

A History of the Baptists

By John T. Christian

CHAPTER XXI THE ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES

THE exact date of the arrival of the first Baptists in America, and their names are uncertain. There are traces of immersion and the rejection of infant baptism at an early date. Governor Winslow wrote of the Baptists, in 1646, "We have some living among us, nay, some of our churches, of that judgment." Cotton Mather states that "many of the first settlers of Massachusetts were Baptists, and they were as holy and watchful and faithful and heavenly people as any, perhaps in the world" (Mather, *Magnalia*, II.459). He further says:

Some few of these people have been among the Planters in New England from the beginning, and have been welcome to the communion of our Churches, which they have enjoyed, reserving their particular opinions unto themselves. But at length it came to pass, that while *some* of our *churches* used it, it may be, a little too much of cogency towards their brethren, which would weakly turn their backs when *infants* were brought forth to be *baptized*, in the congregation there were some of these brethren who in a day of temptation broke forth into *schismatical practices*, that were justly offensive unto all of the churches in this wilderness (*Ibid*, II. 459. Hartford, 1820).

Speaking of these statements of Mather the Baptist historian Crosby says: "So that Antipaedobaptism is as ancient in those parts as Christianity itself" (Crosby, I. 111).

Baptist news were broached at Plymouth. Roger Williams came in 1631. He had attended the preaching of Samuel Howe, the Baptist preacher in London who practiced immersion. Williams himself paid a high tribute to Howe. It is not certain that Williams, at this time, had fully adopted Baptist principles. "When it is recollected," says Ivimey, "that so early as the year 1615, the Baptists in England pleaded for liberty of conscience as the right of all Christians, in their work entitled, 'Persecution judged and condemned:'-and this appears to have been the uniform sentiment of the denomination at large, and that Mr. Williams was very intimate with them at a very early period, which is evident from the manner in which he speaks of Mr. Samuel Howe of London: It is highly probably that these principles which rendered him such a blessing to America and the world were first maintained and

taught by the English Baptists (Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptists*, I.219, 220).

It is probable that Williams already believed in immersion and rejected infant baptism. In 1633 he was "already inclined to the opinions of the Anabaptists" (*Publications of the Narragansett Club*, I. 14). For on requesting his dismissal to Salem in the autumn of 1633, Elder Brewster persuaded the Plymouth Church to relinquish communion with him, lest he should "run the same course of rigid Separation and Anabaptistry which Mr. John Smith, the Se-Baptist of Amsterdam had done" (*Publications of the Narragansett Club*, I. 17). Anabaptism was a spectre which haunted the imaginations of the early American settlers. The word possessed a mysterious power of inspiring terror, and creating odium. It "can be made the symbol of all that is absurd and execrable, so that the very sound of it shall irritate the passions of the multitude, as dogs have been taught to bark, at the name of a neighboring tyrant."

William Gammell, after stating the immersion of Roger Williams, further says:

The very mention of the name of Anabaptism called up a train of phantoms, that never failed to excite the apprehensions of the early Puritans. Hence it was, that when Mr. Brewster suggested even the remotest association of Roger Williams with this heresy, the church at Plymouth was easily induced to grant the dismissal which he had requested. A considerable number of its members, however, who had become attached to his ministry were also dismissed at the same time, and removed with him to Salem (Gammell, *Life of Roger Williams*, 27. In *Sparks' American Biography*, IV).

There was an Anabaptist taint about Plymouth. There is therefore this singular circumstance that the Rev. Charles Chauncy, who was an Episcopal clergyman and brought with him the doctrine of immersion, made for Plymouth, Felt says he arrived "a few days before the great earthquake on the 1st of June," 1639.

The account of the disturbance on account of immersion is related by two governors who were eye witnesses. Governor Winthrop of the Colony of Massachusetts, under date of 1639, says:

Our neighbors of Plymouth had procured from hence, this year, one Mr. Chancey, a great scholar, and a godly man, intending to call him to the office of a teacher; but before the fit time came, he discovered his judgment about baptism, that the children ought to be dipped and not sprinkled; and, he being an active man, and very vehement, there arose much trouble about

it. The magistrates and the other elders there, and most of the people, withstood the receiving of that practice, not for itself so much, as for fear of worse consequences, as the annihilation of our baptism, &c. Whereupon the church there wrote to all the other churches, both here and in Connecticut, &c., for advice, and sent Mr. Chancey's arguments. The churches took them into consideration, and returned their several answers, wherein they showed their dissent from him, and clearly confuted all his arguments, discovering withal some great mistakes of his about the judgment and practice of antiquity (Winthrop, History of New England, I.390, 331).

Governor Bradford of Plymouth Colony took up the matter likewise and showed that not only Chauncy was an immersionist but that the whole of New England was agitated on the subject of immersion. Thus there is the record of two governors on the subject. Governor Bradford says:

I had forgotten to insert in its place how ye church here had invited and sent for Mr. Charles Chansey, a reverend, godly and very learned man, intending upon triall to chose him pastor of ye church hear, for ye more comfortable performance of ye ministrie with Mr. John Reinor, the teacher of ye same. But ther fell out some difference aboute baptising. he holding that it ought only to be by dipping, and putting ye whole body under water, and that sprinkling was unlawfull. The church yeelded that immersion, or dipping, was lawfull, but in this could countrie not so conveniente. But they could not nor drust not yeeld to him in this, that sprinkling (which all ye churches of Christ doe for ye most Parte at this day) was unlawfull & humane invention, as ye same was prest; but they were willing to yeel to him as far as they could, & to the utmost; and were contented to suffer him to practise as he was perswaded; and when he came to minister that ordinance he might so doe it to any yt did desire it in yt way, provided he could peacably suffer Mr. Reinor, and such as desired to have theirs otherwise baptized by him, by sprinkling or powering on of water upon them; so ther might be no disturbance in ye church hereabout. But he said be could not yeeld hereunto. Upon which the church procured some other ministers to dispute ye pointe with him publickly; as Mr. Ralfe Patrick, of Duxberie, allso some other ministers within this governmente. But he was not satisfied; so ye church sent to many other churches to crave their help and advise in this matter, and with his will & consente, sent them his arguments written under his owne hand. They sente them to ye church at Boston in ye Bay of Massachusetts, to be communicated with other churches ther. Also they sent the same to ye churches of Conightecutt and New-Haven, with sundrie others; and received very able & sufficient answers, as they conceived, from them and their larned ministers, who all concluded against him. But himself was not satisfied therwth. Their answers are too large hear to relate. They conceived ye church had done what was meete in ye things, so Mr. Chansey

having been ye most parte 3 years here, removed himself to Sityate, wher he now remaines a minister to ye church ther (Bradford, Of Plimoth Plantation, 382, 384).

This was the first debate on the American continent on the subject of immersion. This was possibly before there was a Baptist church in this country, certainly before there was more than one, namely, the First Providence. The whole of New England was agitated on the subject of immersion.

The Church at Boston and other churches returned answers (Bradford, History of New England, I.). As much as Chauncy was admired at Plymouth the church did not employ him on account of his views on the subject of immersion. This is set forth by Hooker in a letter to his son-in-law, Shepherd, November 2, 1640. He says:

I have of late had intelligence from Plymouth. Mr. Chauncy and the church are to part, he to provide for himself, and they for themselves. At the day of fast, when a full conclusion of the business should have been made, he openly professed he did as verily believe the truth of his opinion as that there was a God in heaven, and that he was as settled in it as that the earth was upon the center. If such confidence find success I miss my mark. Mr. Humphrey, I hear, invites him to providence, and that coast is most meet for his opinions and practice (Felt, Ecclesiastical History, I. 443).

It will be seen from this letter of Hooker's that Mr. Chauncy was invited on leaving Plymouth to go to Providence, for "that coast is most meet for his opinions and practice." That is to say the Providence men believed in immersion. It cannot mean anything else since Chauncy still believed in infant baptism. This is perfectly plain for Felt says of Chauncy, July 7, 1642:

Chauncy at Scituate still adheres to his practice of immersion. He has baptized two of his own children in this way. A women of his congregation who had a child of three years old, and wished it to receive such an ordinance, was fearful that it might be too much frightened by being dipped as some had been. She desired a letter from him, recommending her to the Boston church, so that she might have the child sprinkled. He complied and the rite was accordingly administered (Felt, Ecclesiastical History, I. 497. See also Winthrop, History of New England, 11.72).

So there was no difference between the Providence men and Chauncy on the form of baptism. So Chauncy settled at Scituate. But the practice of dipping had long been known in that town. In 1684 after Spilsbury had drawn out of the Jacob Church, in London, and he was in the practice of dipping, Lathrop,

then pastor of that church and some of his followers, removed from London, and settled at Scituate, Massachusetts. Even after the removal the old question of immersion would not dawn. Deane, who was an able historian and editor of the publications of the Massachusetts Historical Society, says:

Controversy respecting the mode of baptism had been agitated in Mr. Lathrop's church before he left England, and a part had separated from him, and established the first Baptist (Calvinistic) church in England in 1633. Those that came seem not all to have been settled on this point, and they found others in Scituate ready to sympathize with them.

Lathrop remained in Scituate till 1639. The immersion trouble still pursued him, and in 1639 he and the portion of the church that practiced sprinkling, who were in the minority, removed to Barnstable. Deane further says that a majority of those left in Scituate believed in immersion, but "nearly half the church were resolute in not submitting to that mode." One party "held to infant sprinkling; another to adult immersion exclusively; and a third, of which was Mr. Chauncy, to immersion of infants as well as adults." So when Chauncy came to Scituate he found a people of his own mode of thinking.

Dr. Henry S. Burrage asks:

How came Mr. Chauncy to hold such an opinion, if immersion was unknown among the Baptists of England until 1641? And certainly if Mr. Chauncy in 1638 rejected sprinkling and insisted upon immersion as scriptural baptism, why may not Roger Williams and his associates at Providence have done the same in the following year? [or the year before].

Not only did all the churches consider and respond to the appeal of the Plymouth church to its position on the question of immersion, but almost every man who could wield a pen, seems to have used it against the prevailing Anabaptist errors. John Lathrop, in 1644, published "A Short Form of Catechisme of the Doctrine of Baptisme. In use in these Times that are so full of Questions". In the same year, Thomas Sheppard went to press, urged by the "increase of the Anabaptists, rigid Separatists, Antinomians and Familists." In 1645, George Phillips, of Watertown; in 1647, John Cotton of Boston and Nathaniel Ward of Ipswich; in 1648, Thomas Cobbett, of Lynn; and in 1649, Thomas Hooker, all published treatises dealing with the question of baptism and its proper candidates, and aimed at the Anabaptists, in which the severest epithets were employed. And these are but samples which have been preserved of a vigorous literature, called forth by the supposed exigencies of the times" (King, *The Baptism of Roger Williams*, 52. Providence, 189?).

In 1654 Chauncy was elected President of Harvard University. Consistent with his former position, he still held to immersion. Pierce, the historian of Harvard, says:

The town to which President Dunster retired after his resignation had the singular fortune to supply the college with a successor in the person of the Rev. Charles Chauncy. He "was of the contrary extreme as to baptism from his predecessor; it being his judgment not only to admit infants to baptism, but to wash or dip them all over" (Pierce, History of Harvard University, 18. Cambridge, 1833).

The third pastor of Scituate was Henry Dunster. He was the first President of Harvard. He came to America in 1640 and was immediately elected President of the College. Hubbard says of him:

Under whom, that which was before but at best schola *illustra*, grew to the stature and perfection of a College, and flourished in the profusion of all liberal sciences for many years.

And Prince says:

For a further improvement it (The New England Psalm Book) was committed to the Rev. Mr. Henry Dunster, president of Harvard College; one of the great masters of the oriental languages, that hath been known in these ends of the earth (Prince, Preface to New England Psalm Book).

He had brought the College to the highest standard of usefulness. He was present in Boston at the trial of Clarke, Holmes and Crandall for worshipping God. He had long had scruples on the subject of infant baptism and now he was convinced that it was wrong. He boldly preached against the same in the church at Cambridge. This greatly frustrated Mr. Jonathan Mitchell, the pastor of the church. He said:

I had a strange experience; I found hurrying and pressing suggestions against Pedobaptism, and injected scruples and thoughts whether the other way might not be right, and infant baptism an invention of men, and whether I might with good conscience baptize children, and the like. And these thoughts were darted in with some impression, and left a strange confusion and sickness upon my spirit (Mitchell's Life, 69,70).

This action against infant baptism, in 1653, forced his resignation as President of Harvard, Quincy, the historian of Harvard, says:

Dunster's usefulness however was deemed to be at an end and his services no longer desirable, In consequence of his falling in 1653, as Cotton Mather expresses it, "into the briars of anti-paedobaptism," and of having borne "public testimony in the church at Cambridge against the administration of baptism to any infant whatever". . . Indicted by the grand jury for disturbing the ordinance of infant baptism on the Cambridge church, sentenced to a public admonition on lecture day, and laid under bonds for good behaviour, Dunster's martyrdom was consummated by being compelled in October, 1654, to resign his office as President (Quincy, History of Harvard University, I, 15-18).

He now goes to Scituate as pastor and Chauncy went to Harvard as President. Thus did Baptist sentiments prevail. The opposition was strongest against their views of infant sprinkling.

Hanserd Knollys arrived in Boston, in 1638, and in a brief time moved to Dover, then called Piscataway, New Hampshire. There has been much dispute as to whether he was at the time a Baptist. He died September 19, 1691. On his return to England in 1641 he was certainly a Baptist. Mather, who was a contemporary, and evidently acquainted with his opinions in America says he was a Baptist. He says:

I confess there were some of these persons whose names deserve to live in our book for their *piety*, although their particular *opinions* were such as to be disserviceable unto the declared and supposed interests of our churches. Of these there were some godly Anabaptists; as namely Mr. Hanserd Knollys (whom one of his adversaries called *Absurd Knowles*), of Dover, who afterwards moved back to London, lately died there a good man, In a good old age (Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, I. 243. Hartford, 1855).

However that is he was apparently pastor of a mired congregation of Pedobaptists and Baptists at Dover. There was nothing strange about this for even Isaac Backus, the Baptist historian, was once pastor of such a church before he became a regular Baptist. There was soon in the church a disturbance on the subject of infant baptism. Mr. Leckford, an Episcopalian, visited Dover in April, 1641, and he describes a controversy between Mr. Knollys and a ministerial opponent about baptism and church membership. "They two," says he, "fell out about baptizing children, receiving of members, etc." The Baptists, taught by Knollys, in order to escape persecution removed, in 1641, to Long Island. After Long Island fell into the power of the Episcopalians they moved again to New Jersey and called their third home Piscataway. This has long been a flourishing Baptist church.

Manifestly the Anabaptist peril was regarded as great so the General Court of Massachusetts, March 3, 1636, ordered:

That all persons are to take notice that this Court doth not, nor will hereafter, approve of any such companies of men as shall henceforth join in say pretended way of church fellowship, without they shall first acquaint the magistrate and the elders of the greater part of the churches in this jurisdiction with their intentions, and have their approbation therein. And further it is ordered, that no person being a member of any such church which shall hereafter be gathered without the approbation or the magistrates and the greater part of the said churches, shall be admitted to the freedom of this commonwealth (Massachusetts Records).

In 1639, it seems, there was an attempt to found a Baptist church at Weymouth, a town about fourteen miles southeast of Boston. This was frustrated by interposing magistrates. The crime charged was:

That only baptism was the door of entrance into the visible church; the common sort of people did eagerly embrace his opinion (Lenthal), and labored to get such a church on foot, as all baptised ones might communicate in, without any further trial of them (Massachusetts Records).

John Smith, John Spur, Richard Sylvester, Ambrose Morton, Thomas Makepeace, and Robert Lenthal, were the principal promoters of the design. They were all arraigned before the General Court at Boston, March 13, 1639, where the most of them were fined (Benedict, History of the Baptists, I.356. Boston, 1813).

The same year in which Mr. Chauncy came over, a female of considerable distinction, whom Governor Winthrop calls Lady Moody, and who, according to the account of that statesman and historian, was a wise, amiable, and religious woman, "was taken with the error of denying baptism to infants" (Winthrop, II. 123, 124). She had purchased a plantation at Lynn, ten miles Northeast of Boston, of one Humphrey, who had returned to England. She belonged to the church in Salem, to which she was near, where she was dealt with by many of the elders and others; but persisting in her error, and to escape the storm which she saw gathering over her head, she removed to Long Island and settled among the Dutch. "Many others infested with Anabaptism removed thither also." Eleven years after Mrs. Moody's removal (1651), Messrs. Clarke, Holmes, and Crandall, went to visit some Baptists at Lynn, by the request of an aged brother. This circumstance makes it probable, that although many Anabaptists went off with this lady, yet there were some left behind (Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination, I. 358).

In 1644, we are informed by Mr. Hubbard, that "a poor man, by the name of Painter, was suddenly turned Anabaptist, and having a child born would not suffer his wife to carry it to be baptized. He was complained of for this to the court, and enjoined by them to suffer his child to be baptized. But poor Painter had the misfortune to dissent from the church and the court. He told them that infant baptism was an antichristian ordinance, for which he was tied up and whipt. He bore his chastisement with fortitude, and declared that he had divine help to support him. The same author who records this narrative, intimates that this poor sufferer, "was a man of very loose behavior at home." This accusation was altogether a matter of course; it need no further facts to substantiate it; for was it possible for a poor Anabaptist to be a holy man? Governor Winthrop tells us he belonged to Hingham, and says he was whipt "for reproaching the Lord's ordinance" (Winthrop, II. 174, 175). Upon which Mr Backus judicially enquires: "Did not they who whipped this poor, conscientious man, reproach infant sprinkling, by taking such methods to support it, more than Painter did?" (Backus, I. 857, 358).

By this time Winthrop tells us the "Anabaptists increased and spread in Massachusetts" (Winthrop, II. 174). This is confirmed in many ways.

Thomas Hooker of Connecticut wrote to Thomas Sheppard of Cambridge as follows:

I like those Anabaptists and their opinion every day worse than the other. . . unlesse you be very watchful you will have an army in the field before you know how to prepare or to oppose.

When John Wilson, the colleague of John Cotton, was near his end, he was asked for what sins the land had been visited by God's judgments, and his answer was, "Separatism, Ana-baptism and Korahism."

Persecutions had begun against the Baptists in 1635, and were inflicted subsequently in the name of the law in many places, in Dorchester, Weymouth, Rehobeth, Salem, Watertown, Hingham, Dover, N. H., and Swampscott. So numerous were the offenders that on November 13, 1644, the General Court, passed a law for the Suppression of the Baptists. The law was as follows:

Forasmuch as experience hath plentifully and often proved, that since the first rising of the Anabaptists, about one hundred years since, they have been the incendiaries of the commonwealths, and the infectors of persons in main matters of religion, and the troublers of churches in all places when they have been, and that they who have held the baptizing of infants

unlawful, have usually held other errors or heresies together therewith, though they have (as other heretics use to do) concealed the same till they spied out a fit advantage and opportunity to vent them, by way of question or scruple; and whereas divers of this kind have since our coming into New England appeared amongst ourselves, some whereof (as others before them) denied the ordinance of magistracy, and the lawfulness of making war, and others the lawfulness of magistrates, and their inspection into any breach of the first table; which opinions, if they should be connived at by us, are like to be increased amongst us, and so must necessarily bring guilt upon us, Infection and trouble to the churches, and hazard to the whole commonwealth; it is ordered and agreed, that if any person or persons, within this jurisdiction, shall either openly condemn or oppose the baptizing of infants, or go about secretly to seduce others from the approbation or use thereof, or shall purposely depart the congregation at the ministration of the ordinance, or shall deny the ordinance of magistracy, or their lawful right and authority to make war, or to punish the outward breaches of the first table, and shall appear to the court willfully and obstinately to continue therein after due time and means of conviction, every such person or persons shall be sentenced to banishment (Backus, History of the Baptists In New England, I.359, 860)

Speaking of this law, Hubbard, one of their own historians says:

But with what success is hard to say; all men being naturally inclined to pity them that suffer, how much soever they are incensed against offenders in general. Natural conscience and the reverence of a Deity, that is deeply engraven on the hearts of all, make men more apt to favor them that suffer for religion, true or false (Massachusetts Record's, 373).

The next year in March an effort was made at a General Court "for suspending (if not abolishing) a law against the Anabaptists the former year." It did not prevail for "some were much afraid of the increase of Anabaptism. This was the reason why the greater part prevailed for the strict observation of the aforesaid laws, although peradventure a little moderation as to some cases might have done very well, if not better."

Roger Williams was born about the year 1600. He was educated in the University of Cambridge under the patronage of the celebrated jurist, Sir Edward Coke. He was sorely persecuted by Archbishop Laud, and on that account he fled to America. He arrived in Boston, February, 1681. He was immediately invited to become pastor of that church, but he found that it was "an unseparated church" and he "durst not officiate to" it The Salem church extended him an invitation to become pastor, but he was prevented from remaining in that charge by a remonstrance from Governor Bradford.

He was gladly received at Plymouth, but he gave "vent... to divers of his own singular opinions," and he sought "to impose them upon others."

Hence he returned to Salem in the Summer of 1683 with a number of persons who sympathized with his views; and in 1684 he became pastor of that church. There had already been a good deal of discussion on certain phases of infant baptism. He was finally banished from that colony in January, 1686. His radical tenets demanded the separation of the church and state, and that doctrine was unwholesome in Salem.

After many adventures in passing through the trackless forests in the midst of a terrific New England winter, he arrived in Providence with five others, in June of the same year. In 1688 many Massachusetts Christians who had adopted Baptist views, and finding themselves subjected to persecution on that account, moved to Providence (Winthrop, *A History of New England*, I.269). Most of these had been connected with Williams in Massachusetts and some of them were probably Baptists in England. Williams was himself well acquainted with Baptist views, and had already expounded soul liberty. Winthrop attributed Williams' Baptist views to Mrs. Scott, a sister of Ann Hutchinson. Williams was acquainted with the General Baptist view of a proper administrator of baptism, namely that two believers had the right to begin baptism. On his adoption of Baptist views, previous to March, 1639 (Winthrop says in 1638, I. 293), Williams was baptized by Ezekiel Holliman, and in turn Williams baptized Holliman and some ten others. At this time there was not a Baptist preacher in America unless Hanserd Knollys was such a man.

The form of baptism on the occasion was immersion (Newman, *A History of Baptist Churches in the United States*, 80. New York, 1894). In a footnote Dr. Newman says:

Contemporary testimony is unanimous in favor of the view that immersion was practiced by Williams. As the fact is generally conceded, It does not seem worth while to quote the evidence.

That evidence is clear and explicit. Reference has already been made to the immersion views of Chauncy, and that on November 2, 1640, at Providence, "that coast is most meet for his opinion and practice."

In the person of Richard Scott there was an eye witness of the baptism of Roger Williams. He was also a Baptist at the time. He says:

I walked with him in the Baptists' way about three or four months, in which time he brake from the society, and declared at large the ground and reason

of it; that their baptism could not be right because it was not administered by an apostle. After that he set about a way of seeking (with two or three of them that had dissented with him) by way of preaching and praying; and there he continued a year or two, till two of the three left him (Scott, Letter in George Fox's answer to Williams. Backus, History of the Baptists of New England, 1.88).

This was written thirty-eight years after the baptism of Williams. Scott had turned Quaker. There is no question that the "Baptists' way" was immersion; and there is no intimation that the Baptists had ever changed their method of baptizing.

There was another contemporary witness in the person of William Coddington. He had likewise turned Quaker and could not say too many things against Williams. In 1677 he wrote to his friend Fox, the Quaker, as follows:

I have known him about fifty years; a mere weathercock; constant only in inconsistency; poor man, that doth not know what should become of his soul, if this night it should be taken from him. . One time for water baptism, men and women must be plunged into the water (Backus, History of the Baptists of New England, I. 333).

The testimony of Williams to the form of baptism is singularly clear. He declares that it is an immersion. In a tract which for a long time was supposed to be lost, "Christenings Make not Christians," 1645, he says:

Thirdly, for our *New-England* parts, I can speake uprightly and confidently, I know it to have been easie for myselfe, long ere this, to have brought many thousand. of these Natives (the Indians), yea the whole country, to a far greater Antichristian conversion then was ever yet heard of in *America*. I have reported something in the Chapter of their *Religion*, how readily I could have brought the whole Country to have observed one day in seven; I adde to have received a *Baptisme* (or washing) though it were in *Rivers* (as The first *Christians* and the Lord Jesus himselfe did) to have come to a *stated* church *meeting*, maintained priests and forms of prayer, and the whole forme of antichristian worship in life and death (p.11).

In a letter which is found among the Winthrop papers, dated Narragansett, November 10, 1649, Williams says:

At Seekonk a great many have lately concurred with Mr. John Clark and our Providence men about the point of new baptism, and the manner by dipping, and Mr. John Clark hath been there lately, (and Mr. Lucar), and hath dipped

them. I believe their practice comes nearer the first practice of the great Founder Christ Jesus, than any other practices of religion do (Publications of the Narragansett Club).

A great many Baptist writers could be quoted to prove that Williams practiced immersion, A statement from a few Pedobaptist writers is sufficient.

Joseph B. Felt says:

Having become an Anabaptist, through the influence of a sister to Mrs. Hutchinson and wife to Richard Scott, he went to live at Providence the preceding year, Williams, as stated by Winthrop, was lately immersed. The person who performed this rite was Ezekiel Holliman, who had gone to reside there from Salem. Williams then did the same for him and ten others, and thus they formed a church (Felt, Ecclesiastical History of New England, 1.402).

Professor George r. Fisher, Yale University, says:

At Providence, in 1639, a layman named Holliman baptized him by immersion, and then Williams in turn baptized Holliman, and "some ten more." This was not a strange step, for Roger Williams had been anticipated in his favorite tenet of "soul liberty" by the Baptists, who were pioneers in the assertion of the doctrine of religious freedom (Fisher, History of the Christian Church, 472).

Professor Fisher further says:

In 1638 Williams was immersed by an Anabaptist named Holliman and ten others. There was thus constituted the first Baptist church In America (Fisher, The Colonial Era, 123).

Dr. Philip Schaff says:

In 1638 he became a Baptist; he was immersed by Ezekiel Holliman and in turn immersed Holliman and ten others (Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, 1.851).

The act of baptism by immersion never seemed to trouble Williams. He had doubts in regard to any authorized administrator of baptism on account of the corruption in the world, there being no valid church. He continued only three or four months in connection with the Providence church, and then he

departed from them and turned Seeker. Under this point Governor Winthrop, under date of June or July, 1639, says:

At Providence, matters went on after the old manner. Mr. Williams and many of his company, a few months since, were in all haste rebaptized. and denied communion with all others, and now he has come to question his second baptism, not being able to derive the authority of it from the apostles, otherwise than by the ministers of England, (whom he judged to be ill authority) so as he conceived God would raise up some apostolic power. Therefore he bent himself that way, expecting (as was supposed) to become an apostle; and having a little before, refused communion with all, save his own wife, now he would preach to and pray with all comers. Whereupon some of his followers left him and returned back from whence they went (Winthrop, I. 307).

Having been an Episcopalian, apostolic succession was the rock upon which he split. Cotton Mather says of him:

Upon the sentiment of the court, Mr. Williams with his party going abroad (as one says) to "seek their providences," removed into the Southern part of New England, where he, with a few of his own sect, settled a place called Providence. Then they proceeded not only into the *gathering* of a thing like a church, but into the renouncing of their *infant-baptism*; and at this further step, of *separation* they stopped not, but Mr. Williams quickly told them, "that being himself misled, he had led them likewise out or the way," he was now satisfied that there was none upon earth that could administer baptism, and so that their *last* baptism, as well as their *first*, was a nullity, (or the want of a *called adminiatrator*; he advised them thereupon to *forego* all, to *dislike* everything, and wait for the coming of a new apostle: whereupon they dissolved themselves, and became that sort of sect that we term Seekers, &c. (Mather, Magnalia, 1.498).

A very curious sidelight is thrown on this subject by Hornins, a contemporary writer of Holland. There was a very close religious and political relation between Holland, England and American at this time. This Dutch writer (Georgil Hornii, Historia Eccies, Ludg. Bat., 1665, p.267) directly mentions Roger Williams, and traces the origin of "the Seekers" to America. As to the English Baptists, he bears a testimony of which their descendants need not be ashamed He says: "That of the Anabaptists there were two classes. The first holding the Free Will and a community of goods, and denying the lawfulness of magistracy and infant baptism. Of these there were at that time in England few or none. The second class were orthodox in all but their denial of infant baptism."

As a matter of fact, he remained a Baptist in principle all of his life. Mather says "The church came to nothing." On this point there has been much debate, and the authorities are divided. The church has no records for more than one hundred years after 1639, they being probably burned in King Philip's War, and its history on this account is incomplete. Benedict admits that "the more I study on this subject, the more I am unsettled and confused" (Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America*, 443. See King, *The Mother Church in America*, 1896). It is a matter, however, of no particular moment to the general historian. Nothing depends on it. In any event, the Baptists of America did not derive their origin from Roger Williams. Benedict (p. 364) mentions the names of fifty-five Baptist churches, including the year 1750, in America, not one of which came out of the Providence church.

"From the earliest period of our colonial settlements," says J. P. Tustin, "multitudes of Baptist ministers and members came from Europe, and settled in different parts of this continent, each becoming the center of an independent circle wherever they planted themselves" (Tustin, *A Discourse delivered at the Dedication of the Baptist Church and Society in Warren, R. I.*, 38). Mr. Tustin continues: "It is a fact generally known, that many of the Baptist churches in this country derived their origin from the Baptist churches in Wales, a country which has always been a nursery for their peculiar principles. In the earlier settlements of this country, multitudes of Welsh emigrants, who left their fatherland, brought with them the seeds of Baptist principles, and their ministers and members laid the foundation of many Baptist Churches in New England, and especially in the middle states." The churches, therefore in this country, were for the most part made up of members directly from England and Wales.

James D. Knowles (*Memoir of Roger Williams*, 169 note. Boston, 1834), has raised this question and answered it as follows:

The question which has been asked, with some emphasis, as if it vitally affected the Baptist churches in this country; "By whom was Roger Williams baptized?" has no practical importance. All whom he immersed were, as Pedobaptists must admit, baptized. The great family of Baptists in this country did not spring from the First Church in Providence. Many Baptist ministers and members came, at an early period, from Europe, and thus churches were formed in different parts of the country, which have since multiplied over the land. The first Baptist church formed in the present State of Massachusetts, is the church at Swansea. Its origin is dated in 1663, when the Rev. John Myles came from Wales, with a number of the members, of a Baptist church, who brought with them its records. Of the 400,000 communicants now in the United States, a small fraction only have had any

connection, either immediate or remote, with the venerable church at Providence, though her members are numerous, and she has been honored as the mother of many ministers.

This was the beginning of the settlement of Rhode Island. The first declaration of democracy, in America, was here formulated March, 1641. The Author of the History of American Literature says:

It was ordered and unanimously agreed upon, that the government which this body politic doth attend unto in this island and the jurisdiction thereof, in favor of our prince, is a Democracy, or popular government; that is to say, it is in the power of the body of freemen, orderly assembled, or major part of them, to make or constitute just laws, by which they will be regulated, and to despute from among themselves such ministers as shall see them faithfully executed between man and man.

And the following acts secured religious liberty there:

It was further ordered, by the authority of this present Court, that none be accounted a delinquent for doctrine, provided, it be not directly repugnant to the government or laws established

On September, 1641, it was ordered:

That the law of the last Court made concerning liberty of conscience in point of doctrine, be perpetuated.

It was decreed at Providence, in 1641, that since:

Our charter gives us power to govern ourselves, and such other as come among us, and by such a form of civil government as by the voluntary consent, etc., shall be found most suitable to our estate and condition: It is agreed by this present Assembly thus incorporate, and by this present act declared, that the form of government established in Providence Plantations is Democratical; that is to say, a government held by the free and voluntary consent of all of the greater part of the free inhabitants (Rhode Island State Papers).

The state was not to dictate to or disturb the church. In the charter the word "civil" everywhere defines the jurisdiction of the Court. Religion and the State were divorced, Arnold says:

The use of the word civil is everywhere prefixed (to the charter) to the terms "government" or "laws" wherever they occur... to restrict the operation of

the charter to purely political concerns. In this apparent restriction there lay concealed a boon of freedom such as men had never known before. They (the Rhode Islanders) held themselves accountable to God alone for their religious creed, and no earthly power could bestow on them a right which they held from heaven. . . At their own request their powers were limited to civil matters (Arnold, History of Rhode Island, I 200).

Hough, commenting upon the provisions of the charter of Rhode Island, says:

This broad and liberal grant of liberty of opinion in matters of religions faith is among the earliest examples of that toleration which now prevails in every state in the American Union but at the time it was asked and obtained, it formed a striking and honorable contrast with the custom and laws of the neighboring colonies (Hough, American Constitutions, II. 246. Lauer, Church and State in New England, 48. Tenth Series, II., III. Johns Hopkins University Studies. Baltimore, 1892).

The service that the Baptists have rendered to the world in bringing religions liberty to this continent has been fully acknowledged by the greatest authorities in the world. Only the statements of a few representative men are here given.

Bancroft, the historian of the United States, says of Williams:

He was the first person in modern Christendom to assert in its plenitude the doctrine of the liberty of conscience, the equality of opinions before the law... Williams would permit persecutions of no opinion, of no religion, leaving heresy unharmed by law, and orthodoxy unprotected by the terrors of penal statutes, ... We praise the man who first analyzed the air, or resolved water into its elements, or drew the lightning from the clouds; even though the discoveries may have been as much the fruits of time as of genius. A moral principle has a much wider and nearer influence on human happiness; nor can any discovery of truth be of more direct benefit to society, than that which establishes a perpetual religions peace, and spreads tranquillity through every community and every bosom. If Copernicus is held in perpetual reverence, because, on his deathbed, he published to the world that the sun is the center of our system; if the name of Kepler is preserved in the annals of human excellence for his sagacity in detecting the laws of the planetary motion; if the genius of Newton has been almost adored for dissecting a ray of light, and weighing heavenly bodies in the balance-let there be for the name of Roger Williams at least some humble place among those who have advanced moral science, and made themselves the benefactors of mankind (Bancroft, History of the United States, 1. 375-377).

Judge Story, the eminent lawyer, says:

In the code of laws established by them in Rhode Island, we read for the first time since Christianity ascended the throne of the Caesars, the declaration that conscience should be free, and that men should not be punished for worshipping God in the way they were persuaded he requires.

The German Philosopher, Gervinus, says:

In accordance with these principles, Roger Williams insisted, in Massachusetts, upon allowing entire freedom of conscience, and upon entire separation of the Church and State. But he was obligated to flee, and in 1636, he formed in Rhode Island, a small and new society, in which perfect freedom in matters of faith was allowed, and in which the majority ruled in all the civil affairs. Here, in a little state, the fundamental principles of political and ecclesiastical liberty practically prevailed, before they were ever taught in any of the schools of philosophy in Europe. At that time people predicted only a short existence for these democratical experiments- Universal suffrage: universal eligibility to office; the annual change of rulers ; perfect religious freedom-the Miltonian doctrine of schisms. But not only have these ideas and these forms of government maintained themselves here, but precisely from this little State, have they extended themselves throughout the United States. They have conquered the aristocratic tendencies in Carolina and New York, the High Church in Virginia, the Theocracy in Massachusetts, and the monarchy in all America. They have given laws to a continent, and formidable through their moral influence, they lie at the bottom of all the democratic movements which are now shaking the nations of Europe (Gervinus, History of the Nineteenth Century. Introduction).

He not only sought liberty for his own people, but to all persons alike. Hitherto the Jews had been proscribed, He especially plead for them. No persons have more fully recognized the worth of religious liberty than have the Jews; and they have paid eloquent tribute to his memory, In this direction Straus says:

The earliest champion of religious freedom, or "soul liberty," as he designated that most precious jewel of all liberties, was Roger Williams....To him rightfully belongs the immortal fame of having been the first person in modern times to assert and maintain in its fullest plenitude the absolute right of every man to "a full liberty in religions concernments," and to found a State wherein this doctrine was the key-stone of its organic laws (Straus, Origin of Republican Form of Government in the United States, 47-50, New York, 1885. See Religious Liberty of Henry M. King, 1903).

It is now time to return to the persecutions of the Baptists in the other colonies. Note has already been taken of the activity of the Massachusetts colony against the Baptists, and the persecuting laws that they passed and executed. On October 18, 1649, this Colony urged drastic measures against the Baptists of Plymouth. The General Court wrote to the Plymouth brethren as follows:

Honored and beloved Brethren We have heard heretofore of divers Anabaptists arisen up in your jurisdiction, and connived at: but being but few, we well hoped that it might have pleased God, by the endeavors of yourselves and the faithful elders with you, to have reduced such erring men again into the right way. But now, to our great grief, we are credibly informed that your patient bearing with such men hath produced another effect, namely, the multiplying and increasing of such errors, and we fear may be of other errors also, if timely care be not taken to suppress the same. Particularly we understand that within this few weeks there have been at Sea Cunko thirteen or fourteen persons rebaptized (a swift progress in one town), yet we hear not if any effectual restriction is intended thereabouts (Massachusetts Colonial Records, III. 173).

This Sea Cunko (now Swansea and Rehoboth), was to be the location of the third Baptist church in America, under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Myles.

The persecuting spirit of Massachusetts was soon further put to the test. John Clarke was the pastor of the Newport Baptist church, founded somewhere between 1638 and 1644. This John Clarke was the father of American Baptists. He had much to do, in connection with Roger Williams, with procuring the second charter of Rhode Island in 1668. There was at Lynn, Massachusetts, an aged disciple by the name of William Witter. He had been cut off from the Salem church, June 24, 1651, "for absenting himself from public ordinances nine months or more and for being rebaptized" (Felt, Ecclesiastical History of New England. II. 25-46). He had previously become a member of the church in Newport. On July 19, 1651, John Clarke, Obadiah Holmes and John Crandall, "being the representatives of the Baptist church in Newport, upon the request of William Witter, of Lynn, arrived there, he being a brother in the church. who, by reason of his advanced age, could not undertake so great a journey as to visit the church" (Newport Church Papers).

While they were expounding the Scriptures they were arrested by two constables. They were watched over that "night (in the ordinary) as Thieves and Robbers," by the officers, and on the second day they were lodged in the common jail in Boston. On July 31 they were brought to public trial in

Boston, without trial by jury and at the will of the magistrates. Governor Endicott charged them with being Anabaptists. Clarke replied he was "neither an Anabaptist, nor a Pedobaptist, nor a Catabaptist." At this reply the Governor stepped up:

And told us we denied infant baptism, and being somewhat transported, told me I had deserved death, and said he would not have such trash brought into his jurisdiction. Moreover he said, You go up and down and secretly insinuate into those that are weak, but you cannot maintain it before our ministers. You may try and dispute with them (Clarke, Narrative).

Clark was about to make reply when he was remanded to prison. Holmes says:

What they laid to my charge, you may here read in my sentence, upon the pronouncement of which, as I went from the bar, I expressed myself in these words:- I bless God, I am counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. Whereupon John Wilson (their pastor, as they call him) struck me before the judgment seat, and cursed me, saying, The curse of God or Jesus go with thee (Backus, History of the Baptists in New England, I.189).

From the prison Clarke accepted the proposition to debate the subjects involved and suggested by the Governor (Massachusetts Archives, X. 212). It was supposed that John Cotton would represent the ministers. But the Governor allowed the debate to come to naught, though he had proposed it. Clarke and Crandall were not long afterward released "upon the payment of their fines by some tender-hearted friends" without their consent and contrary to their judgment. Holmes not accepting the deliverance was publicly whipped. He said:

The man striking with all his strength (yea spitting in (on) his hands three times as many affirmed) with a three corded whip, giving me therewith thirty strokes. When he had loosed me from the post, having joyfulness in my heart, and cheerfulness in my countenance, as the spectators observed, I told the magistrates, You have struck me as with roses (Backus, I.192),

The whipping was so severe that Governor Jenekes says:

Mr. Holmes was whipt thirty stripes, and in such an unmerciful manner, that in many days, if not some weeks, he could take no rest, but as he lay on his knees and elbows, not being able to suffer any part of his body to touch the bed whereon he lay (See Summer Visit of Three Rhode Islanders, by Henry M. King, 1890).

The trial and whipping of Holmes was the occasion of the conversion of Henry Dunster, the President of Harvard, to the Baptists. The immediate cause of the organization of the church in Boston was a sermon Dunster preached there on the subject of infant baptism. The church was much delayed in its organization, but this finally took place May 28, 1665. The magistrates required them to attend the Established Church. The General Court disfranchised them and committed them to prison, and pursued them with fines and imprisonments for three years (Backus, I. 300). In May, 1668, the General Court sentenced Thomas Gould, William Turner, and John Farnum to be banished; and because they would not go, they were imprisoned nearly a year; and when petition for a release of the prisoners was presented to the General Court, some who signed the petition were fined for doing so, and others were compelled to confess their fault for reflecting on the Court.

The complete separation of Church and State was not guaranteed by the Constitution of Massachusetts until 1833.

Virginia was the great battle ground for religious freedom. The Colony was founded by members of the Church of England, and none others were tolerated in its jurisdiction. The charter, 1606, provided:

The presidents, councils and ministers should provide that the true word and service of God should be preached and used according to the rites and doctrines of the Church of England.

The bloody military code of 1611, the first published for the government of the Colony, required every man and woman in the Colony, or who should afterwards arrive, to give an account of their faith and religion to the parish minister, and if not satisfactory to him, they should repair often to him for instruction; and if they refuse to go, the Governor should whip the offender for the first offense; for the second refusal to be whipped twice and to acknowledge his fault on the Sabbath day in the congregation; and for the third offense to be whipped every day till he complied (Howell, Early Baptists of Virginia, 38. Laws, &c., Strasbury. London, 1812).

The tyrannical Sir W. Berkeley had passed, December 14, 1662, the following law:

Whereas many schismatical persons out of their averseness to the orthodox established religion, or out of new fangled conceits of their own heretical inventions, refused to have their children baptized. Be it therefore enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that all persons that, in contempt of the divine sacrament of baptism, shall refuse when they may carry their child to a

lawful minister in that country to have them baptized shall be amerced two thousand pounds of tobacco, half to the publique (Henning, Statutes at Large, Laws of Virginia, II. 165).

These statutes were put into execution. The Baptists were democrats from principle and naturally did not love the Establishment. Hawks, the historian of the Episcopal Church of Virginia, says:

No dissenters in Virginia experienced, for a time, harsher treatment than did the Baptists. They were beaten and imprisoned; and cruelty taxed its ingenuity to devise new modes of punishment and annoyance. The usual consequences followed; persecution made friends for its victims; and the men, who were not permitted to speak in public, found willing auditors in the sympathizing crowds who gathered around the prisons to hear them preach from grated windows (Hawks, Contributions to Ecclesiastical History in the United States, I. 121. New York, 186-9).

He further says:

Persecution had taught the Baptists not to love the Establishment, and they now saw before them a reasonable prospect of overturning it entirely. In their Association they calmly discussed the matter, and resolved on their course; in this course they were consistent to the end; and the war which they waged against the Church, was a war of extermination. They seem to have known no relentings, and their hostility never ceased for seven and twenty years. They revenged themselves for their sufferings by the almost total ruin of the Church; and now commenced the assault, for, inspired by the ardours of patriotism which accorded to their interests. . . they addressed the convention, and informed that body that the religious tenets presented no obstacle to their taking up arms and fighting for the country; and they tendered the services of their pastors in promoting the enlistment of the youth of their persuasion. . A complimentary answer was returned to their address; and the order was made that the sectarian clergy should have the privilege of performing divine service to their respective adherents in the army, equally with the chaplains of the Established Church. This, it is believed, was the first steps towards placing the clergy of all denominations, upon an equal footing in Virginia (p.138).

The intense opposition to the Baptists in Virginia, in 1772, may be gathered from a letter written by James Madison to a friend in Pennsylvania. He says:

That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some; and to their eternal infamy the clergy can furnish their quota ofimps for such purposes. There are at this time, in the adjacent county, not less than

five or six well meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox.

In 1775 the Baptists of Virginia met in regular session in their General Association. "This was," says their historian, Robert Scmple, "a very favorable season for the Baptists. Having been much ground under the British laws, or at least by the interpretation of them in Virginia, they were, to a man, favorable to any revolution by which they could obtain freedom of religion. They had known from experience that mere toleration was not a sufficient check, having been imprisoned at a time when the law was considered by many as being in force. It was therefore resolved at this session, to circulate petitions to the Virginia Convention or General Assembly, throughout the State, in order to obtain signatures. The prayer of these was, that the church establishment should be abolished, and religion left to stand upon its own merits; and, that all religions societies should be protected in the peaceable enjoyment of their own religious principles."

Accordingly, in 1776, the Baptists were enabled to place upon their records that the bill had been passed and in their judgment that religious and civil liberty were duly safeguarded. This simply suspended the old laws of persecution.

An Assessment Bill was passed, in 1784, by the General Assembly of Virginia, through the influence of the Episcopalians and Presbyterians. The bill provided that a tax be levied upon all persons for the support of religion, and the money be divided among the leading sects. The Baptists would come in for a large share of the patronage. The legislature declared that "a general assessment for the support of religion ought to be extended to those who profess the public worship of the Deity" (Journal of the House of Delegates, October, 1784, 32). Madison, writing of this struggle, under date of April 12, 1785, says:

The Episcopal people are generally for it (the tax) . . . The Presbyterians seem ready to set up an establishment which is to take them in as they were to pull down that which shut them out. . . I do not know a more shameful contrast than might be found between their memorials on the latter and the former occasion (Rivers, Life and Times of Madison, I. 630).

In this contest the Baptists stood alone and won. They were supported by individuals of all denominations. "It is a matter of record," says Howell, "in their proceedings that when, in 1785, they had repeated their Declaration of Principles, the General Committee placed them in the hands of Mr. Madison, with the request that he would employ them in their behalf, in a memorial to the legislature, praying for the passage of the law" (Howell, Early Baptists of

Virginia 92). His voice and that of Jefferson sounded the sentiments which were victorious.

Mr. Jefferson prepared the "Act for Religious Freedom" which passed the General Assembly of Virginia in the year 1786. The Acts says:

Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly, That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in nowise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare the act irrevocable, would be of no effect in law, yet we are free to declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such an act will be an infringement of natural rights (Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 379, 382).

Thus was liberty of soul secured in Virginia by the Baptists. The Establishment was finally put down. Dr. Hawks says:

The Baptists were the principal promoters of this work, and in truth aided more than any other denomination in its accomplishment (Hawks, Ecclesiastical Contributions, 152).

Bishop Meade, another Episcopalian, says:

The Baptist Church in Virginia took the lead in dissent, and was the chief object of persecution by the magistrates and the most violent and persevering afterward in seeking the downfall of the Establishment (Meade, Old Parishes and Churches in Virginia, I. 52. Philadelphia, 1872).

And He again says:

The warfare begun by the Baptists, seven-and-twenty years before was now finished: The Church was in ruins, and the triumph of her enemies complete (Meade, II. 449, 450).

In the period ending with the Revolutionary War religious tests were everywhere. They were consistently, opposed by the Baptists. As a result the Baptists were persecuted and came under the heavy hand of the law. Only in Rhode Island was liberty of conscience maintained. The Baptists in bringing liberty of conscience to a Continent had undertaken a supreme task, but they were equal to the occasion. Professor George P. Fisher, has given a fine statement of the case. He says:

At the beginning of the American Revolution, the Episcopal Church was established in the Southern colonies. In New Jersey and New York, it enjoyed the special favor of the government officials. In Massachusetts and Connecticut there had never been an establishment, in the strict sense of the term. Every town was obliged to sustain public worship and support a minister. There was an assessment upon the inhabitants for this purpose. As the people were for a long time almost exclusively Congregationalists, the worship was of this character. As other denominations arose, the laws were so modified as to allow the tax to be paid by each of the organizations to the support of its own worship. Such an act was passed in Connecticut in reference to the Episcopalians in 1727, shortly after the founding of Christ Church in Stratford, for their first religious society in the State; and in 1729 the same right was extended to Quakers and Baptists. In places where no congregations had been gathered by dissidents from the prevailing system, individuals, whatever their religions beliefs might be, were compelled to contribute to the support of the Congregational worship there existing. This requirement was more and more counted a hardship. It is believed that in all the colonies there were religious tests in some form. Even in Pennsylvania and Delaware, none could vote save those who professed faith in Christ. When the revolutionary contest began, it was natural that there should spring up movements to abolish the religions inequalities which were a heritage from the past. The Baptists, who were outnumbered by none of the religious bodies except the Congregationalists, and who had felt themselves especially aggrieved, at once bestirred themselves in Massachusetts and Virginia to secure the repeal of obnoxious restrictions. A Baptist committee laid their complaints before the Massachusetts delegates in the first Continental Congress at Philadelphia. The support which the Baptists lent to the patriotic cause, and the proclamation of human rights which was made on every hand, won a hearing for their demands, and rendered them, after tedious delays, successful. In Virginia, Patrick Henry, Jefferson, and Madison enlisted in their favor. In 1785, the statute of religious freedom was adopted, of which Jefferson deemed it a great honor to have been the author, by which intervention in matters of faith and worship was forbidden to the State. All denominations were put thus on a level, and none were taxed for the support of religion. In New England, the release from this last requirement, or from the payment of a tax for a particular form of religion to

be chosen by the citizen, was accomplished later. It took place in Connecticut in 1818; and the last of the provision. of this character did not vanish from the statute-book In Massachusetts until 1833, when Church and State were fully separated. In that State, from 1780 to 1811, a religious society had to be *incorporated* in order to have its members exempted from taxation for the parish church (Fisher, History of the Christian Church, 559, 560).

Up to this date, as has been seen, the Baptists had been persecuted in the colonies, and their labors had been directed toward the overthrow of the iniquitous laws. The Revolutionary War opened up possibilities to overthrow the entire system of persecution. The Baptists were not slow to seize and improve the opportunity thus presented. They were everywhere the friends of liberty.

The American War was brought on by the Episcopal Party in England who were opposed to freedom. The soldiers who fought against this country were mainly Irish Catholics. The foremost British statesmen thought the War unjustifiable. William Pitt, May 30, 1788, said in the House of Commons:

The American war was conceived in injustice, and matured in folly, and that it exhibited the highest moral turpitude and depravity, and that England had nothing but victories over men struggling in the holy cause of liberty, or defeat which filled the land with mourning for the loss of dear and valuable relations slain in a detested and impious quarrel.

Six months after this date, when the surrender of Cornwallis was published in England, in the House of Commons, Fox adopted the words of Chatham, uttered at the beginning of the Revolution, and said:

Thank God that America has resisted the claims of the mother country (Hume, Smollett and Farr, History of England, III.155, 182).

Burke and other noted Englishmen expressed themselves in the same manner. The Baptists of England were on the side of America. When Robert Hall was a little boy, he heard Rev. Robert Ryland, the commanding Baptist preacher of Northampton, say:

If I were General Washington I would summon all the American officers; they should form a circle around me, and I would address them. and we would offer a libation in our own blood, and I would order one of them to bring a lancet and a punch-bowl; and he should bleed us all, one by one, into this punch-bowl; and I would be the first to bare my arm: and when the bowl was full, and we had all been bled, I would call upon every man to

consecrate himself to the work, by dipping his sword into the howl, and entering into a solemn covenant engagement by oath, one to another, and we would *swear by him that sits upon the throne, and liveth forever and forever*, that we would never sheath our swords while there was an English soldier in arms in America (Hall, 'Works, IV. 4849. New York, 1844).

The opinion of the English Baptists is set forth in a letter from, Dr. Rippon, the London Baptist preacher, to President Manning of Brown University. He says:

I believe all of our Baptist ministers in town, except two, and most of our brethren in the country, were on the side of the Americans in the late dispute. . . We wept when the thirsty plains drank the blood of your departed heroes, and the shout of a King was amongst us when your well-fought battles were crowned with victory. And to this hour we believe that the Independence of America will for a while secure the liberty of this country; but that if the continent had been reduced, Britain would not have long been free (Guild and Manning, Brown University, 824. Boston, 1864).

There was not a tory among the Baptists of America. Rhode Island was largely Baptist. "The Baptists have always been more numerous," says Morgan Edwards, "than any other sect of Christians in Rhode Island; two thirds of the inhabitants, at least, are reputed Baptists. The governors, deputy-governors, judges, assemblymen and officers, civil and military, are chiefly of that persuasion" (Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society, VI. 304). May 4, 1776, just two months before the Declaration of Independence, Rhode Island withdrew and repudiated the rule of George III. This was thirty-two days before Virginia renounced allegiance (Howison, History of Virginia, II. 138). In large numbers they sent their sons to the army. Bancroft speaks of Rhode Island at the Revolution "as enjoying a form of government, under its charter, so thoroughly democratic that no change was required beyond a renunciation of the king's name in the style of its public acts" (Bancroft, History of the United States, IX 563). When the Constitution of the United States was adopted Rhode Island had long enjoyed freedom. Arnold says:

Rhode Island for more than a century and a half has enjoyed a freedom unknown to any of her compeers, and through more than half of that period her people had been involved with rival Colonies in a struggle for political existence and for the maintenance of those principles of civil and religious freedom which are now everywhere received in America (Arnold, History of Rhode Island, II.563).

The Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia, September 5, 1774, and in eight days there was a Committee of Baptists, headed by Rev. Isaac Backus, who solemnly recognized its authority. They bore the following memorial from the Warren Association of the Baptist churches of New England:

Honorable Gentlemen: As the Antipedobaptist churches of New England are most heartily concerned for the preservation and defence of the rights and privileges of the country, and are deeply affected by the encroachments upon the same, which have lately been made by the British parliament, and aft willing to unite with our dear countrymen, vigorously to pursue every prudent measure for relief, so we would beg leave to say that, as a distinct denomination of Protestants, we conceive that we have an equal claim to charter-rights with the rest of our fellow subjects; and yet have long been denied the free and full enjoyment of those rights, as to the support of religious worship. Therefore we, the elders and brethren of twenty Baptist churches met in Association at Medfield, twenty miles from Boston, September 14, 1774, have unanimously chosen and sent unto you the reverend and beloved Isaac Backus as our agent, to lay our case, in these respects, before you, or otherwise to use all the prudent means he can for our relief.

John Gano, Moderator.

Hezekiah Smith, Clerk.

The Philadelphia Baptist Association, the oldest in America, likewise sent a Committee to assist the appeal from New England. Dr. Samuel Jones, in a Centenary Sermon, in 1807, before the Philadelphia Association, says:

When Congress met in this city, I was one of the committee under the appointment of your body, that, in company with the late Rev. Isaac Backus, of Massachusetts, met the delegates in Congress from that State, in yonder State house, to see if we could not obtain some security for that liberty, for which we were then fighting and bleeding by their side. It seemed unreasonable to us, that we should be called upon to stand up with them in the defence of liberty if, after all, it was to be liberty for one party to oppress another (Minutes of the Philadelphia Association, 459, 460).

The constant plea of the Baptists was for liberty of conscience. To this memorial Congress gave a faithful hearing and a sympathetic reply as follows:

In provincial Congress, Cambridge, December 9, 1774. On reading the memorial of the Rev. Isaac Backus, agent to the Baptist churches in this government, Resolved: That the establishment of civil and religious liberty, to each denomination in the province, is the sincere wish of this Congress. But being by no means vested with the power of civil government, whereby they can redress the grievances of any person whatsoever, they therefore recommend to the Baptist churches, that when a General Assembly shall be convened in this colony, they lay the real grievances of said churches before the same, when and where their petition will most certainly meet with all that attention due to the memorial of a denomination of Christians so well disposed to the public weal of their country.

By order of Congress,

John Hancock, President.

A true extract from the minutes.

Benjamin Lincoln, Secretary.

(Backus, II. 202).

John Adams had said: "We might as well expect a change in the solar system, as to expect they would give up their establishment" The Baptists did not at this time gain their cause but progress was made toward true liberty.

The Baptists everywhere existed in the army. The Baptist General Association notified the Convention of Virginia that they had considered what part it would be proper to take in the unhappy contest, and had determined that they ought to make a military resistance to Great Britain in her unjust invasion, tyrannical oppression, and repeated hostilities" (Headly, Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution, 250. New York 1864). They proclaimed that "they were to a man favorable to any revolution, by which they could obtain freedom of religion" (Sample, History of Virginia Baptists, 62. Richmond, 1890).

Baptist preachers became chaplains in the army. The Baptist General Association sent, in 1775, Rev. Jeremiah Walker and John Williams to preach to the soldiers. These were the most popular Baptist preachers in the Old Dominion. McClanahan raised a company chiefly of Baptists whom he commanded as captain and preached to as chaplain. Rev. Charles Thompson son of Massachusetts served as chaplain three years and Rev. Hezekiah Smith was from the same State. Rev. Samuel Rogers of Philadelphia was

one of the foremost preachers of the day. He was appointed chaplain of a brigade by the Legislature. Rev. David Jones followed Gates through two campaigns. Rev. John Gano had great mental powers and as "a minister he shone like a star of the first magnitude in the American churches" (Sprague, *Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit*, 66). He was the foremost chaplain in the army. Headley says of him:

In the fierce conflict on Chatterton's Hill he was continually under fire, and his cool and quiet courage in thus fearlessly exposing himself was afterwards commented upon in the most glowing terms by the officers who stood near him (Headley, *Chaplains and Clergy of the Revolution*, 255).

Other Baptists served the Revolutionary cause in many ways. James Manning, the President of Brown University, was the most popular man in Rhode Island. He filled for the government many delicate positions and was elected unanimously to Congress. John Hart, a member of the old Hopewell Baptist church, was one of the signers of The Declaration of Independence. Col. Joab Houghton was a valuable officer in the army. It was thought by many that the Baptists were too patriotic.

For their patriotic endeavors they received the highest praise. Thomas Jefferson, writing to the Baptist church, of Buck Mountain, Albemarle County, Virginia, neighbors of his, in reply to a letter which they had sent him, says:

I thank you, my friends and neighbors, for your kind congratulations on my return to my native home, and on the opportunity it will give me of enjoying, amidst your affections, the comforts of retirement and rest Your approbation of my conduct is the more valued as you have best known me, and is an ample reward for my services I may have rendered. We have acted together from the Origin to the end of the memorable Revolution, and we have contributed, each in a line allotted us, our endeavors to render its issue a permanent blessing to our country. That our social intercourse may, to the evening of our days, be cheered and cemented by witnessing the freedom and happiness for which we have labored, will be my constant prayer. Accept the offering of my affectionate esteem and respect (Jefferson, *Complete Works*, VIII. 168).

In his complete works there are replies to congratulatory addresses from the Danbury, Baltimore and Kettocton Associations; and from the representatives of six Baptist Associations which met at Chesterfield, VA, November 21, 1808. The last body was the General Meeting of the Baptists of Virginia. To them he says:

In reviewing the history of the times through which we have passed, no portion of it gives greater satisfaction than that which presents the efforts of the friends of religious freedom with which they were crowned. We have shown, by fair trial, the great and interesting experiment whether freedom of religion is compatible with order in government and obedience to the laws. And we have experienced the quiet as well as the comfort which results from leaving one to profess freely and openly those principles of religion which are the inductions of his own reason (Jefferson, Complete Works, VIII. 139).

When the Constitution of the United States was presented to the States for ratification it was doubtful whether it would pass. Massachusetts and Virginia were the pivotal States. Massachusetts was evenly divided and it was only through the labors of Manning, Stillman and Backus that the Constitution was adopted by that State. The majority was nineteen votes. There were 187 yeas and 168 nays on the last day of the session, and "before the final question was taken, Governor Hancock, the president, invited Dr. Manning to close the solemn invocation with prayer. The prayer was one of lofty patriotism and every heart was filled with reverence."

The vote of Virginia was equally in doubt John Leland, the Baptist preacher; and James Madison were candidates, in Orange County for the Legislature. Orange was a Baptist county and the probabilities were that Leland would be elected. He withdrew in favor of Madison, and Madison was elected and in the legislature he was just able to save the Constitution. J. S. Barbon; of Virginia, in 1857 in an eulogy of James Madison said:

That the credit of adopting the Constitution of the United States properly belonged to a Baptist clergyman, formerly of Virginia, by the name of Leland. . . If Madison had not been in the Virginia Convention, that Constitution would not have been ratified by the States, and as the approval of nine States was required to give effect to this instrument, and as Virginia was the ninth. if it had been rejected by her, the Constitution would have failed (the remaining States following her example), and that it was by Elder Leland's influence that Madison was elected to that Convention (Sprague, Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit, 179).

One thing more must be done to secure soul-liberty in this country beyond peradventure. There was an open question whether the Constitution in the form adopted safeguarded liberty. A General Committee of the Baptists of Virginia met in Williams' meeting-house, Goochland County, March 7, 1788. The first question discussed was:

Whether the new federal constitution, which had now lately made its appearance in public, made sufficient provision for the secure enjoyment of religions liberty on which, it was argued unanimously, that, in the opinion of the general committee it did not (Semple, History of the Virginia Baptists, 76, 77).

Upon consultation with Mr. Madison the Committee addressed General Washington. The next year, within four months after Washington had become President, this address was formally presented, in which they expressed the fear "that our religious rights were not well secured in our new Constitution of government." They solicited his influence for proper legislation, and he returned a favorable answer. As a result, an amendment to the Constitution was made the next month, September 25, which says:

Congress shall make no law, establishing articles of faith, or mode of worship or prohibiting the free exercise of religion, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition to the general government for a redress of grievances.

No more fitting conclusion can be had to this volume than to quote the language of the Father of his Country. The days of persecution, of blood and of martyrdom were passed. Civil and soul liberty, the inalienable rights of man, enlargement, benevolent operations. educational advantages, and world wide missionary endeavor, -all had been made possible by the struggles of the past. George Washington had been consulted by the Baptists to assist in securing freedom of conscience, and he replied:

I have often expressed my sentiments, that every man, conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience. While I recognize with satisfaction, that the religious society of which you are members have been throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously the firm friends to civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution, I cannot hesitate to believe, faithful supporters of a free, yet efficient general government. Under this pleasing expectation, I rejoice to assure them, that they may rely on my best wishes and endeavors to advance their prosperity (Sparks, Writings of George Washington, XII. 155. Boston, 1855).