

THE

CHRISTIAN BANNER.

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"
"This is love, that we walk after his commandments."

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A NARRATIVE

OF THE ORIGIN AND FORMATION OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION.

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They were next engaged in making out "a directory for public worship" instead of the old liturgy. This directory passed the assembly with great unanimity, none but the independents demurring much about it. It was, however, with much difficulty introduced into the congregations throughout the kingdom, and the parliament were obliged the next summer to pass another ordinance obliging the "common prayer" to be cast out of all the churches, and the new directory to be the law of worship. Great tyranny was exercised in getting the people to worship according to the new directory. A fine of five pounds for the first offence, ten for the second, and a year's imprisonment for the third, was the penalty for only reading the common prayer in private families. "All ministers who do not observe the directory in all cases of public worship, shall forfeit forty shillings." This ordinance was issued August 23, 1645. "These," says Mr. Neal, "were the first fruits of presbyterian anarchy." The baptists, too, at this time, were written against, preached against, and some of them shut up in prison; and even one Mr. Otes in Essex was tried for his life for the murder of Anne Martin, because she had died a few days after she was baptized. "On the next day after the establishment of the directory, Dr. William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, received sentence of death. He had been a prisoner in the Tower almost three years, upon sundry impeachments. His trial excited great interest and occupied much time." He had been a tyrant in the church and state, and a cruel persecutor. But the presbyterians measured to him as he had measured to others. Mrs. Macaulay in her history of England, vol. iv. page 147, very correctly observes that "the parliament ought to have left this aged prelate an example of their mercy, rather than to have made him the monument of their justice." "It is plain, adds she, that he fell a sacrifice to the intolerant principles of the Presbyterians, a sect who breathed as fiery a spirit of persecution as himself." The archbishop died by the executioner in the seventy-second year of his age, and the twelfth of his archepiscopacy. Such were the religious spirit and zeal of the times, and such the proceed-