

A History of the Baptists

By John T. Christian

CHAPTER XX THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

THE troubled times of the Civil Wars gave the Baptists an opportunity to make great growth. This is affirmed by all parties. Robert Baillie, who was an enemy to them, says:

Under the shadow of Independency, they have lifted up their heads and increased their number above all sects in the land. They have forty-six churches in and about London: they are a people very fond of religious liberty, and very unwilling to be brought under bondage of the judgment of any other.

Thomas Edwards says, in 1646, that the Anabaptists stand "for a toleration of all religions and worship." He says:

"They have grown to many thousands in the city and country," "keep open meetings in the heart of the city," and that "they increase and grow daily" even while Parliament is in session (Edwards, Gangraena, I. Epistle Dedicatory).

Dr. Featley, their opponent, accuses them of holding the following opinions:

That it is the will and command of God, that since the coming of his Son the Lord Jesus, a permission of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or Anti-Christian consciences and worships be granted to all men in all Nations and Countries; that Civil States with their Officers of justice are not Governors or Defenders of the Spiritual and Christian state and worship: That the doctrine of Persecution in case of Conscience (maintained by Calvin, Beta, Cotton, and the Ministers of the New England Churches) is guilty of the blood of the souls crying for vengeance under the Altar (Featley, The Dippers Dipt. The Epistle Dedicatory).

In the margin he continues their plea:

That the Parl. will stop all proceedings against them, and for future provide that as well particular and private congregations as publike, may have publike protection, that all statuetes against the Separatists be reviewed and repealed; that the Presse may bee free for any man that writes nothing scandalous or dangerous to the State: and this Parliament prove themselves

loving Fathers to all sorts of good men, bearing respect unto all, and so inviting an equall assistance and affection from all.

A dissatisfied officer wrote to Cromwell:

Have they not filled your towns, your cities, your provinces, your islands, your castles, your navies, your tents, your armies, your courts? Your very council is not free: only we have left your temples for you to worship in.

So strongly were they attached to liberty that when Cromwell made himself Protector, and intimated his intention of removing all Baptists from his army, one of the officers, a Baptist, said to him:

I pray do not deceive yourself, nor let the priests deceive you, for the Baptists are men that will not be shuffled out of their birthright as free born people of England (*Baptist Magazine*, XXXV. 295, A. D. 1843).

Probably the best epitome which has appeared of this period was written by Dr. William R. Williams, of New York. He says:

To the Baptists then, the age . . . is a memorable one. The period of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate was the season in which our distinguishing sentiments, heretofore the hidden treasures of a few solitary confessors, became the property of the people. Through weary years they had been held by a few in deep retirement, and at the peril of their lives; now they began rapidly working their way and openly into the masses of society. The army that won for Cromwell his "crowning mercies," as he called those splendid victories which assured the power of the Parliament, became deeply tinged with our views of Christian faith and order. "They were not, as military bodies have so often been, a band of mercenary hirelings, the sweepings of society, gleaned from the ale-house and the kennel, or snatched from jail and due to the gallows; but they were composed chiefly of substantial yeomanry, men who entered the ranks from principle rather than for gain, and whose chief motive for enlistment was that they believed the impending contest one for religious truth and for the national liberties, a war in the strictest sense *pro aris et focis*. Clarendon himself allows their superiority, in morals and character, to the royalist forces. In this army the officers were many of them accustomed to preach; and both commanders and privates were continually busied in searching the Scriptures, in prayers, and in Christian conference. The result of the biblical studies and free communings of these intrepid, high-principled men was that they became, a large portion of them, Baptists. As to their character, the splendid eulogy they won from Milton may counterbalance the coarse

caricatures of poets and novelists, who saw them less closely, and disliked their piety too strongly, to judge dispassionately their merits.

Major General Harrison one of their most distinguished leaders was a Baptist. He was long the bosom friend of Cromwell; and became alienated from him only on discovering that the Protector sought triumph, not so much from principle, as for his own personal aggrandizement. Favorable to liberty, and inaccessible to flattering promises of power, he became the object of suspicion to Cromwell, who again and again threw him into prison. On the return of the Stuarts, his share in the death of Charles I among whose judges he had sat, brought him to the scaffold, where his gallant bearing and pious triumph formed a close not unsuitable to the career he had run. Others of the king's judges, and of the eminent officers of the army, belonged to the same communion. Some of these sympathized only, it is true, with their views of freedom, and seem not to have embraced their religious sentiments. Among this class was Ludlow, a major-general under Cromwell, an ardent republican, and who, being of the regicides, sought a refuge, where he ended his days, in Switzerland. He was accounted the head, at one time, of the Baptist party in Ireland. Such was their interest, that Barter complains, that many of the soldiers in that kingdom, became Baptists, as the way to preferment. (Orme, I. 135), The chancellor of Ireland under Cromwell was also of our body: Lilburne, one of Cromwell's colonels, and brother of the restless and impracticable John Lilburne, was also of their number. Overton, the friend of Milton, whom Cromwell in 1651 left second in command in Scotland, was also ranked as acting with them, as also Okey and Alured. Col. Mason, the governor of Jersey, belonged to the Baptists, and still others of Cromwell's officers. Penn, one of the admirals of the English navy, but now better known as the father of the celebrated Quaker, was a Baptist. Indeed, in Cromwell's own family their influence was formidable: and Fleetwood, one of his generals and his son-in-law, was accused of leaning too much to their interests as a political party. The English matron, whose memoirs form one of the most delightful narratives of that stirring time, and who in her own character presented one of the loveliest specimens of Christian womanhood, Lucy Hutchinson, a name of love and admiration wherever known, became a Baptist. She did so, together with her husband, one of the judges of Charles I. and the governor of Nottingham Castle for the Parliament, from the perusal of the Scriptures. Of no inferior rank in society, for Hutchinson was a kinsman of the Byrons of Newstead, the family whence sprung the celebrated poet, their talents, and patriotism, and Christian graces, and domestic virtues, throw around that pair the lustre of a higher nobility than heralds can confer. and a dignity, compared with which the splendor of royalty, and the trappings of victory are poor indeed.

The ministry of our denomination comprised, too, men of high character; some, unhappily, but too much busied in the political strife of the age, but others whose learning and talent were brought to bear more exclusively on their appropriate work. Tombes, the antagonist of Baxter, Bampfield, Gosnold, Knollys, Denne and Jessey, all Baptist preachers had held priestly orders in the English established church; Gosnold being one of the most popular ministers in London, with a congregation of 8,000; and Jessey, a Christian whose acquirements and talents, piety and liberality won him general respect. Kiffin, a merchant whose wealth and the excellence of his private character had given him influence among the princely traders of London, and introduced him to the court of the Stuarts, was pastor of a Baptist church in that city. Cox, another of our ministers at this time, is said by Baxter to have been the son of a bishop; and Collins, another pastor among us, had in his youth been a pupil of Busby. De Veil, a convert from Judaism, who had, both with the Romish church of France, and in the Episcopal church of England, been regarded with much respect, and, in the former, been applauded by no less a man than the eloquent and powerful Bossuet, became a Baptist preacher, and closed his life and labors in the bosom of our communion, Dell, a chaplain of Lord Fairfax, and who was, until the Restoration, head of one of the colleges in the university of Cambridge, was also a Baptist minister. Although they deemed literature no indispensable preparation for the ministry (nor did the church of the first six centuries), the Baptists under Cromwell, and the Stuarts, were not destitute of educated men. Out of the bounds of England, Vavasor Powell, the Baptist, was evangelizing Wales with a fearlessness and activity that have won him, at times, the title of its apostle; and, on our own shores, Roger Williams, another Baptist, was founding Rhode Island, giving of the great doctrine of religious liberty, a visible type. Our sentiments were also winning deference from minds that were not converted to our views. Milton, with a heresy ever to be deprecated and lamented, had adopted most fully our principles of baptism. Jeremy Taylor, a name of kindred genius, in a work which he intended but as the apology of toleration, stated so strongly the arguments for our distinguishing views, that it cost himself and the divines of his party much labor to counteract the influence of the reasonings: while Barlow, afterwards also a bishop, and celebrated for his share in the liberation of Bunyan, addressed to Tombes a letter strongly in favor of our peculiarities. Such progress in reputation and influence was not observed without jealousy. Baxter laments that those who, at first, were but a few in the city and the army, had within two or three years grown into a multitude (Works, xx. 297) and asserts that they had so far got into power as to seek for dominion, and to expect, many of them, that the baptized saints should judge the world, and the millennium to some. And Baillie, a commissioner from Scotland to Westminster Assembly, a man of strong sense, and the ardor of whose piety cannot be questioned, though he was a bitter sectarian,

complained that the Baptists were growing more rapidly than any sect in the land; while Lightfoot's diary of the proceedings of the same assembly proves that similar complaints were brought before that venerable body.

Some would naturally, as in the history of the early Christians, be attracted to a rising sect, who were themselves unprincipled men. Lord Howard, the betrayer of the patriotic Russell, was said to have been at one period of his shifting and reckless course, a Baptist preacher. Another whose exact character it is difficult to ascertain, perverting, as royalist prejudices did, even his name for the purposes of ridicule, Barebones, the speaker of Cromwell's parliament, is said to have been a Baptist preacher in London. Others, again, of the body were tinged with extravagances; some joined with other Christians of the time in the confident expectation of what they termed the Fifth Monarchy, Christ's personal reign on the earth. In the changes of the day, and they were many and wondrous, they saw the tokens of Christ's speedy approach to found a universal empire, following in the train of the four great monarchies of the prophet's vision. It is to the credit of Bunyan, that he discerned and denounced the error. Then, as in all ages of the church, it was but too common for the interpreters of prophecy to become prophets. Others, again, were moved from their steadfastness by Quakerism, which then commenced its course: while others adopted the views of the Seekers, a party who denied the existence of any pure and true church, and were waiting its establishment yet to come. In this class of religionists was the younger Sir Henry Vane, the illustrious patriot and statesman so beautifully panegerized in a sonnet of Milton, and from his talents dreaded alike by Cromwell and the Stuarts, and the friend of Roger Williams. The founder of Rhode Island seems himself, in later life, to have imbibed similar views.

Yet with all of these mingled disadvantages, and they are but such heresies and scandals as marked the earliest and purest times of Christianity, that era in our history is one to which we may turn with devout gratitude, and bless God for our fathers. In literature, it is honor enough that our sentiments were held by the two great men who displayed, beyond all comparison, the most creative genius in that age of English literature, Milton and Bunyan. In the cause of religion and political freedom, it was the lot of our community to labor, none the less effectively because they did it obscurely, with Keach, doomed to the pillory, or, like Delaune, perishing in the dungeon. The opinions, as to religious freedom, then professed by our churches, were not only denounced by statesmen as rebellion. but by grave divines as the most fearful heresy. Through evil and through good report they persevered, until what had clothed them with obloquy became, in the hands of later scholars and more practiced writers, as Locke, a badge of honor and a diadem of glory. Nor should it be forgotten, that these views

were not with them, as with some others, professed in the time of persecution, and virtually retracted when power had been won. Such was, alas, the course of names no less illustrious than Stillingfleet and Taylor. But the day of prosperity and political influence was, with our churches, the day of their most earnest dissemination Their share. in storing up the falling liberties of England, and in infusing new vigor and liberality into the constitution of that country, is not yet generally acknowledged. It is scarce even known. The dominant party in the church and in the state, at the Restoration, became the historians; and "when the man, and not the lion, was thus the painter," it was easy to foretell with what party all the virtues, all the talents, and all the triumphs, would be found. When our principles shall have won their way to more general acceptance, the share of the Baptists in the achievements of that day will be disinterred, like many other forgotten truths, from the ruins of history. Then it will, we believe, be found, that while dross, such as has alloyed the purest churches in the best ages, may have been found in some of our denomination, yet the body was composed of pure and scriptural Christians, who contended manfully, some with bitter sufferings, for the rights of conscience, and the truth as it is in Jesus: that to them English liberty owes a debt it has never acknowledged: and that among them Christian freedom found its earliest and some of its staunchest, its most consistent, and its most disinterested champions. Had they continued ascending the heights of political influence, it had been perhaps disastrous to their spiritual interests; for when did the disciples of Christ long enjoy power of prosperity, without some deterioration of their graces? He who, as we may be allowed to hope, loved them with an everlasting love, and watched over their welfare with a sleepless care, threw them back, in the subsequent convulsions of the age, into the obscure lowly stations of life, because in such scenes he had himself delighted to walk, and in these retired paths it has ever been his wont to lead his flock (Life and Times of Baxter. *The Christian Review* VIII. 5-11. March, 1843).

It is generally admitted that these Baptists possessed the highest attainments and the most exalted character. The opinions of a few competent authorities, and certainly they were not prejudiced in favor of the Baptists, are here quoted. Dr. Hawes says:

Whoever properly estimates the doctrines and practices of the Baptists, must allot them a place among the faithful, notwithstanding their views of baptism. In all other things they are united with their reforming brethren. They are exemplary in their zeal for the salvation of souls, and exhibit respectable specimens of those who follow Christ as their example.

The historian Mackintosh says:

The Baptists are a simple and pious body of men, generally unlettered, obnoxious to all other sects for their rejection of infant baptism, as neither enjoined by the New Testament, nor consistent with reason. These suffered more than any other persuasion under Charles II. They had publicly professed the principles of religious liberty (Mackintosh, ch. VI. 167).

Some years ago Hugh Price Hughes, the foremost Methodist preacher of England, said:

I assert with a full sense of the responsibility, that I believe that the great battle of the twentieth century will be the final struggle between the Jesuit Society in the full Possession of the authority of Rome and the individual human conscience; and when, like Oliver Cromwell, I look around to see where I shall find Ironsides, who will vindicate the rights of the human conscience, my eyes fall upon the Baptists. The anvil on which the Jesuit hammer will break to pieces is the Baptist conscience. I should like all the world through to pit the Baptist conscience against the Jesuit.

One other quotation will be given in this place. It is from the celebrated Dr. Chalmers. He says:

Let it never be forgotten of the Particular Baptists of England, that they form the denomination of Fuller and Carey and Ryland and Hall and Foster; that they have originated among the greatest of all missionary enterprises; that they have enriched the Christian literature of our country with authorship of the most exalted piety. as well as of the first talent and the first eloquence; that they have waged a very noble and successful war with the hydra of Antinomianism; that perhaps there is not a more intellectual community of ministers in our island, or who have put forth to their number a greater amount of mental power and mental activity In the defence and illustration of our common faith; and, what is better than all the triumphs of genius or understanding, who, by their zeal and fidelity and pastoral labour, among the congregations which they have reared, have done more to swell the lists of genuine discipleship in the walks of private society-and thus to uphold and to extend the living Christianity of our nation (Chalmers, Lectures on Romans, 76).

The price of human liberty in England was the blood of the Baptists. They stood ever for soul liberty. They struggled for it through blood and fire. At the beginning of the Civil Wars the animosity against the Baptists was very great. Edwards, who fairly represented the hostility of those times against the Baptists, says:

I here declare myself, that I could wish there were a public Disputation, even in the point of Paedobaptisme and of Dipping, between some or the Anabaptists, and some of our Ministers; and had I an interest in the Houses to prevaile to obtaine it (which I speak not as to presume of any such power, being so meane and weak a man) it should be one of the first Petitions I would put up to the Honorable Houses for a public Disputation, as was at Zurick, namely, that both Houses would give leave to the Anabaptists to chuse for themselves such a number of their ablest men, and the Assembly leave to chuse an equall number for them, and that by Authority of Parliament publike Notaries sworne, might be appointed to write down all, some Members of both Houses' present to see to the Peace kept, and to be Judges of the faire play and liberty given the Anabaptists, and that there might be severall dayes of Disputation, leave to the utmost given the Anabaptists to say what they could, and if upon such faire and free debates it should be found the Anabaptists to be in the Truth, then the Parliament only to Tolerate them, but to Establish and settle their way throughout the whole Kingdome, but if upon Disputation and debate, the Anabaptists should be found in Error (as I am confident they would) that then the Parliament should forbid all Dipping, and take some severe course with all Dippers, as the Senate of Zurick did after the ten severall Disputations allowed the Anabaptists (Edwards, Gangraena, III.177).

Plainly the advice of Edwards was to drown the Baptists. The Presbyterian party, which was now fully in the saddle, did something more than use words. Various petitions, from many sources, were sent up to Parliament asking that severe laws should be enacted against all sectaries who would not come into the Presbyterian establishment.

The first law passed by Parliament in this direction was an ordinance silencing all preachers who were not ordained ministers either of the English or of some Foreign Church. It bore date April 26, 1645, and was as follows:

It is this day ordained and declared by the Lords and Commons assembled in parliament, that no person be admitted to preach, who is not ordained a minister, either in this or some other reformed church, except such, as intending the ministry, shall be allowed for the trial of their gifts, by those who shall be appointed thereunto by both houses of parliament (Crosby, History of the Baptists, I.193).

The law was ordered printed, that it should be enforced in the army as well as elsewhere, and due punishment inflicted upon any who violated it. It was found however upon the test that many of the Baptists had formerly been ordained, when they belonged to the State Church, and the magistrates

could make little out of the matter. Another ordinance was therefore passed December 26, 1646, to the following effect:

The commons assembled in parliament do declare, that they do dislike and will proceed against all such persons as shall take upon them to preach, or expound the scriptures in any church, or chapel, or any other public place, except they may be ordained, either here or in some other reformed church, as it is already prohibited in an order of both houses of the 26th of April, 1645, and likewise against all such ministers, or others, as shall publish or maintain, by preaching, writing, or any other way, any thing against, or in derogation of church government which is now established by authority of both houses of parliament; and all justices of the peace, sheriffs, mayors, bayliffs, and other head officers of corporations, and all officers of the army, are to take notice of this declaration, and by all lawful ways and means, to prevent offenses of this kind, and to apprehend the offenders, and give notice thereof to this house, that thereupon course may be speedily taken, for a due punishment to be inflicted on them (Crosby, I 195).

This law would have given the Baptists great trouble only the disturbed condition of the country directed the officers to other tasks. There seems to have been a favorable turn toward the Baptists for on March 4, 1647, a declaration was published by the lords and Commons to the following effect:

The name of Anabaptism hath indeed contracted much odium, by reason of the extravagant opinions and practices of some of that name in Germany, tending to the disturbance of the government and peace of all states, which opinions and practices we abhor and detest: But for their opinion against the baptism of infants, it is only a difference about a circumstance of time in the administration of an ordinance, wherein in former age; as well as this, learned men have differed both in opinion and practice. And though we could wish that all men would satisfy themselves, and join with us in our judgment and practice in this point; yet herein we held it fit that men should be convinced by the word of God, with great gentleness and reason, and not beaten out of it with force and violence (Crosby, I. 196).

This promised well, but this very Parliament, the next year, May 2, 1648, enacted: An ordinance of the lords and commons assembled in parliament, for the punishing of blasphemies and heresies (Crosby, I.197).

It was one of the worst and most cruel laws passed since the early days of the Reformation. Heresy, in some instances was classed with felony, and was to be punished with the pains of death, without benefit of clergy. others were subject to conviction before two justices of the peace and to be imprisoned upon conviction. Such a person was required to give surety that

he would not any longer maintain such errors. Among the errors mentioned was the following:

That the baptizing of infants is unlawful, or that such baptism is void, and that such persons ought to be baptized again, and in pursuance thereof shall baptize any person formerly baptized: That the church government by presbytery is antichristian or unlawful.

Infant baptism has always led its advocates to persecute. Thus did the Presbyterians carry out their cruel ideas. The ordinance would have produced much more suffering than it did, but the Baptists and other sectaries were in such numbers, and were increasing so rapidly, that it was not always convenient to execute such a law. One John Bidle was arrested, tried and convicted before a magistrate. Cromwell could not afford to have him punished too strenuously, so he was banished for three years. It was a good occasion for the Baptists to protest against the violation of conscience, and so they petitioned the Protector for the privilege of soul liberty. Among other things they said:

That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ (tho' differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship or discipline publickly held forth) shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion, &c. Art 37. That all laws, statutes, ordinances, &c. to the contrary of the aforesaid liberty, shall be esteemed as null and void. Art 38.

The persecutions, however, as might have been expected, were more particularly directed against the Baptists, since they denied the necessity of infant baptism. Almost every prominent Baptist preacher was sooner or later committed to prison. The Presbyterians were now supreme in Parliament, and they favored the administering of the laws for persecution. But Cromwell perceived that the Long Parliament was odious to the people, so he put, without ceremony, an end to their power, April 20, 1653.

Cromwell owed much to the Baptists. After he became Protector, the Baptists on account of their views of religious liberty, were not in his favor. But it was under the profligate Charles II and James II that they suffered most of all. The Baptists were the outspoken advocates of liberty of conscience.

In their letter to Charles II, dated A. D. 1655, presented to him at Bruges, they call upon him to pledge his word "that he will never erect, nor allow to be erected, any such tyrannical, popish, and antichristian Hierarchy (episcopalian, presbyterian, or by what name soever called) as shall assume

power over, or impose a yoke upon, the conscience of others; but that every one of his subjects should be at liberty to worship God in such a way as shall appear to them agreeable to the mind and will of Christ" (Clarendon, History of the Rebellion, III.359). The same spirit animated them during the reign of James II.

The Confession of the Particular Baptists, 1689, Article XXI says:

God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or not contained in it. So that to Believe such Doctrines, or to obey such Commands out of Conscience, is to betray true liberty of Conscience; and requiring of an implicit Faith, and absolute and blind Obedience, is to destroy Liberty of Conscience, and Reason also.

The General Baptists also in An Orthodox Creed, 1679, Article XLV, of the Civil Magistrates, say:

And subjection in the Lord ought to be yielded to the magistrate. in all lawful things commanded by them, for conscience sake, with prayers for them, &c.

In Article XLVI, Of Liberty of Conscience, it is said:

And the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute blind obedience, destroys liberty of conscience, and reason also, it being repugnant to both, and that no pretended good end whatsoever, by any man, can make that action, obedience, or practice, lawful and good, that is not grounded in, or upon the authority of holy scripture, or right reason agreeable thereunto.

The most rigid laws were enacted against the Baptists, and executed with terrible severity. The jails were filled with them. They could be convicted by one magistrate, without trial by jury; and the law forbade their meetings in their conventicles. It was the battle of the fire and faggot against liberty of conscience.

It brought to the fore great men. The two original minds of the century were essentially Baptist—John Milton and John Bunyan. Lord Macaulay says:

We are not afraid to say, that, though there were many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two minds which possessed the imaginative faculty in a very eminent degree. One of those minds produced the Paradise Lost, the other the Pilgrim's Progress (Macaulay, Critical and Historical Essay; 140. Boston, 1879).

Of the ability of John Milton there is no question. Macanlay says of him:

We turn for a short time from the topics of the day, to commemorate, in all love and reverence, the genius and virtues of John Milton, the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English literature (Ibid., 2).

Macaulay places him as one of the greatest of the poets. It is not probable that Milton belonged to a Baptist church. In his last days he did not appear to be connected with any religious society. In all distinguishing views he was in accord with the General Baptists of his day. He had a powerful and independent mind, emancipated from the influence of authority, and devoted to the search of truth. Like the Baptists, he professed to form his system from the Bible alone; and his digest of Scriptural texts is certainly one of the best that has appeared. No Baptist writer of any age has more thoroughly refuted infant baptism (Milton, *Christian Doctrines*, II. 115). Many of the biographies of Milton, however, class him with the Baptists. Featley gives this slant to both Roger Williams and John Milton (Featley, *The Dipers Dipt The Epistle Dedicatory*). John Lewis quotes Featley and numbers Milton as a Baptist (Lewis, *A Brief History of the Rise and Progress of Anabaptism in England*, 87). John Toland, who wrote the first life of Milton, 1699, says:

Thus lived and died John Milton, a person of the best accomplishments, the happiest genius and the vastest learning which this nation, so renowned for producing excellent writers, could ever yet show . . . In his early days he was a favorer of those Protestants then opprobriously called by the name Puritan. In his middle years he was best pleased with the Independents and Anabaptists, as allowing of more liberty than others and coming the nearest to his opinion to the primitive practice. But in the latter part of his life he was not a professed member of any particular sect among Christians; he frequented none of their assemblies, nor made use of their peculiar rites in his family. Whether this proceeded from a dislike of their uncharitable and endless disputes, and that love of dominion or inclination to persecution, which, he said, was a piece of popery inseparable from all Churches, or whether he thought one might be a good man without subscribing to any party, and that they had all in some things corrupted the institutions of Jesus Christ, I will by no means adventure to determine; for conjectures on such occasions are very uncertain, and I have never met with any of his acquaintanc who could he positive in assigning the true reasons for his conduct (Toland, *Life of Milton*, 152, 153).

He was persecuted to the grave. There is no sadder picture than that of Milton in his last days. Macaulay says of him:

If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, they might have been excused in Milton. But the strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience. His spirits do not seem to have been high, but they were singularly equitable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful, Such as was when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels, in the prime of health and manly beauty, loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes, such it continued to be when, after having experienced every calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die (Macaulay, Critical and Historical Essays, 13).

The other original mind of the century was John Bunyan. "The history of Bunyan," says Macaulay, "is the history of a most excitable mind in the age of excitement" The Pilgrim's Progress, next to the Bible, has been read by more people than any other book. Macaulay says of it:

That wonderful book, while it obtains admiration from the most fastidious critics, is loved by those who are too simple to admire it. Doctor Johnson, all whose studies were desultory, and who hated, as he said, to read books through, made an exception in favour of the Pilgrim's Progress. That work was one of the two or three works which he wished longer. It was by no common merit that the illiterate sectary extracted praise like this from the most pedantic of critics and the most bigoted of Tories. In the wildest parts of Scotland the Pilgrim's Progress is the delight of the peasantry. In every nursery the Pilgrim's Progress is a greater favorite than Jack the Giant-killer. Every reader knows the straight and narrow path as well as he knows a road in which he has gone backward and forward a hundred times. This is the highest miracle of genius, that things which are not should be as though they were, that the imagination of one mind should become the personal recollection of another. And this miracle the tinker has wrought (Macaulay, 134).

For denying infant baptism and being "a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the disparagement of the Church of England," he was, in 1660, committed to prison, where he remained twelve years; or till 1672. Bunyan says of his imprisonment:

I found myself a man encompassed with infirmities: the parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of my flesh; and that not only because I am somewhat too fond of these great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the many

hardships, miseries and wants that my poor family was likely to meet with, should I be taken from them; especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all besides. Oh the thoughts of the hardships my poor blind one might undergo. would break my heart to pieces. Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou to have for my portion in this world. Thou must be beaten, must beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow on thee. But yet, recalling myself, thought I, I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you.

In describing his sufferings, Macaulay says:

It may be doubted whether any English Dissenter has suffered more severely under the penal laws than John Bunyan. Of the twenty-seven years which have elapsed since the Restoration, he had passed twelve in confinement. He still persisted in preaching; but, that he might preach, he was under the necessity of disguising himself like a carter. He was often introduced into meetings through back doors, with a smock frock on his back, and a whip in his hand. If he had thought only of his own ease and safety, he would have hailed the Indulgence with delight. He was now, at length, free to pray and exhort in open day. His congregation rapidly increased; thousands hung upon his words; and at Bedford¹ when he ordinarily resided, money was plentifully contributed to build a meeting-house for him. His influence among the common people was such that the government would willingly have bestowed on him some municipal office but his vigorous and stout English heart were proof against all delusion and all temptation. He felt assured that the proffered toleration was merely a bait intended to lure the Puritan party to destruction; nor would he, by accepting a place for which he was not legally qualified, recognize the validity of the dispensing power. One of the last acts of his virtuous life was to decline an interview to which he was invited by an agent of the government (Macaulay, *The History of England*, II.177, 178).

The place of Bunyan is secure. "Bunyan is, indeed," says Macaulay, "as decidedly the first of allegorists, as Demosthenes is the first of orators, or Shakespeare the first of dramatists."

The most widely known and the most beloved Baptist of the times was William Kiffin, the merchant preacher. At this time he was about seventy-five years of age, and he lived unto the last year of King William's reign. His portrait does not bear out the once current impression concerning the Baptists of that age. With skullcap and flowing ringlets, with mustache and "imperial", with broad lace collar and ample gown, he resembled a gentleman cavalier rather than any popular ideal of a sour-visaged and

discontented Anabaptist. Though one of the cleanest men he was called to suffer for his religious convictions. Macaulay has recorded something of his sufferings. He says:

Great as was the authority of Bunyan with the Baptists, That of William Kiffin was still greater. Kiffin was the first man among them in wealth and station He was in the habit of exercising his spiritual gifts at their meetings: but he did not live by preaching. He traded largely; his credit on the Exchange of London stood high; and he had accumulated an ample fortune. Perhaps no man could, at that conjuncture, have rendered a more valuable service to the court. But between him and the court was interposed the remembrance of one terrible event. He was The grandfather of the two Hewlings, those gallant youths who, of all the victims of the Bloody Assizes had been the most generally lamented. For the sad fate of one of them James was in a peculiar manner responsible. Jeffreys had respited the younger brother. The poor lad's sister had been ushered by Churchill into the royal presence, and had begged for mercy; but the king's heart had been obdurate. The misery of the whole family had been great; but Kiffin was most to be pitied. He was seventy years old when he was left destitute, the survivor of those who should have survived him. The heartless and venal sycophants of Whitehall, judging by themselves, thought that the old man would be easily propitiated by an alderman's gown, and by some compensation in money for the property which his grandson had forfeited, Penn was employed in the work of seduction, but to no purpose. The king determined to try what effect his own civilities would produce. Kiffin was ordered to attend at the palace. He found a brilliant circle of noblemen and gentlemen assembled. James immediately came to him, spoke to him very graciously, and concluded by saying, "I have put you down, Mr. Kiffin, for an Alderman of London." The old man looked fixedly at the king, burst into tears. and made answer, "Sir, I am worn out; I am unfit to serve your Majesty or the City. And, sir, the death of my poor boys broke my heart. That wound is as fresh as ever. I shall carry it to my grave." The king stood silent for a minute in some confusion, and then asked, "Mr. Kiffin, I will find a balsam for that sore." Assuredly James did not mean to say any thing cruel or insolent; on the contrary, he seems to have been in an unusually gentle mood. Yet no speech that is recorded of him gives so an unfavorable a notion of his character as these few words. They are the words of a hard-hearted and low-minded man, unable to conceive any laceration of the affections for which a place or a pension would not be a full compensation (Macaulay. The History of England, II.178, 170).

The happy succession of William and Mary to the throne of England, February 13, 1689, and the passage of the Toleration Act, on May 24 following, secured comparative liberty to the Baptists. They were tolerated

but still under the power of the State. Great had been their sufferings; but they had remained consistent in their advocacy of the rights of conscience. Their views had prevailed at tremendous sacrifice. "The Baptists were the first and only propounders of absolute liberty," says the celebrated John Locke, "just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty" (Locke, *Essay on Toleration*, 31, 4th ed.).

The part the English Baptists played in obtaining soul liberty is now conceded by the historians. Price says:

It belonged to the members of a calumniated and despised sect, few in numbers and poor in circumstances, to bring forth to public view, in their simplicity and omnipotence, those immortal principles which are now universally recognized as of Divine authority and of universal obligation. Other writers of more distinguished name succeeded, and robbed them of their honor; but their title is so good, and the amount of service they performed on behalf of the common interests of humanity is so incalculable, that an impartial posterity must assign to them their due meed of praise (Price, *History of Protestant Nonconformity*, I.222).

Chines Butler, Roman Catholic, says:

It is observable that this denomination of Christians-now truly respectable, but in their origin as little intellectual as any-first propagated the principles of religious liberty (Butler, *Historical Memoirs respecting the English, Irish, and Scottish Catholics*, I. 325. London, 1819).

Herbert S. Skeats says:

It is the singular and distinguished honour of the Baptists to have repudiated, from their earliest history, all coercive power over the consciences and actions of men with reference to religion. No sentence is to be found in all their writings inconsistent with those principles of Christian liberty and willinghood which are now equally dear to all the free Congregational Churches of England. They were the proto-evangelists of the voluntary principle (Skeats. *A History of the Free Churches of England*, 24. London, 1869).

In a foot note he says he is not connected with the Baptist denomination and therefore, "perhaps, greater pleasure in bearing this testimony to undoubted historical fact" belongs to the author.

Dr. Schaff says:

For this change of public sentiment the chief merit is due to the English Non-conformists, who in the school of persecution became advocates of toleration. especially to the Baptists and Quakers, who made religious liberty (within the limits of the golden rule) an article of their creed, so that they could not consistently persecute even if they should have a chance to do so (Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, 1.802, 803).

The period which followed was not one of prosperity for Baptists. There was a world reaction which had set in against Christianity. Infidelity for the next one hundred years was to occupy a large place in the world, This general spirit of unrest and unbelief wrought havoc in empires as well as in individuals. No just history of these times can be written that does not take into account this trend in human affairs. It was a period of stagnation. Worldliness was common in the churches, and piety was at a low ebb.

There were moreover internal troubles among the Baptists. The General Baptists were paralyzed by dissensions and alienations. The Particular Baptists had made their Confession on the lines of the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians. There was a constant tendency in the discussion of election and predestination toward hyper-Calvinism, and in the debates which arose over the doctrines of Wesley many Baptist preachers became Antinomians. There was a blight upon the churches and much of their religion took a most repulsive form.

John Gill was by far the ablest man among the Baptists. He was born in Kettering, in 1729, and became a superior scholar in Greek, Latin and logic. After many years of study he became a profound scholar in the Rabbinical Hebrew and a master of the Targum, Talmud, the Rabboth and the book of Zohar, with their ancient commentaries. He was a prolific writer as is attested by his Body of Divinity, his Commentary on the Bible ,and many other works.

Toplady, who was his intimate friend, gives the following just estimate of him:

If any man can be supposed to have trod the whole circle of human learning, it was Dr. Gill. . . It would, perhaps, try the constitutions of half the literati in England, only to read with care and attention the whole of what he said. As deeply as human sagacity enlightened by grace could penetrate, he went to the bottom of every thing he engaged in. . . Perhaps no man, since the days of St. Austin, has written so largely in defense of the system of grace, and, certainly, no man has treated that momentous subject, in all its branches, more closely, judiciously and successfully.

He was also a great controversialist as well as a great scholar. On this subject Toplady adds:

What was said of Edward the Black Prince, that he never fought a battle that he did not win; what has been remarked of the great Duke of Marlborough, that he never undertook a siege which he did not carry, may be justly accommodated to our great philosopher and divine.

Toplady further says:

So far as the doctrines of the gospel are concerned, Gill never besieged an error which he did not force from its strongholds; nor did he ever encounter an adversary to truth whom he did not baffle and subdue. His doctrinal and practical writings will live and be admired, and be a standing blessing to posterity, when their opposers are forgotten, or only remembered by the refutations he has given them. While true religion and sound learning have a single friend remaining in the British Empire, the works and name of John Gill will be precious and revered.

With all of his learning, while he did not intend it, he fell little short of supralapsarianism. He did not invite sinners to the Saviour, while preaching condemnation, and asserted that he ought not to interfere with the elective grace of God. When his towering influence and learning are taken into account, some estimate may be formed of the withering effect of such a system of theology.

There were forces at work, already which meant a revolution in Baptist affairs. These forces were finally to culminate in the great foreign mission work of Carey. The preaching of Wesley and Whitefield had profoundly stirred the nation. The Arminian theology of Wesley was opposed by Toplady and Gill, nevertheless the people felt a great quickening power. It may properly be said that while the Arminian theology could not withstand the sledge-hammer blows of Gill, the result was that practical religion resolved itself into a matter of holy living rather than into a system of divinity.

Dr. Gill was succeeded in the pastorate by Dr. John Rippon. Rippon filled the same pastorate as Gill had done in London for sixty-three years, or until 1832. His preaching was full of affection and power. He compiled a hymn book and founded the *Baptist Annual Register*, a monthly, from 1790 to 1802. In 1809 *The Baptist Magazine* was established. These were the first distinct Baptist newspapers. During the Commonwealth several newspapers, such as *The Faithful Post*, *The Faithful Scout*, *Murcurius Politicus*, and others, had Baptist editors and contributors, but they were political rather than religious papers. The Baptists, previous to the founding of *The Baptist*

Magazine, had maintained a friendly correspondence in the columns of the *Evangelical Magazine*. This was unsatisfactory. On account of controverted points which needed ample discussion and the growing importance of the mission work in India, Booth, Ryland, and others, felt a Baptist periodical was *imperative*. The Baptists were likewise active in writing books and pamphlets. Among such books was the famous *Pedobaptism Examined* by Abraham Booth.

Booth was for thirty-seven years pastor of the Prescott street Church, London. He was a prolific writer, and was justly reputed as one of the greatest scholars of his day. His *Grace Abounding* is today read with delight. Dr. Newman, a personal friend, says of him:

As a divine he was a star of the tint magnitude, and one of the brightest ornaments of the Baptist denomination to which he belonged. Firm in his attachment to his religious principles, he despised the popular cant about charity, and cultivated genuine candor, which is alike remote from the laxity of latitudinarians and the censoriousness of bigots.

Another movement which must have had a beneficial effect upon the Baptists was prison reform under John Howard. He was born September 2, 1726. At first he was a Congregationalist, but later became a Baptist. He was made sheriff of Bedfordshire. He visited the prison where Bunyan was incarcerated for twelve years. Everything in it was shocking, and appealed to his whole humanity to remove the horrid evils that reigned all over the place. From that moment he seems to have concentrated himself to fight prison abuses and the powers of the plague throughout the world. How he traveled, how he suffered, how he labored with kings, emperors, empresses, parliaments, and governors of jails; how he gave his money to relieve oppressed prisoners and victims of the plague; how he risked his life times without number, it is not here possible to tell.

The eloquent Edmund Burke says of him: "He visited all Europe and the East, not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur; nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals, or to collate manuscripts; but to dive into the depth of dungeon-to plunge into the infection of hospitals-to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain-to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt-to remember the forgotten-to attend to the neglected-to visit the forsaken, and to compare and to collate the distresses of men of all countries. His plan is original, and as full of genius as it is of humanity" (*Baptist Magazine*, IX. 54, 55. London, 1817).

It is sufficient to say that the name of Howard stands high above every other philanthropist to whom our race has given birth. The Howard Associations of all lands show the extent and duration of his fame.

At the time of his death he had long been a member of the Little Wild Street Baptist Church, London, The great prison reform movement had its origin in the imprisonment of a Baptist preacher and was carried out by another great Baptist His funeral sermon was preached by the famous Dr. Samuel Stennett Dr. Stennett, in that discourse, said of his friend:

Nor was he ashamed of those truths be heard stated, explained, and enforced in this place. He had made up his mind, as he said, upon his religions sentiments, and was not to be moved from his steadfastness by novel opinions obtruded on the world. Nor did he content himself with a bare profession of these divine truths. He entered into the spirit of the gospel, felt its power, and tasted its sweetness. You know, my friends, with what seriousness and devotion he attended, for a long course of years, on the worship of God among us. It would be scarcely decent for me to repeat the affectionate things he says, in a letter writ me from a remote part of the world, respecting the satisfaction and pleasure he had felt in the religions exercises of this place (Stennett, Works, III., 295. London, 1829).

The entire letter is printed in the same volume (p. 459). In it he expresses his adherence to the faith. He says:

But, Sir, the principal reason of my writing is most sincerely to thank you for the many, many pleasant hours I have had in reviewing the notes I have taken of the Sermons I had the happiness to hear under your ministry; these, Sir, with many of your petitions in prayer, have been, and are, the songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

With unabated pleasure I have attended your ministry; no man ever entered more into my religious sentiments, or more happily expressed them. It ever was some little disappointment when any one occupied your pulpit; oh, Sir, how many Sabbaths have I ardently longed to spend in Wild Street; on those days I generally rest or if at sea, keep retired in my little cabin. It is you that preach; and I bless God I attend with renewed pleasure; God in Christ is my rock, the portion of my soul. I have little more to add, but, accept my renewed thanks.

There was another great force working for the betterment of the Baptist denomination. It was represented by Andrew Fuller. He was horn February 6, 1754. His spiritual struggles if less interesting than John Bunyan were equally deep. He was long under conviction. He says of himself:

In March, 1770, I witnessed the baptizing of two young persons. having never seen that ordinance administered before, and was considerably affected by what I saw and heard. The solemn immersion of a person, on a profession of faith in Christ, carried such a conviction with it, that I wept like a child on the occasion. . . I was fully persuaded that this was the primitive way of baptizing, and that every Christian was bound to attend to this Institution of our blessed Lord. About a month after this I was baptized myself, and joined the church at Soham, being then turned of sixteen years (Fuller, Works, I. 7)

October, 1788, he became pastor at Kettering, and there he spent the remainder of his useful life. He was a determined opponent of error in all forms. He entered the lists "a mere Shamgar, as it might seem, entering the battlefield with but an ox-goad against the mailed errorists of his island," but he produced an impression that his enemies could not overcome. In appearance he was "tall, broad-shouldered, and firmly set. His hair was parted in the middle, the brow square and of fair height, the eyes deeply set, overhung with large bushy eyebrows. The whole face had a massive expression".

The man who encountered him generally bore the marks of a bludgeon. He was the determined foe of hyper-Calvinism. He said in his strong way "had matters gone on but a few years the Baptists would have become a perfect dunghill." His work entitled: "The Gospel worthy of all Acceptation: or, The Obligation of Men fully to credit, and cordially to approve, whatever God makes known; wherein is considered the Nature of Faith in Christ, and the Duty of those where the Gospel comes in that matter," was an epoch making book.

The book provoked a controversy, but the result of the controversy was that it cleared the ground and opened up the way for the preaching of the gospel to the whole world. Fuller became the first great Missionary Secretary of modern times.

Dr. Joseph Belcher gives the following description and estimate of him:

Imagine a tall and somewhat corpulent man, with gait and manners, though heavy and unpolished, not without dignity, ascending the pulpit to address his fellow mortals on the great themes of life and salvation. His authoritative look and grave deportment claim your attention. You could not be careless if you would; and you would have no disposition to be so, even if you might. He commences his sermon, and presents to you a plan, combining in a singular manner the topical and textual methods of preaching, and proceeds to illustrate his subject, and enforce its claim on your regard. You are struck

with the clearness of his statements; every text is held up before your view so as to become transparent; the preacher has clearly got the correct sense of the passage, and you wonder that you never saw it before as he now presents it; he proceeds, and you are surprised at the power of his argument, which appears to be irresistible. You are melted by his pathos, and seem to have found a man in whom are united the clearness of Barrow, the scriptural theology of Owen, and the subduing tenderness of Barter and Flavel.

Andrew Fuller was providentially raised up at a period when coldness benumbed some parts of the Christian church, and errors obscured the glory of others. Untaught in the schools, he had to work his way through all kinds of difficulty; to assume the attitude of a controversialist even against his own section of the church, as well as against the enemies of the common faith; and to contend against prejudices of every sort, that truth might spread, and Christian zeal be roused into action. The wonder rather is, that one short life should have accomplished so much, than so little was effected (Fuller, Works, I. 107 note).

This missionary movement really began in 1784 in a conference for prayer established by Carey. Only two years previous to this date Carey and Fuller became acquainted; when the latter, "a round headed, rustic looking" young man preached "On being men in Understanding" and heard him read a circular letter at the association on "The Grace of Hope." Carey had fasted all day "because he had not a penny to buy a dinner." He enjoyed the sermon and the two men became fast friends.

At a meeting held in Kettering, October 2, 1792, the Baptist Missionary Society was formed, and the first collection for its treasury amounting to ?18 2s 6d, was taken up. Mr. Fuller was appointed the first Secretary, and while others nobly aided, Andrew Fuller was substantially the Society till he reached the realms of glory. Speaking of the mission to India, he says:

Our undertaking to India really appeared to me, on its commencement, to be somewhat like a few men, who were deliberating about the importance of penetrating into a deep mine, which had never before been explored. We had no one to guide us, and while we were deliberating, Carey, as it were, said, "Well, I will go down if *you* will hold the rope." But before he went down he, as it seemed to me, took no oath from each of us at the mouth of the pit, to this effect, that while "*we* lived, we should *never* let go the rope" (Ivimey, History of the English Baptists, IV. 529).

Carey perhaps had the greatest facility of learning languages of any man who ever lived. In seven years he learned Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French and

Dutch. Carey and Thomas, a Baptist surgeon of India, were appointed missionaries. They first attempted to sail in the Earl of Oxford, but were prevented by the East India Company. Carey finally sailed in the Danish East Indianman, the Kron Princessa Maria, June 13, 1793.

On his missionary work in India it is not necessary, in this place, to linger. He prepared grammars, dictionaries and most of all translated the Scriptures. Of his books it is said:

The versions of the Sacred Scriptures, in the preparation of which he took an active and laborious part, including Sanscrit, Hindu, Brijbhassa, Mahrratta, Bengali, Oriya, Telinga, Karnata, Maldivian, Gurajatee, Buloshe, Pushtoo, Punjabi, Kashmeer, Assam, Burman, Pali, or Magudha, Tamul, Cingalese, Armenian, Malay, Hindostani, and Persian. In six of these tongues the whole Scriptures have been translated and circulated; the New Testament has appeared in 23 languages, besides various dialects in which smaller portions of the sacred text have been printed. In thirty years Carey and his brethren rendered the Word of God accessible to one third of the world.

Even that is not all; before Carey died 212,000 copies of the Scriptures were issued from Serampore in forty different languages, the tongues of 330,000,000 of the human family. Dr. Carey was the greatest tool maker for missionaries that ever labored for God, His versions are used today by all denominations of Christians throughout India.

Carey, Marshman and Ward gave during their stay in India nearly \$400,000.00 for the spread of the gospel. Frederick VI, of Denmark, sent them a gold medal as a token of appreciation for their labors. At the death of Carey the learned societies of Europe passed the most flattering resolutions.

Dr. Southey says of Carey, Marshman and Ward:

These low-born, low-bred mechanics have done more to spread the knowledge of the Scriptures among the heathen than has been accomplished, or even attempted, by all the world beside.

William Wilberforce said in the House of Commons of Carey:

He had the genius as well as the benevolence to devise the plan of a society for communicating the blessings of Christian light to the natives of India. To qualify himself for this truly noble enterprise he had resolutely applied himself to the study of the learned languages; and after making considerable proficiency in them, applied himself to several of the oriental tongues, and

more especially to the Sanscrit, in which his proficiency is acknowledged to be greater than that of Sir William Jones, or any other European.

With the defeat of Antinomianism, and under the impulse of the missionary propaganda, there was a renewed desire to read and study the Bible. With this there began another movement which was destined to exercise the most beneficial influence upon the human race in every part of the globe. Towards the close of the eighteenth century a great want of Welsh Bibles was felt by ministers of religion in that country. Few families were in possession of a single copy of the Holy Scriptures. So urgent was the need, of a supply, that the Rev. Thomas Charles came to London to place the matter before some religious people. Having been introduced to the committee of the Religious Tract Society, of which Rev. Joseph Hughes, a Baptist Minister was Secretary, that there might be a similar dearth in other parts of the country, and that it would be desirable to form a society for the express purpose of circulating the Scriptures. Inquiries were made throughout England, as well as upon the Continent, and it was found that the people everywhere were destitute of the Bible. The result was the formation of The British and Foreign Bible Society. Mr. Hughes was elected secretary.

"I am thankful for my intimacy with him," said his friend Leifchild. "My esteem of him always grew with my intercourse. I never knew a more consistent, correct, and unblemished character. He was not only sincere, but without offense, and adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. His mind was full of information, singularly instructive, and very edifying; and while others talked of candor and moderation, he exemplified them" (Leifchild, Memoir of the Rev. J. Hughes, 148)

Mr. Hughes prepared a prize essay on: "The Excellency of the Holy Scriptures, an Argument for their more General Dispersion." The circulation of this essay led to the formation of the Society, May 4, 1804, at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street. Mr. Hughes originated the Society, gave it a name, and became its first secretary. At this meeting it was agreed:

(1) A Society shall be formed with this designation, The British and Foreign Bible Society, of which the sole object shall be to encourage a wider dispersion of the Holy Scriptures.

(2) This Society shall add its endeavors to those employed by other Societies for circulating the Scriptures through the British dominions, and shall also, according to its ability, extend its influence to other countries, whether Christian, Mahometan, and Pagan, &c.

The institution was thus established and more than seven hundred pounds were subscribed for its maintenance. The first historian, John Owen, says:

Thus terminated the proceedings of this extraordinary day, a day memorable in the experience of all who participated in the transactions by which it was signalized; a day to which posterity will look back, as giving to the world, and that in times of singular perturbation and distress, an institution for diffusing, on the grandest scale, the tidings of peace and salvation; a day which will be recorded as peculiarly honorable to the character of Great Britain, and as fixing an important epoch in the history of mankind (Owen, *The History of the Origin and First Ten Years of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, 1.16, 17 London, 1816).

The institution of Sunday Schools also dates from this period. It was the year 1780 that Robert Raikes, the proprietor and editor of the *Gloucester Journal*, had his attention drawn to the ignorance and depravity of the children of Gloucester. The streets of the lower part of the town, he was informed, were filled on Sunday with "multitudes of these wretches, released on that day from employment, spent their time in noise and riot playing at chink, and cursing and swearing." Raikes at once conceived the idea of employing persons to teach these children on Sunday. The idea was carried into execution, and at the end of three years he wrote to a friend:

It is now three years since we began; and I wish you were here, to make inquiry into the effect. A woman who lives in a lane, where I had fixed a school, told me, some time ago, that the place was quite a heaven on Sundays, compared with what it used to be. The numbers who have learned to read, and say their catechism, are so great that I am astonished at it. Upon the Sunday afternoon the mistresses take their scholars to church, a place into which neither they nor their ancestors ever entered with a view to the glory of God (Watson, *History of the Sunday School Union*, 5, 6).

The school of Raikes was not a Sunday School, but a school which taught reading and catechism of the Church of England and marched the children to Church on Sunday. Mr. Raikes does not appear to have expected that his system would be generally adopted. William Fox, a Baptist deacon, of London, had the honor of giving universality to the Sunday School. He became interested in the movement and proposed the Sunday School Society. "I am full of admiration at the great," writes Mr. Raikes to Mr. Fox, "and the noble design of the society you speak of forming. If it were possible that my poor abilities could be rendered in any degree useful to you, point out the subject, and you will find me not inactive" (*Baptist Magazine*, XIX. 251. London, 1827). The Sunday School Society, which has been of such signal use in England, was organized in the Prescott Street Baptist Church,

London, September 7, 1785. Fox placed the Sunday School under voluntary instead of paid teachers, and had the Bible taught instead of secular studies. The modern Sunday School in its development originated with a Baptist.

It has sometimes been said that on account of their opposition to infant baptism the position of the Baptists included a harsh attitude toward the young. But they are not indifferent to the conversion of their children. The covenants of Baptist churches as far back as they can be traced, pledge each member to bring up his offspring in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" This was manifested in the lives of these English Baptists. Benjamin Keach (born 1640) suffered at the pillory by order of the judges for writing and publishing a book entitled "The Child's Instructor," and he was placed in prison for two months and forced to pay a fine of one hundred pounds. He was converted at eighteen and was pastor in London at the age of twenty-eight. John Gill (born 1607), the great commentator, was converted when he was twelve years of age, and at twenty-three was the successor of Keach. John Rippon (born 1751), the successor of Gill was converted when he was sixteen, was a licensed preacher in Bristol College when he was seventeen, and was chosen to succeed the great Gill at twenty years of age. John Ryland (born 1755) was converted when he was fourteen and ordained when he was eighteen. Joseph Stennett (born 1692), was converted at fifteen and was ordained as pastor of Little Wild Street when he was twenty-two. Samuel Stennett (born 1727), son and successor of the above, was converted and baptized when he was quite young. Robert Hall (born 1764), was converted at nine years of age, began to preach at fifteen and was assistant pastor of Broadmead Church, Bristol, before he reached his majority. Andrew Fuller (born 1754) was converted at fourteen years of age, baptized at sixteen, and ordained at twenty-one." This list of distinguished Baptist preachers, converted when young, could be indefinitely extended.

Out of the same general awakening Stepney College, now Regents Park College, owes its origin. Its foundation is due entirely to Abraham Booth, No institution has done more service for the Baptists of England than has this one. For more than thirty years the celebrated Joseph Angus was its president. He was a profound scholar, a forceful writer and a member of the Committee that Revised the New Testament. At the age of twenty-two he was pastor of the church honored by the ministrations of Dr. Gill and Rippon, and that was in later days to receive additional fame from the ministry of Charles H. Spurgeon. The work of Revision occupied much of his best thought and labor for ten years (1870-1880), and to the enthusiasm which so congenial a task inspired was added the delight of intercourse with scholars from almost every section of the religious community. He was always distinctively a Baptist

Besides Bristol and Midland Colleges, the foundation of which have already been mentioned, the Baptists of England have Rawdon College, A. D. 1804, the Pastors College, 1861, and Manchester College, 1866.

English Baptists have abounded in able authors. Note can be made of only two or three here. John Foster was a writer of essays. Sir James Mackintosh declares that he was "one of the most profound and eloquent writers that England has produced." Aubrey, in his "Rise of the English Nation" makes this reference to John Foster: "The *Eclectic Review* for a length of time swayed literary and political opinions; mainly through the splendid articles, nearly 200 in number, contributed by John Foster. His famous essays showed their author to be, according to Mackintosh, one of the most profound and eloquent writers that England has produced. His "Life and Correspondence" by Ryland ranks among the classics. No song book would be complete that did not contain "Blest be the tie," by John Fawcett; and "How Firm a Foundation," by George Keith.

The English Baptists have always had able, cultured and eloquent preachers. They have produced three of the greatest preachers of all time. Robert Hall has been pronounced the greatest preacher that ever used the English tongue. And no generation will forget Charles H. Spurgeon and Alexander Maclaren.