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PUBLICATION OF THE WORKS OF EARLY ENGLISH
AND OTHER BAPTIST WRITERS.

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It has been a matter of regret with many, that the writings of the early members and ministers of the Baptist churches of this country should be comparatively so little known. The present appears to be a favourable time to reprint such of them as may be deemed worthy of perpetuation, from their historical or theological importance.

These writings are confined to no peculiarity of sentiment, but embrace every topic of divine truth, which the word of God presents for the salvation of the believer, as well as for the regulation of the church of Christ.

To the Baptists, belongs the honour of first asserting in this land, and of establishing on the immutable basis of just argument and scripture rule, the right of every man to worship God as conscience dictates, in submission only to divine command.

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Rejecting the authority of men in matters of faith, they wrote with great simplicity and directness of purpose. Scripture alone was their authority, and excepting some of their polemical works, their productions are remarkably free from that parade of learning which was the fault of their age.

They were not, however, destitute of learning. Most of the early Baptists had had an university education : and if this privilege was not enjoyed by their successors, it was because the national seats of learning denied it to them. The names of Bampffield, Canne, Cornwell, Danvers, Delaune, Du Veil, Denne, Grantham, Jessey, Knollys, Smyth, and Tombes, are sufficient to prove that the Baptist churches were not destitute of able and learned expounders of their sentiments, eminent for their attainments in both classical and divine knowledge.

The historical value of the works which it is proposed to reproduce, is very great. Their authors exercised no mean influence on the course of national affairs during the period of Cromwell's protectorate, and they became in subsequent reigns, as they had been in times preceding the Commonwealth, the especial objects of ecclesiastical and political persecution. Some of the works which it is desired to publish will also embrace the period of the Reformation, and illustrate the sufferings endured, by the baptists of that eventful period, for conscience sake.

As theological writers they are characterized by fervour of spirit ; deep study of the word of God ; great facility of application of divine truths to passing events ; a holy attachment to "the truth as it is in Jesus ;" clear and pungent exhibitions of the word of life ; an uncompromising adherence to the scriptures as the rule of doctrine, practice, and ecclesiastical organization and discipline ; and finally, a fearless following of their convictions, derived from the divine oracles.

Works of this kind are also wanting for our congregational and family libraries. It is to be feared that too many of us are ignorant of our own history, and of the great and good men who lost all in the maintenance of our principles.

The series of proposed volumes will include the works of both General and Particular Baptists ; Records and Manuscripts relating to the rise and progress of Baptist churches ; Translations of such works as may illustrate the sufferings of the Baptists and the extension of their principles, together with such Documents as are to be found only in large historical collections, or may not yet have appeared in an accessible form. On the Baptismal controversy only those treatises will be given, which are of acknowledged worth or historic value. The whole will be accompanied with biographical notices of the authors, and with such notes and illustrations as may be essential to their completeness.

The publications will consist of works produced before the close of the seventeenth century. The following list comprises the names of some of the authors whose works are intended to form part of the series ;—Bampffield, Blackwood, Bunyan, Canne, Collier, Collins, Cornwall, Danvers, Delaune, Denne, Du Veil, Drapes, Grantham, Griffith, Helwys, How, Jeffrey, Jessey, Keach, Kiffin, King, Knollys, Lawrence, Palmer, Powell, Pendarves, Smyth, Stennett, Tombes, Roger Williams, &c.

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B L O U D Y T E N E N T
OF
PERSECUTION.

THE
BLOODY TENENT
OF
PERSECUTION

FOR
CAUSE OF CONSCIENCE DISCUSSED:

AND
MR. COTTON'S LETTER
EXAMINED AND ANSWERED.

BY ROGER WILLIAMS.

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