

## CHAPTER II.

## LITTLE FOXES;

OR, THE SPIRIT OF RIGID SEPARATION IN ONE REMARKABLE ZEALOT,

VEKING THE CHURCHES OF NEW-ENGLAND; AND THE SPIRIT OF GIDDY FAMILISM IN ANOTHER;  
AND SOME LESSER CONTROVERSIES ARISING ABOUT THE CROSS IN THE BANNER,  
AND ABOUT SWEARING ON THE GOSPELS.

*Hic se aperit Diabolus!\**

§ 1. It is remarkable, that in the sacred annals of that matchless and blessed church-history, which our God has given us in our Bible, there is a special *mark* often set upon the *first* persons that were eminent in this or that way of sinning, and were upon that score, "the chief of sinners:" and they who have observed this *remarkable*, have particularly *marked* the infamous Corah, the *first rebel* against the divine *church-order* established in the wilderness, as one instance to confirm the observation. There are some, not thoughtless persons, who, in numerating the troublesome and scandalous things that have disturbed us in our New-English wilderness, have complained of a crime, which they have distinguished by the name of CORAHISM; or that litigious and levelling spirit, with which the *separation* has been leavened. Now, tho' I would chuse rather to leave a *veil* than a *scar* upon the *memory* of any person, that by his miscarriage hath made himself too *memorable*; yet our church-history will be but an *unfinished piece*, if we do not set a *mark* upon *that man* who was one of the *first* that made themselves notable by their opposition to the church-order of these plantations; and this we may the more freely do, because of an injunction upon us, "to mark them that cause divisions."

§ 2. In the year 1654, a certain Windmill in the Low Countries, whirling round with extraordinary violence, by reason of a violent storm then blowing; the stone at length by its *rapid motion* became so intensely hot, as to fire the mill, from whence the flames, being dispersed by the high winds, did set a whole town on *fire*. But I can tell my reader that, about twenty years before this, there was a whole country in America like to be set on *fire* by the *rapid motion* of a windmill, in the head of one particular man. Know, then, that about the year 1630, arrived here one Mr. Roger Williams; who being a preacher that had less *light* than *fire* in him, hath by his own sad example, preached unto us the danger of that evil which the apostle mentions in Rom. x. 2: "They have a zeal, but not according to knowledge." Upon his arrival, the church of Salem invited him to assist Mr. Skelton in the charge of their souls; but the governour and council, fearing least not only that church would soon come to have nothing

\* Here the devil shows himself.

of *Salem* in it, but also that the whole *political*, as well as *ecclesiastical* constitution of the country, would suffer by employing a minister of his character, did advise them to desist from "laying hands too suddenly upon him." And that which increased in them the suspicion of his *ill* character, was partly, indeed, his refusing to *communicate* with the church of Boston, because they would not make a publick and solemn declaration of repentance for their communicating with the church of England, while they were in the realm of England; (which the New-English reformers thought then would be to carry the matter as far beyond their sense, as the vulgar translation hath done to the text in Luke xv. 8, where, instead of *everrit domum*—"she swept the house"—it reads, *evertit domum*, or "she *overset* it:") but partly his violent urging, that the civil magistrate might not punish breaches of the first table in the laws of the ten commandments; which assertion, besides the door which it opened unto a thousand profanities, by not being duly limited, it utterly took away from the authority all capacity to prevent the land, which they had purchased on purpose for their own *recess* from such things; its becoming such a "sink of abominations," as would have been the *reproach* and *ruin* of Christianity in these parts of the world. The church taking the advice of their *fathers* in the State, on this occasion, Mr. Williams removed unto Plymouth, where he was accepted as a preacher for the two years ensuing.

§ 3. But at Plymouth his turbulent and singular opinions, not finding the entertainment which he expected, *he* desired a dismissal back to Salem from them; and *they*, perceiving the giddy courses of *separation*, whereto he would *abandon* himself, and whereby he might *endanger* them, wisely *humour'd* what he *desir'd*. Coming to Salem, in the time of Mr. Skelton's illness, the church, affected with the *fierceness* of his *talking* in publick, and the *starchtness* of his *living* in private, so far forgot themselves, as to renew their invitations unto him to become their pastor; and tho' the government again renewed their advice unto the people to forbear a thing of such ill consequence, yet *they* rashly pursued their motion, and *he* quickly accepted it. It happened that soon after this, the church made suit unto the court for a parcel of land, which lay commodious for their affairs; but the court, offended at the slight lately put upon them, delay'd their grant of what the church petitioned for; whereupon, incensed Mr. Williams enchants the church to join with him in writing letters of *admonition* unto all the churches whereof any of the magistrates were members, that they might admonish the magistrates of "scandalous injustice" for denying this petition. The neighbouring churches, both by petitions and messengers, took such happy pains with the church of Salem, as presently recovered that holy flock to a sense of his *aberrations*; which Mr. Williams perceiving, though he had a little before bragg'd, "that of all the churches in the world, those of New-England were the purest; and of all in New-England, that whereof himself was the teacher;" yet he now, stay-

ing at home, sent unto the church of Salem, then assembled, a letter, to give them notice, "that if they would not separate, as well from the churches of *New-England* as of *old*, he would separate from them." His more considerate church not yielding to these lewd proposals, he never would come to their assemblies any more; no, nor hold any *communion* in any exercise of religion with any person, so much as his own *wife*, that went up unto their assemblies; but at the same time he kept a meeting in his own house, whereto resorted such as he had infected with his *extravagancies*.

§ 4. These things were, indeed, very disturbant and offensive; but there were *two* other things in his *quixotism*, that made it no longer convenient for the civil authority to remain unconcerned about him. For, first, whereas the king of England had granted a royal charter unto the "governour and company" of this colony; which patent was indeed the very *life* of the colony; this hot-headed man publickly and furiously preached against the patent, as an "instrument of injustice," and pressed both rulers and people to be humbled for their sin in taking such a patent, and utterly throw it up; on an insignificant pretence of *wrong* thereby done unto the Indians, which were the natives of the country, therein given to the subjects of the English crown. Secondly, an order of the court, upon some just occasion had been made, that an "oath of fidelity" should be, though not *imposed* upon, yet *offered* unto the freemen, the better to distinguish those whose fidelity might render them capable of employment in the government: which order this man vehemently withstood, on a pernicious pretence that it was the prerogative of our Lord Christ alone to have his *office* established with an *oath*; and that an oath being the worship of God, *carnal persons*, whereof he supposed there were many in the land, might not be put upon it. These crimes at last procured a sentence of *banishment* upon him.

§ 5. The court, about a year before they proceeded unto the *banishment* of this *incendiary*, sent for the pastors of the neighbouring churches, to intimate unto them their design of thus proceeding against him; which yet they were loth to do, before they had advised the *elders* of it, because he was himself an elder. Mr. Cotton, with the consent of the other ministers, presented a request unto the magistrates, that they would please to *forbear* prosecuting of him, till they themselves, with their churches, had in a *church-way* endeavoured his conviction and repentance; for they alledged, that they hoped his *violences* proceeded rather from a *misquided conscience*, than from a *seditions principle*. The governour foretold unto them, "You are deceived in the man, if you think he will condescend to learn of any of you;" however, the proposal of the ministers was approved and allowed. But several of the churches having taken the best pains they could, tho' they happily brought the church of Salem to join with them in dealing with the man, yet the effect was, that he renounced them all, as *no churches* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereupon the court ordered his removal out of the jurisdiction.

§ 6. One passage that happened at his trial was a little odd. He complained in open court, that he was wronged by a slanderous report, as if he "held it unlawful for a father to call upon his child to eat his meat."

Mr. Hooker, then present, being moved hereupon to speak something, replied, "Why? You will say as much again, if you stand to your own principles, or be driven to say nothing at all." Mr. Williams expressing his confidence that he should never say it, Mr. Hooker proceeded: "If it be unlawful to call an unregenerate person to pray, since it is an action of God's worship, then it is unlawful for your unregenerate child to pray for a blessing upon his own meat. If it be unlawful for him to pray for a blessing upon his meat, it is unlawful for him to eat it; for it is sanctified by prayer, and without prayer, unsanctified: [1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.] If it be unlawful for him to eat it, it is unlawful for you to call upon him to eat it; for it is unlawful for you to call upon him to sin." Hereupon Mr. Williams chose to hold his peace, rather than make any answer: such the giddiness, the confusion, the *antocatacristic* of that *sectarian* spirit. I have read of a gentleman who had an humour of making singular and fanciful expositions of Scripture: but one Doctor Sim gave him a dose of *physick*, which, when it had wrought, the gentleman became *orthodox* immediately, and expounded at the old rate no more. Pity this Dr. Sim had but undertaken the cure of our Mr. Williams.

§ 7. Upon the sentence of the court, Mr. Williams with his party going abroad (as one says) to "seek their providences," removed into the southern parts of New-England, where he, with a few of his own sect, settled a place called Providence. There they proceeded not only unto the *gathering* of a thing like a church, but unto 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 of 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*, for the want of a *called administration*; he advised them therefore to *forego* all, to *dislike* every thing, and wait for the coming of *new* apostles: whereupon they dissolved themselves, and became that sort of sect which we term *Seekers*, keeping to that one principle, "that every one should have the liberty to worship God according to the light of his own conscience;" but owning of no true *churches* or *ordinances* now in the word. It is a memorable reflection made on this occasion by Mr. Cotton, in a book which he published for his own vindication from the printed calumnies of Mr. Williams:

"It is a wise proverb," saith he, "of a wiser than Solomon: the 'backslider in heart [from any truth or way of God] shall be filled with his own ways.' They that separate from their brethren further than they have *just cause*, shall at length find cause, or at least think they have found cause just enough to separate from one another. I never yet heard of any instance to the contrary, either in England or Holland; and for New-England, there

is no such church of the separation at all that I know of. That separate church, (if it may be called a church) which separated with Mr. Williams, first broke into a division about a small occasion (as I have heard) and then broke forth into Anabaptism, and then into Antibaptism and familism, and now finally into no church at all."

§ 8. Mr. Williams, after this, was very instrumental in obtaining a charter for the government of Rhode-Island, which lay near and with his town of Providence, and was by the people sometimes chosen governour: but for the most part he led a more private life.

It was more than forty years after his exile that he lived here, and in many things acquitted himself so laudably, that many judicious persons judged him to have had the "root of the matter" in him, during the long winter of this retirement: He used many commendable endeavours to Christianize the Indians in his neighbourhood, of whose language, tempers and manners he printed a little relation with observations, wherein he *spiritualizes* the *curiosities* with two and thirty chapters, whereof he entertains his reader. There was always a good correspondence always held between him and many worthy and pious people in the colony, from whence he had been banish'd, tho' his keeping still so many of his dangerous principles kept the government, unt'o whose favour some of the English nobility had by letters recommended him, from taking off the sentence of his banishment. And against the Quakers he afterwards maintained the main principles of the Protestant religion with much vigour in some disputations; whereof he afterwards published a large account, in a book against George Fox and Edward Burrowes, which he entituled, "*George Fox digg'd out of his burrowes.*" But having reported thus much concerning Mr. Williams, we shall now supersede further mention of him, with the mention of another difference, which happened in our "primitive times," wherein he was (indeed but obliquely and remotely) concerned.

§ 9. It was about the year 1633 that one in *some* authority, under the *heat* of some impressions from the ministry of Mr. Williams, did by his *own* authority cut the *red-cross* out of the king's colours, to testify a zeal against the continuance or appearance of a *superstition*. This *hot action* met with a *warm censure*; and besides the mischiefs hereby occasioned among the trained soldiers, whereof some were loth to follow the *colours* which had the *cross*, lest they should put honour upon a Popish *idol*; others were loth to follow the colours which had not the *cross*, lest they should seem to cast off their allegiance to the crown of England; the business fell under agitation in the General Court.

The freemen of the colony show'd their displeasure at the gentleman chiefly concerned in this business, by discarding him from his place in the government; and a committee of those freemen, chosen by both magistrates and people, judged him to be guilty of a great offence, and worthy of admonition, and so to be one year disabled for bearing any publick office. An *harder* sentence was not passed, because real tenderness and

perswasion of *conscience*, and not any *ill-affected mind*, was the real original of his offence: but *so hard* a sentence was passed, as a signification of the desire which was rooted in the heart of the country, to approve themselves in all points thorough Englishmen and good subjects. Now, though the action of defacing the colours was generally disapproved, yet the *rite* of the "cross in the banner" became on this occasion a matter of controversie, wherein many pious and able men were differently perswaded; and some of our chief worthies maintained their different perswasions with *weapons* indeed no more dangerous than easie *pens*, and *effects* no worse than a little harmless and learned *ink-shed*, it will not be a thing unuseful or unpleasant unto a curious reader to have a brief *display* of that controversie.

§ 10. On the one side, they that pleaded against the use of "the cross in the banner," argued after this manner. The question is not, whether a private man may not march after his colours, which have the cross in them? for the Christian legions never scrupled following the *Labarum*\* of the Roman emperor, which was an idolatrous ensign. Yea, the Jews themselves, that made such earnest suit, first unto Pilate, and then unto Petronius, to have such an idolatrous ensign removed from the walls of their temple, yet without any scruple followed it into the field. Nor is it the question, whether the cross may be used in our colours, as a charm to protect us from enemies, to defend us from disasters, to procure victories unto us. The *faith* which the Roman Catholicks have in it, mentioned by Hoveden in the reign of Henry II., when England, France and Flanders distinguished themselves by their varieties of it, ever since retained, is abominable to all *real* Protestants. But the question is, whether the cross, as representing the cross of Christ, erected as a badge of Christianity, and a sign of distinction between Christians and Infidels, may by any prince or state be now in their banners reserved and employed? *This*, they approved not, and that for these reasons: *First*, That which God hath commanded utterly to be *destroyed*, should not be *retained* for the important uses of men; but God has commanded the "cross in the banner" to be destroyed. This may be thus proved: *images* of *idols* are commanded utterly to be destroyed: but the cross in the banner is the image of an idol, and the greatest idol in the church of Rome. The text in Deuteronomy, where this is commanded, will affect Christians as well as Jews; for the *moral reason* of the command still continues. If it be objected, that then the *temples* of idols were to be destroyed, it may be answered, Theodosius made a *law* that they should be so. However, we may distinguish between temples dedicated unto *idols*, and such temples as were dedicated unto *God* with *creatures*. The Papists, with Aquinas, deny their temples to have been dedicated unto *saints*; but affirm them dedicated unto the honour and service of God, for his blessings communicated by the saints, whose names are used on this occasion. These temples being purged from their "superstitious designa-

\* Imperial standard.

tions," may be still used for our Christian assemblies, as our Saviour used the *Jewish water-pots* to turn the *water* into *wine*, tho' they were "superstitious purifications" for which they were placed there. Again, there is no *civil honour* to be given unto the image of an idol; the second commandment forbids all sort of honour, not only *sacred*, but *civil* also, to such an image; yea, and elsewhere, all mention of it with honour is prohibited. But now to advance the *cross* into the *banner*, is to put a *civil* and no little *honour* upon it: it is the cross in the ensign, which does now *insignire*, and render it *insign*; and it was the intention of Constantine to honour the cross, when he interdicted all executions of malefactors upon it, but improved it for his banner. Further, if the *figure* of the *altar in Damascus* might not be used as a badge of the religion and profession of the Israelites, then the figure of the cross may not be used as a badge of the religion and profession of the Protestants: For there is a like proportion; the Papists regard the cross as the altar whereon our Lord was offered: Now, such a figure of an altar was unlawful to the people of God. Once more, that which was *execrable* to our Lord, the sign of it should not be *honourable* to us. But so was the cross of our Lord; it made his death *accursed*; nor was it a pure instrument of meer martyrdom unto him. Moreover, if the partaking of *idolothytes* in the places where the idols are worshipped, express a communion with idols and idolaters, then the setting up of the cross in the places where idolaters do worship it, namely, in the banner, is an expression of communion in their idolatry. 'Tis true, such *meats*, when sold in the shambles, might be eaten without scruple of conscience; but besides this, that it was only a common place where these might be eaten; whereas the "cross in the banner" is in the temple, where the *apocalyptic Gentiles* do adore it; you may add, they were creatures of God, whereas the "cross in the banner" is only an humane contrivance. If it had been lawful for a man to have bought the *silver-shrines* of Diana, and have caused them to be worn for the cognisance of his family or his attendants; the cross might perhaps have been lawfully used in the banner for a cognisance. Finally, if the first use of the "cross in the banner," by Constantine, were superstitious, then "the first fruits being unclean, the whole lump of the following use is also unclean." But now, Eusebius will tell you, "that this saving sign the emperor used as a protection against all warlike and hostile powers." And Sozomen will tell you, that the emperor changed the image in the Roman *Labarum* for the sign of the cross, and so the soldiers, who were accustomed to worship the heathen imperial ensign, by the continual sight and worship of the cross, might be weaned from their country-rites, and brought on to worship that God alone whose sign it was." These were the chief of the considerations then urged against the cross by the faithful that were themselves in a wilderness, now preaching and suffering under the cross. That they thus argued, was not because they were those whom the apostle calls "enemies

unto the cross of our Lord;" they knew, they felt, they consented, that, *Omnis Christianus est Crucianus*—"every Christian must be a cross-bearer." Our king Edward I. was the comliest of men, tho' commonly called *crook-back*, by a mistake of the name *crouch-back*, [that is, *cross-back*] which name he has worn, because of his wearing a cross on his back. Our good old planters had the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ laid upon their back, by the manifold afflictions which they underwent for his truths and ways; but mankind will be mistaken, if they imagine those blessed soldiers, under the banners of the Lord Redeemer, to have been of a "defective stature" in Christianity, because of their not affecting to make the cross in their banners the *mark* of that Christianity. It is Catholicly—that is, *ridiculously*—enough given as the answer to the second question in the catechism, wherein the French new-converts are instructed; the question, "Whereby shall one know a true Christian?" the answer, *A ce qu'il fait le Signe de la Croix*; that is, "By this, that he makes the sign of the cross." Our New-Englanders were good Christians, but yet were loth to give the cross for the *sign* of their being so; they chose a *better sign* of it, by being themselves *crucified* unto the vanities of the world; that which made the cross disagreeable to them, was its being the great *idol* of Popery, which is but revived Paganism. As the primitive Christians, when the Pagans charged them with the veneration of the cross, answered, *Crucis nec Colimus, nec Optamus*;\* this might a Minutius on the behalf of our New-English Christians have given for *their* answer also: If Tertullian reckoned it a scandal raised upon the primitive Christians, that they were, *Crucis Religiosi*,† you see the *New-English* Christians took an effectual course, that they might not on that part be scandalized.

§ 11. On the other side, they that pleaded for the use of "the cross in the banner," argued after this fashion: To state the question, we must know that it is necessary that there should be a *banner* displayed: and a banner with a cross in it, serves the end of a banner as much as any other. Had the *cross* never been *superstitiously abused*, the *civil use* of that figure could not be questioned; but the superstitious abuse is a thing that is added unto the civil use, and accordingly the superstitious abuse may again be removed from it; otherwise what a desolation of *bells* must be produced by a just *reformation* of superstitions? Wherefore, if the present authority does neither appoint nor declare any superstition in the observation of any civil usage, the superstition of that usage is at an end. Thus, tho' it be notoriously known that many persons in authority have their superstitious conceits about churches, yet, inasmuch as there is no *injunction of authority* upon private persons to approve any such conceits, 'tis no superstition in such persons to use those churches unto unlawful purposes. The question then is, whether the "civil use" of the "cross in the banner" may not be separated from the "superstitious abuse" of it? It seems that

\* Crucifixes we neither worship nor want.

† Cross-worshippers.

it may; for—*first*, If *names* that have been abused for the honour of *idols*, may in a *civil way* be still used, then *things* that have been so abused, may be in like manner used for a civil distinction. But we find the names of Apollo and Phœbe, and the like, used in the “Apostolical salutations,” altho’ it had been a less difficulty for those persons to have changed the names at first sinfully impos’d on them, than for “the cross in the banner” to be now wholly laid aside. If any heathen king put an honour upon his idol Bel, by saying, “O Belteshazzar!” the Spirit of God may speak it without any honour to that idol at all. Again, it is one thing to describe a *cross*, as an *artificial thing*, by way of *civil signification*, and another thing to employ a *cross*, as a *sacramental thing*, by way of *sacred observation*; and in the *banner*, ’tis the *former*, not the *latter way*, that it is considered; when I am relating how a Papist *crosses* himself, I may lawfully express it by making an *aerial cross* like his; whereas it would not be lawful for me to make such a cross upon the *same ends* with him. And, what if the cross, as first used by Constantine, had in it somewhat unwarrantable? It follows not, that the *following use* of it is of the same *lump* with the *first*; for if it now be used upon another design, the *uncleanness* is taken away. Besides, Constantine brought the cross with as much unwarrantableness into his *coins*, as into his *colours*; but it is believed that most men, at this day, would count themselves very sorely *cross’d*, and their purses very *unhappy*, if there were none of those *crosses* in them. To proceed: Meats that were sacrificed unto idols might be eaten, when sold and bought in the market; now a *cross*, as an effect of *art*, is a creature of God’s, as well as any of the meats bred and cooked by men. And what if the *banner* be like the *temple* to the *idol*? One might have eaten the *idolothytes* in a chamber or corner of an idol temple, if there had been any such, where beholders would not have been scandalized. Such were the *colours of good and evil*, which were put upon the use of the *cross in the colours*, at the first settlement of the militia in these plantations. But there was nothing like a *war* appearing in the disputations of the good men, that thus *flourished* the matter on both sides. All the *velitations* were *peaceably furled up* in this result: that the *cross* was kept in the *banners of castles and vessels*, where it was necessary; and in the *banners of the trained bands* it was generally omitted, until it was very lately introduced.

§ 12. It will be now not *improper*—I am sure it will not be *unchristian*—in the same chapter which reports the disturbances of New-England, raised by Mr. Williams, to relate some further disturbances of the country, to the extinguishing whereof Mr. Williams very commendably contributed his assistances: For I freely acknowledge, with Tully, *Est iniqua in omni re accusanda, prætermisissis bovis, malorum enumeratio, vitiorumque selectio.\**

Know, then, that in the year 1636 arrived at Boston one Samuel Gorton,

\* An unfair summing up and setting forth of evils and vices, to the exclusion of what is good, is reprehensible under all circumstances.—CICERO, *de Legibus*, III. 10.

who by one of the best pens in those times is described as "a most prodigious Minter of exhorbiant novelties, and the very dregs of *famulism*." This Gorton continued at Boston till some directions were sent hither to demand from him considerable sums of money, which he had borrowed at London; and then he removed out of the Massachuset-Colony. Coming to Plymouth, he began to spread his blasphemous and enormous opinions; but being upon some *civil controversie* with a neighbour brought before the court, he behaved himself so mutinously, seditiously and outrageously, that he was *fined* and sent out of that colony. From thence he went into Rhode-Island, where he affronted what little government they had with such intolerable insolences, that he was there *whipped* and sent out of *that* colony. The Knight Errant then made his progress over to Providence, with a misled *knot of squires*, where the humanity of Mr. Williams to them in that winter-season was requited, *snake-fashion*, with such cruel *stings* as made the inhabitants implore aid from the Massachuset-Bay. These wicked Gortonians began to seize the lands of certain Indians, which had submitted themselves unto the protection of the King of England, and sow such discords among the English, as threatened all manner of bloody confusion. Wherefore the authority of the Massachuset-Bay, being addressed by the distressed people, sent their agents to adjust the differences which had happened, and prevent the ruin of the King's interests, not merely in that "fag-end of the world," but in all these plantations. In the mean time, this crew of miscreants not only kept blowing up a flame of war between the English and the Indians, but also sent unto the English in the Bay one libel upon the back of another, stuff'd with scores of such envenomed *reproaches* against the rulers and churches, *denials* of all order, and *blasphemies* against every sacred thing, that the Massachuset-Colony could not in this extremity do God and the King better service, than by "going out of their line," (if it were a *going out* of it, for to send thus unto the help of our confederates, under whose *weaker jurisdiction* those wretches were so obstreperous, and upon whose *earnest application* it was undertaken) to lay hold on these malefactors as the "enemies of mankind." Accordingly, being by a band of men brought unto Boston, whither Mr. Williams and his fellow-planters had referred their cause, against a knot of *incendiaries* that had expressly declared, "All courts whatsoever to be idols, and the devices of Satan, and all pretended officers and lieutenants of Christ to be destroyers of the Holy One of Israel." The court proceeded unto an examination of their misdemeanours. About six of the chief ringleaders received sentence to be kept at work, in so many several towns, during the pleasure of the court; and they were also required, on a very severe penalty, to utter none of their profane *heresies*, except in conference with ministers, or such as might be allowed thereupon to confer with them; thus they were confined for one winter, and then banished. It were endless to reckon up the frenzies of this exhorbitant

and extravagant generation; but they held, "that Christ was but a shadow and figure of what is done in every Christian;" they held, "that Christ was incarnate in Adam, and was that image of God wherein Adam was created;" they held, "that our Lord's being born afterwards of the Virgin, and suffering, was but a manifestation of his suffering in Adam;" they said, "that man's losing of God's image was the death of Christ;" they said, "that faith and Christ is all one;" Sermons they called "lies, tales and falsehoods;" Churches, their name for them was, "devised platforms;" Baptism, they called, "vanity and abomination;" the Lord's Supper, they called, "An abomination and a spell;" and they called ministers, "magicians." Now, tho' the ministers, whom they so called, used all due pains to *charm* these *adders* with convincing disputations, when they were in the Bay, and indeed often drove them to a *bay* with argument, yet they would obstinately maintain their unmaintainable tenets. By the same token, that unto that nonsensical assertion of Gorton, "that the death of Christ was the death of God's image in the fall of Adam;" it being reply'd by Mr. Cotton, "that the death of Christ was the price of our redemption; whereas the fall of Adam was not the price of our redemption, but the cause of our condemnation;" the man by *silence* thereupon, *loudly proclaimed* himself confounded, and yet he would not revoke or disclaim his heretical nonsense. Gorton lived many years after this; degenerated into such a *beast* that *professedly*, as well as *practically* he declared, "that there is no happiness to be expected but in this life;" and he would advise his followers, "to make much of themselves, because they must have no more than what they should enjoy in the world." But it pleased God thus mercifully to deliver this his New-English people from the troubles with which these *pestilences* did endanger them.

§ 13. Reader, be content that the same chapter which has related the *controversies* that have sometimes disturbed the churches of New-England about matters, the *laiffulness* whereof has been *scrupled*, should leap over half an hundred years to grasp at another of those controversies, which, as late as the year 1688, was an occasion of some further disturbance; The *affinity*, rather than the *chronology* of the thing inviting us, in *this place* to lodge the history of that controversy.

When the charter of New-England were taken away, the governour, who with a treasonable and an arbitrary commission then tyrannized over the colonies, at length drove the New-Englanders to imitate the whole English nation, in an happy *revolution*, on the eighteenth of April, 1689. And in the *declaration*, which they published at and for this revolution, one article was this:

"To plunge the poor people every where into deeper incapacities, there was one very comprehensive abuse given to us: multitudes of pious and sober men thro' the land scrupled the mode of *swearing on the book*, desiring that they might swear with an *uplifted hand*, agreeable to the ancient custom of the colony; and tho' we think we can prove that the

*common law* amongst us (as well as in some other places under the English Crown) does not only indulge, but even command and enjoin the rite of *lifting the hand* in swearing, yet they that had this doubt were still put by from serving upon any juries, and many of them were most unaccountably *fined* and *imprisoned*. This one grievance is a Trojan horse, in the belly of which 'tis not easie to recount how many insufferable vexations have been contained."

The Christians of New-England were not the only persons that have scrupled the lawfulness of swearing, *Tactis Evangelis*,\* on and by the gospels. Those famous divines, Rivet, Paræus and Voetius, have all of them written against it; Dr. Goodwyn and Mr. Nye reckoned it "the worst of all the English ceremonies:" and that blessed martyr, Mr. William Thorp, did refuse to comply with that mode of swearing; declaring that Chrysostom long before him was against a *book-oath*, as well as he; and arguing, "If I touch the book, the meaning of that ceremony is nothing else but that I swear by it, when it is not lawful to swear by any creature." It is well known that in Scotland, and the reformed churches abroad, that *ceremony* is not used; and even in the English Courts of Admiralty, another form of swearing is frequently practised: yea, there was once an ordinance of Parliament in England, for the ease of those consciences which doubted such a form of swearing. The varieties among the primitive Christians, in the modes of swearing, are too *many*, and some of them too *faulty*, to be recited; but this I am sure of, Athanasius of old would use no rite in swearing, but that of *lifting up the hand unto Heaven*. However, it may be the Christians of New-England are the only ones in the world that ever suffered a formal *persecution*, by *fines* and *gaols*, for bearing their testimony unto "purity of worship," in that great point of *worship*, an *oath*: and perhaps these Christians might bear a part in *finishing the testimony* to be born unto the laws of our Lord Jesus Christ in the world, by patiently suffering this persecution, while the Quakers, who refused all swearing at all, did undergo no such hardships from the government. Now, the reasons that moved these *confessors* hereunto are easily understood. They were of this old Puritan principle; that all *religious worship* not *commanded* by God is *forbidden*; and that all *symbolical ceremonies* enjoined on men in religious worship, are made parts of it. More closely; they judged that our *swearing ON the gospel*, is a *swearing BY the gospel*, and therefore idolatrous. That this mode of swearing was *originally* a signification of *swearing BY the gospel*, is evident from all the interpretation, which not only the old canon-law, but also the old common-law, explain'd in old *precedents*, has given of it; and no particular magistrate has power to put any other *interpretation* upon the law, than what the *law* has given of it self; much less can a *private person* do so. Yea, the mode is *naturally* and *necessarily*, as well as *originally*, a *swearing BY the gospel*; for else it must signifie only the *presence* and *consent* of the person that swears. But first, our statute-law has positively superseded any such pretence

\* With the wand of the gospels.

wherein the "oath of supremacy" concludes, "by the contents of this book:" and besides, there is no *proportion* of things to countenance that pretence: the touching of a *table*, would signifie this, as much as the touching of the *Bible*. The Bible is a *sacred thing*; to put it unto a meer *civil use*, is a *profane abuse* of it, in such a solemn and serious business, as the dispensing of right between man and man: why? it leaves out a respect unto the Bible, which is always due unto it. With a contingent and overly act, I may perhaps look on the Bible only as a *book*, made of *paper* and *cover*; but in a stated, solemn, serious *act*, such as a "process of law," the Bible may not be *singled out* for a less use than what the word of the Most High God is to be preferred for. Whereas, if we take the general acknowledgment of them that *swear ON the gospel*, they tell us, 'tis to procure *devotion*, and affect them with the consideration of the *rules* they are to use in swearing, and the *woes* they incur if they use them not. Now, say we, our Lord hath directed us to do this, by *hearing* and *reading* his word; not by a bare *touching* of it: nor may a *transient motive* to piety be made a *stated medium*. Or else, they tell us, 'tis to *express* devotion; 'tis in *this way* that they make their *imprecation* and their *invocation*; 'tis their external declaration, "that they swear by the God who made this book, and expect the plagues written in this book, if they swear a falsehood." Now, this is a *way of worship* which the Lord never instituted. In fine, 'tis a *wrong religious application in a prayer*; an *oath* is a *prayer*, and a *creature* is in this mode of swearing applied unto, as well as Almighty God; yea, God is applied unto thro' a creature: and non-conformists reckon the second commandment violated by such applications. The *religious forms* of addressing to God, we say, are to be appointed by none but God himself: whereas the *elevation of the hand* has, even for *sacred* as well as for *civil* uses, and in an *oath* particularly, had such unexceptionable approbation, that the faithful of New-England chose it, and "chose rather to suffer affliction," than to use a *rite* in the worship of God, which they suspected sinful.

Reader, we will only take this occasion to recite a good passage of Dr. Owen's: "If, instead of driving all sorts of persons, the worst, the vilest of men, on slight, or light, or no occasions unto swearing, none might be in any case admitted thereunto, but such as evidence in their conversations such a regard unto the Divine rule and government of the world, as is required to give the least credibility to an oath, it would be much better with humane society." And now we'll pass on to other matters.