

toleration. A stern Calvinist himself, Vane proclaimed the sacred maxim "that EVERY MAN who worshipped God according to the dictates of his conscience was entitled to the protection of the state;" and in this avowal he was sustained by those staunch Independents, Cromwell, Marten and St. John. Forster, in his "Statesmen of the Commonwealth," says that "Vane heralded the way for Milton and Locke, for the great statesman Fox, and for his noble kinsman in our time, Lord Holland." During Pym's life, Vane followed his leadership, and for several years was a confidential adviser of Oliver Cromwell. On every great measure of the House of Commons, Vane's name appears. He supports the abolition of the Star Chamber and High Commission Courts, and the enactment of habeas corpus; it is Vane that carries up the impeachment to the Lords against that great tyrant, Archbishop Laud, and it is Vane that obtains for Pym the proof of those crimes that send Strafford to the executioner. Vane is one of the first to advocate that famous "root and branch petition" that ends in the overthrow of the Bishops. He is of that long-to-be-remembered Westminster Assembly, where he unsuccessfully endeavours to inspire the Presbyterian divines with those principles of religious freedom that to him were so dear. Vane, too, was the Commissioner by whose persistence the word "League" was inserted in the title of the Covenant by which the Parliamentarians of England and the people of Scotland bound themselves together. It was Vane who had inserted in the covenant itself the words "According to the Word of God," before the words "and the example of the best reformed churches;" words which completely altered the sense of the covenant that had been drawn up by the Presbyterians. Had it not been for these words, many of the Independents would not have subscribed the covenant, and those who would have subscribed it would have been bound by it to set up Presbytery as the church government of the English nation. As it was, the Presbyterians charged the Independents with being covenant-breakers, which they repelled by quoting the words of the covenant. They even maintained that they did more than the covenant required, as they had concurred in the establishment of presbytery; while they insisted that the Congregational and all other evangelical churches should be tolerated. Vane, Cromwell, and some others, would have tolerated Jews, Roman Catholics, and Unitarians.

All historians agree in the statement that the Presbyterians would consent to no settlement of their religion on the nation, with toleration for other religious bodies. It was this intolerance of theirs that drew from John Milton that harsh poem, in which occurs the following lines:—

"Because you have thrown off your prelate lord,
And with stiff vow renounc'd his liturgy,
.... Dare ye for this abjure the civil sword,
To force our consciences that Christ set free
And ride us with a classic hierarchy,
.... New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large."

It is but justice to the Presbyterians to remark that, half a century later, that body disavowed the intolerance of their predecessors, but for which the Presbyterian might have been the national religion of Britain.

A half a century had gone by since the first Congregational church had been established in England, when the Long Parliament met; a quarter of a century had elapsed since Jacob had returned from Leyden, to re-transplant Congregationalism into Southwark; and to all human appearances little progress had been made on British soil, except in the new settlements across the