

1770.—“ We had a poor sermon at church. However, I went again in the afternoon, remembering the words of Mr. Philip Henry: ‘ If the preacher does not know his duty, I bless God that I know mine.’ ”

Puritanism.

The following extracts are taken from “ The Puritan Commonwealth,” by the late Mr. Oliver, a Boston Lawyer, himself belonging to a family which occupies a distinguished place in the whole history of Massachusetts. It is a work of very deep interest, and we hope to quote more largely from it at a future time.

Rapid spread of dangerous errors among Puritans:

“ In the Primitive Church, when faith was bright and strong, Christianity shrunk from the presence of a doubt. A single heresy, whenever it exhibited itself, was sufficient to summon from the four corners of Christendom a cloud of witnesses, who, mighty in truth, would cast it forth as an unclean thing! Behold these zealous Puritans, hardly yet weaned from the mother that bore them, and with the experience of scarcely ‘ a lustre of years,’ sitting in judgment on ‘ eighty-two blasphemous, heretical and erroneous’ principles, which, under their own system of culture, had sprung up on the virgin soil of Massachusetts! Three weeks of heated discussion were consumed by this synod. The angerings of disputation was relieved only by the obscuring expression. The controversialists lost themselves in the most cloudy regions of abstruse theology, and dealt in terms as vague as they were incomprehensible.”

The Church of England:

“ The Church of England was no phantom, conjured up by the diseased imagination of a victorious monarch. Its chauns were sung before the barbarians of the North had swept like a tempest over the fertile provinces of degenerate Rome. Traditions, revealing glimpses of truth through the darkness of those early ages, still delights to recount how the great Tentmaker himself carried the laws of Christianity not only to the Romans, but also to the Scythians, the Huns and the Britons. Legends are still extant which relate how British kings, though vassals to Rome, voluntarily submitted to a nobler servitude at the foot of the Christian Church. And the venerable Bede narrates with pride the triumph of the first British martyr, ere the light of Christianity had dawned upon the hearts of the Pagan tyrants of the world.”

SUPERSTITION.—They that are against superstition oftentimes run into the wrong side. If I will wear all colours but black, then am I superstitious in not wearing black.

They pretend not to abide the Cross because it is superstitious: for my part, I will believe them when I see them throw their money out of their pockets, and not till then.

TRADITION.—Say what you will against tradition, we know the signification of words by nothing but tradition. You will say, the Scripture was written by the Holy Spirit, but do you

understand what language ’twas written in? No. Then for example, take these words (*In principio erat Verbum*). How do you know these words signify (*the beginning was the Word*) but by tradition, because somebody has told you so?

PARITY.—This is the juggling trick of the parity; they would have nobody above them, but they do not tell you they would have nobody under them.

LITURGY.—There is no Church without a Liturgy, nor indeed can there be conveniently, as there is no school without a grammar. One scholar may be taught otherwise upon the stock of his acumen, but not a whole school. One or two that are piously disposed, may serve themselves their own way, but hardly a whole nation.

To know what was generally believed in all ages, the way is to consult the Liturgies, not any private man’s writings. As, if you would know how the Church of England serves God, go to the Common Prayer Book, consult not this nor that man.—*Selden’s Table Talk*.

If you forget God when you are young, God may forget you when you are old.

As it sometimes rains when the sun shines, so there may be joy in a saint’s heart when there are tears in his eyes.

INFLUENCE.—The truest way to aid the cause of religion is—to be religious.

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