JEREMY TAYLOR AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

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THE movements and personal influences which tended to the development of religious liberty in England in the Seventeenth Century were extremely complex and are difficult to trace. The establishment of the supremacy of the Sovereign, as the head of the Church, by Henry VIII. and the revival of learning in the Sixteenth Century, set in action ecclesiastical and political forces which in their peculiar interaction required more than three hundred years to work out their result. With the advent of Edward VI. the rising individuality in religion, nourished by the New Learning, proceeded swiftly to reforms for which the mass of the people were not ready. After the short and fierce Catholic reaction under Mary was over, during which the nascent Protestantism was put down in fire and blood, these reforming and liberalizing forces gained fresh headway; but though active, seething and showing abundant strength, they were kept in abeyance by the extraordinary statesmanship, tact and vigor of Elizabeth. Conformity was insisted upon mainly for political, rather than for religious causes. Punishment was dealt out alike to Papist and Non-conformist. No less than one hundred and eighty-seven persons suffered death under Elizabeth by the laws against Catholic priests and Catholic converts; and though in far less number Brownists, Separatists and Puritans were imprisoned and hanged with impartial severity. It is a mistake to suppose that all these were pure lovers of religious freedom, and were persecuted

accordingly. Many of them were simply disorderly and fanatical mischief-makers, impossible to be tolerated. Some, however, were thoughtful and conscientious supporters, not only of religious but of civil liberty, far in advance of their times. For these England became a difficult place, and later going forth to Holland and America they gave to religious liberty at once its clearest definition and its most practical, though far from perfect realization.

But these were only a fragment. Plenty of this leaven remained in England. In the subsequent reigns of James I. and Charles I. its effects were seen in struggles of the most complicated character which finally issued in the execution of the king, the advent of Cromwell, the profound lessons of Commonwealth and Protectorate, the restoration of the Monarchy, and the Toleration Act of 1689. In all this long struggle for religious freedom, Protestant dissent played the most important part. The Puritan occupied the most conspicuous position on the stage. He on the whole had the earliest and clearest vision, gave the most definite testimony, suffered, at the time, if we except the Catholics, the most privations, and in the retrospect has probably received rather more than his full measure of credit and glory.

Especially have we in New England, rejoicing in our heritage, been disposed minutely to investigate and graphically to make the most of the achievements of the Puritan party, both in England and America. This is entirely commendable. But something is to be said for those who from first to last remained in the communion of the English Church and did what they could to fight out the battle for religious freedom within her ranks. They played no small or unhandsome part in the great achievement, though they have been comparatively overlooked. There was always an influential remnant of Churchmen, both lay and clerical, whose learning, social standing and sobriety of judgment gave them a conserving power which

in the net result had its value, as well as the more radical testimony of the Separatist.

The English Church, during all the first part of this century, had a difficult task. Through its close connection with the State it was compelled to bear the odium of the weakness, folly and tyranny of the Sovereign. It had to defend itself against the intrigues and unscrupulous efforts of the Papacy to return to ecclesiastical and political power. It had to resist the general debasement of morals, the bold wickedness in high places and the scandalous degradation of ecclesiastical functions which followed the Reformation; and the very measures which it was obliged to take to accomplish these things, roused the suspicions and antagonism of the dissenting parties. It is only within comparatively recent years that the obstacles that beset the broad minded and conscientious Anglican divines of the reigns of James I. and Charles I. have begun to be appreciated, their services on behalf of toleration understood and justice done them.

Among these true promoters of religious liberty in the English Church none occupies a more shining place than Jeremy Taylor "the Shakespeare of divines" of the Seventeenth Century. His life and writings are so wrapped up with the movement of the times that they can best be considered together.

The son of a barber, he was born in August, 1613, in a house known as the "Black Bull" opposite Trinity Church, Cambridge. Harry Vane and Bishop Pearson were born the same year; Richard Baxter two years, and Ralph Cudworth four years later. Milton and Fuller were each five; Roger Williams and Oliver Cromwell were each thirteen; and George Herbert and Isaac Walton were each twenty years old. Three years later Shakespeare, and thirteen years later Bacon died. Taylor thus appeared almost in the centre of a notable group.

A precocious lad, he was trained at Perse School,

Cambridge, entered as a sizar at Caius College at the age of thirteen, took his first degree at eighteen, was admitted to holy orders at twenty, and at twenty-one became M.A. and prælector in rhetoric. During his residence at the University, there were also there, Milton, Herbert, Fuller, Crashaw, Henry More, Benjamin Whichcote and John Harvard, and he might have known any, or all of them. Accident gave him the opportunity to preach at St. Paul's, the pulpit of which had been glorified by the eloquence of the poet-preacher Donne, then three years dead, and where we are told that Taylor's "florid and youthful beauty and sweet and pleasant air and sublime and raised discourses" were "the astonishment and admiration" of his auditors. He was evidently the pulpit sensation of the hour. He thus attracted the attention of Laud, then as powerful Archbishop of Charles I., beginning to turn the relentless screws of "Thorough" church discipline upon all laxity and non-conformity. Laud perceived his talent, and after some delay secured his admission as Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, and later made him his chaplain. At Oxford he remained two years, falling under the influence of Chillingworth and incurring suspicion of a tendency to popery through his intimacy with the Franciscan Sancta Clara. In 1638 he was given by Juxon the comfortable living of Uppingham in Rutlandshire, still however keeping his fellowship at Oxford, where he had gained sufficient distinction to preach at St. Mary's, November 5, his first published sermon on the Gunpowder Plot, a labored, dry, scholastic dissertation with a fulsome dedication to Laud.

He remained as parish priest at Uppingham for about four years, marrying there Phœbe Langdale; when having been made Chaplain in ordinary to the King, the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642 led him to join Charles, probably at Oxford. Here by royal mandate he received the degree of D.D. and wrote his second work, "Episcopacy Asserted," published late in 1642. Here too he began to receive

the favor of Christopher, afterwards Lord, Hatton, who, Laud having been impeached and imprisoned, continued for several years to be his patron and to whom many of his books are dedicated.

We now lose sight of him—pronounced loyalist and churchman—for about two years as he probably followed the disastrous fortunes and wanderings of the King, until we suddenly find him with Colonel Gerard a prisoner of the Parliamentary forces when that officer, in his attempt to relieve Cardigan Castle in Wales, was defeated February 4, 1645. This was a good fortune for him and also for us. Liberated, as he says, "by the courtesies of my friends, or the gentleness and mercies of a noble enemy," he with two other royalist clergymen, for a time carried on a school for boys in Wales, and later was made private Chaplain by the genial and broad-minded Lord Carberry, who received him into his beautiful country estate, "Golden Grove," on the bank of the Towey in South Wales. Here "in a private corner of the world," secure from the terrible storms that were breaking over England, Taylor remained for about ten comparatively happy years, only occasionally disturbed by fears as some spray from the billows of the great civil conflict beat upon his refuge; and here he wrote his most celebrated works. He complains of the lack of books. We are glad of the lack, for it freed him from the excess of citation of authorities and quotations from the classics and gave liberty to his genius which now began to disport itself. His first book was "An Apology for Liturgy," a most lucid and heartfelt argument for the Prayer Book as against the Directory for Worship, set forth by the Parliament. It was dedicated to the King and published in 1646. This was followed in 1647 by "The Liberty of Prophesying," the most famous, though not the most popular of his books. Then came "The Great Exemplar," or "Life of Christ," not in the least a critical work, but really a series of glowing and exquisite

discourses and prayers gathering about the chief events in our Saviour's life—a treatise in which the extraordinary power, imagination and beauty of the author's style begin to fascinate us. The best known of all his works, the "Holy Living," came next, followed by twenty-eight sermons, which were probably a long time in preparation, and in which his wonderful gifts as a master of gorgeous, yet pure English are still further displayed. One wonders where in this corner of Wales he got hearers for the music and throb of these glittering battalions of majestic sentences. The companion to "Holy Living," the "Holy Dying" appeared later, surpassing its predecessor in dignity of thought and brilliancy of expression; and to this succeeded another series of twenty-four sermons which, with the twenty-eight, already published, he called the Eniautos. In these last sermons Taylor attains his maximum of splendor. He moves with the ease, the exultation, the certainty of a sovereign in the treasure house of kings, and his spirit still thrills and rules us from his dusty pages. Hardly anything nobler exists in our noble tongue.

A sermon on the death of Lady Carberry and a small tract entitled "Clerus Domini" came out in connection with these larger works, and in 1654, he published his "Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament," a controversial work, burdened with learning, which stirred up strife and is inferior to his other works of this period. A book that brought him into unpleasant prominence was "Golden Grove," a sort of catechism, or manual of creed, litanies, prayers and offices for the whole life of a Christian, which was published in 1655. His charming "Discourse on Friendship" followed, a pure piece of literary work worthy of Cicero, in which there is no suggestion of theologian or priest. Two treatises dealing with sin and repentance, called "Unum Necessarium" and "Deus Justificatus," in which he seemed to incline towards Pelagianism, and which stirred up further hostility to

him, came next and may possibly have been the cause of his arrest and short imprisonment in Chepstow Castle. If to these controversial books, we add one other, we shall complete the list of Taylor's chief productions. This is the "Ductor Dubitantium," published, after long delay, in 1660, the longest, most ambitious, the most laboriously composed, by him the most highly regarded but perhaps the least valuable of all his works. It is a most prolix and attenuated analysis of cases of conscience, filled with odd learning and hair-splitting distinctions, which had few readers when it was published, and in spite of a separate edition brought out in 1851, has few now, though it is of interest to those curious in such matters.

There is one other book bearing the amusing title, "A Discourse on Auxiliary Beauty, or Artificial Handsomeness," published in 1656, which singularly enough has been persistently attributed to Taylor, but as all his biographers point out, entirely without adequate evidence. He may have had something to do with it, as a friend of the real author.

During all this turbulent period from about 1645 to about 1655, he enjoyed the hospitable shelter of Golden Grove. It is sad that he could not have enjoyed it longer. He ventured occasionally, perhaps secretly, to London; he formed connections with Rushton, the famous publisher by whom his books were brought out; he secured the valuable friendship of John Evelyn, for whom he acted as confessor, with whom he often stayed and who greatly helped him; he found infrequent opportunities for preaching in St. Gregory, a little church near St. Paul's which Cromwell sometimes tacitly allowed to be used for Episcopal services. There is a legend that he had access to Charles during the last summer of the monarch's life when he was a prisoner of the Parliament, and that the King parted from him with affection, giving him his watch, now in the hands of one of Taylor's descendants and a ring set

with a ruby and two diamonds owned by a Mrs. Roberts of New York. This is all possible, but rather unlikely, though of Taylor's personal devotion to Charles there can be no doubt. The King would scarcely bestow such tokens, except as he was looking forward to the end; and though Taylor was probably in London early in 1649, the King was so closely guarded that Taylor would hardly have been of the very few admitted to him.

Later than this, Taylor's unwise use of Golden Grove, the name of his place of relative concealment, as the title of one of his books, in the preface of which he makes an indirect reference apparently to Cromwell as "the son of Zippor," caused his arrest and imprisonment, probably in the Tower, early in 1655, from which Evelyn's intercession procured his release.

Taylor was now in circumstances of very great personal distress, to meet which he seems to have been naturally unfitted. The ejected Episcopal clergy were mostly poor and in hiding and they and their friends were objects of suspicion. For some reason Lord Carberry seems to have withdrawn his support and the shelter of his estate. Taylor poor, suspected, homeless, bereft of wife and some of his children who had died at Golden Grove, was dependent upon the sympathy and bounty of Evelyn. In his extreme poverty he apparently had been helped by a Mrs. Joanna Bridges who, from unsubstantial stories, was thought by Bishop Heber to be a natural child of the King, and who had an estate at Man-di-nam, where she had perhaps cared for Taylor's surviving children. At any rate she became his wife, probably in 1656, and his fortunes began to mend.

Through the influence of Evelyn, Lord Conway, "a pious and active Irish landlord, devoted to the Anglican Church and a convinced, though not fanatical loyalist," who had a magnificent seat at Portmore in "the woods of Ulster" in the northeastern part of Ireland, invited

Taylor to be assistant lecturer in the parish of Lisburn. There seems to have been a sort of collegiate church there, the vicar of which was an Independent preacher partly supported by Conway. The place was not inviting, but there was no choice. Taylor's difficulties in regard to stipend, serving under an Independent, etc., were partially removed and in 1658 he was installed as lecturer at Lisburn and probably (though it was illegal), as private Chaplain to Conway, who treated him with much consideration. Cromwell had given him a passport and protection for his family, under his sign manual, and he had letters to powerful friends and supporters of the Parliament in Dublin. It is easy to see, however, that his position was extremely uncomfortable. The neighboring parishes were filled with fighting Presbyterian ministers who were in perpetual hostility to the Anabaptists, on the one hand, and the Episcopalians on the other. The death of Cromwell in 1658 gave them greater freedom and much of their wrath fell upon Taylor, who was deprived of his lectureship, arrested and summoned to Dublin. He was shortly released and returned to Portmore, burying himself in his books and longing for England.

At the Restoration Taylor was in England, and on the 29th of May, 1660, took glad part in welcoming Charles II. He was now forty-seven and perhaps the most brilliant writer and preacher, if not one of the most distinguished men among the Episcopal clergy, and there seemed to be every reason to expect his appointment to one of the vacant sees in England. This would have been a fit and happy lot. Why we cannot discover, but he was sent back to Ireland as Bishop of Connor and Down, and later was made—not Bishop but administrator of the adjacent, but temporarily dismantled diocese of Dromore and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dublin. In the last office he was in his element. To the reorganization of the University, whose affairs were in the utmost disorder

through the disasters of the civil war, he gave himself with fervent zeal and conspicuous success. In his work as Bishop it was different. His diocese, today in the wealthiest and most cultivated part of Ireland, was then out of the way, semi-savage and fanatical. His parishes were filled with obstinate and bitter Presbyterians, angry at being disturbed, who denied his authority as Bishop, refused attendance upon his visitations and rejected scornfully all his overtures. He did not understand them, and they tormented him. It was a misfit all round. Like many a really sweet-natured man he seems to have had a vein of obstinacy and even of implacability, when goaded by senseless opposition. Worn out by the resistance of his "dour" Presbyterians, he invoked the secular arm, forced them out of their churches, caused, at least indirectly, their imprisonment and severe handling, and brought from England a colony of Episcopal clergy to take their place. The Bishop had to fight his way to authority. It was a poor use to which to put so fine a tool. Curiously enough his eager intellectual activity, during these distractions, was displayed in the publication of his "Worthy Communicant," one of the best of his devotional books; his "Dissuasive from Popery," really an appeal to the Irish people on behalf of Episcopacy, and his glowing sermon on the death of Archbishop Bramhall.

Meantime he seems to have been deserted, or at least forgotten by his English friends, Thurland, Hatton, Evelyn. They failed to respond to his earnest appeals. He wrote passionately to his old friend Sheldon, once of All Souls, now Archbishop of Canterbury, begging for some appointment in England—some translation to an English see. But it was all in vain. Whether his Irish Episcopal friends thought it was indispensable to have some one of his reputation in Ireland; whether the King for some unknown reason was secretly against him; whether

he had acquired a reputation for vigor in administration and of breadth in theology which was inconvenient—we know not. He found himself irrevocably shut up in barbarous Ireland. In all this his circumstances have a curious likeness to those of Edmund Spenser, near the close of his life. Cultured, sensitive, fond of friends, dependent for doing his best upon a congenial atmosphere, he felt his isolation, lost courage, hope and much of his sweetness, and in a measure ceased to be the Jeremy Taylor of the wonderful sermons of Golden Grove. There is a tradition that, in his distress, he caused his secretary to collect all the copies he could of his "Liberty of Prophesying" and burn them. It may well be true, for the principles of that noble book he had failed in practice to carry out, and though it had passed to a second edition, it is significant that he left it out of the list of his books which he gave to Graham for the library of Dublin University. Under these conditions, his health failed and he died at Lisburn August 13, 1667, just fifty-four years of age, practically a broken-hearted man. A few days before, his only surviving son, Charles, was buried at St. Margaret's, Westminster. Taylor's memory and grave were neglected until 1827, when a tablet to him was erected in the Cathedral Church at Lisburn, and in 1866, among some bones discovered in confusion in the Cathedral of Dromore, a skull larger than usual was found, and this, supposed to be Taylor's, was buried in the choir, and a brass tablet placed above it.

Taylor was a handsome man, of sweet voice, gracious manners, and with a tinge of vanity in his personal appearance. He was profoundly learned—with the learning of his time—in theology, philosophy, history and literature, though far less so in science. Living in a period of the greatest political, ecclesiastical and theological upheaval, he was much of the time comparatively destitute of money, books and home; was harassed, imprisoned, and driven

about; yet such was his genius and facility of work, that his writings, some of them immortal, fill fifteen large octavo volumes, and his is one of the dearest names in English literature.

He was not a deep or original thinker; not a philosopher or theologian of the first order, but, with a natural conservatism, possessed an astonishing insight into the meaning and moral availability of accepted truth. A strict churchman and loyalist he was rather latitudinarian in theology. He was not fond of music; did not believe in sprinkling in baptism; was a supporter of the confessional; thought it right for the unlawful proclamations and edicts of a true prince to be proclaimed by the clergy, and justified the killing of all a master's slaves if the master himself was murdered by one. In character he was ingenuous, pure, unselfish, a passionate lover of truth, full of charity, attached to the old, yet with broad vision and with a genius for religion, or perhaps one might say, for devoutness; for all his writings, even his elaborate prefaces and dedications, and his polemical and casuistical treatises, have a wonderful and marked elevation of spirit, as if the author, though engaged in trivial definitions and controversies, naturally walked with God.

Taylor wrote some poetry, mostly hymns; but cramped by the absurd metres which were the fashion of his time, his verse has relatively no value. His fame rests chiefly on his genius as a writer of resplendent prose, in which he has perhaps only one or two equals in the whole range of English letters.

Here he has unquestionably suffered from his subject matter. He was first of all a clergyman, a preacher, a divine, a bishop, and people do not generally think of divinity as literature, or run to sermons for the pure pleasure of literary thought and expression; even in the Seventeenth Century they did not; still less do they in the Twentieth. All the more remarkable is it that Taylor,

for the most part confining himself to theological, devotional and homiletical limits, achieved such literary distinction. He had not the weight of Hooker; nor the range, originality, or poetic passion of Milton; nor the quaintness, wit and reckless good nature of Fuller; nor the terse and thoughtful stateliness of Bacon; but he has a lucidity, an ease, force and precision of movement, a light, sensitive and sometimes humorous touch, accompanied by a wealth, a fitness, a splendor of imagery which give him pre-eminence among them all. Coleridge "used to reckon Shakespeare and Bacon, Milton and Taylor, four square, each against each." He spoke of Taylor's "great and lovely mind"; that "he was the most eloquent of divines; had I said of men, Cicero would forgive me and Demosthenes nod." Keble said of him "I confess I do not know any other author, except perhaps Hooker (whose subjects are so different that they will hardly bear comparison), worthy to be likened to him. Spenser comes nearest to his spirit in all respects. Milton is like him in richness and depth, but in morality seems to me as far below him as pride is before humility."

The best known and most widely circulated of Taylor's writings are his "Holy Living" and "Holy Dying," and selected passages from his other devotional books, his life of Christ and his sermons. The mingled piety and music of these exquisite sentences still enthrall us and are good for the soul. But his "Liberty of Prophesying" is his most significant book, and the book which, because its appearance hit the right moment in one of the profoundest political, intellectual and moral struggles of the English race, gives him his greatest fame, though in point of his peculiar richness and beauty of style, it is inferior to much of his writing.

The distinguishing trait of this learned, frank and lofty treatise is its grounding of liberty of religious opinion in charity, and in this respect it is a transcript of the pious

spirit of its great author. He urges that no other weapons be used in behalf of the faith than those which are suitable to the Christian warfare, such as "preaching and disputation, charity and sweetness, holiness of life, assiduity of exhortation, the word of God and prayer. For these ways are most natural, most prudent, most peaceable and effectual. Only let not men be hasty in calling every misliked opinion by the name of heresy; and when they have resolved that they will call it so, let them use the erring person like a brother, nor convince him with a gibbet, or vex him out of his understandings and persuasions." He points out that "few men considered that so long as men had such variety of principles, such several constitutions, educations, tempers and distempers, hopes, interests and weaknesses, degrees of light and degrees of understanding, it was impossible all should be of one mind. And what is impossible to be done, is not necessary it should be done. And therefore although variety of opinion was impossible to be cured (and they who attempted it, did like him who claps his shoulder to the ground to stop an earthquake), yet the inconvenience arising from it might possibly be cured—not by uniting their beliefs—that was to be despaired of,—but by curing that which caused those mischiefs and accidental inconveniences of their disagreeing. For although these inconveniences which every man sees and feels, were consequent to this diversity of persuasions, yet it was but accidentally and by chance, inasmuch as we see that in many things, and they of great concernment, men allow to themselves and to each other a liberty of disagreement and no hurt neither. And certainly if diversity of opinions were of itself the cause of mischiefs, it would be so ever—that is, regularly and universally; but that we see it is not." "For," he continues, "if it be evinced that one heaven shall hold men of differing opinions—if the unity of faith be not destroyed by that men call differing religions, and if an unity of

Christian charity be the duty of all, even towards persons that are not persuaded of every proposition that we believe, then I would fain know to what purpose are all those stirs and great noises in Christendom, those names of faction, the several names of churches not distinguished by the divisions of kingdoms, which was the primitive rule and canon, but distinguished by names of sects and men? These are all become instruments of hatred, thence come schisms, and parting of communions, and then persecutions, and then wars and rebellions, and then the dissolutions of all friendships and societies. All these mischiefs proceed, not from this, that men are not of one mind (for that is neither necessary nor possible), but that every opinion is made an article of faith, every article is the ground of a quarrel, every quarrel makes a faction, every faction is zealous, and all zeal is for God, and whatever is for God cannot be too much. We by this time are come to that pass we think we love not God except we hate our brother, and we have not the virtue of religion unless we persecute all religions but our own."

He assumes that there must be some basis for the exercise of toleration, that the Apostles' creed was originated and laid down by the Apostles themselves as such basis, and that it contains all that is necessary to be believed unto salvation, and no more. "The duty of faith is completed in believing the Apostles' creed." "Since it is necessary to rest somewhere, it is best to rest there where the Apostles rested." "Not that it is unlawful for any wise man to extend his creed to anything which follows from these articles, but no such is fit to be pressed on others as an article of faith"—least of all by force. "For it is a demonstration that nothing can be necessary to be believed under pain of damnation, but such propositions of which it is certain that God hath spoken and taught them to us, and of which it is certain that this is their sense and purpose."

With vast learning and acuteness he proves that persecution by the Church was unknown during its earlier history; that it is impossible to establish any rule of faith more definite than the Apostles' creed, either from the Bible, tradition, decrees of councils, the fathers, the Pope, or the opinions of the Universal Church. He vindicates the authority of reason. "No man may be trusted to judge for all others, unless this person were infallible and authorized to do so; which no man, or company of men is, yet every man may be trusted to judge for himself." He points out the folly, iniquity and uselessness of punishing by torture and death the holding of opinions which he has proved to be harmless and inevitable. "No Christian is to be put to death, dismembered, or otherwise directly persecuted for his opinion which does not teach impiety or blasphemy. If it plainly or apparently brings in a crime and himself does act it or encourage it, then the matter of fact is punishable according to its proportion or malignity." He distinguishes ecclesiastical from secular authority, and shows that the secular governor has no right to punish opinions, but only disturbance of the peace. "The ecclesiastical power which only is competent to take notice of such questions, is not of capacity to use the temporal sword, or corporal inflictions. The mere doctrines and opinions of men are things spiritual, and therefore not cognizable by a temporal authority; and the ecclesiastical authority which is to take cognizance, is itself so spiritual that it cannot inflict any punishment corporal."

He has a long section on the Anabaptists in which he argues with great subtilty on both sides of their position, and deals with them in great breadth and charity. "Their doctrine is wholly to be reproved and disavowed, but the men are to be treated with the usages of a Christian; strike them not as an enemy, but exhort them as brethren." "But for their other capital opinion that it is not lawful for princes to put malefactors to death, nor to take up

defensive arms, nor to minister an oath, . . . it is not to be disputed with such liberty as the former." For "that prince or commonwealth that should be persuaded by them would be exposed to all the insolences of foreigners, and all mutinies of the teachers themselves, and the governors of the people could not do that duty they owe to their people of protecting them from the rapine and malice which will be in the world as long as the world is. And therefore they are to be restrained from preaching such doctrine, if they mean to preserve their government; and the necessity of the thing will justify the lawfulness of the thing. If they think it to themselves, that cannot be helped; so long it is innocent as much as concerns the public; but if they preach it, they may be accounted authors of all the consequent inconveniences and punished accordingly. No doctrine that destroys government is to be endured." Here Taylor goes beyond the problem of mere religious toleration and with wonderful grasp and prevision lays down a broad political principle as sound and as vitally applicable to Twentieth Century as to Seventeenth Century issues.

He has another long section in which he deals with equal breadth and charity with the Papists, concluding that so far as their doctrine is concerned "there is nothing in the foundation of their faith that can reasonably hinder them to be permitted; the foundation of faith stands secure for all their vain and unhandsome superstructures." "But if we consider their doctrines in relation to government and public societies of men, ... such doctrines as these: the Pope may dispense with all oaths taken to God, or man; he may absolve subjects from their allegiance to their natural prince; . . . heretical princes may be slain by their subjects; . . . now these opinions are a direct overthrow to all human society and mutual commerce, a destruction of government and of the laws and duty and subordination which we owe to princes;

and therefore those men of Rome that . . . do preach them cannot pretend to the excuses of innocent opinions, . . . for God hath not left those truths which are necessary for conservation of public societies of men, so intricate and obscure, but that every one that is honest and desirous to understand his duty will certainly know that no Christian truth destroys a man's being sociable and a member of the body politic, coöperating to the conservation of the whole as well as of itself." Dealing with the doctrine of transubstantiation he excuses Papists from the charge of idolatry in the celebration of mass and decides that this is not a sufficient ground for withholding toleration from them. In this respect he is more liberal than Milton. Considering terms of communion, he insists that churches ought to allow those to commune who agree with them in essentials, and he concludes his great discourse with the story of Abraham and the idolatrous traveler, a story which Franklin also quotes, though probably from another source.

This singularly lucid, skilfully argued and comprehensive book was a bold utterance for the time, and though its main contentions have long since been accepted, it remains still attractive to the reader, a monument to the courage, insight and piety of the author and an evidence of the conscientious efforts of some Anglican divines of the Seventeenth Century for the attainment of freedom in religious opinion. But the treatise has its limitations. Taylor conceived of toleration as the privilege of those only who accept the Apostles' creed. His book is not a plea for universal religious liberty. While he did not deny the claim of those outside this pale to toleration, he did not assert it. What he thought should be done with Jews, Pagans and those who profess religions other than Christianity, he has not told us. His principles, carried to their conclusion, would embrace these, but whether he thought of them, we do not know. The issue was not then sharply raised.

But with all this, considering the time, it is a strikingly progressive book. Here was a man at the age of thirty-four, a follower and protégé of the persecuting Archbishop Laud; separated from chosen friends and books; hiding from persecution in a corner of Wales; pronounced royalist and Episcopalian, writing this most charitable, learned and sustained argument for freedom in religion.

England was in the throes of the Civil War. The King was a prisoner, now of the Parliament, and now of the army, which were craftily struggling against each other for the mastery. The Independents and Presbyterians were at one another's throats. The Presbyterian Directory of Worship was everywhere enforced; the use of the Prayer Book forbidden; and Episcopacy hunted out of almost every parish and diocese in the land. The altars, beautiful sculptures, priceless stained glass, costly vestments and sacramental vessels of church and cathedral were broken, trodden under foot, or carried off. The sacred buildings became stables and outhouses. The church revenues and lands were confiscated. No one could teach or preach without taking an oath to resist every sign of Popery or Prelacy. The Universities were presbyterianized, and toleration was scoffed at by thousands of voices as "the Devil's Masterpiece." "If the Devil had choice whether the hierarchy, ceremonies and liturgy should be established in the kingdom, or a toleration granted, he would choose toleration," said one speaker in Parliament. "We detest and abhor the much endeavored toleration," said a meeting of the London ministers. The Presbyterians were more relentless than Laud. Even the Independents could expect no real liberty at their hands. Still in this uproar, this contention, this bitter struggle of faction, this "dyscrasy," as Taylor calls it, there was an earnest desire on the part of the best men to find some common ground, some accommodation in ecclesiastical matters; and it was without doubt in a desire to further

this, that Taylor published his book in June, 1647. But Episcopacy was at the moment trampled and torn under the feet of contending sects who were not disposed to listen to a plea from their common antagonist; and when at the Restoration the author and his church returned to power, both of them apparently forgot for the time the lessons of his book, which afforded such a platform for all parties.

The book has however been given too much credit in some quarters. Bishop Heber for example calls it, "the first public defence of the principles of religious toleration," "the first attempt on record to conciliate the minds of Christians to the reception of a doctrine which, though now the rule of action professed by all Christian sects, was then by every sect alike regarded as a perilous and pretentious novelty." This is an error, as we shall see. If he had said that the book was the first separate, distinct and comprehensive argument for religious liberty put forth by an Episcopalian he would have been nearer the truth.

Mr. Gosse thinks that there is "an absolutely novel note in Taylor" in that he "first conceived of a toleration not founded upon agreement, or concession, but upon a broad basis of practical piety"; and he says, "that it is not too much to claim for Taylor in the religious and intellectual order, something of the gratitude which we pay, or should pay to Sir James Simpson in the physical order"; that is, "for the blessed anæsthetics which this great innovator [Taylor] introduced into the practice of religious surgery." This gives a doubly false impression. Sir James Simpson was no more the first who introduced anæsthetics in surgery—being preceded by more than a year by Morton in this country—than was Taylor to introduce toleration in religion, being anticipated, not only for generations before by a host of various productions of non-conformists, whose names shine like stars in the

story of this great struggle, but by the writings of a large number of thinkers and leaders in the Anglican Church itself.

Perhaps one of the earliest of these to be mentioned is Richard Hooker, the first part of whose great work on Ecclesiastical Polity was published in 1594. Hooker's work is certainly not a plea for religious liberty. Certain phases of his masterly argument seem to give a basis for intolerance. On the other hand he affirms that many of the points in dispute between the Episcopalian and Non-conformist, in church government, were not fixed, but subject to changes according to circumstances; and when he deals with general principles he concedes much to the Puritan position.

Before Hooker, Parker, the first Archbishop of Elizabeth (1559), though laying down no principle of liberty, practically showed a broad and tolerent spirit towards both Papist and Puritan; and his successor, the weaker Grindal, bravely defended the "Prophesyings" which, inspired by Non-conformity, sprang up outside of the regular establishment, until both the "Prophesyings" and the Archbishop were put down by the iron hand of the great Queen.

Much later and more pronounced than these, however, is that profound thinker and logician, William Chillingworth, 1602–1644, in his relentless pursuit of the truth, first Protestant, then Catholic, then Protestant again, who was at Oxford with Taylor, of whom he complains that "he wants much of the ethical part of a discourser and slights too much many times the arguments of those he discourses with." Perhaps the younger man listened with more attention than the older man supposed (they were eleven years apart), for Chillingworth's great work, "The Religion of Protestants, a safe way of Salvation," published in 1637, to this day a marvel of grasp, acuteness and clear English, no doubt furnished Taylor with leading suggestions. Gardiner says concerning the "Liberty of

Prophesying" that "three-fourths of its argument was written under the influence of Chillingworth." Certainly the demonstration of the impossibility of finding any infallible authority in religion, with which a large part of Taylor's book is taken up, is set forth even more clearly by Chillingworth. Up to the date of Chillingworth's book no such thorough-going argument on behalf of the freedom of the individual reason from authority had ever been made, and as a necessary corollary of this, liberty of conscience was as a theory irresistibly demanded by the author as the right of the individual man. Chillingworth says: "Seeing there are contentions among us, we are taught by nature and scripture and experience (so you tell us out of Mr. Hooker), to seek for the ending of them by submitting to some judicial sentence whereunto neither part may refuse to stand. This is very true. Neither should you need to persuade us to seek such means of ending all our controversies, if we could tell where to find it. But this we know that none is fit to pronounce for all the world a judicial, definite, obliging sentence in controversies of religion, but only such a man, or society of men, as is authorized thereto by God. And besides, we are able to demonstrate that it hath not been the pleasure of God to give to any man, or society of men, such authority. And therefore, though we wish heartily that all controversies were ended, as we do that all sins were abolished, yet we have little hope of the one or the other, until the world be ended; and in the meanwhile think it best to control ourselves with, and to persuade others to charity and mutual toleration, seeing God hath authorized no man to force all men to unity of opinion, neither do we think it fit to argue thus: to us it seems convenient there should be one judge of all controversies for the whole world, therefore God hath appointed one: but more modest and more reasonable to collect thus: God hath appointed no such judge of controversies, there-

fore though it seems to us convenient there should be one, yet it is not so: or though it were convenient for us to have one, yet it hath pleased God (for reasons best known to Himself), not to allow us this convenience." (Page 138.)

There is a firmness of tread here which is refreshing, even after two hundred and seventy years and which, though in that violent time it was realized and followed by comparatively few, only two editions of the book being published in 1637–38, yet later became the logical basis for a reasoned toleration. Again he writes: "Seeing falsehood and error could not long stand against the power of truth, were they not supported by tyranny and worldly advantage, he that could assert Christians to that liberty which Christ and his Apostles left them, must needs do truth a most heroical service. And seeing the overvaluing of differences among Christians is one of the greatest maintainers of the schisms of Christendom, he that could demonstrate that only those points of belief are simply necessary to salvation wherein Christians generally agree, should he not lay a very fair and firm foundation of the peace of Christendom? Now the corollary which I conceive would produce these good effects is this: That what man or church soever believes the creed and all the evident consequences of it, sincerely and heartily, cannot possibly (if also he believes the Scriptures), be in any error of simple belief which is offensive to God; nor therefore deserve for any such error to be deprived of his life, or be cut off from the Christian Communion and the hope of salvation. And the production of this again would be this, that whatsoever man or church doth for any error of simple belief, deprive any man, so qualified as above, either of his temporal life or livelihood, or liberty, or of the Church's Communion, and hope of salvation is, for the first, unjust, cruel, and tyrannous; schismatical, presumptuous, and uncharitable, for the second." (Page 268.)

These words, published by a great churchman, ten years before the "Liberty of Prophesying"; seven years before Milton's monumental "Areopagitica"; and more than seven years before Roger Williams's "Bloudy Tenant of Persecution" saw the light, show that even in Episcopal, still more in dissenting ranks, Taylor was very far from being the first to argue for toleration. Chillingworth was roundly denounced by the Presbyterians for his liberality, and a Presbyterian minister, with extraordinary license, bitterly upbraided him at his funeral, and threw into his open grave a copy of his book "The Religion of Protestants" "to rot with him," he said.

But Chillingworth was not the only Anglican that anticipated Taylor in the plea for religious liberty. After two centuries and three quarters, our hearts warm to "the ever memorable John Hales," the "pretty little man, sanguine, of a cheerful countenance, very gentle and courteous, quick and nimble," who used to dress "in violet colored clothes," and as Dean of Windsor and Fellow of Eton lived in hiding for nine weeks on brown bread and beer at sixpence a week, keeping the keys and accounts of the school when both armies in the Civil War sequestered the rents. Secretary of the English delegation at the Synod of Dort, he there learned enough to lead him, as he said, to "bid good night to Calvin." Friend of Chillingworth and Falkland, "nothing troubled him more than the brawls which were grown from religion, and he therefore exceedingly detested the tryanny of the Church of Rome, more for their imposing uncharitably upon the consciences of other men, than for the errors of their opinion; and he would often say that he would renounce the Church of England tomorrow if it obliged him to believe any other Christians should be damned; and that nobody would conclude another man to be damned who did not will him so." (Clarendon, in Preface, Hales's Works, Vol. 1.)

His little tract "Concerning Schisms and Schismatics," written privately probably for Chillingworth, and published without his consent probably about 1640, caused him to be summoned before Laud, who, in spite of Hales's latitudinarian views, seems to have treated him kindly. This tract declares that, "it hath been the common disease of Christians from the beginning not to content themselves with that measure of faith which God and the Scriptures have expressly afforded us, but out of a vain desire to know more than is revealed, they have attempted to discuss things of which we can have no light neither from reason, or revelation; neither have they rested here, but upon pretence of church authority which is none, or of tradition which for the most part is but a figment, they have presumptuously concluded, and confidently imposed upon others a necessity of entertaining conclusions of that nature, and to strengthen themselves have broken out into divisions and factions, opposing man to man, synod to synod, till the peace of the Church vanished beyond possibility of recall. Hence arose those ancient and many separations among Christians occasioned by Arianism, Eutychianism, Nestorianism, Photinianism, Sabellianism and many more, both ancient and in our times, which indeed are but names of schism, however in the common language of the prophets they were called heresies. For heresy is an act of the will, not of reason; and indeed is a lie and not a mistake. . . . But can any man avouch that Arius and Nestorius and others that taught erroneously concerning the Trinity, or the person of our Saviour, did maliciously invent what they taught, and not fall on it by error or mistake? Till that be done, and upon that good evidence, we will think no worse of all parties than needs we must, and take these rents in the Church to be at worst but schisms of opinion. In which case what we are to do is not a point of any great depth of understanding to discover, so be distemper and partiality do

not intervene. I do not see . . . that men of different opinions in Christian religion may not hold communion *in sacris* and both go to one church. Why may I not go, if occasion requires, to an Arian Church, so there be no Arianism in their liturgy? And were liturgies and public forms of service so framed as that they admitted not of particular and private fancies, but contained only such things as in which all Christians do agree, schisms of opinion were utterly vanished."

One is not surprised that Laud was disturbed by the following on conventicles. "In time of manifest corruption and persecution, wherein religious assembling is dangerous, private meetings however beside public order, are not only lawful, but they are of necessity and duty; else how shall we excuse the meetings of Christians for public service in time of danger and persecution, and of ourselves in Queen Mary's days? And how will those of the Roman Church among us put off the imputation of conventicling who are known amongst us privately to assemble for religious exercises against established order?"

In his sermon at St. Paul's cross on "Dealing with erring Christians," speaking of those who hold different views respecting original sin and predestination, Hales says: "The authors of these conceits might both freely speak their minds and both singularly profit the Church; for since it is impossible when Scripture is ambiguous that all conceits should run alike, it remains that we seek out a way, not so much to establish a unity of opinion—which I take to be a thing likewise impossible—as to provide that multiplicity of conceit trouble not the Church's peace. A better way my conceit cannot reach with than that we would be willing to think that these things, which with some show of probability, we deduce from Scripture are at best but our opinion; for this presumptuous manner of setting down our own conclusions under this high commanding form of necessary truths, is generally one of the

greatest causes which keeps the churches this day so far asunder, whereas a gracious receiving of each other by mutual forbearance in this kind, might peradventure in time bring them nearer together. This peradventure, may some man say, may content us in case of opinions indifferent out of which no great inconvenience by necessary and evident proof is concluded; but what recipe have we for him that is fallen into some known and desperate heresy? Even the same with the former. And therefore anciently, heretical and orthodox Christians many times, even in public holy exercises, conversed together without offence."

But Chillingworth and Hales were by no means the only Churchmen whose words and example were on the side of toleration both before and after Taylor wrote his book. It is easy to magnify the harsh dealing of the Established Church with the Catholics, the Non-conforming and the Independent parties before the Civil War and after the Restoration. There is plenty that sounds horrible in all this to our modern ears, unaccustomed to all ecclesiastical punishments, and especially unused to the severe criminal code of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The ecclesiastical machinery of oppression and persecution was no doubt vigorously worked, and when the Puritans and Presbyterians had the power, they knew perfectly well how to make return in kind. But those in the Church of whom Laud was the conspicuous representative, when they had the upper hand, were by no means the only influential factors in the Establishment. There were deep currents running the other way. There was always a thoughtful minority that testified for breadth and liberty. Not to speak of the liberal minded ecclesiastics who protested against the severe measures with which Elizabeth forced conformity upon the people, there were men like the great scholar Archbishop Usher, who died in 1656, declared by even Presbyterian authority "the most learned

and reverend father of our Church," who was universally beloved and who suggested a scheme for a "moderated episcopacy," that attracted even the attention of Cromwell, and, but for the heated passions of the hour, might have formed a workable basis for ecclesiastical union.

There were the divines of Oxford who in February, 1644, brought forward the proposals of the so called "Treaty of Uxbridge," in which Charles and the Parliament sought to find a ground of accommodation, and the first article of which was, "That freedom be left to all persons, of what opinions soever, in matters of ceremony, and that all the penalties of the laws and customs which enjoin those ceremonies be suspended."

It is said indeed that Charles was not sincere, that he did not intend to carry out these proposals. They at least were formulated in good faith by his theological counsellors; they anticipated the proposals made to him by the Army in 1647, and the Toleration Act of 1689, and the Oxford clergy who made them were the first persons, who, acting as a public body, made proposals tending to liberty of religious opinion and practice; but the Presbyterians were in no mood to listen to such propositions. Among these clergymen—long a devoted follower and counsellor of the king—was the gifted Henry Hammond, a profound scholar and a saintly man, whose "Practical Catechism" and sermons, though he was a strong Churchman, breathe a most tolerant spirit, and show that he understood the principles and was ready for measures of comprehension.

There was Richard Baxter who, though at this time Churchman as he was, could not accept the extreme view of either party; critic both of the King and of Parliament, yet by his breadth and tact and evangelical zeal he contrived to unite all the ministers of Kidderminster in practical serviceableness and charity through all those troublous times. There was the witty Bishop Hall of

Norwich who long kept his place by his mingled piety and independence, and who though no Puritan told Laud that rather than be subject to "the slanderous tongues of his informers, he would throw up his rochet."

There was the rollicking, whimsical, yet able, and keen-sighted Thomas Fuller (1608–1661), historian of the English Church, the most popular writer of his times, who, neither follower of Laud nor anything of a Puritan yet had appreciative words for the Separatists while yet loyal to the King.

There was the true Churchman, but leader of the latitudinarian School of English Divines, Benjamin Whichcote, famous as preacher and Platonist, graduate of Emmanuel, the Puritan College of Cambridge, who distinctly favored the Puritan party during the Civil War.

There was the saintly George Herbert, twenty years older than Taylor, keeping faith and hope and charity in his little church at Bemerton till his death, ten years before the Civil War, and writing his quaint poem on "Divinitie" whose breadth anticipates Taylor's book; and again in his poem on the Militant Church describing the evils of the time he says:

> "Religion stands on tip toe in our land
> Ready to pass to the American strand,"

as though he had sympathy for the Puritans.

And there was the brilliant Lucius Cary, Lord Falkland, who had not the firmness to act up to his lights, but who gathered about him at Great Tew near Oxford a congenial company of thoughtful liberty lovers, among whom were Hales and Chillingworth.

Of course such men as these do not represent the main trend of opinion in the Established Church before or during the Civil War, but they show that Taylor had many forerunners and followers among genuine Churchmen, to say nothing of Dissenters; that the substance of his

book was foreshadowed by many Episcopal thinkers; and that he must have had many sympathizers in Episcopal ranks.

The Non-conforming individuals and bodies certainly deserve great credit which has generally been acknowledged as the earlier and more pronounced advocates of religious liberty in England. Their record in this respect is open. But it is important to remember that with the exception of a few individuals, their aim was to change the whole ecclesiastical policy of the state, and when it was changed, to govern it with as intolerant a hand as their predecessors. It is also important to bear in mind that the Established Church was by no means all blind, or reactionary during this significant period, but that no small part of its culture, its learning, its wisdom and its piety was actively enlisted on the side of liberty of conscience and of opinion.

Of course the enormous obstacle which hindered all parties in the struggle towards the freedom which when in the minority, each in turn longed for, was the entire identification of Church and State. Religion was politics and politics was religion. This was as true under the Parliament as it was under the King; as true of Presbyterianism as of Episcopacy. The control of the government was the aim, desired or dreaded which lay back, consciously or unconsciously, of almost every attempt to express or suppress religious opinion. It cannot be said that freedom was the direct object of any party. It was rather the incidental result of the quarrels of all parties. The fear of the establishment of popery by intrigue, constantly hung over the nation. Whichever party was in control—whether Charles or Cromwell, Laud or the Parliament, the Commonwealth or the Army—could for the time see little or nothing good in its opponents, and for the most part, when in power denied to others the very toleration for which, when it was oppressed, it had pleaded in vain.

Thus slowly as the authority, in that time of violent transition, went revolving round from King and Bishop, to Commonwealth and Protector, from the Presbyterianism of Parliament to the Independency of the Army, till it completed the circle and at the Restoration, came back to King and Bishop again, each party in turn experienced the dangerous responsibility of power and the misery and limitations of oppression, until the inconsistency and folly of attempting to coerce religious opinion and prescribe religious worship by a criminal code, gradually dawned on all hands, and liberty of conscience began to be realized as the only possible remedy for abuses, toleration the only possible foundation for a Christian state and civilization.

Of course it is the persecuted and not the persecutors—the under, and not the upper dog in the fight—who see the beauty of toleration and discover the most potent arguments in its behalf. Hence it is generally among the Protestants; among the individuals and sects, who felt the impulse of the new learning and, beginning to exercise their newly found individualism and liberty, broke away from the established order and in consequence suffered for it—it is among these that we find the earliest and most pronounced advocates of freedom of religious opinion and action. They had little to lose. For the moment they did not have the responsibility of civil and ecclesiastical order, and the anxieties that always arise in connection with the practical solution of difficulties created by reformers.

Mr. Worley in his life of Taylor, properly remarks that the Liberty of Prophesying "would have been more valuable if it had been produced when the church was a persecutor instead of when she was persecuted": and it may be suggested that under such circumstances probably Taylor would never have written it, inasmuch as when the Church came into power at the Restoration, he apparently found

it inconvenient to practise the theories which he had advocated in its weakness.

Bishop Brooks in his little book on Tolerance somewhat too severely speaks of "the tolerance of Jeremy Taylor writing the Liberty of Prophesying when the Parliament were masters in the Land" as "the tolerance of helplessness; the acquiesence in the utterance of error because we cannot help ourselves; the tolerance of persecuted minorities." (Page 20.) "The book is the book of an ecclesiastic. It deals with the impossibility of compulsion as if, if it were possible, compulsion would not be so bad a thing." (Page 42.)

This is hardly fair. Taylor points out as clearly as anyone can that, in the nature of things, "it is unnatural and unreasonable to persecute disagreeing opinions. Unnatural: for understanding being a thing wholly spiritual cannot be restrained, and therefore neither punished by corporal afflictions. . . . You may as well cure the colic by brushing a man's clothes, or fill a man's belly with a syllogism." Yet we shall all agree with Bishop Brooks, when with great discernment, he remarks that "the Liberty of Prophesying had a place which neither of the other books [Williams and Milton], could have filled in English life and literature and religion."

So we leave the great Bishop of Connor and Down and his noble book, with the commendation, two centuries and a quarter later, of his scarcely less distinguished brother, the Bishop of Massachusetts.