

old regimen, were concerned that a secular Prelacy should not be substituted in the room of the ecclesiastical. The Commons, on the other hand, were equally vigilant to prevent any spiritual authority to succeed the past, which would perpetuate the same evils under a different name." This led the Parliament to convene the "Assembly of Divines," to give their judgments on such questions as the Lords and Commons might submit to their deliberation. The majority of this Assembly were the children of Oxford and Cambridge, who had filled distinguished situations within the pale of the Establishment; though, in the period spoken of, they had become Presbyterians. There were a few Erastians, who derived their chief support from Lawyers, especially Selden and White-lock. But the great controlling and modifying power, with which the Presbyterians had to contend, was found in the friends of a small body of returned exiles, who had embraced the principles of Independents.

Mr. Westley, on his entrance and continuance at Oxford, found Independents of great name, in the high places of that University. Dr. Thomas Goodwin, the President of the Magdalen College, had from among the collegians, what was then termed "a gathered church," in which was found Stephen Charnock, Theophilus Gale, John Howe, &c.; men afterwards of great celebrity; Dr. John Owen also, who had lately been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Oxford. He found the University in great disorder; set himself vigorously to correct these evils, and happily succeeded. Among the students he acted as a father: the vicious he discouraged and punished; but the modest, diligent, and worthy he encouraged and rewarded. Among the latter was Mr. Westley. Dr. Calamy states, "During his stay at Oxford, he was taken notice of for his seriousness and diligence. He applied himself particularly to the study of the oriental languages, in which he made no inconsiderable progress. Dr. Owen, who was at that time Vice-Chancellor, had a great kindness for him," &c. Ingenuous and right-hearted young men become greatly attached to those who are pleased thus generously to notice and kindly to patronize them. In this case, the young, diligent, and plastic student was worthy of his distinguished friend; and it is no matter of surprise, on this ground only, that on Church government, and perhaps on other subjects, he became a convert to his patron, the Vice-Chancellor.

John Westley having honourably acquitted himself at Oxford, and taken his degree, is next found at Melcombe, or, as the united towns are now known, at Weymouth. To Oxford he had taken the inestimable treasure of genuine piety: this he not only held fast, but also associated with it valuable accredited learning; and, as proof of both his piety and wisdom, immediately on his return to Dorset, he is found in the closest connexion with the Christian church. His collegiate education had not led to vanity, nor to suppose himself too great or too learned to be, what was his best, his ennobling distinction, namely, a humble Christian. Duty, as he apprehended it, led him not to the most honoured, but the

"gathered church" at Weymouth. He thus avoided the snares of the world, so dangerous to the young; and took the best means, in communion with the wise and the good, to learn those lessons of self-distrust, and detain that degree of piety, for which nothing can be equivalent in a Christian Minister. Awaiting the voice of heaven, to this important work he was in due time called; first, occasionally among his own people, at Radipole, also, which is two miles distant from Weymouth; and among the seamen along shore. These labours were not only approved by judicious Christians and able Ministers, but were also attended with success, in the apparent conversion of souls. At length he was fully dedicated to the Ministry: his own church, by fasting and prayer, recommended him to the proper ecclesiastical authorities: when examined and approved by these, he was appointed by the Trustees in May, 1658, to the vicarage of Winterbourne-Whitchurch, in Dorsetshire. The following is copied from the ecclesiastical records of this parish:—

"WINTERBOURNE-WHITCHURCH.

"Vicars—Tobias Walton, 1603. John Westley, M. A. 1653; ejected, 1662. Edward Sutton, instituted, 1679."

Winterbourne-Whitchurch is on the great western road, five miles from Blandford, towards Dorchester. To the traveller going westward, the church is the most conspicuous object, as he descends to the village; but coming from the west it is hid, until he ascends the hill on the western extremity. The income of Mr. Westley's vicarage was not above £30 per annum; and it is not known that Turnwood, an adjoining village, where he occasionally preached, afforded him any thing additional. When appointed to his living, he was promised an augmentation of £100 per year; but the great and rapid political changes of his day prevented this from ever coming to his hands.

Being settled, and Providence apparently directing his way, he soon suitably married. The wife of his youth, and who long survived him as his "desolate widow," would not be otherwise known to posterity, than the niece of Dr. Thomas Fuller, but by the following letter from the late Rev. John Wesley to his brother Charles. The date is London, January 15th, 1763; and it states, "So far as I can learn, such a thing has scarce been for these thousand years before, as a son, father, grandfather, *alavus, trilarus*, preaching the Gospel, nay, and the genuine Gospel, in a line. You know, Mr. White, some time Chairman of the Assembly of Divines, was my grandfather's father." By this letter, so happily preserved, we may learn the estimation in which Mr. Westley was held, by his connexion with Ministers, certainly among the most distinguished in the west of England. In the days of John Westley, there were two very celebrated men, whose name was John White. The one, the Assessor in the Assembly of Divines, and better known as the Patriarch of Dorchester: the other whom Clarendon designates "a grave lawyer," was the member for Southwark, 1640, and Chairman of