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J. S. Alexander
ART. I.—*Guerike's Manual of Church History.**

THE rapidity with which this work was sold, is a sufficient proof that it was wanted. The German press teems, it is true, with valuable books in this department, nor are there wanting in that language convenient manuals for the use of students. But research is continually adding to the stock of knowledge; and the favourable change, which has occurred of late years, in the religious views of many, has created a necessity for a compendious work, which should not only furnish the results of recent investigation, but present them in a form consistent with evangelical belief. This task Professor Guerike has undertaken in the work to which we now invite the attention of our readers. He is *Professor Extraordinarius* of theology in the University of Halle, and is well known as a strenuous adherent to the creed of Luther, but at the same time as an humble and devoted Christian. Some of our readers may perhaps recollect him, as the author of a life of Francke, which was reviewed in a former volume of this work,† and from which the late lamented Rezeau Brown

* Handbuch der Allgemeinen kirchengeschichte. Von H. E. Ferd. Guerike. a. o. Professor der Theologie zu Halle. Halle, 1833. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. 1120.

† See Bib. Rep. for July 1830.

out to the sinner the error of his ways, and to direct him to the Saviour; and in the accomplishment of this, every consideration of self seemed to be swallowed up.

“Of the spirit and character of his preaching, as truly as of any man’s that I have ever heard, I think the description of the apostle Paul’s preaching to the Corinthians may be used: ‘For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified!’ His labours were incessant—too great for his debilitated state of health. It is well known that a desire to do good, and a love to his Master’s work, would not allow him to enjoy the relaxation which was necessary. A respectable number were added to the church during his six months’ labour, and many—even the most lawless and thoughtless—were occasionally made to feel and reflect, under his discourses.”

When we see the young and active servant of God, in the midst of fruitful labours, snatched away from the midst of us, we are too ready to suppose that he is lost to the kingdom of Messiah. Oh no! he has gone to “be ever with the Lord,” to that city where “there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and *his servants shall serve him.*” In a higher sphere, and with nobler powers, he gives his tribute of obedience to the Master whom he loved. There, no error misleads his understanding, or drops from his lips, no inconstancy or lukewarmness checks his service, no unhallowed fire is mingled with the incense of his praise; all, all is knowledge and love and rectitude, without a blemish or defect.

J. A. Alexander

ART. III.—*Memoir of Roger Williams, the Founder of the State of Rhode Island. By James D. Knowles, Professor of Pastoral Duties in the Newton Theological Institution.*
Boston: Lincoln, Edmands & Co. 1834. 12mo.

OUR nation is one of the very few, whose origin is not involved in darkness. That which, in other countries, is the subject of obscure tradition or epic fable, is with us matter of sober history and official record. On the early inhabitants of such a country, it is incumbent to provide succeeding ages, with an abundance of historical instruction. Had we and our fathers felt this obligation in a due degree, many a chasm would have been filled up, which now must yawn forever. It is unfortunately true, that those who colonized America, while ready enough to repu-

diate abuses of a certain sort, adhered with much tenacity to some European notions which might well have been discarded. Coming as they did from a little nook of the smallest continent, into a new world of gigantic limbs and features, it might have been supposed, that their exterior arrangements would be accommodated to the change of scene. It might have been supposed, that in laying off their towns and building houses, they would take advantage of their newly acquired elbow-room, and exchange smoke and pavements for green grass and wholesome air. And yet, to the astonishment of later generations, and especially of visiters from the old world, our worthy fathers chose to live in narrow, crooked, crowded streets, though surrounded by a continent running to waste for want of occupation. This preposterous attachment to ancestral usage, at the expense of comfort, and in spite of altered circumstances, has continued, in a measure, to the present time, and as may be seen from the construction of the towns and villages, even in our newest settlements. It is, indeed, a most extraordinary fact, that there are more green plots and open squares in London than in New York, to the shame of the Dutchmen who contrived the latter city.

Analogous to this blind imitation of the old world, is the way in which our fathers and ourselves have left the history of the country to take care of itself. They knew, and we know, that the want of light respecting early English history, is much to be lamented. But they also knew, that it was a want which could not be supplied, and therefore, wisely left our own deficiencies to become equally irreparable. We are far from meaning to deny, that much has been accomplished, but in comparison with what might have been done, that much is almost nothing. The treasures which we do possess daily increase in value, and what we neglect to gather, will be more and more regretted by succeeding generations to the end of time. The great uses of history are becoming more apparent. It is no longer a pastime, one degree above romance. Like other branches of knowledge, it has been pressed into the service of religion, and by Christian alchemy its meanest elements are transmuted into gold.

We of the present age have much to do in this way. We should fix what now is only floating on the surface of tradition. We should combine what is scattered. We should perpetuate what is vanishing from the memory of man. We should complete the links of that important chain, which is to connect posterity with the original settlers. And that, not merely because we have the opportunity; not merely because it is easier to go back to the beginning of our nation than of any in the old

world; but because the fathers of this country are more worthy of remembrance than those of any other. The American colonies did not owe their existence to the prowling of ambition after power, to the thirst of conquest, or the *auri sacra fames*. If the character of the subject gives value to the history, surely our early annals have a title to preeminence, especially in the eyes of those who love the cause of truth.

As this historical dignity belongs especially to the settlers of New England, so the records of that region are the most complete. And yet from various causes, there are chasms even there. Among these causes we are sorry to enumerate intolerance and bigotry. Those who were convicted of dissent from an inexorable standard, were not only disapproved, but thrust aside as unworthy of remembrance, or remembered only to be scoffed at and condemned. Those who know how the freedom of conscience was dispensed by the very men who fled to seek it from a garden to a wilderness, will not wonder, that historical injustice should have befallen Roger Williams. The best thing said of him by Cotton Mather is, that he *may* have had the root of the matter in him. No early writer thought him worthy of a memorial, and the moderns have been baffled by the want of materials. We are glad, at length, to see his life in print, and glad to see it written by Professor Knowles. Not merely because a native of Rhode Island has anticipated Southey, who had formed the same design; nor merely on account of the biographer's ability and established reputation. We have still another reason. When the current of history and traditional opinion has set in favour of an individual; when the best construction has been uniformly put upon his questionable acts, and a full allowance of applause has been bestowed upon his real merits; truth often gains by the appearance of a writer, who inclines the other way; one who suspects where others praise, and condemns what others labour to palliate or excuse. Such a biographer may be unjust; but his want of charity corrects mistaken kindness; and between the hostile parties, public sentiment is settled on a reasonable basis. The same results must follow when the case is turned about, and when a man who has been vilified by a series of historians, falls at length into the hands of a partial friend. It may not be safe to go all lengths with such a friend, but it is surely wise to take advantage of his efforts to detect mistakes and falsehood. On this ground we are better pleased, that Roger Williams should be painted by a Rhode Island Baptist than by a Boston Unitarian, or an English Poet-Laureate.

In pursuance of a plan which we have heretofore adopted, we shall furnish our readers with a succinct biography of Williams. Our object is not to abridge the work before us; but so to present its striking points, that some may be induced to read it, and others comforted for the want of opportunity.

The known history of Roger Williams begins with his arrival in America. Tradition makes him to have been born in 1599, and educated at Oxford, under the patronage of Sir Edward Coke, whose attention he drew upon himself, when a boy, by taking notes of what he heard in church. According to the same doubtful authority, he commenced the study of law, but relinquished it for that of theology, took orders, and obtained a living. For these statements Mr. Knowles has found no satisfactory vouchers. We must be content to take them as matters of tradition, incapable of proof, but not improbable enough to be rejected as mere fables.

The well known causes which expelled so many good men from the English church and shores of England, in the reign of the first Stuarts', led also to the emigration of Roger Williams, who embarked at Bristol with his wife, on the 1st of December, 1630. He arrived in the following February, and found the corner stone of the American church already laid.

The Plymouth Pilgrims, who arrived from England, December 11th, 1620, had belonged, in the mother country, to the strictest sect of Independents. Before they came to America, they had been settled in Holland, where they were organized as a church. In New England, this organization was of course received; but it deserves to be remembered, that in one point they were honourably distinguished from their brethren in the other primary settlements. We refer to the principle, which they adopted, that ecclesiastical censures are wholly spiritual, and not to be enforced by civil penalties.

The settlers of Salem and Boston, who came over eight years later, professed to be members of the church of England, though they solemnly abjured its alleged corruptions. On leaving England, they expressed their sorrow on account of this compulsory secession from the mother church, and their ardent wishes for its thorough reformation. This class of emigrants had higher notions of ecclesiastical authority, and indeed, proceeded on the principle, that the state is but a handmaid to the church.

Salem was settled in September, 1628; and on the 6th of August, 1629, thirty persons entered into solemn covenant, as a Christian church. Mr. Skelton was ordained *Pastor*, and Mr. Higginson, *Teacher*, the two officers being regarded as dis-

ting, but equally essential. They were inducted into office by a vote of the church, and by imposition of the hands of a ruling elder, as the organ of the church. Several of the settlers were dissatisfied with the rejection of the liturgy, and formed a society in which the prayers were read. This schism was healed, in a summary way, by sending the schismatics back to England.

Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts Bay, removed the seat of government from Salem to Charlestown, where a church was formed July 30th, 1630. John Wilson was constituted Teacher, by imposition of hands, "but with this protestation by all," says Winthrop,* "that it was only as a sign of election and confirmation, and not of any intent that Mr. Wilson should renounce the ministry he received in England."

The system thus commenced, and afterwards completed under the influence of Cotton, coincided essentially with that of modern Congregationalism, but distinguished between pastors and teachers, and recognized ruling elders. The church was now made the model of the state. It was the obvious intention of the colonists to establish a theocracy. In May, 1631, it was enacted by the General Court, that no one should be admitted to the privileges of a freeman, unless he was a member of some church within the colony. At the same time, the law of Moses was adopted, as the basis of their civil code. Idolatry, blasphemy, man-stealing, adultery, and witchcraft, were made capital crimes; and every inhabitant was compelled to contribute to the support of religion.

Roger Williams, on his first arrival, refused to unite with the church of Boston, because, to use Winthrop's words, "they would not make a public declaration of their repentance for having communion with the churches of England." He also declared his opinion, that the civil magistrate had no right to punish breaches of the first table, i. e. the first four commandments. Notwithstanding the position which he thus assumed, he was, within a few weeks, elected teacher of the church at Salem, in the place of Higginson, who had died some months before. This invitation was complied with, whereupon the court at Boston wrote to Endicott, at Salem, expressing their surprise at this precipitate election, and requesting a suspension of proceeding till a conference could be held. At the same time the law already mentioned was enacted, excluding such as were not members of a church, from civil privileges.

On the very day of these proceedings at Boston, the church in

* Journal, vol. i. p. 32.

Salem received Williams as their minister, and on the 18th of the ensuing month, (May 1631,) he took the usual oath, and was admitted as a freeman. The colonial authorities could not be expected to remain quiescent, and accordingly we find, that in the course of the summer, he was obliged to leave Salem and withdraw to Plymouth. Here he became assistant to Ralph Smith, the pastor, and for a time was much respected and esteemed. During his stay in Plymouth, he embraced the opportunity of frequent intercourse with the neighbouring Indians. It appears from a statement of his own, that he resided for a time among them, with a view to learn their language.

As might have been expected, the free expression of his singular opinions, with respect to church and state, gave offence at Plymouth. Some also began to apprehend that he would run a course of "rigid separation and anabaptistry," like that pursued by Smith, the *se-baptist* at Amsterdam, so called, because he baptized himself, for want of a suitable administrator. In this juncture, an invitation to resume his place at Salem was cheerfully accepted.

Soon after his return to Salem, his suspicious jealousy of all encroachment on religious liberty displayed itself in a way that must provoke a smile. The ministers of the colony were in the habit of meeting once a fortnight at each others houses, for the purpose of discussing some important question. In this excellent arrangement, Roger Williams and his colleague Skelton, detected the insidious germ—of what? Why, of a Presbytery! On this laughable whim Professor Knowles comments with the utmost gravity, and we may here take occasion to observe, that his decided partiality to Williams, while it has the good effects which we have already mentioned, sometimes exposes him to a little ridicule, by leading him to treat mere trifles with as much solemnity as great events. Another bad effect is, that the biography presents the aspect of a special plea. Little points which might be left untouched, without detracting in the least from Roger's reputation, are laboriously canvassed, and a world of pains taken to make out the case distinctly in his favour.

No sooner was the good man's dread of an inchoate Presbytery partially allayed, than he incurred the censure of the governor and council, in relation to a treatise which he had written at Plymouth, and in which they charged him with calling king James a liar and a blasphemer, on account of certain phrases used by his majesty in the colonial charter. The object of the treatise, which was never printed, seems to have been to show that no royal charter could entitle the settlers to the Indians' lands without their own consent. The principles avowed in it

were truly noble; yet we find him shortly after submitting very humbly to the censure of the government, and offering his book, or any part of it, to be burnt. This, as Mr. Knowles well says, shows that Williams was by no means so intractable and contumacious as some have represented him.

It is well known, that the controversy between Puritans and Prelatists, in England, turned very much upon the use of the surplice, the sign of the cross, and other Popish ceremonies. The repugnance to these relics of a corrupted church which the fathers of New England had been taught to feel before their emigration, was by no means laid aside on their arrival in America. Needless as it might well have been considered, Roger Williams preached at Salem against the use of all such rites as had ever been abused to idolatrous purposes. Such was the effect of his discourses upon Endicott, that he cut the cross from the military colours, an act as ridiculous as it was unlawful. Such rigour is almost as superstitious as the mummery which it labours to destroy.

In 1634, the magistrates hearing of "some episcopal and malignant practices against the country," prescribed an oath to be taken by the inhabitants, in order that such as refused it, might not be placed in any office of trust. This oath Roger Williams declined himself, and persuaded others to decline, on the ground that an oath is a part of public worship, and therefore not to be imposed upon the unregenerate, thereby compelling them to take God's name in vain, no unconverted man being capable of a sincere oath. After some preliminary measures, he was summoned and appeared before the general court, July 5, 1635. There he was charged with propagating four pernicious doctrines. "1. That the magistrate ought not to punish the breach of the first table, otherwise than in such cases as did disturb the civil peace. 2. That he ought not to tender an oath to an unregenerate man. 3. That a man ought not to pray with such, though wife, child, &c. 4. That a man ought not to give thanks after the sacrament, nor after meat."* These opinions were unanimously condemned as erroneous and dangerous, and the Salem church was censured for electing him to fill the place of Skelton. Time was allowed, both to the church and Williams, to consider the matter, with a requisition to "make satisfaction" at the next general court.

At this same court the men of Salem petitioned for some land in Marblehead Neck, which they claimed as belonging to their town. It was refused because they had chosen Roger Williams

* Winthrop's Journal, vol. 1. p. 162.

for their teacher! Hereupon the church at Salem wrote to the other churches, complaining of the wrong, and requesting them to reprove the magistrates and deputies, as individual church members, for the sin which they had committed. Endicott was imprisoned for justifying this letter, and not discharged till he acknowledged his error. In the meantime, Williams fell sick, and not being able to speak, wrote a letter to his church, declaring that he would not commune with them, unless they declined communion with the other churches.

In October he appeared again before the general court and justified both letters, as well as the four doctrines for which he was arraigned. Mr. Hooker was appointed to dispute with him, but he was not convinced. He was therefore sentenced to leave the jurisdiction of the court within six weeks. One minister alone dissented from this judgment. The church at Salem disclaimed his errors and submitted to the magistrates. Many of the members, however, accompanied or followed him in his exile. He received permission to remain in Salem till the Spring, but as he could not refrain from uttering his sentiments in private, the court resolved to send him to England. When summoned to Boston for this purpose, he refused to come, and when orders were sent for his apprehension he had been gone three days.

Mr. Knowles very properly directs attention to the fact, that there is no indication of personal hostility in these proceedings. Williams was generally esteemed as a preacher and a man. The two leading men in the colony, Winthrop and Cotton, were on terms of friendship with him, and were ever after treated by him with profound respect. The judgment of the court appears to have proceeded from an honest belief that his opinions were pernicious, and a conscientious wish to save the people from corruption.

About the middle of January, 1636, Roger Williams left Salem in secrecy and haste, and went in the direction of Narraganset Bay. Thirty-five years afterwards he writes; "I was sorely tost for one fourteen weeks, in a bitter winter season, not knowing what bread or bed did mean," adding, that he still felt the effects of these ancient hardships.

His first visit was to Ousamequin, the Sachem of Pokanoket, who resided at Mount Hope. From him he obtained a grant of land on the east bank of the Pawtucket (now the Seekonk) within the limits of the present town of Seekonk, Massachusetts. The place was within the Plymouth territory; but Williams acted on the principle for which he had contended, that the Indians alone were the rightful proprietors.

He had begun to build and plant at Seekonk, when he received

a kind and respectful letter from Winslow, Governor of Plymouth, reminding him of the unpleasant consequences likely to ensue from the position he had chosen, and advising him to remove to the other side of the water, in which case, he assured him, they would be loving neighbours.

With this timely counsel Williams at once complied, embarked in a canoe, accompanied by William Hams, John Smith, Joshua Verin, Thomas Angell, and Francis Wickes. They ascended the river on the west side of the peninsula, to a spot near the mouth of the Moshassuck. To the settlement here founded, Williams, "in grateful remembrance of God's merciful providence to him in his distress," gave the name of *Providence*.

It is probable that this event occurred in June 1636, the same month in which Hartford was founded by a colony from Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Roger Williams' first design was, to go alone among the Indians, learn their language, and labour for their good; in other words, to be a solitary missionary. From this plan he was diverted by the straits to which some of his acquaintance were reduced by the same causes that made him an exile. He therefore resolved to form a settlement which should be an asylum for the victims of intolerance. The negotiations with the native chiefs, however, were in his name and at his expense. The lands were granted to himself exclusively, and on the express ground of personal regard and gratitude to him. While at Salem and Plymouth he had treated with the Narraganset Indians, as if in anticipation of his banishment, and had won their favour by his kindness to Indian visitors and his frequent gifts. Without these preparatory measures, it is highly probable, that no white settlers would have been admitted into Narraganset Bay.

From these facts it is very clear, that Roger had it in his power to become a great proprietor. Nay, he was a great proprietor, owner of Rhode Island, by general grant and particular purchase. Had he retained this great domain as his personal property, and instituted an aristocracy, he could hardly have been blamed. That he did not, is a signal instance of generosity, public spirit, and genuine republicanism. By a deed, bearing date, October 8, 1638, he conveyed to the twelve, who had joined him in his settlement, a perfect equality of right, retaining for himself a simple share as one of the community. The only equivalent that he was to receive for this large cession, was the sum of thirty shillings from each person who should subsequently join the little commonwealth; from the original grantees he exacted nothing. This consistent and disinterested adherence, in a time of prosperity, to the liberal princi-

ples maintained in adverse circumstances, is perhaps unparalleled, and deserves all praise.

In this division of the land, Williams retained two fields, or farms, called Whatcheer and Saxifrax Hill, for which, though included in the Sachem's grant, he made private satisfaction to the natives whom he displaced. These lands he cultivated by his own labour, to obtain subsistence, as his means were now exhausted by the expenses of removal and settlement, and his dealings with the Indians. Such was his necessity, that he records with thankfulness the donation of a piece of gold from "that great and pious soul," Winslow of Plymouth. In one of his published works he says that he was employed much, yet not exclusively, in spiritual labours; "but day and night, at home and abroad, on the land and water, at the hoe, at the oar, for bread."

The little society composed of Roger Williams and his fellow settlers, was soon enlarged by emigrants from Massachusetts and from Europe. Among the latter was his brother Robert. Every inhabitant was required to subscribe a covenant, which we copy, as illustrative of Roger Williams' principles, ecclesiastical and political.

"We, whose names are here underwritten, being desirous to inhabit in the town of Providence, do promise to submit ourselves, *in active or passive obedience*, to all such orders or agreements as shall be made for public good of the body, in an orderly way, *by the major consent* of the present inhabitants, masters of families, incorporated together into a township, and such others whom they shall admit unto the same, *only in civil things.*"

When the difficulties commenced between the Massachusetts colony and the Pequod Indians, Roger Williams gave a pleasing proof of his kindly feelings towards the government which had banished him, by interfering to prevent a league between the Pequods and the Narragansets. During the course of the ensuing war, he rendered other services of no small moment to the whites, especially as an interpreter and a negociator. In 1637 a settlement was formed on Rhode Island, properly so called. This event was occasioned by the proceeding in Massachusetts, with respect to the celebrated Mrs. Hutchinson, who, after collecting a female congregation by her eloquence, was convicted of heresy by a Synod, and banished by the government. The excitement produced by this act was met by an order to disarm a number of the inhabitants, many of whom forsook the colony, and went to other settlements. A considerable number of them visited New Hampshire, but the rigour of the climate drove them further south. On their way to Long Island and Delaware Bay, they were kindly received by Roger Williams, who persua-

ded them to settle on Aquetneck, now Rhode Island. Through his intercession land was obtained, first by a grant from the Indian chiefs, and then by bargain with the actual occupants. The first settlement was Portsmouth, on the northern part of the Island. The next was New Port, in the south-west corner. Both towns composed one colony, under a judge and three elders, on the Jewish model, afterwards called governor and assistants. One of the first assistants was the husband of Mrs. Hutchinson. That lady is not known to have created any disturbance in Rhode Island, a natural result of the religious freedom there enjoyed. After her husband's death she removed to the neighborhood of New York, where she was murdered by the Indians.

The misunderstanding that from time to time occurred between the Massachusetts government and the different tribes of Indians, gave a high value to Roger Williams' skill as an interpreter, and his good offices as a days-man. Nevertheless, a law was passed in 1637, virtually excluding the inhabitants of Providence from the bounds of Massachusetts. The ground of this restriction was the apprehension of disorders from what were considered the lax principles of Williams and his party, with respect to civil government. Their only real laxity, however, appears to have consisted in the total separation of ecclesiastical and civil power, in their social system.

Providence Williams, Roger's eldest son, is said to have been the first white native of the settlement, from which he took his name. He was born in 1638, the same year in which Harvard College was organized, and New Haven founded.

One effect of the exclusion of the Providence people from the neighbouring colonies, was a scarcity of all those articles for which they were dependent on the mother country. Among the rest, paper was very scarce, so that the documents remaining of that period are written very closely upon scanty scraps. We need not wonder, therefore, at the meager stock of facts relating to the history of Williams. With respect to his ecclesiastical connexions, there is a great degree of doubt. He and his first companions in the settlement appear to have continued members of the church of Salem until 1639, when he was re-baptized by one Ezekiel Holliman, after which he baptized Holliman in turn, and ten besides. Upon this event, such of them as had been members of the church at Salem, were excommunicated. It is doubtful whether Williams was regarded as the pastor of this Baptist church, during the time of his connexion with it, which was only three or four months, at the end of which period he arrived at the conclusion that his baptism was not valid, that there was no true church on earth, nor any authorised ministry

or valid ordinances. The apostolic succession had been lost on the rise of Antichrist, and could not be restored until that enemy should be overthrown. This doctrine he appears to have derived from the Apocalypse, and he forthwith proceeded to reduce it to practice, by withdrawing from the church which he had just before established, and leaving those whom he had subjected to the vain repetition of a solemn ordinance, completely in the lurch. Professor Knowles has taken no small trouble to discuss the causes of these sudden whimsies. We honour his motives and forensic skill, but we are much afraid that weakness of judgment and a restless disposition, had an undue share in actuating Roger Williams' movements. We are very far from saying this because he became a Baptist. Had he continued one, we should have honoured him, if not for his theology, at least for his uprightness. But the ludicrous velocity with which he left a church of his own formation, and the extraordinary reasons which he offered for his conduct, are to us unambiguous symptoms both of weakness and caprice.

For several years we know scarcely any thing of Williams or his colony, except that he continued, in cases of necessity, to mediate between the whites and Indians; and that his settlement was much disturbed by the proceedings of Samuel Goiton, who was banished first from Massachusetts, then from Newport, and having formed a settlement within the bounds of Roger Williams' purchase, engaged in a quarrel with some previous settlers, which terminated in bloodshed. He afterwards removed to the Indian territory, where he was apprehended, taken to Boston, tried for his life, and acquitted. He then went to England and obtained a sort of charter for his settlement at Shawamet, forbidding the interference of the Massachusetts government. During these commotions, Massachusetts undertook to extend her authority to Providence and Rhode Island, on the ground of a submission to her government by a small number of the colonists. This claim was of course resisted.

The year 1643 is memorable in the history of New England, as the date of the first colonial confederacy. Massachusetts, Plymouth, Hartford, and New Haven, were the contracting parties. Two things about this covenant deserve attention. One is the solemn avowal, so unlike the style of modern constitutions and official acts, that the design of the colonies in their first formation, as well as of the proposed confederation, was "to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the liberties of the Gospel in peace." The other circumstance is the exclusion of the Rhode Island settlements. The reason given for this uncharitable act, was that they had no charter, and

consequently could not be recognised as a body politic. When this difficulty was removed, however, the exclusion still continued, and indeed there can be no doubt, that it arose from a strong disapprobation of the principles avowed by Roger Williams, and adopted in his settlements.

Before this event took place, the people of Providence and Newport had come to the conclusion, that a regard to their own prosperity required a union of the settlements, and the erection of a regular colonial government. With this view Roger Williams was commissioned as a deputy to England. He wished to embark at Boston, but the old restrictions still remained in force, and he was still an exile. He went therefore to Manhattoes, now New York, and sailed from that port in the month of June, 1643.

Before his embarkation he had an opportunity of exerting his influence with the native tribes of those parts, in favour of the whites. This was an office which he had for years discharged, even in behalf of those by whom he was proscribed. Nor can it be denied that his forbearance and benevolence are conspicuously visible in the favours thus conferred upon the very government which forbade him and his fellows to purchase the means of self-defence within their limits. Happily, Roger was on such terms with the natives, as enabled him not only to dispense with arms himself, but also to protect his uncharitable neighbours.

Roger Williams says in one of his books, that "a grain of time's inestimable sand is worth a golden mountain." On this principle he appears to have acted, during his voyage to England. He relieved the tedium of the passage by composing his *Key to the Indian Languages*, which was printed soon after his arrival, and attracted much attention.

He reached England at a time when the eventful conflict between king and parliament was as yet a doubtful one. About the time of his arrival, Robert, Earl of Warwick, was appointed Governor in Chief of the American colonies, with a council of five peers and twelve commoners. From these commissioners, Williams, by the assistance of Sir Henry Vane, obtained a charter granting ample powers for the erection of an independent government, to the inhabitants of Providence, Portsmouth, and Newport, under the name of *The Incorporation of Providence Plantations in the Narraganset Bay in New England*. A copy of this charter is given by Professor Knowles in his appendix. It bears date March 19, 1644.

Before he left England, he prepared and published his cele-

brated *Bloody Tenet*,* containing a defence of religious liberty, in answer to a letter by John Cotton, of Boston. Cotton replied in his *Bloody Tenet washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb*, to which Williams, at a later date, rejoined, in his *Bloody Tenet yet more Bloody by Mr. Cotton's endeavour to wash it white*. In the first of these publications Roger Williams clearly disavows the contempt of civil authority which had been charged upon him.

He landed at Boston, September 17, 1644, emboldened to this step by a letter from several noblemen and members of parliament, exhorting the Massachusetts colonists to receive him as a friend. This letter enabled him to proceed unmolested to Providence, but produced no relaxation of the Massachusetts rigour. Their dread of his loose principles was much enhanced by the growth of *Anabaptistry* even among themselves. This alarming symptom led to an enactment, that whoever should openly or secretly condemn infant baptism, or endeavour to draw others from the practice, should be banished. As Roger Williams was the founder of this dreaded sect in America, they had reason to regard him with distrust, a feeling not abated by the great increase of influence conferred upon him by the ample charter which he brought from England.

At Providence, he was joyfully and honourably welcomed, and began at once to prepare for the erection of a colonial government. This, however, proved no easy task, and he found that time was requisite to bring the three incorporated settlements into unanimity.

Scarcely had he returned before he had occasion again to interpose between the Indians and the whites. The other governments appear to have felt no scruples in demanding his assistance, and he as little in complying with their call. Another general war was soon thus suppressed by Roger's intervention, a circumstance which does him no small honour.

In 1646, or thereabouts, the settlements agreed upon a form of government. The legislative power was vested in an assembly of six representatives; the executive in a president and four assistants for the four incorporated settlements of Providence, Portsmouth, Newport, and Warwick. The first assembly, under this constitution, met at Portsmouth, May 19, 1647. Williams was certainly entitled to expect the highest station in

* "The Bloody Tenet of Persecution for Cause of Conscience, discussed in a conference between Truth and Peace, who in all tender affection present to the High Court of Parliament, as the result of their discourse, these amongst other passages of highest consideration."

the colony, which owed its first existence and its civil rights to him. The office of president, however, was bestowed, first upon Coggshall, and then upon Coddington. The rank assigned to Williams, was that of assistant, or magistrate, for Providence.

The infant colony was soon threatened with division, the inhabitants of Portsmouth being anxious to obtain admission into the general New England league, which the confederates refused, unless they would subject themselves to the government of Plymouth. About the same time Connecticut laid claim to a portion of the territory included in Williams' grant. These political difficulties seem to have given Roger some uneasiness, though he still looked at all things in a religious light, and trusted steadfastly in an overruling Providence.

We must not omit to mention, that the colonial constitution, in the formation of which Roger Williams took the lead, contained a most explicit recognition of the principle for which he had suffered and contended. It is thus expressed: "Otherwise than thus, what is herein forbidden, [referring to mere civil and municipal restrictions] all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the name of his God. And let the lambs of the Most High walk in this colony without molestation, in the name of Jehovah their God forever and ever."

Mr. Knowles has enriched his volume with a series of letters never before published, from Roger Williams to John Winthrop, of Connecticut, son to the governor of Massachusetts, and a highly educated and accomplished man.* Williams became acquainted with him in England, and there seems to have been a mutual affection. The letters are highly characteristic, and extremely curious, displaying, in addition to the religious tone and pervading quaintness of the Puritan style, several qualities peculiar to himself, especially an odd sort of awkward formality which cannot be described. To those who do not read the book itself we should be glad to furnish samples of this correspondence. We have space, however, for no more than one, and that the first and shortest of the series. It is not so strongly marked as several others, but its brevity entitles it to preference.

"*Narraganset*, 22, 4, 45 (so called. †)

"Sir—Best salutations, &c. William Cheesebrough, now come in, shall be readily assisted for yours and his own sake. Major Browne is come in. I have, by Providence, seen divers papers (returning now yours thankfully) which are snatched from me

* See his life in Allen's Biographical Dictionary.
† i. e. June 22, 1645.

again. I have, therefore, been bold to send you the *Medulla* and *Magnalia Dei*. Pardon me if I request you, in my name, to transfer the paper to Captain Mason, who saith he loves me. God is love; in him only I desire to be yours ever.

“ROGER WILLIAMS.

“Loving salutes to your dearest, and kind sister. I have been very sick of cold and fever, but God hath been gracious to me. I am not yet resolved of a course for my daughter. If your powder, with directions, might be sent without trouble, I should first wait upon God in that way; however, it is best to wait on him. If the ingredients be costly, I shall thankfully account. I have books that prescribe powders, &c. but yours is *probatum* in this country.”

The superscription is, “For his honoured kind friend, Mr. John Winthrop, at Pequod, these.”

To this letter we cannot refrain from adding a single sentence, without comment. “My humble desire is to the most righteous and only wise judge, that the wood of Christ’s gallows (as in Moses’ act) may be cast into all your and our bitter waters, that they be sweet and wholesome obstructers of the fruits of sin, the sorrows of others abroad, (in our England’s *Aceldama*) our own deservings to feel upon ourselves, bodies and souls, (wives and children also) not by barbarians, but devils, and that eternally, sorrows inexpressible, inconceivable, and yet, if Christ’s religion be true, unavoidable, but by the blood of a Saviour.”

Coddington, the chief man of the Rhode Island settlements, having failed in his attempt to detach the Island from Providence and unite it to Plymouth, went to England in 1648, to obtain a separate charter. Besides a difference of sentiment on this point, he and Williams were of adverse parties as to English politics, Coddington leaning towards the king, and Williams towards the parliament. In consequence of this man’s absence, Roger Williams was elected temporary president. He appears however, to have been wholly unambitious, with respect to office, so that when the place was permanently filled by a Mr. Smith, he writes to Mr. Winthrop; “This last choice at Warwick (according to my soul’s wish and endeavour) hath given me rest.”

About this time a law was passed in Providence plantations, forbidding the sale of “wines and strong waters” to the natives, except in cases of necessity, which were left to the discretion of Roger Williams.

It is interesting to look back at remote events and see how they affected men of other generations. History, in its regular

systematic form, presents us for the most part with occurrences, carefully purged from every tincture of contemporary feeling. This may be necessary to historical truth, and yet the quality purged out is just the thing which gives to history its charm. It is on this account that narratives written at the time of the events, however imperfect or erroneous, are always more attractive than the finest histories composed in a later age. These reflections are suggested by one of Williams' letters, in which he mentions that momentous incident in English history, the death of Charles the First. Writing to Winthrop, of Connecticut, he says: "Sir, tidings are high from England. Many ships from many parts say, and a Bristol ship, come to the Isle of Shoals within a few days, confirms, that the king and many great lords and parliament men are beheaded. London was shut up on the day of execution, not a door to be opened. The states of Holland and the Prince of Orange (forced by them) consented to proceedings. It is said Mr. Peters preached (after the fashion of England) the funeral sermon to the king, after sentence, out of the terrible denunciation to the king of Babylon, *Esai.* 14: 18, &c."*

We are pleased with Mr. Knowles's passing observation on this great event, which is, that all who are not advocates of arbitrary power, must admit that Charles had forfeited his crown, and that all who do not silence the emotions of their hearts by political prejudice, must admit that he ought not to have been put to death.

In this part of his history, Mr. Knowles gives some lamentable specimens of the spirit which prevailed in New England, with respect to toleration. We refer particularly to the case of Clarke and Holmes, Baptist preachers, who were sent by the Baptist church in Plymouth, to visit an old man of that persuasion in the neighbourhood of Boston. Here Mr. Clarke preached on the Sabbath to a private circle in the baptist's house. In the midst of his discourse he was interrupted by two constables, carried to the meeting house, till after public service, and on the morrow he and Holmes were sentenced to be whipped or pay a fine. Clarke's fine was paid without his knowledge. Holmes received thirty stripes, inflicted so severely, that for some

* Cruel as this ceremony seems to us to have been, no one can help admiring the awful appropriateness of the text selected, "all the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit, as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land and slain thy people. The seed of evil doers shall never be renowned."

time he was unable to lie down. He was afterwards pastor of the Baptist church at Newport, as successor to Clarke. Well might Saltonstall, then in England, write to Cotton; "these rigid ways have laid you very low in the hearts of the saints."

In 1651, Coddington returned from England with a separate charter for the islands of Rhode Island and Connecticut, signed by John Bradshaw, and creating Coddington perpetual governor. This division threatened the existing colony with instant ruin. A majority of the islanders themselves were opposed to the new charter, and very anxious to prevent its execution. Newport and Portsmouth appointed John Clarke their deputy to England, and Providence and Warwick* gave a similar appointment to Roger Williams. As he had never been remunerated for his former agency, he was obliged to sell his house at Narraganset, though something was raised by subscription in the colonies for his support. These proceedings troubled the united colonies. Massachusetts and Plymouth now fell out respecting Warwick, each laying claim to it in the division of the spoil.

It was in November 1651, that Clarke and Williams sailed for England. After some time, they procured an order from the council, vacating the charter given to Coddington, and confirming that of Williams. This decision was sent home by another agent, while Clarke and Williams both remained in England. There the former published, "Ill news from New England, or a Narrative of New England's Persecutions; wherein it is declared, that while Old England is becoming new, New England is becoming old; also four proposals to parliament, and four conclusions touching the faith and order of the Gospel of Christ, out of his last will and testament."

It was during this visit that Roger Williams published *The Bloody Tenet yet more Bloody*, which we have already mentioned. He also took this opportunity to print two other essays, one called *The Hireling Ministry none of Christ's, or a Discourse on the Propagation of the Gospel of Christ*; the other, *Experiments of Spiritual Life and Health, with their Preservatives*.

Much of his time appears to have been spent at the house of Sir Henry Vane, both in London and the country. It was chiefly through the influence of that celebrated personage that he secured the leading object of his mission. This was not attained, however, until after long delays, which, together with an

* Warwick had been united with the other three settlements after the date of the charter.

“old law suit” that he mentions in his letters, detained him more than two years. During this period he engaged in teaching, as a means of subsistence. There is a sentence on this subject in one of his letters, which will interest the reader, on account of the great name which it mentions. “It pleased the Lord,” says Roger, “to call me for some time, and with some persons, to practise the Hebrew, the Greek, Latin, French, and Dutch. The secretary of the council, (Mr. Milton) for my Dutch I read him, read me many more languages.”

We were struck with the following sentence in relation to the state of public sentiment in England. We look at the great events of those days in the light of subsequent history. How different must have been the feelings of such as witnessed their occurrence, and could only guess at the catastrophe. “Praised be the Lord, we are preserved, the nation is preserved, the parliament sits, God’s people are secure, too secure. A great opinion is, that the kingdom of Christ is risen, and the kingdoms of the earth are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. Others have fear of the slaughter of the witnesses yet approaching.” How different that ferment from the present one in England! That, in all its workings, still presented a religious surface. The excesses of that day were fanatical; those of our day atheistical. For even the Christians, who take part in the strife of politics, imbibe more of the unbeliever’s spirit than they give him of their own.

The repeal of Coddington’s charter was followed by new perplexities. The Islanders and Continentals could not act in unison. So disastrous were the consequences of these new divisions, that Williams returned home in the summer of 1654, bringing a letter from the protector’s council, permitting him to land thereafter in the Massachusetts territories without molestation, and an epistle from Sir Henry Vane to the Rhode Island colonists, rebuking their dissensions. Through the influence of Williams, the conflicting settlements were restored to harmony, after which he was elected president of the united colony, Aug. 31, 1654.

Soon after these events the Rhode Island settlers had their principles brought to a decisive test by two occurrences. The first was the attack on civil government of every kind, made by one William Harris, who claimed liberty of conscience, as he called it, in promulgating his seditious doctrines. The colonial government made a just distinction between freedom of opinion and licentiousness of action, and proceeded in the case in such a manner as to show, that while no one would be hindered in believing what he pleased, no one would be permitted to disturb society under the pretext of enjoying his natural liberty.

The same just principles were avowed and acted on, in a more serious emergency which shortly followed. The first emigration of Quakers to New England, was followed, as is well known, by a sanguinary law for their suppression in Massachusetts. The other colonies were called upon to join in this proscription. But Providence Plantations, while they engaged to punish all breaches of the peace and all attacks upon the government, refused to sanction such proceedings against any sect, as such, or on the ground of its opinions. In this affair their views appear to have been truly enlightened, with respect not only to the moral principle, but to the question of practical expediency. In their letter to the Massachusetts government, they justly declare that toleration was the surest remedy for fanatical excess, appealing to their own towns, as an evidence, where the Quakers finding no opposition and little notice, either changed their demeanour, or removed to the other colonies, for the purpose of enjoying the agreeable excitement of persecution. The same lesson is taught by all experience. On the death of Oliver Cromwell, Roger Williams wrote to Winthrop, "It hath pleased the Lord to glad the Romish conclave with the departure of those two mighty bulwarks of the Protestants, Oliver and Gustavus." He appears to have entertained a high esteem for Cromwell, to whom he is said to have been distantly related. An address to Richard Cromwell was voted by the assembly of the colony, but never presented. On the 19th of October, 1660, Charles II. was proclaimed in Rhode Island.

Williams' personal relations to the other colonists were much perplexed by the very generosity with which he had conceded his possessions to their use. Through the influence of Harris, already mentioned, a new deed was procured from the Narraganset Sachems, enlarging the grant very much to the detriment of the natives, and declaring that the former deed was given to Roger Williams as the *agent* of the colonists. This attempt to rob him of the credit which he so well merited, seems to have less affected him than the injustice done to the poor Indians, who, as he asserts, assented to the instrument before they understood it.

From one of his letters written at this period, we must extract a sentence which is strongly indicative of a truly Christian spirit. "Sir," says he to Winthrop of Connecticut, "you were not long since the son of two noble fathers, Mr. John Winthrop, and Mr. H. Peters. It is said they are both extinguished. Surely I did ever from my soul honour and love them, even when their judgments led them to afflict me."

In July 1663, Mr. Clarke, the colonial agent in England,

obtained from Charles II. a new charter, which is still the constitution of the State. In their petition the colonists declared, that it was much on their hearts "to hold forth a lively experiment, that a most civil state may stand, and best be maintained with a full liberty in religious concernments." Agreeably to this desire, the charter contains this memorable provision: "No person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinion, in matters of religion, who do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony; but that all and every person and persons may, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his own and their judgments and consciences, in matters of religious concernments, throughout the tract of land hereafter mentioned, they behaving themselves peaceably and quietly, and not using this liberty to licentiousness or profaneness, nor to the civil injury and outward disturbance of others."

From the time when Roger Williams left the Baptist society which he had organised himself, he seems to have stood aloof from all ecclesiastical connexions, and to have died without renewing his communion with any visible church. It appears, however, that he continued, till the close of life, to preach occasionally at Providence, and monthly at Narraganset. He was the only Christian preacher whom the Indians of that region would consent to hear, and even his ministrations were attended in appearance by no spiritual blessing.

In his old age he was so unwise as to engage in a public controversy with the Quakers. The refusal of Rhode Island to persecute this sect, rendered it necessary in his opinion, to give some decisive proof that their tolerance did not arise from doctrinal agreement. Hearing, therefore, that George Fox was at Newport, he sent fourteen theses which he offered to defend in public. Fox left Newport for England without seeing the challenge, which was accepted, however, by three of his adherents. On the 9th of August 1672, Roger Williams rowed in a boat to Newport, thirty miles, a remarkable proof of his vivacity and vigour. The discussion was disorderly, and like every other of the kind, without effect, save that of exasperating enmity and confirming error. An account of this debate was published by Williams under the title of *George Fox digged out of his Burrows*, to which Fox and Burnyeat (one of the debaters) replied in the *New England Firebrand Quenched*.

Four years after this event, on the breaking out of the war with Philip, Williams received a commission, and appears upon

the records as Captain Roger Williams, at the age of seventy-seven.

With respect to the last years of his life we know very little, though there is reason to believe that he withdrew from public business, and ended his days in poverty. So scanty is our information as to this period, that the day, and even the month, of his departure are unknown. This much is certain, that he died before the tenth of May, 1683, and that "he was buried with all the solemnity the colony was able to show."

The last chapters of the work before us contain a review of Roger Williams' writings, which is very interesting and, to us, instructive, but incapable of abridgment or analysis.

A few words, at the close, are devoted to his character, which, as Mr. Knowles observes, was so transparent, that those who have traced his history have had ample means of forming their own judgment. The only point on which we feel at all disposed to question the biographer's correctness, is his estimate of Roger Williams' intellectual powers. We feel, however, that we have no right to draw conclusions, in relation to this matter, as the data are not fully before us. His works we have not read, and it is on them that Mr. Knowles' judgment rests. We must say, however, that the specimens afforded by the author of his life, are far from leaving the same impression on his mind and our own. We think too that there is some appearance of a disposition to take for granted, *ab initio*, that he must have been a genius, because he was a champion of religious liberty. We can easily believe that the great principle of freedom of conscience might take full possession of an inferior mind, and rouse it to consistent and effective action. This is in full accordance with the policy of Him who chooses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. Still, however, we submit to Mr. Knowles' better judgment, and superior opportunities. It is only to an apparent assumption of the fact that these strictures are directed.

Of the execution of the work before us, we can speak in terms of the highest praise. It exhibits proof of an uncommon talent for historical research and composition. Instead of the vague, confused, inaccurate mode of statement, which disgraces too many American works of this class, and even renders them useless as historical authorities, Professor Knowles' volume is marked by scrupulous precision, even in the minutiae of mere dates, as well as by that perspicuous conciseness of expression, which is characteristic of the best historians. We were at first disposed to think that he went back too far, and was too elementary, in the historical sketches which are interspersed. But we

are now persuaded, that to many readers this very circumstance will make the book more useful and agreeable. We must not take our leave of it, without distinctly stating, that it is not so much an article of personal biography, as a contribution to the civil and church history of our country. As such we recommend it to our readers. We earnestly desire to see the history of America treated with skill, with taste, and in a Christian spirit. The concurrence of these qualities in the work before us, leads us to disregard theological partialities, and to urge Professor Knowles to give us more.

ART. IV.—*Cornelius Jansenius; and the Controversies on Grace, in the Roman Catholic Church.*

J. N. Alexander

THE limits of a periodical publication would necessarily exclude any thing like a complete history of the Jansenists and their opinions. No controversy among the many which have divided the self-styled Catholic church, has been more fruitful of elaborate treatises and stirring events. The mere citation of authorities which might be named would fill many pages, and the annals of the controversy, whether in its theological or its casuistical aspect, as many volumes. What then remains, but that we should bind ourselves down to a syllabus of the narrative, and a transient survey of the spirited encounter?

The question concerning predestination and grace, which was first brought out in its whole extent in the Pelagian controversy, was never wholly put at rest. Between the Thomists and Scotists, the Dominicans and Franciscans, the Reformers and Italian Papists, the Jansenists and Molinists, and finally the Calvinists and Arminians—the ball of polemic contest has been kept in active motion, until the very moment when we write. Infallible pontiffs failed to settle it. Decrees of silence, sanctioned by sword and fagot, could not suppress it. And the utmost endeavours of packed Councils, representing or embodying the learning, craft, and power of the Roman communion, secured nothing more than violent opposition or sullen compliance. The reason is plain. It is a question which, in its rudiments, suggests itself to every deep thinker, be he Pagan, Mohammedan, or Infidel; a question which the Bible determines in one way, and the modern Catholic church in another way. The decisions of the Council of Trent, as uttered in the cate-