

THE CANADA BAPTIST MAGAZINE.

No. 6.

MONTREAL, DECEMBER, 1840.

Vol. IV.

BAPTIST WORTHIES.—No. VII.

JOHN BUNYAN.

In the list of Baptist Worthies, the name of John Bunyan ought to follow that of John Gifford. While true religion or English literature remains, the name of Bunyan will not be forgotten, nor remembered without veneration. Bunyan is a universal favourite. Princes, statesmen, philosophers, and poets, celebrate his praise. The common people read his works with delight. Some of those works have been translated into various languages, and have obtained a wide circulation. Hence his character, history, writings, and imprisonment, are almost universally known: for who has not heard of the Elstow tinker, in early life the ringleader of sport and wickedness on the village green, afterwards becoming the glorious dreamer in Bedford Jail, where he conceived and wrote the Pilgrim's Progress.

Bunyan was born, A. D., 1628, at Elstow, a village near Bedford. His father was a tinker, very poor, and "of that rank in life that is meanest and most despised of all the families in the land." Both his parents were "honest and bore a fair character;" nor did they neglect the education of

their son, who says, "they put me to school, to learn me to read and write, according to the rate of other poor men's children." But whatever was the amount or quality of his education, it taught him neither to fear God, nor to regard man—for, from a child, he says, "I had but few equals for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God. Yea, so settled and rooted was I in these things, that they became as a second nature to me." He was passionately fond of the village sports so common in those days among the enemies of Puritanism and liberty—such as leaping, dancing, May-poles, May-games, and Morrice dances—recommended to all his loving subjects by James I., in the Book of Sports, which was ordered to be read in all the churches of England! When seventeen years old, Bunyan entered the Parliamentary army, then flushed with recent victories, under the generalship of Fairfax and Cromwell—shared with his compatriots in the dangers and glory of the battle of Naseby, and afterwards was present at the siege of Leicester, where he experienced a merciful interposition of providence,