now or Never, 1663.
  64. Fair Warning; twenty-five Reasons against the toleration of Popery, 1663.
  65. Divine Life, 1664.
  66. 'Two Sheets for Poor Families, 1665.
  67. A Sheet for the Instruction of the Sick during the Plague, 1665.
  68. Reasons for the Christian Religion, 1667.
  69. Directions to the Converted, 1669.

70. The Life of Faith, 1670.
71. Cure of Church Divisions, 1670.
72. Defence of the Principles of Love, 1671.
73. Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day, 1671.
74. Duty of Heavenly Meditation, 1671.
75. Holiness the Design of Christianity, 1671.
76. The Power of Magistrates and Church Pastors, 1671.
77. God's Goodness Vindicated, 1671.
78. Second Admonition of Mr. E. Bagshaw, 1671.
79. More Reasons for the Christian Religion, 1672.
80. Sacrilegious Desertion of the Holy Ministry rebuked, 1672.
81. Certainty of Christianity without Popery, 1672.
82. The Church told of Mr. E. Bagshaw's Scandals, 1672.
83. Christian Directory, folio, 1673.
84. Full and Easy Satisfaction as to the True Religion, 1674.
85. Poor Man's Family Book, 1674.
86. An Appeal to the Light; a Sermon, Eph. i. 3, 1674.
87. Catholic Theology, folio, 1675.
88. More Proofs of Infants' Church Membership, 1675.
89. Two Disputations of Original Sin, 1675.
90. Select Arguments against Popery, 1675.
91. Treatise on Justifying Righteousness, 1675.
92. Answer to Dr. Tullie's Angry Letter, 1675.
93. Substance of Mr. Cartwright's Exceptions considered, 1675.
94. Christ, not the Pope, the Universal Head of the Church, 1675.
95. Reasons for Ministerial Plainness and Fidelity, 1676.

96. A Review of the State of Christian Infants, 1676.
97. Judgment of non-conformists on the office of Reason in Religion, 1676.
98. Judgment of non-conformists respecting Grace and Morality, 1676.
99. Judgment of non-conformists of things indifferent, commanded by authority, 1676.
100. About Things Sinful by accident, 1676.
101. What mere non-conformity is not, 1676.
102. Roman Transubstantiation, 1676.
103. Naked Popery, 1677.
104. Funeral Sermon for Henry Stubbs, 1678.
105. Which is the True Church, 1679.
106. The Non-conformists' Plea for Peace, 1679.
107. Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Mary Cox, 1680.
108. The True and Only Way of Concord, 1680.
109. Defence of the Non-conformists' Plea, 1680.
110. Second-Part of Non-conformists' Plea, 1680.
111. A Moral Prognostication, 1680.
112. Church History of the Government of Bishops, 1680.
113. Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet's Charge of Separation, 1680.
114. Treatise of Episcopacy, 1681.
115. Funeral Sermon for Henry Ashurst, Esq. 1681.
116. Poetical Fragments, 1681.
117. Apology for the Non-conformists' Ministry, 1681.
118. Methodus Theologiæ Christianæ, folio, 1681.
119. Universal Human Church Supremacy, 1681.
120. Baxter's Dissent from Dr. Sherlock, 1681.
121. A Search for the English Schismatic, 1681.
122. Third Defence of the Cause of Peace, 1681.
123. A Second Defence of the mere Non-conformists, 1681.

124. A Breviate of the Life of Mrs. Margaret Baxter, 1681.
125. Answer to Mr. Dodwell's Letter, 1682.
126. A Specimen of the Present Mode of Controversy in England, in Reply to L'Estrange, 1682.
127. The True History of Councils enlarged and Defended, 1682.
128. Funeral Sermon for Mr. John Corbet, 1682.
129. Immortality of Man's Soul, 1682.
130. Nature of Spirits, 1682.
131. Cure of Melancholy, Sermon, 1682.
132. Compassionate Counsel to Young Men, 1682.
133. How to do good to many, 1682.
134. Family Catechism, 1683.
135. Additions to Poetical Fragments, 1683.
136. Obedient Patience, 1683.
137. Farewell Sermon—Intended to have been preached at Kidderminster, but forbidden, 1683.
138. Richard Baxter's Dying Thoughts, 1683.
139. Dangerous Schismatic Detected and Confuted, 1683.
140. Second Part against Schism and against Mr. Raphson, 1683.
141. Survey of the Reply to Mr. Humphrey, 1683.
142. Catholic Communion Defended, 1684.
143. Answer to Dr. Owen's Arguments against that Practice, 1684.
144. Whether Parish Congregations be true Christian Churches, 1684.
145. A Short Answer to 'A Theological Dialogue,' 1684.
146. Catholic Communion Doubly Defended, 1684.
147. Judgment of Sir Matthew Hale of the Nature of Religion, 1684.

148. *Unum Necessarium*, 1685.
149. *A Paraphrase on the New Testament*, 1685.
150. *Richard Baxter's Sense of the Subscribed Articles*, 1689.
151. *English Non-conformity, under Charles II. and James II.* 1689.
152. *Knowledge and Love compared*, 1689.
153. *Cain and Abel's Malignity*, 1689.
154. *Scripture Gospel Defended*, 1690.
155. *Defence of Christ and Free Grace*, 1690.
156. *End of Doctrinal Controversies*, 1691.
157. *Glorious Kingdom of Christ against Thomas Beverly*, 1691.
158. *Reply to Mr. Thomas Beverly*, 1691.
159. *Of National Churches*, 1691.
160. *Against Revolt to a Foreign Jurisdiction*, 1691.
161. *Richard Baxter's Penitent Confession and necessary Vindication*, 1691.
162. *Certainty of the World of Spirits, evinced by Unquestionable Histories of Apparitions*, 1691.
163. *Protestant Religion truly stated and justified*, 1692.
164. *Paraphrase of the Psalms of David*, 1692.
165. *Treatise of Universal Redemption*, 1694.
166. *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*, fol. 1696.
167. *Monthly Preparations for the Holy Communion*, 1696.
168. *The Mother's Catechism*, 1701.

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