A THESIS

on

ROBERT BROWNE (1550?-1633) as CHURCHMAN and THEOLOGIAN.

Submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Ph.D. at Edinburgh University by Dwight Chichester Smith, B.A., B.D. (Yale University).
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For nearly two and a half centuries after his death, Robert Browne was known only by the unsympathetic accounts of those who were hostile to him and all for which he stood. Even when Hanbury wrote his "Historical Memorials" in 1839, he knew of no evidence concerning Browne's life, other than the stories preserved by his opponents. Then, forty years later, Dexter brought new light to the subject, by his discovery of Browne's "True and Short Declaration," and by his attempt to understand the man and to interpret him fairly. This pioneering work in the modern study of Browne led to the reprinting of the "True and Short Declaration." A few years later, it was used effectively by Williston Walker in "The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism" in 1893, and by Mackennal, who wrote "The Story of the English Separatists" in the same year. At the end of another decade, T.G. Crippen published a reprint of Browne's "Treatise of Reformation," thus making Browne's first known publication available to a much wider group of readers than those who could contrive to visit the few libraries where Browne's works might be found. Crippen's introduction to the Treatise was based largely upon Dexter's account of Browne.

Crippen's work in 1903 marked the beginning of a period of renewed interest in Browne. In the next few years Burrage, Cater, and Powicke all contributed materially
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to the general knowledge and understanding of Browne. Bur­
rage's discovery and publishing of Browne's Letter to his
Uncle Flower, and "A Reproofe of Certayne Schismaticall
Persons" went far to clarify the hitherto apparently in­
soluble contradictions appearing in Browne's life. Bur­
rage's "True Story of Robert Browne" was in 1906 an able
attempt to fulfil the promise of its title, although nume­
rous blank spaces and uncertainties had to be left in this
account of Browne's life. Some of those remaining ques­
tions were answered by Cater who, having studied records at
Stamford, Northampton, Peterborough, and Achurch, published
his findings in the Transactions of the Congregational
Historical Society. Still further important evidence was
to be included by Serjeantson in his "History of the Church
of St. Giles, Northampton" in 1911. Meanwhile, Powicke had
written on Brownism for the Encyclopaedia of Religion and
Ethics in 1908, and in 1910 published "Robert Browne,
Pioneer of Modern Congregationalism." In these accounts,
he included the findings made available by Burrage and
Cater, and also helped to clarify various problems of
interpretation as to Browne's motives and intentions. In
1912, Burrage included a considerable comment on Browne in
his "Early English Dissenters," correcting his True Story
at certain points on which additional information had come
to light since 1906. Even then, however, Burrage did not
realize that Serjeantson's research had at last solved the question of Browne's excommunication. Further information relating to Browne was presented by Peel in 1920 in "The Brownists in Norwich and Norfolk in 1580", and by A.F. Scott Pearson in his Life of Cartwright in 1925.

So far as the writer's knowledge extends, the above account includes all the important published work relating to Robert Browne during the past century. Other books have, of course, mentioned him, but have not added anything new to what is known about him. For twenty-five years, nothing has been done to bring the account of Browne up to date by gathering together all the known relative facts about the man and his teachings. When the writer, therefore, began to investigate the literature bearing upon Browne, in order to understand and evaluate him as Churchman and Theologian, it became apparent that the task should include work of three different sorts. For this reason, the chapters which follow are divided into three parts.

Part One, including the first four chapters, presents the historical facts relating to our subject. The first two chapters give an account of the Elizabethan Church problem, seeking to explain the circumstances which influenced Robert Browne. The third and fourth chapters present the most complete account of his life which can be
written at present. The writer believes that it presents also the most satisfactory explanation of Browne's character.

Part Two consists of seven chapters, which give the substance of Browne's known writings. The course of Browne's argument is followed in each case, and a considerable amount of direct quotation is included, so that the author's style and method, as well as his arguments, may be understood. The writer believes that this section constitutes the only summary dealing with all of Browne's extant works. Dexter, Walker, Burrage, and Powicke have each presented portions of Browne's writings, in condensed form, but none of them has given the substance of all seven so that they may be closely compared, as to development and evident point of view in the writing. It may be noted that Powicke, who gives almost nothing concerning the "Treatise Vpon the 23 of Matthewe," and scarcely more with regard to "A True and Short Declaration," does include a discussion of what Browne seems to have written in reply to Bredwell. The present writer has omitted such material from Part Two, because the only available record of it is in the possibly distorted and certainly inadequate references made by Bredwell himself.

Part Three takes the material presented in the two preceding sections, and on the basis thus provided
undertakes to evaluate Robert Browne as Churchman and Theologian. The writer offers the conclusions thus reached as the judgment concerning Browne which is most positively indicated by the facts known about the man and his teachings.
PART ONE

ROBERT BROWNE and the ELIZABETHAN CHURCH CONTROVERSY.
CHAPTER ONE

The First Fifty Years of English Protestantism.

Robert Browne lived in an age which is, perhaps, unsurpassed in the variety of its interests to students of many subjects. Certainly one cannot begin to understand English literature unless one is familiar with the Elizabethan period. Still less can one explain the developments of modern history without knowing what happened in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. So, too, must the student of modern Church History look to the same era if he would know the background of English-speaking Protestantism.

When one investigates the development of Protestant thought, he discovers that one of its most important figures is Robert Browne. Out of a life which lasted more than eighty years, he spent about a decade in vigorous protest against the Church of England. Despite the comparative brevity of those years their result was an impression so indelibly fixed upon English thought that "Brownist" remained a by-word long after Browne himself was lost in obscurity. Important as his teachings were, they cannot be fully understood unless we know the man as well. If, as Pierce contends, Brownism was "the only original English
contribution to the ecclesiastical interpretation of the New Testament", then we shall want to know more about both it and its author. To do so, however, we must also call to mind the salient facts in the Elizabethan church controversy. No man is likely to be understood except in the framework of his own time and place. Especially is it true, when a man has gained importance because of his part in a controversy, that the whole trend of that conflict must be passed in review if he is to be fitted into his proper place.

The Elizabethan church conflict is not to be understood unless we remember that its origins were in political as well as religious affairs, and that those who participated most actively in it were, themselves, subject to the interplay of those two types of motive. This was true from the very moment that Henry VIII established the Church of England as an entity independent of Rome. His act was politically important because the Roman Church refused to sanction Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, and as a consequence the question of legitimate succession to the English throne was involved. So urgent

(1) Pierce: An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts, London 1908, p. 54.
did Henry consider the matter that he dared to risk all 
that would be meant by a break with Rome. He declared 
the doctrine of Royal Supremacy which, whether he foresaw 
the fact or not, was certain to touch every national 
cause. He gambled on the loyalty of the English people to 
king and country, and he won. To ensure success, however, 
he invoked the Protestant ideas which were already more 
effectively at work in the land, thanks to the influence 
of Wycliff, than Henry himself realized. The counties 
most impregnated with Lollardy gave him the support which 
he so desperately needed against the Pope. Later, those 
same counties provided the martyrs under Mary; and later 
still they produced the backbone of English Puritanism.

Henry was more prepared to appeal to Protestant 
zeal than to gratify it. With one eye on German alliances, 
he advocated the Articles of Religion of 1536, which were 
especially Lutheran. Even then, however, if Mackennal's 
interpretation of events is sound, the sentiment for reform

(1) Mackennal: The Story of the English Separatists, 
London 1893, p. 9

(2) Ibid p. 9f.
in England had already moved beyond such a position.

The Articles, based on the Bible and the three creeds, were suggestive of Luther's teaching on transubstantiation, confession, veneration of and prayer to the saints, and justification by faith. The Six Articles of 1539 were still less Protestant. They affirmed the real presence of our Lord in the sacraments, and provided for communion in one kind only, a celibate clergy, private masses, auricular confession to the priest, and death by burning for all who denied the first article, or persistently opposed the others. Even the king and bishops tried to mitigate the severity of Parliament's decision, while both at home and abroad note was taken of the fact that the English Reformation bore many resemblances to Romanism. Its political nature was all the more apparent.

Henry could not quench the hopes he had aroused, however, and the zeal for reform continued. On his death, Edward VI, Henry's young son, became king under the Protectorate of his uncle, the Earl of Hertford, an ardent Calvinist. Later Hertford was driven from power by Northumberland, who was willing to proceed much more drastically on the road to reform. In the five years that Edward reigned, many measures were adopted to purge the Church of the superstitions and abuses which had fallen

Upon it.

Among the reforms undertaken were these:

1. The Six Articles of 1539 were repealed, and the Forty-two Articles (later reduced to Thirty-nine) were introduced.

2. A new Prayer-Book was instituted in 1549, followed by a more definitely protestant Second Prayer-Book in 1552.

3. Priests were permitted to marry.

4. Recusant Roman Catholic clergy were actively proceeded against.

Protestant dreams of a new day were rudely shattered, however, when Edward died in 1553, and his half-sister Mary came to the throne. As a devoted Roman Catholic, she set about the restoration of the outlawed Church, and the development of counter-persecutions.

1. All priests who had married in Edward's reign were expelled from their posts.

2. The Prayer-Books were burned, and the Mass was revived.


4. Mary was married to King Philip of Spain.

5. Three hundred Protestants were burned at the stake.


Some churchmen recanted, thus making their peace with Mary. Others presented an appearance of conformity sufficient to save themselves. Many, however, fled to the continent, finding refuge in various centres of the Reformation, and greatly increasing their measure of zeal. The result was that, in quite different ways, Edward and Mary each gave an impetus to Protestantism.

As may be inferred, there was widespread resentment against Mary and her bishop, Bonner. The feeling may be illustrated in one report of the time which announced, "the lorde began to shewe mercy unto Englands by removinge Queene Mary by deathe." When the exiled reformers returned, following Elizabeth's accession to the throne in November 1558, they found much hatred against all those who represented the former regime. Bishops were being called "butchers" to their faces; and when Bonner was thrown into prison, it was said that not even confessed murderers would associate with him.

In such an atmosphere, Robert Browne, who must have been born during Edward's reign, would be growing up. While

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(2) A Briefe Discourse of the Troubles Begun at Frankfort, London 1907, p. 223; Essays Congregational and Catholic, London 1931 (Essay by Peel: From the Elizabethan Settlement to the Emergence of Separatism) p. 241 quotes this.

(3) Pierce: op. cit. p. 4f quotes "Zurich Letters", vol. I, p. 82, a letter written by John Jewel.
there is no record of suffering inflicted upon any member of his immediate family, we may be sure that the growing lad must have heard repeated tales of the Marian persecutions, until it would become fairly second nature for him to think of Roman Catholics as instruments of Satan.

The returning reformers brought with them a more learned, evangelical, and experienced theory of the reformed church, which they were burning to establish. Their hopes were, however, doomed to disappointment. Elizabeth was very much her father's daughter. For national reasons she wanted a strong church, independent of Rome; but the religious phase of reform meant little if anything to her. Intellectually she was a Protestant, but as a matter of practical fact, religion was an affair of policy for her. She compensated for a feeble spiritual faith by having a passionate fondness for show and grandiose display in any public function, whether religious or secular. She was estranged from Rome by her claim of legitimacy, but she could not understand those who, because of convictions, opposed her "confused liking for medieaval ceremonials." Was she not queen and supreme governor in matters both spiritual and temporal? Let the people, then, accept her views without making any

(2) Pierce, op. cit. p. 6.
trouble about it! Besides, her aptitude for statecraft led her to subordinate all personal matters to political ends. Not only religion but matrimony as well were instruments for her to use in that more absorbing task.

"While the Spanish support needed security, the queen favoured a Catholic claimant for her hand . . . On the other hand, when favour had to be made with reforming Scotland, or it was wise to rouse the sluggish Philip of Spain by coquetting with his rebellious and protestant Netherlands, the queen equally said the contrary as to her own beliefs, and encouraged other matrimonial plans; . . . religious convictions with Elizabeth, as with Philip and other leaders in the religious contest, were continually subordinated to other considerations."

This was a time when the national morale was at a low ebb. A contemporary paper in the Record Office, entitled "Distresses of the Commonwealth", lists the following items, in the course of a gloomy survey of national life:

The Queen poor; the realm exhausted; the nobility poor and decayed; want of good captains and soldiers; the people out of order; division among ourselves.

Peel suggests that such a state of affairs was increased

(1) Heron, pp. 92ff.


by the fact that the Reformation in England was largely secular and political in motive, rather than religious, as it was in other lands. The reaction to breaking Rome's power would naturally result, therefore, in at least a temporary decline in moral tone, and a movement from liberty to license. We see such a deficiency in moral and religious principle reflected in the character of the queen. Moreover, the people, accustomed as they were to accept authoritarian dogma without question, were content to accept her word without any recourse to the dictates of faith. Laymen and clergy alike, longing only for peace and a chance to recover from exhaustion, were willing to drift along under any rules that did not press them too hard. So far as most of them were concerned, the queen had a free hand to play the game of expediency.

Nor is this unflattering picture of the national spirit drawn merely from disgruntled complaints of hyper-critical Puritans. Even in Edward's reign there had been many complaints about the lack of good pastors, the abuses of non-residence and plurality, extreme simony, prostitution of patronage, and impropriations. Now the same complaints, and more, were raised on all sides, even in

(1) Peel, op. cit., p. 272.
10.

Frere, whose sympathies are with the authorities of the Church, admits that after six years of Elizabeth's reign scarcely two hundred of the old Marian clergy had been dismissed, while the majority who remained were of questionable fitness and capacity. Furthermore, the prevalent practices of pluralism and non-residence made the state of affairs more deplorable than even the figures might suggest. Fifteen to twenty-five per cent of the nation's parishes had only the nominal services of clergymen who might rarely if ever appear among the flocks they were supposed to shepherd. In 1560 the archdeaconry of Colchester, for example, reported nearly a third of its parishes without any service of parson, vicar or curate. In Middlesex, vacancies continued seven, eight, even twelve years, without any appointment being made. The Dean of Carlisle was English Ambassador to Paris; and in his absence there was no resident substitute, nor were any accounts kept. (2)

Pierce quotes official reports from Wales during this same period, revealing an even more deplorable state of affairs than prevailed in England. (3)

To realize still more clearly what church life at that time might involve, we must remember that even if a church had a resident minister his services would probably consist of little more than a perfunctory reading of the prescribed liturgy. In more than half the cases

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(1) Peel, op. cit. p. 243, 275f many instances cited, with quotation from a letter written from Parker to Grindal in 1560, lamenting the state of affairs.

(2) Frere pp. 104ff.

(3) Pierce: John Penry, His Life, Times, and Writings, London 1923, pp. 120ff.
there would be no preaching from one year's end to another, since the majority of the clergy were "dumb dogs" as they were called at that time.

The problem of ministerial qualifications was, indeed, a sore point in the Elizabethan Church. The Puritans claimed that the only valid type of ministry was that which included regular preaching. To Elizabeth, that was nonsense. The minister's task as she saw it was to administer orderly services in the manner prescribed by the Prayer-Book. She thought the Church should "have few preachers and that three or four might suffice for a county." To her way of thinking a much more important matter was the celibacy of the clergy. But for persistent opposition from her trusted adviser Cecil, she would have forbidden the clergy to marry.

Tension was bound to grow within the Church so long as the queen looked on the Church as an institution based on tradition, and useful for political purposes, while the Reformers regarded it with earnest zeal as an

(1) Frere, op. cit.
(3) Frere, p. 69.
institution founded solidly upon the New Testament, and
divinely established. Pierce says that the supreme event
for the history of the Reformation in England was the
publication of Tyndale's New Testament, "so perfectly done
that the English have never realized that it is a trans-
lation." Even more important than its style was its con-
tent. When Reformers were lodged in jail, they protested
that they had only obeyed the royal injunction to "the
diligent reading and sincere obedience thereof." Elizabeth
indulged in a great contradiction when she published Tyn-
dale's New Testament, and at the same time tried to per-
petuate the Tudor idea of absolutism in Church and State.
For the very translation of the New Testament in contem-
porary language was a major blow in the struggle to free
the individual, who was united to Christ by faith and
obedience, from the domination of the priesthood. Indeed,
however much the controversies over vestments and ornaments
may seem to have been disputes about superficial matters of
taste, they were in fact rooted in the profound issue of
the nature of Christian faith and the Church.


(2) Strype: Annals of the Reformation (4 vols.) Oxford
1824, IV p. 131 quotes a letter to the queen, offer-
ing this explanation; Pierce: Hist. Int., p. 3,
cites this reference.

(3) Mackennal, p. 13.
Even as we say this, we must admit that there were merits in Elizabeth's ecclesiastical policy. For instance, she was amazingly tolerant of doctrinal differences in a day when heresy was commonly persecuted; and she refused to engage in either controversy or persecution on such issues. Her subjects were free to think as they pleased, provided they would go through the motions of outward conformity. The Marian clergy might say that they were made to suffer for conscience's sake; but in the eyes of the government their offense was civil disobedience, and it was with this that they were charged.

Recognizing this argument in Elizabeth's defence, we may still be critical of some parts of her policy. At the same time, however, we ought to recognize the fact that from her point of view that policy was exceedingly lenient; and in the light of those times it marked a forward step.

Frere draws attention to a "Declaration of the Queen's proceedings since her reign" which was drawn up in 1570, although it was never published. Rehearsing the gentleness of her rule, the mildness of her justice, the purely defensive character of her arms, and the peaceableness of her kingdom, it went on to make the

(1) Peel, op. cit. p. 251. Frere, p. 54.
14.

following points with respect to her ecclesiastical policy:\(^{(1)}\)

1. She claimed no more authority than her predecessors enjoyed.

2. Her policy did not claim to define faith, nor to change ceremonials.

3. It did not claim to minister word and sacraments.

4. It accepted the duty of seeing that her subjects lived in faith and obedience to the Christian religion.

5. It saw to it that ecclesiastical government was duly carried on.

6. Without any inquisition, it merely demanded that people profess the Christian faith as defined by the Holy Scriptures and the Creeds.

7. It forced no ceremonies or externals on those who outwardly conformed.

8. It utterly denied the Pope's claim to surpass this authority.

9. Whatever severity was exercised towards the disobedient was more than matched by gentleness and consideration for those who obeyed, and by the granting of liberty of conscience so far as was consistent with proper execution of the law.

Immediately upon her accession, Elizabeth met the problem of undoing what had been done in Mary's reign. She secured passage, by the Parliament of 1559, of the Act of Supremacy. Article VII of that Act denied the right of

\(^{(1)}\) Frere, p. 146f.
any external authority to claim the allegiance or obedience (1) of Englishmen, and Article VIII asserted the spiritual and (2) temporal authority of the Crown. The same Parliament passed the Act of Uniformity, which was intended to be a compromise measure. Article II restored the liturgy of the Second Prayer-Book of Edward with slight changes, while Article XIII prescribed the ornaments (including vestments) (3) provided for in the First Prayer-Book of Edward.

Even before these Acts were passed, the astute observer could foresee troubles. In 1558 William Cecil, who was later to become Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer, the great Lord Burghley, prepared "A Device for the Alteration of Religion." Romanists and Puritans, he saw, could never be reconciled to any compromise. Even if the former welcomed what promised to save them from persecution, the latter would surely "call the alteration a cloaked papistry (4) or a mingle-mangle". Feeling was also tense about the definition of the relationship of Crown and Church. Elizabeth finally decided to use the title "Supreme Governor" in the Act of Supremacy, and to have an ecclesiastical commission which should act under the authority of the Crown.

(2) Ibid, p. 6
(4) Frere, p. 5.
(5) Frere, pp. 18ff.
The queen sought to pacify the Catholics by retaining what looked like the Mass, while the Reformers would welcome the language and ideas of the later and more evangelical liturgy. Doubtless the vast majority of her subjects were content with whatever she might decide, although Pierce insists that the number of Marian martyrs and Elizabethan Nonconformists indicates a considerable body of popular sentiment which would reject anything suggesting Rome. At any rate, the only ones likely to raise complaint were enthusiasts who would simply have to conform.

At the outset they did so, with more or less grace, accepting as temporarily unavoidable the plan which they heartily disliked. It was, in their eyes, a brief stop along the road to the full Genevan system. The First Prayer Book had always had critics, such as John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, in Edward's day, who went to prison because he "scrupled the vestments".


After Elizabeth's accession, hopes for thorough reformation were kindled anew, and vestments were even less popular. In 1559 John Jewell wrote to Peter Martyr, "The scenic apparatus of divine worship is now under agitation; ... as if Christ's religion could not exist without something tawdry." In 1562, he hoped that the requirement of the linen surplice would soon be dropped, since, "as to matters of doctrine, we have pared everything away to the very quick, and do not differ from your doctrine by a nail's breadth."

These hopes might have been realized, although the probability seems slight when we see how Elizabeth forced Archbishop Parker to adopt a more severe policy. Somehow, in spite of such evidence, the Reformers persisted in the hope that if only they could state their case to the queen she would interfere for them. Their cause was so transparently just, as they saw it, that they could not imagine how it could be denied. When the Convocation of 1563 met, they almost succeeded in passing a resolution which petitioned for six reforms. The 58 votes in favour of it were defeated by 59 in opposition.

(1) Zurich Letters (2 vols.) Parker Soc. Ed. Cambridge 1842, pp 23 & 100; Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 10; Tracts p. xxi quote from these letters.

(2) Pierce: Tracts p. xix.
The proposed reforms were:

1. Saints' days to be abolished, as a relic of popery.
2. The minister to face the congregation at time of prayer.
3. The sign of the cross to be omitted at baptisms.
4. Kneeling at communion to be at the discretion of the Ordinary.
5. The surplice to be the only required vestment.
6. Organs to be abolished in church services.

In 1563/4 there was resistance to uniformity at Oxford. The Puritan leaders there were Humphrey, who was President of Magdalen as well as Regius Professor of Divinity, and Sampson, who was Dean of Christ Church. Since wide diversity of practice existed throughout the land, Parker might have let the matter rest after a mild and ineffective reprimand. Elizabeth, however, had decided that pressure must be applied for conformity. She was at a critical point in diplomatic affairs. To offset France's power, she was exhibiting renewed interest in a marriage with the Archduke Charles. She told Guzman, the Spanish Ambassador, that at heart she was a Catholic herself. He

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(1) Peel, op. cit. p. 258. Powicke, op. cit. p. 5f.
retorted that the English preachers obviously did not share her view, since they were slandering her because of a silver crucifix in her private chapel. She said she would have crucifixes in all the churches; and shortly thereafter she wrote Parker that uniformity must be enforced. His efforts at evasion were fruitless. She hounded him into obedience; and he, in turn, deprived Sampson of his Deanery, and required Humphrey to compromise.

Of greater consequence, however, were the "Advertisements partly for the due order in the publique administration of common prayers and usinge the holy Sacramentes, and partly for the apparrell of all persons ecclesiasticall by vertue of the Queenes Maiesties letters commanding the same, the xxv day of January, etc.", which Parker issued in the Spring of 1566. Parker had attempted, without success, to secure an injunction from the queen. She insisted upon exercising the effective authority implicit in uniform obedience, but she would not commit herself in writing. Parker, having received orders without the authority to enforce them, decided to incorporate in the title of his "Advertisements" the explanatory clause about the queen's letters. He was tormented by the possibility that he might be made the scape-goat in case the Puritans

should challenge the legality of his "Advertisements". To his great relief, however, the opposition did not reach such a point.

Among other features, the "Advertisements" included notice that all preaching licenses, dated before 1 March, 1564/5, were cancelled, and might be renewed "on payment of iiiij pens for the writinge, parchment, and waxe" in the cases of those who duly conformed. Ceremonies and vestments were also specifically prescribed. A note was added to the effect that the queen would enforce these rules "for the time". Once more, Puritan hopes rose; but in vain. Indeed, this was the end of the old period of toleration. Henceforth the issue was clear. One either conformed or did not. (1)

Applying the new rules meant more trouble for Parker. It began at his very door-step, when Grindal refused to enforce the rules in London. Parker called 110 of the London clergy to Lambeth on 26 March 1566, and demanded that they sign their names with volo or nolo, to indicate whether or not they subscribed. He reported ruefully to Cecil that "61 confirmed; . . . 37 denied, of which number were the best and some preachers." The rank and file subscribing were, he confessed, such as might better be out of the ministry, being "mere ignorant and

(1) Frere: op. cit. p. 118; Peel: op. cit. pp. 262ff; Pierce: Hist. Int. pp. 11ff declares that English Protestant Nonconformity was born of the Advertisements.
vain heads." The situation was especially distasteful to him, since his own inclinations were against requiring vestments. Nearly a decade later he wrote to Burghley, "cap, tippet, surplice, or wafer bread, or any such" had never been important in his eyes except as they were related to the problem of ecclesiastical obedience.

"If I, or you, or any other named 'great Papists', he wrote, "should so favour the pope or his religion that we should pinch Christ's true Gospel, woe be unto us." (2)

There were two ways in which opposition to the "Advertisements" could find expression, and which Robert Browne employed fifteen years later to indicate his dissatisfaction with the Church. First, and more successful, was attack by printed pamphlets. "A briefe discourse against the outwarde apparrell and Ministering garmentes of the popish church" appeared in the Spring of 1566. It was answered by an anonymous "Briefe Examination for the Tyme of a Certaine Declaration lately put into print, etc.", which said that all learned men disavowed the complaints made by

(1) Correspondence of Matthew Parker, Cambridge 1853, p. 269f Frere pp. 181ff; Peel: op. cit. pp. 266ff; Pierce: Hist. Int., p. 14f describe this session with the London clergy.

(2) Parker Correspondence, p. 478f; Pierce: Tracts p. xxif quotes this.
those brought up "in prophane occupations". A speedy reply declared that many of the most learned men favoured reform, and pointed out that the very Apostles had been men of profane occupations. Alarmed at the prospect of future attacks by pamphlet, the authorities issued Injunctions on 29 June 1566, forbidding anyone to publish adverse criticisms of any law, statute, edict, or injunction, authorized by the Crown. This supplemented Injunctions of 1559 which had sought to suppress all publications except those approved by the Council or Bishops. To these, still more drastic restrictions were to be added later. Yet the flood of pamphlets continued. By the time Robert Browne began to write, the laws had become so strict that two men were hung for selling his pamphlets. Nevertheless, they continued to be circulated and read.

The other form of direct opposition was the assembling of dissenters in illegal services of worship. Since more people were directly involved than in the printing of tracts, the chances of discovery were all the greater. We find, however, that illegal conventicles had been held at various times in previous reigns.


(2) See Chapter II below.
23.

A law of 1400, in Henry IV's reign, declared in its preamble "that some had a new faith about the sacraments of the church, and the authority of the same; and did preach without authority, gathered conventicles, taught schools, wrote books against the Catholic faith, with many other heinous aggravations". In 1511, 6 men and 4 women were forced to abjure certain errors, and to reveal all others who held such errors, or kept private conventicles. Bonner's spies ferreted out secret congregations in 1556 and 1557, at a house in Bow Churchyard, and at the Saracen's Head in Islington. The culprits were tortured on the rack, and burned at the stake. Part of their offence was that they had used Edward's Service Book.

Despite similarities in cases, these instances were all different from those which now began to cause trouble. For they had been protests against Catholic rule, whereas what now occurred was overt revolt against the Protestant Church of England, participated in by Protestants. A group who assembled, ostensibly for a wedding, at Plumber's Hall on 19 June 1567, were arrested. They admitted being engaged in a service which included sermon and communion; and they said they objected "to the whole constitution of the Church lately reformed". Bishop Grindal tried vainly to reason with them. Their unlawful service book was the one which had been secretly used in Mary's day. Grindal, who


estimated their number at 200, said they were mostly women, lawless folk, with a few ministers, of little judgment or learning. Not only were they meeting in open separation, but they ordained officers and excommunicated seceders from their group.

The growing sentiment for reform led to the presentation of a bill to Parliament in 1568, aimed at the correction of four abuses.

1. To abolish superstitious elements in baptism.

2. To eliminate Papists from church offices and great livings.

3. To stop appointment of boys to church livings, their fathers gaining financially and doling out work to ill-paid curates.

4. To end the appointing of notorious incompetents, and the practice of pluralism.

The queen was enraged at the suggestions, however worthy, since they involved infringement of her prerogative. Strickland, their sponsor, was reprimanded. Further attempts in successive Parliaments met with a similar fate.

(1) A Parts of a Register (Edinburgh 1593) pp. 23-37 gives the prisoners' account of this examination. Hanbury I p. 17 says refugees from Holland helped them.

(2) Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 34.
Papal policy served to intensify the popular feeling for reform. On the advice of Alva, the Pope subsidized an attempt to rouse the Catholics of the North to revolt against Elizabeth, thinking to make capital of lingering Marian sentiment as well as sympathy for Mary of Scotland. The plot failed. Remembering Mary Tudor all too well, and not caring for the object lessons afforded by Catholic Spain and France, people felt that with all her faults, they would rather take their chances with Elizabeth. Frustrated in this attempt, the Pope tried Elizabeth in absentia at Rome, and excommunicated her. This failed also. The queen did not tremble, nor did her subjects rise. Even loyal Catholics resented having to choose between church and queen. When one, Felton, fixed a copy of the writ of excommunication of February 1570 to the Bishop's Palace gate in Paul's Churchyard, he was seized, hung, disembowelled, and quartered. In the eyes of his apologists he was a martyr to his faith. The State called it treason. Loyal Englishmen mocked at the Pope's impotency to win England. At the same time, they were anxious over the queen's own attitude. For at this juncture she deemed it advisable to renew friendship with France, and therefore began an apparently serious courtship of the Duke of Anjou, Catherine de Medici's son.

(1) Frere pp. 67, 148ff; Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 23; see also Neale: Queen Elizabeth, London 1934, chapters XI and XII.
Her own ministers were convinced that she intended to go through with it; and the Protestant party were in despair.

What amounted to the official statement of the Puritan case had been put by Thomas Cartwright, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, in six propositions which he delivered to John May, vice-chancellor, in 1569/70.

1. Names and functions of archbishops and archdeacons should be abolished.

2. Bishops and deacons should resume their apostolic functions of preaching and praying, and relieving the poor.

3. Ministers and presbyters should supplant the hierarchy in government of the Church.

4. Ministers should be located in definite charges.

5. Ministers should not solicit office as candidates.

6. The people, and not the bishops, should choose and ordain ministers.

Cartwright explained that the Puritan case was founded on two lofty motives: a sense of the moral personality of the nation, and a sense of responsibility to the parish. It was these purposes, he announced, and not ambition for place and power which prompted them to face not only opposition from the hierarchy, but the queen's displeasure as well, in the struggle for reformation within the Church. (2)

(1) Pierce: op. cit. p. 29; also Neale, p. 221f.

(2) Pearson: p. 28f; Hackenmull pp. 16ff; Frere p. 155; Powicke: op. cit. p. 14f.
Cartwright had many supporters at Cambridge, and also his most persistent opponent, John Whitgift, then Master of Trinity. When Whitgift was made vice-chancellor in 1570, one of his first acts was to eject his unsuccessful rival from the Lady Margaret chair. Like most church leaders of the time, Whitgift favoured Calvinist doctrines. When he was made Doctor of Divinity his thesis was "That the Pope is Antichrist". But in questions of church discipline, he was a rigid defender of the established order. His detractors attributed this to ambition, while his friends said it was the result of earnest conviction. The controversy came to be symbolized by these two champions. Thereafter no one imagined that it was an argument about vestments. Everyone saw that episcopacy was the real issue. Feeling ran high at Cambridge, not only over the personalities involved, but also over the question at stake. Remembering that Robert Browne was a student at Corpus Christi, or Bene't, while the argument was still tense, we see still more clearly why he grew deeply concerned over the church question.


(2) Strype: Whitgift I p. 18f; Pierce: Tracts pp. xxii-xxv.

(3) Strype: Ibid pp. 39-44; Frere p. 156.
It was officially decided to tolerate no insubordination. When Alcock suggested at Convocation in 1571 that the brethren who "scrupled the vestment" be treated leniently, the answer was a tightening of the rules. New licenses for preachers were demanded, which meant another weeding-out process.

Frere admits that the Puritans had grounds for complaint. Patronage and tenure of benefices were often degraded. On the other hand, he insists that the laity who profited by the system were much more enthusiastic about it than were high-minded ecclesiastics. The scandal reached most alarming proportions in ecclesiastical courts, where clever lawyers could win concessions for Romanist offenders, while Puritans suffered full penalties. Nevertheless, Frere contends that "the Bishops continually met obstinacy with leniency". He suggests that the small number of unreconciled Marian clergy explains why they were not more vigorously proceeded against. He denies that many Puritan ministers were ejected for failure to subscribe; "some of the leaders were taken in hand and the rest left untouched as yet". He cites the case of Gilbey, an active Puritan, author of at least two pamphlets, who was allowed to hold the vicarage of Ashby-de-la-Zouch until 1583.

Grindal was so loath to carry out the rules that he was moved from London to York, being replaced by Sandys. Sandys had at first resisted Elizabeth's demands for vestments, but now declared that since he was under strict orders his people must "draw in the same yoke" with him. He harried Romish recusants as well as Puritans, and would

(1) Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 34; Frere, p. 171.
(2) Frere, pp. 157, 173-5; Pearson pp. 58ff tells of Gilbey.
have suppressed the services which were permitted in the
house of the Portugese ambassador, if Parker had permitted
him to do so.

Prior to the opening of Parliament in 1572 John
Field and Thomas Wilcox published anonymously "An Admoni­
tion to the Parliament" which was widely read in spite of
prohibitions against it, and finally went through four
editions.

The pamphlet listed the marks of a true Church:

1. "Preachyng of ye worde purely".
2. "Ministering of the Sacramentes sincerely".
3. Proper ecclesiastical discipline.

The pamphlet also enumerated abuses, which
included those of the courts; and it offered reasons
against agreeing that the Prayer Book was "not re­
pugnante to the word of God", as well as arguments
against saint's days and other superstitious
practices.\(^2\)

The queen was enraged, not only at the criticism, but be­
cause it was addressed to Parliament instead of herself.
The authors were imprisoned in June, forced to confess,
and sentenced in October to a year in prison. It was too

\(^1\) Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 31ff.

\(^2\) Pierce: op. cit. pp. 36ff; Pearson p. 59f; Strype: Whi­
gift I pp. 55ff.

\(^3\) Heron p. 109; Frere pp. 178ff; Pearson pp. 61ff.
late to prevent the damage, however. The following summer the "Admonition" was still so widely read that Elizabeth issued a proclamation that all copies should be surrendered. None were given up.

To counteract the Admonition, Parker got Cooper, Bishop of Lincoln, to answer it from the open-air pulpit at Paul's Cross, 27 June 1572. Cooper accused the Non-conformists of "gaping for livings", and declared the existing policy the best possible for the times. A prompt "Answer" made havoc of his defence. "A Second Admonition" followed, which was subsequently attributed to Cartwright who had returned from the continent after an absence of two years. This pamphlet defended Field and Wilcox, and complained that they had received severe and illegal treatment in Newgate.

When word arrived of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day in France, 24 August 1572, Puritan feeling was greatly increased. Parker decided that Whitgift, who had driven Cartwright from Cambridge, should write an "Answer


(2) Pierce: op. cit. p. 41.

(3) Pearson pp. 46-57; on p. 74 he denies that Cartwright was its author. Pierce: op. cit. p. 42f; Heron, p. 115f; Perc pp. 178ff.
Whitgift defended the existing order by declaring the Apostolic system (for which the Puritans contended) to be unworkable in England:

1. The Apostolic Church was small, and intimately acquainted; the English parishes were large, and could not know who was fit to call.

2. Virtue and godliness made many in the Apostolic church fit to be chosen; the present Church abounded with "hypocrites, dissemblers, drunkards, whoremongers, etc."

3. The early Christians were wise and competent to judge; the members of the existing Church were mostly ignorant.

4. The Apostolic Church consisted of saints; the Church of England included idolaters, papists, and atheists within its parishes.

5. The Apostolic Church, being popular in discipline could be democratic; the Church of England was established, protected, and subject to the control of the civil state.

The following April saw "A Replye to An Answere, etc.", signed "T.C.", being issued from a secret press. Cartwright barely escaped to the continent. Whitgift responded with "A Defense of the Answer", within a year; and from

(1) Strype: Whitgift I p. 57; Pearson p. 68; Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 49.

(2) Pierce: Ibid page 49; Frere pp. 178ff; Pearson p.86 corrects details given by these two; Strype: op. cit. I pp. 102ff; also Pearson pp. 120, 131.
abroad arrived "A Second Replie" in 1575, and "The Rest of the Second Replie" in 1577. Whitgift, insisting that he had made sufficient answer, gave no further answer. Meanwhile, the secret press was discovered and suppressed, after which there came a lull in the printed controversy until Robert Browne began a fresh attack in 1582, with the books he wrote in Zealand.

The Puritans, in the meantime, continued to develop Presbyterian practice within the Church. Although Scott Pearson casts serious doubts on the long-cherished belief that the first Presbytery was organized at Wandsworth in November 1572, preliminary steps were being taken in various places, and Northamptonshire is said to have been the first county to be fully organized on the Presbyterian plan. One common form of activity was "Prophecying", a week-day meeting for clergy and lay members, in which the scripture was expounded, and those gifted with knowledge and eloquence might participate. By many bishops they were regarded as beneficial to the spiritual life of the Church.

(1) Strype: Whitgift I pp. 109-126-139; Pearson p. 88; PierceHist Int. p. 49.

(2) Pearson pp. 109ff; Burrage: op. cit. p. 93

(3) Heron pp. 122ff; Powicke: op. cit. p. 6; Pearson pp. 74-81.
Norwich Prophecyings were particularly famous. Elizabeth told Parker they must be stopped. The Privy Council, being appealed to, advised that they continue. The queen, however, commanded; and Prophecyings ceased in Norwich. Parker issued general instructions in 1574, forbidding them everywhere.

Matthew Parker died in 1575, and Grindal was moved from York to take his place. Sandys, in turn, went to York, and John Aylmer became Bishop of London. About the same time, Whitgift was made Bishop of Worcester. Grindal, who was the original of Spenser's gentle shepherd, Algrind, had been a loyal adherent of the old order until he sincerely accepted Protestantism. The low state of the clergy distressed him, and he tried to raise the standard of requirements. He believed firmly in Prophecying, although he favoured certain restrictions. Being instructed by the queen to put an end to the practice, he replied in the Autumn of 1576, saying that God had blest Prophecying, and that she should know that she, "a mortal creature, must soon appear

(1) Heron, pp. 117-120; Powicke: op. cit. p. 6. Pearson pp. 74-81.
(2) Frere, p. 186
before the judgement seat of the Crucified". The queen was in a fury. She ordered the bishops directly to reduce the amount of preaching permitted. Grindal tried vainly to retain the authority adhering to his position. Burghley and Leicester prompted the Privy Council to attempt a futile intercession. The archbishop was confined to his house, his office sequestered. After virtual imprisonment of seven years, he died on 6 July 1583, blind, heartbroken, and on the verge of being cast out by the queen. To the Puritans he was a model of Christian gentleness. Frere calls his attitude "a particular piece of characteristically puritan crankiness."

Aylmer, in London, erred in the other direction. His zeal against non-conforming groups included Roman Catholics, for which he was reprimanded by Burghley, since Elizabeth was just then much engrossed in her diplomatic courtship of Alençon. Whitgift, whose operations were some distance from London, pleased the queen better. Within a month of Grindal's death, he was elevated to the Primacy, and installed at Lambeth.


(2) Frere, p. 192
(3) Pierce: op.cit. p. 66. He was Anjou's younger brother.
CHAPTER TWO

The Primacy of John Whitgift.

We have seen that, as the controversy in the Church of England grew during the first half century of that Church's establishment, strain accumulated until serious trouble became inescapable. The dispute passed through its tragic phase of violence during the primacy of Whitgift. The fact that he was the Churchman upon whom devolved the greatest burden of responsibility led the Non-conformists of his own day, as well as their later apologists, to blame Whitgift personally for most of the suffering which occurred. In fairness to him, however, we must admit that his position was extremely difficult. The queen demanded that the archbishop secure uniformity in the Church. Being unable to achieve that end by voluntary agreement, Whitgift undertook to accomplish it by coercion. The attempt was foredoomed, but any man who hoped to stay on good terms with Elizabeth had to make it. When we come to examine Robert Browne's history in more detail, we shall see that the archbishop was willing to be lenient with anyone who would subscribe to the established ecclesiastical authority, even though he were the most notorious dissenter of his day. So long as one starts with Whitgift's presuppositions, such a policy seems not only generous but
fairly reckless in its leniency.

Furthermore, we must remember that Whitgift felt himself to be harrassed on all sides. Robert Browne was both a nuisance and a trouble-maker in his eyes, but he was only one of many whom Whitgift must try to control. If we review the first ten years of this primacy, we shall see not only the setting in which Browne's work was accomplished, but also the contending forces which competed for the attention and sympathy of the religiously-minded people of the decade.

Since we are apt to suppose that the Protestant Nonconformist problem was the only important issue before the Church, it may help us achieve a more correct perspective if we take note of the "Annales or Generall Chronicle of England", written in 1600 by John Stow, dedicated to Whitgift, and published in folio after Stow's death in 1615. Stow's interests were for the most part in political and military events, or else such odd items as that "Maister Francis Drake returned into England, having sailed round about ye world (as is affirmed)". For our specific purpose, however, the following items are of particular interest:

(1) Strype: Whitgift II p. 437.

1580: Stow reports the defeat of Italians and Spaniards who had been sent by the Pope to aid Desmond's rebellion.

1581: He reports a Proclamation "against the retaining of Jesuites and massing priests sowers of sedition, and other treasonable attempts." On 20 November, Campion and others condemned for high treason, and on 1 December "hanged, bowelled, and quartered". (1)

1583: "Elias Thacker was hanged at S. Edmonsbury in Suffolk on the fourth of June, and John Copine on the sixt of the same moneth, for spreading certaine bookes, seditiously penned by one Robert Browne against the Booke of common prayer, established by the lawes of this realme, their bookes so many as could be found were burnt before them." (2)

1584: He tells of 5 priests, "hanged, bowelled and quartered" on 7 Feb. (3)

1586: Archbishop Whitgift made a member of the Privy Council. (4)

1588: Several pages tell of the Armada's arrival and destruction. (5)

1591: 3 Seminary priests and 4 citizens who sheltered them, executed. (6)

1593: "Henry Barrow, gentleman, John Greenwood clarke, Daniel Studley girdler, Saxio Billot, gentleman, Robert Bowley, fishmonger" all indicted for felonies on 21 March, their offenses being connected with the distribution of books written by Barrow and Greenwood. (7)

"About the same time Penny, a Welshman, a principall penner and publisher of books intituled Martin marre prelate, was apprehended at Stebenheth, by the vicar there, and committed to pryson. In the moneth of Maie, he was arraigned at the kings bench at

Westminster, condemned of felonie, and afterward conuauied from the Gaite of the kinges bench to Saint Thomas Waterings, & there hanged." (1)

It may be noted that our citations from Stow include as many instances concerned with Roman Catholics, as those relating to Protestants, while the total of persons executed is greater. That proportion was considered important by contemporary observers, although later writers have tended to forget the fact. Disobedience to established authority was, in fact, a problem which faced Whitgift from both directions. We may well take note of a few facts in the matter of Roman Catholic Nonconformity.

Content to be quiet at the outset of Elizabeth's reign, and unwilling to gratify the Pope's desire for rebellion against the queen, Roman Catholics were nevertheless increasingly active in their disobedience, until it was necessary to add Wisbeach Castle to the number of prisons, even though only the clergy were punished. By 1573, recruits began to arrive from the Seminary at Douai; and by 1580 missionaries, trained in controversy and dissimulation, and prepared to face martyrdom, had arrived, to the number of 110. The Council became alarmed. A printer who repeatedly distributed pamphlets was executed in 1575. The

(1) Stow: p. 765.
next year, Cuthbert Mayne, formerly of Oxford, was arrested, tortured, and deprived of his books, pictures, trinkets, etc. A year later, he was seized, condemned, and executed. By an Act of 1571 the Roman Catholic religion was treasonous. Mayne declared his loyalty, but admitted that he would aid any invasion to restore Papal obedience. A dispensation from the Pope, allowing Catholics to profess loyalty to secular governments "rebus sic stantibus", was announced in 1580, but only strengthened prejudice against Catholics.

In 1579 Catholic intrigue made matters worse by supporting an attempt to capture Ireland. Memory of the fiasco led London Catholics to look with alarm on the arrival of two more Oxford men who arrived from Douai in the summer of 1580. Their names were Campion and Parsons. For a year they escaped detection in various parts of the country. Parliament acted against them by passing "An Act to retain the Queen's Majesty's subjects in their due obedience", in which was stated the alternative of loyalty to queen or pope. The same Parliament of 1581 passed an act forbidding the publication of slanderous views and seditious libels, which was later to be used against Separatists.

When Campion was seized in July 1581, the Pope's

(1) See Frere pp. 206-212.
dispensation of the previous year nullified his declaration of loyalty. He was asked to disavow the papal bull which tried to depose Elizabeth, and also the writ of excommunication against her. Refusing, he was executed as a traitor in December, along with two others. Burghley answered the outcry of protest which came from abroad. He pointed to lenient treatment shown the Marian clergy, in contrast to incessant intrigue by Pope and Jesuits. It being charged that one of Campion's fellow-victims was "pulled ... a foot longer than God made him", Burghley retorted that no English cruelties could compare with ordinary practice in Roman Catholic countries on the continent.

More executions followed. In 1582 there were eleven; in 1583, four. In the next twenty years over 160 Roman Catholics were put to death. Their friends said they were martyrs. Frere defends the Church authorities by insisting that there was danger of an invasion which might have led to an English St. Bartholomew's Day, so that severe measures were justified. Declaring that they died "for the deposing power of the Pope", he asks if that can be fairly called an essential part of the Christian religion.

A new oath was framed by which Catholics might disclaim the Pope's right to interfere with secular

(1) Frere, pp. 215-221, 238.
government, while holding to their doctrines and practices. Though many took this oath, plots continued, aiming at the assassination of Elizabeth, and the raising of Mary Stuart to the throne. So great was the resentment at them that Elizabeth's own coolness was probably all that prevented an outbreak of reprisals against the Catholics. When even the queen's household was infected by intrigue, Parliament, the Council, and public sentiment all demanded an end to this ceaseless threatening of national stability. Mary, Queen of Scots, was beheaded at Fotheringay Castle on 8 February 1587.

Within a year, England was beginning to be alarmed by reports of the Spanish fleet which was coming to wreak vengeance for the insults offered to the great Catholic power. The result was increased tension in dealings with Romish recusants, followed by a relaxation when the fleet was destroyed. But reports came of a second Armada in preparation, and vigilance was renewed. The Conventicle Act of 1593, originally intended to suppress Roman Catholic gatherings, was amended so as to include Brownists and Barrowists. It was proposed to impose the death penalty, but it was agreed to soften the penalty so that banishment would be the heaviest sentence, with heavy fines an alternative in case the offender had sufficient means to make it (1) attractive.

The course of reasoning which thus led to a law in which Catholics and Separatists were considered equally offensive, was the logical outcome of events. Although the two groups in question would have said that they had nothing whatever in common, from the government's point of view they belonged essentially in the same category. Indeed, if mutual suffering can make men feel akin, then these two extremes might have had cause for much sympathy, one for the other. We have taken note of the Roman Catholic martyrs. Let us now see what was happening on the other front of this ecclesiastical battle.

The first executions of Protestants, which we have cited from Stow, occurred shortly before Whitgift came to Lambeth. Bury St. Edmunds, a locality that became famous for Nonconformity, was the scene. John Coppin had been imprisoned in 1576 for two years, because of disobedience to church laws. Scarcely was he free before he was again sentenced for refusing to allow his child to be baptized by an "unpreaching minister", and for scandalous speech about the Church and the queen. He was joined in prison by Elias Thacker, and the two began most earnestly to convert their fellow-prisoners. When the Bishop of Norwich exhibited articles against the local justices for having shown undue

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(1) H.M. Dexter: The Congregationalism of the last three hundred years, as seen in its literature, London 1880, p. 208f.
favour to these trouble-makers, the accused officials replied that they had repeatedly tried to bring about a change in the attitude of the prisoners.

"But when by experience we found, that neither our entreating, nor the often godly references and labours of diverse learned and godly pastors (which we only procured) could anything prevail, we gave them up to their froward wills; and became earnest suitors both to the bishops and judges, that they might be removed out of our prison for fear of infecting others, which we could never obtain at the bishop's hand."

In 1582 both men, with a bookbinder named Thomas Gibson, were charged with distributing the books of Robert Browne and Robert Harrison. Gibson was already in trouble because of certain offensive sentences which had been written beside the Queen's arms on the church wall. The three were tried at the assizes in June 1583 on charge of denying the queen's supremacy. Gibson repented, disavowed the sentiments expressed in the books, and was acquitted. Coppin and Thacker "commended all thinges in the saide books to be good and godlye", and were forthwith hanged.

At the same time some forty books are said to have been burned.

(2) See Appendix for an account of this incident.
(3) Dexter: op. cit. p. 210 quotes from Lansdowne MSS:33(64)
Sir Christopher Wray made his official report to Burghley, informing him that the men "were convicted for dispersing Browne's books, and Harrison's books. The first two were executed . . . The book acknowledged her majesty civilly. But so was their terms, and no further . . . . . they were at the very time of their death unmoveably of the same mind." (1)

Thus, we see that in large measure the extreme language of Robert Browne was responsible for the violence which began just as Whitgift was about to take up his new duties. Within a month of coming to Lambeth, Whitgift issued a new set of rulings which required that all clergy subscribe to three Articles:

1. The royal supremacy in matters spiritual and temporal.

2. The Prayer-Book and "Pontifical" "contain nothing contrary to the will of God".

3. The thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

Objection was made to the second of these three Articles, since it implied divine sanction of the Apocrypha as well as the notion that bishops could confer the Holy Ghost. Many refused to subscribe, even when threatened with expulsion from their charges. Appeal was made to the Privy Council who tried to divert Whitgift's attention by proposing ten other reforms. In response, he added these to the others. Deputations came to plead with Whitgift. He gave an interview

(1) Strype: Annals III p. 269.
lasting several days to a group from Chichester in Sussex, and they left, satisfied. A party from Kent enjoyed less success, and on their return wrote to the Council. The result was a letter to Whitgift, protesting against his harshness, and inviting him to confer with the Council. He replied that they were undermining his discipline by entertaining petitions in this irregular manner, from noisy and disgruntled minorities. Their duty was to support their spiritual adviser. He refused to discuss the matter with the Council under such circumstances.

When Grindal died, the Puritans had tried to abolish the Commission for Causes Ecclesiastical. Whitgift sent Burghley eleven arguments in its defence; and it was continued by order of 9 December 1583. This Commission, which the Archbishop dominated, had extraordinary powers. It might require a suspected person to take an oath "ex officio mero", promising to answer all questions truthfully, after which it might proceed with 24 "articles of examination."

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The Articles of Examination were officially adopted in 1584, and were, as we shall see, an object of great criticism. The first Article asked specific facts as to the ordination of the person being examined. The second to seventh dealt with subscription to the royal supremacy, the ecclesiastical authority, and the Prayer Book. The remaining Articles proposed in detail a series of typical offences, ordering the person under examination to tell in each case whether he had been guilty of the offence; and if so, to relate all relevant facts together with his own reasons for having thus offended. (1)

Heron says that with such instruments, Whitgift became "an Inquisitor as strenuous and merciless as Torquemada", and that he maintained "a despotic regime". Pierce says that the Articles nullified the Magna Charta. Many people refused to answer to them, claiming that they were illegal. On the other hand, Prere denies that they were unjust or illegal. The first six, he contends, merely enabled the court to establish grounds of action; and the rest were but a detailed examination. The oath "ex officio" was, he says, simply the promise of an ecclesiastical subordinate to

(1) Strype: Whitgift III pp. 81-7 quotes the text of the Articles in full.

(2) Heron, p. 129.

(3) Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 74f.
answer his superior. It avoided the stigma and expense of a civil trial for any man falsely accused, and demanded no more than any man undertook to agree to when he entered the clergy. Though Jesuits and Seminary priests objected to it, the device had been borrowed from them, and was employed by the Commission before Whitgift's time. Nine "most learned Doctors of the Civil Law" gave their opinion that the oath was entirely legal. According to present day views, the oath and articles, enforced by severe punishment, seem oppressive, even if we might allow them as a device for maintaining ecclesiastical discipline. To satisfy the queen, however, Whitgift had to use strong measures.

Complaints regarding the Commission and its Articles were not limited to those who were subjected to examination. The Lords of the Council formally protested to Whitgift that under the Articles many competent men were being removed in favour of men "notoriously unfit, most for lack of learning, many chargeable with great and enormous faults, as drunkenness, filthiness of life, gaming at cards, haunting alehouses, etc., against whom they heard of no proceedings, but that they are quietly suffered." Even

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(3) Heron pp. 130ff; Fuller III pp. 44ff quotes the letter of protest.
Whitgift's staunch supporter, Sir Christopher Hatton, signed this protest. It was Lord Burghley, however, who made the criticism which has been most commonly quoted against the Articles. Having heard about them from two men whose candidacy he had sponsored, he investigated the Articles, and found them "to my simple judgement . . . savouring the Romish Inquisition". In the ensuing correspondence, Whitgift stoutly defended the usefulness and advisability of the Articles, in spite of Burghley's opinion that his procedure was "I will not say 'rigorous or captious', but (1) I think it is scant charitable."

The exchange of letters between the Archbishop and the Lord Treasurer was in July 1584. It is of interest to us not only for its own sake, but because of subsequent events. After two letters apiece, the matter was allowed to drop, Whitgift having had the final word. Why did Burghley not pursue the subject? Pierce says, "Burghley . . . ceased in disgust to request personally that Whitgift should humanize his inquisition." Frere, on the other hand says Burghley stopped because he realized he must support the Archbishop. Neale uses the incident to prove that Elizabeth supported the policy of her "little black husband",

(1) See Appendix for a more complete account of this correspondence.


(3) Frere, p. 230.
as she playfully called Whitgift; for he says that her answer to such criticism was to make Whitgift a member of the Privy Council. Since two years were to elapse before that appointment, it is difficult to say with certainty that Elizabeth had this particular incident in mind. Indeed, it is possible that whatever connection there may have been was quite the other way around. It may be that Burghley used his influence with Elizabeth to secure the appointment for Whitgift. This, at least, is what Strype says, explaining that Burghley wanted to balance Leicester's influence on the Council. Pierce, for whom Whitgift is always the villain, says that the Archbishop took advantage of Leicester's absence in the Low Countries to indulge in shrewd political dealings that won him the appointment. In the light of so much difference of opinion, it seems quite possible that the relationship of events may have been somewhat as follows: Burghley, whom we know to have been a man of exceptional fairness of mind and balance of judgment, may have concluded, however reluctantly, that for the sake of efficient administration Whitgift must be left

(1) Neale, p. 310f.  
(2) Strype: Whitgift I, p. 471.  
(3) Pierce: Hist. Int., p. 116  
(4) For a full account of the character and accomplishments of Burghley, see Hume: The Great Lord Burghley, London 1898.
free from too much interference. Personal appeals might be made, but beyond that, there would be no right to interfere with the man to whom the queen had delegated a specific task. Perhaps Burghley also admired Whitgift for the tenacity with which he clung to his due rights and authority in spite of all the pressure that was brought to bear upon him. In such a case, it is reasonable to believe that after their sharp exchange of opinions in this matter, the two men settled down to a policy of mutual forbearance, and a sort of tacit understanding that without sacrifice of principle they would, so far as possible, work in harmony together.

If the interpretation offered above is sound, then it helps to explain the otherwise almost incomprehensible fact that fifteen months later Robert Browne, for whose teachings two men had already gone to the gallows, and three others would yet be hanged, was permitted to make his subscription to Whitgift without even having to do penance for what he had written, or specifically to disavow the sentiments therein expressed. When, as we shall shortly observe, Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry could be hanged as felons because of what they had written, how did Browne escape so easily? We shall find part of the answer in the fact that Browne made his subscription in 1585, two years before the appearance of Martin Marprelate; whereas
the three victims of 1593 were in large measure martyrs to the rage which Martin had evoked. When Pierce comments on Browne's immunity, he overlooks the fact that with all his offences Browne at least was never suspected of being Martin. "No evidence of the authority exercised by Burghley is greater than that he saved the propounder of the purely democratic polity of the New Testament Church, his kinsman Robert Browne, from being hanged, and indeed, drawn and quartered", says Pierce. It is certainly doubtful, however, if Burghley could have saved him, at least without considerable difficulty, if he had become involved in the Marprelate affair. Indeed the exchange of letters with Whitgift to which we have referred, leads us to conclude that even in 1585 it was not Burghley's authority which decided the issue. In a test of authority, Whitgift could defend his rights with any man. It seems much more probable that after the asperity of the letters in question there followed an agreement to "live and let live" on the strength of which Whitgift would be willing to yield to Burghley's request for lenient treatment of Browne, provided Browne would subscribe without giving any trouble about it.

Burghley's ceasing to make personal protest against the oath and articles did not prevent his being one of the Lords of the Council who wrote on 20 September.

(1) Pierce: John Penry p. 213.
pleading for more consideration to men of whose sincerity and spiritual worth they were convinced. Complaints were also carried to the queen. Whitgift, hearing of this, wrote a plea that she should not be misled by the complaints, "many of them . . . very childish; some irreligious, and some perilous." He vehemently declared his loyalty to her service.

"And albeit I have incurred the displeasure of some, and the evil speeches and slanderous reports of every man, yet so long as my service shall be accepted of your Majesty, upon whom only, next unto God, I do depend, I will not be discouraged, nor faint in my calling." (2)

A resumption of attack by pamphlet led to the adoption on 23 June 1586 of "Rules and Ordinances made and set forth by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Lords of the Privy Council, in the Star Chamber, for redressing abuses in printing." Except for one press apiece in each of the Universities, no printing presses were to be allowed outside

(1) Strype: Whitgift I pp. 328ff.

(2) Ibid pp. 333-5; Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 99 quotes the letter from Cotton Mss., with the original spelling. Pierce says it shows Whitgift's craftiness.
London, where the Company of Stationers was made responsible for supervision. Binding and distributing of illegal books was made equally an offence with the printing. Illegal printing did not cease, but it was made increasingly perilous.

The Puritan attack was also renewed in the Commons. Church reform was demanded in 1584/5. The Archbishops of York and Canterbury both agreed that abuses must be remedied; but they stoutly resisted any plan to alter ecclesiastical discipline. The queen supported this contention. Appearing in person, she warned the Bishops that existing faults must be mended, and then refused to consider any "new-fangledness dangerous to kingly rule."

Another attempt at reform, the following year, provoked a letter from her.

The letter told the Commons that she had "fully considered, not only of the exceptions that are made against the present reformation, and doth find them frivolous; but also of the platform that is desired, and accounteth it most prejudicial unto the religion established, to her crown, to her government, and to her subjects .... Her Majesty takes your petition herein to be against the prerogative of her crown." (2)

When another measure was introduced in 1588, the Commons


(2) Strype: op. cit. I, pp. 347-393, 495.
passed it in spite of assurances that the queen would be offended. It was, however, vetoed by the House of Lords. The agitation was not entirely in vain, though, for it undoubtedly accelerated the process of reform within the Church.

A different sequel appears in the case of Morrice, an attorney, who was a leading spirit in these and subsequent attempts to secure reform by legislation. The Privy Council eventually imprisoned him for interfering in ecclesiastical matters. He was later released, deprived of his practise at law, and finally silenced by being shut up in Tilbury Castle, a former prison of Mary Stuart, until his death. (1)

England was tense with excitement in the Autumn of 1588. The beheading of Mary was still much discussed; the approaching Armada was in all men's minds; Roman plots were suspected everywhere; and Puritans persistently charged the Archbishop of Canterbury with complicity in them, because of his gentleness to Catholic offenders in contrast to his harshness towards extreme Protestants. Whitgift's patience was wearing very thin when a new factor in the conflict led to further oppressive measures against prominent Nonconformists.

In 1584 Robert Waldegrave, the Puritan printer,

(1) Strype: Whitgift Ipp. 530-542.

had produced a tract entitled "A Briefe and plaine declaration concerning the desires of all those faithfull Ministers that have and do seeke for the Discipline and reformation of the Churche of Englande," to which he affixed the running headline, "A Learned Discourse of Ecclesiastical Government." It was a sober, reasonable appeal for the Puritan case. Pierce thinks that although Dudley Fenner was commonly reputed to have written it, the probable author was William Fulke, Master of Pembroke College, and Margaret Professor of Divinity.

The tract argued that the Church should be led by doctors, pastors, governors, and deacons, whose respective tasks should be teaching, preaching and administering the sacraments, directing discipline, and caring for the distressed. It warned against prelatic pride and pomp, non-residence, plurality, and an unlearned ministry. It advocated popular government in a Church free of interference from civil magistrates.

An answer was made in a sermon at Paul's Cross by Dr. Bridges, Dean of Salisbury, who then published "A Defense of the Government established in the Church of England" in 1587. This was a volume of 1409 pages, which Frere says made up in sheer bulk what it lacked in brilliance. After the appearance of two replies in defence of "the godly

(1) Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 139
(2) Ibid pp. 135–9, Tracts pp. xiii–xv; Frere pp. 247ff.
ministers" and "the ecclesiastical discipline", the matter might have been forgotten, but for the appearance, in the Autumn of 1588 of "The Epistle of Martin Marprelate", which passed "from hand to hand, amid peals of laughter from the large Elizabethan public that loved a joke." The sober-minded Puritans were shocked and distressed by this flip-pant arrival. The prelates were furious. The civil authorities were in a rage. Despite the Rules and Regulations of 1585, here was an illicit book of "fifty-two pages of brilliant and unsparing satire, such as never had been seen in English before". Worse than denouncing the church officials, it exposed them to merciless ridicule.

On Burghley's advice that the author must be detected and punished, Whitgift prepared a proclamation

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(1) Frere, p. 249f.

(2) Ibid. For a different view of the Tracts see Strype: Whitgift I pp. 549ff. For some time the attitude taken towards the Marprelate Tracts was like that of John Strype, who although he felt it necessary to devote several pages to a denial of Martin's charges, considered the tracts vulgar, scurrilous, and indecent; it was no laughing matter to him. H.M. Dexter in his monumental "Congregationalism in the last three hundred years" may be said to have re-discovered the tracts as samples of superb satire. Many writers have been attracted to the subject since Dexter's time. William Pierce's "Introduction" and reprint of the tracts, as well as his life of Penry, deal most thoroughly with the entire subject.
against seditious and schismatical books and libels, which
the queen issued, 13 February 1588/9. Meanwhile, a
second tract, the "Epitome" had appeared. The illegal
pamphlets were read everywhere.

When Elizabeth told Essex of the proclamation
forbidding anyone to have a copy in his possession,
the Earl asked, "What then is to become of me?" and
drawing forth a copy, presented it to her Majesty. (2)

Giles Wigginton, one of the first to be
arrested on suspicion of being Martin, was asked
if he had owned or read a copy. He replied, "I under­
stand by hearsay (that which I suppose you know well
enough) that many Lordes and Ladyses, and other greate
and wealthy personages of all estates have had and
read it; and so they will joyne with me in mine having
and reading of it, if I have done either or both.
And in my simple judgement it would be more for your
credit if you would examine indifferently all sort
about it, and not poor folke only as you are used to
do." (3)

Efforts to apprehend the culprits involved, included a
search for the vendor, the binder, and the printer, as
well as the unknown "Martin". Pierce, who has carefully
pieced together the fragments which tell how the tracts
were published, relates how at the start Waldegrave was

(1) Strype: Whitgift III pp. 216-218 quotes the full text
of the Proclamation.

(2) Pierce: Hist. Int. p. 159 quotes this from Cod­
214.

(3) Peel: The Second Parte of a Register II p. 254.
the printer, until he ceased work on the tracts which he found were distasteful to his Puritan friends. The work was carried on by Hodgkins until the dropping of a case of type led to his arrest. Then type belonging to John Penry, a young Welsh Puritan who was intimately connected with the whole venture, was used. Amid such difficulties, and at dire peril of detection and punishment, seven pamphlets were produced in the space of seven months.

The Marprelate mystery is still unsolved. Various attempts have been made to identify Martin. Dexter proposed the ingenious theory that the copy was written by Henry Barrow, then in prison, and smuggled out to Penry. (2) Powicke, however, proves that this cannot be the solution. (3) All recent writers agree that Job Throckmorton, an influential Puritan layman, was certainly deeply implicated. (4) Pierce also shows that Sir Richard Knightly of Fawsley House, Northampton was close to the secret. He was a county official as well as a Member of Parliament. His second wife, Lady Elizabeth Seymour, was a daughter of the Protector, hence a cousin of Edward VI, and her "warm sympathy . . . with the reformation of religion may be taken for granted". Sir Richard's livery was worn by Newman, chief distributor of the pamphlets. (5) Pierce also believes that Penry felt under obligation to Throckmorton and Sir Richard because of financial assistance given him as a student at Cambridge. If so, this may explain why the earnest young evangelist from Wales was so intimately connected.

(1) Pierce's three books tell the full story of Martin so far as it is known.


(3) Powicke: Barrow pp. 82-5


with the mocking satirist, Martin Marprelate. Quite another clue to the mystery is suggested by Pearson who asks if Laurence Tomson, " - a Northamptonshire man, an alumnus of Oxford, a learned layman, an earnest Puritan . . . was involved in the controversy".

Official suspicions were directed early in the day towards John Udall, a recent graduate of Corpus Christi who had become a notorious trouble-maker in the eyes of the ecclesiastical authorities. Since two pamphlets which he was known to have written were printed by Waldegrave, he was arrested and questioned about Martin. He could tell nothing, for he knew nothing definite about the case. He was nevertheless charged with seditious writing, and was arraigned on 23 July 1590. Though he was condemned to

(1) Pierce: Penry pp. 74ff.
(2) Pearson p. 279f.

The attitude of the authorities towards Udall may be gathered from Frere's account of him. He cites Udall as illustrating Puritan tyranny in the fact that he tried to force "Discipline" on an unwilling flock, who reported him. For refusing the "oath ex officio", he was suspended and imprisoned. Upon his release, he returned and gave cause for complaint again in 1586. The Commission "went a long way to meet his scruples, and bore patiently with his lectures." In spite of damaging admissions, he was released. He hurried off to subscribe to the Book of Discipline, collect material for attacks on the bishops, establish a secret press, and issue two revolutionary treatises. "This led to his being suspended and deprived of his benefice, whereupon he began a year's career as an ecclesiastical marauder upon the Scottish Border. Udall was not the only one of the Puritans who was generously treated, nor the only one to show himself the more intractable thereafter."
hang as a felon, the execution was stayed, and he was kept in Marshalsea Prison, where he died in 1593. Puritan sympathizers said he was a martyr to the cause of true reformation. Strype, however, says that Whitgift had interceded with the queen for his life, and that his mercy kept Udall from hanging. (1)

Reprisals against Martin struck far and wide. Complaints of Presbyterian practice in the Midlands led to the arrest of several prominent leaders, including Cartwright, in the Autumn of 1590. They were kept in Fleet Prison after refusing to answer to the oath. The authorities felt that if Martin were not among them, at least some of them could tell where he was. Although summoned now and then for examination, they were kept in the Fleet for a year and a half. Sir Francis Knollys risked the queen's great displeasure by his efforts in their behalf. In June 1591 a letter came from King James of Scotland asking for clemency to "Mr Cartwright and his

(1) Strype: Whitgift II pp. 58ff.
brethren". Strype says that their final release was due to Whitgift's interceding for them. Frere makes the same claim, insisting that the Archbishop had hitherto kept aloof lest he be accused of spite against Cartwright, for whom he had a high opinion and generous appreciation, and was glad to intervene mercifully. Needless to say, Puritan partisans do not express any such opinion. Pearson ventures the impartial view that force of circumstances and popular sentiment probably determined the policy of Whitgift and the queen in this instance.

All this time, the Puritans considered themselves loyal members of the Church of England. Indeed, when Browne attacked Cartwright's position, shortly before he himself submitted, it was because the Puritans would not quit a Church which they knew to be corrupt. From the other side, supporters of the Church protested that it was dishonest of the Puritans to accept advantages from the Church, while they worked to disrupt its discipline.

(2) Strype: ibid p. 90; Frere p. 280.
(3) Pearson p. 357.
Frere puts the case against the Puritans on this basis:

1. They violated church rules by following the Book of Discipline.

2. They accepted Presbyterian commissions in preference to those of the bishops; and took direction from classes rather than from convocations.

3. They used what rites they approved, wore what they liked, preached and did as suited themselves; and condemned all that displeased them.

4. They accepted positions and revenues from the Church whose government they thereupon pledged themselves to pervert.

5. Earnestness on their part, coupled with certain real grievances, combined with open scandals on the other side to blur the issues, and so to condone a position which was inherently dishonest. (1)

Whatever his apologists may say about Whitgift's generous spirit and open mind, the evidence of their own attitude towards those who opposed him leads us to suspect that he would gladly have purged the Church of all contentious persons. It was necessary, however, for him to tolerate those who had not openly engaged in rebellion such as could be proved in court. For the Puritans had many influential friends to protect them, and to intercede for them. Consequently, Whitgift had to make the best of a

(1) Frere p. 281.

(2) See Appendix for instances of Puritan patrons.
troublesome situation by permitting the Puritans to remain in the Church, while keeping a strict watch over them in order to restrain disobedience.

With the Separatists, however, his problem was quite the reverse. The law said that all citizens must go to church, but these folk persisted in staying away from the parish churches. Also, the law forbade private conventicles, and they proceeded to organize such illegal services. When the sovereign is head of the Church, defiance of church law becomes treason and may be punished as a felony. Therefore such folk as could not be persuaded must be coerced; those who could not be coerced must be punished as an example and warning to all traitors. This, in effect, was the official attitude towards persistent recusants, whether Roman Catholics or extreme Protestants. By the nature of the case, one could not tell how many secret groups there might be. Small wonder, therefore, that when the Parliament of 1593 debated the Conventicle Act, Sir Walter Raleigh declared, "In my conceit the Brownists are worthy to be rooted out of the commonwealth . . . I am sorry for it, I am afraid there are near twenty thousand of them in England."\(^{(1)}\)

Not everyone in the country shared Raleigh's view.

\(^{(1)}\) See Appendix for further discussion of this speech.
The Separatists were by no means popular, but neither were they always viewed with quite such alarm.

In 1592, Bacon wrote in "Certain Observations" the following words: "As for those which we call 'Brownists', being, when they were at the most, a very small number of very silly and base people, here and there in corners dispersed; they are now, thanks be to God, by the good remedies that have been used, suppressed and worn out; so as there is scarcely any news of them." (1)

Peel estimates that at this time there were probably more nearly two hundred Separatists in the land than Raleigh's "twenty thousand". It must be kept in mind, however, that when Raleigh spoke the Archbishop's pursuivants were busy tracking down Separatist meetings. Moreover, it will be remembered that even Stow's Annals takes note of the cases of Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry in that one year 1593. Powicke points out that when another ten years, even with the Conventicle Act in operation, could find Separatists carrying on in such seemingly innocent spots as Scrooby and Gainsborough, the uneasiness expressed by Raleigh is not surprising.

The hanging of three Separatists in 1593 marked


(2) Powicke: Barrow p. 62, and in Essays Cong'l. and Cath. p. 281 quotes Peel.

(3) in "Essays Congregational and Catholic", p. 282.
the climax of activity against the movement which Robert Browne had been instrumental in developing. Since his controversial activities had included an exchange of bitter words with two of these men, we may profitably take note of their experiences before we turn directly to Browne's own history.

Henry Barrow, born about 1550 in a respected Norfolk family, entered Clare Hall, Cambridge, in 1566 and graduated B.A. in 1570. His later description of dissolute life in the Universities indicates that he himself had engaged in the follies and indiscretions which were not uncommon among undergraduates of the time. After six years as a hanger-on at Court, he studied law at Gray's Inn. About 1580, he was converted. Lord Bacon called the change which occurred, "a leap from a vain and libertine youth, to a preciseness in the highest degree, - the strangeness of which alteration made him very much spoken of."

The "alteration" brought him in touch with an earnest young preacher, John Greenwood, who, being about ten years his junior, had graduated from Corpus Christi in 1581. Greenwood had been regularly ordained, but had soon shown interest in reform ideas. Very probably he had been influenced by Robert Browne, who preached at Cambridge.

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(1) Bacon: Works, IV p. 353. See Appendix for this story.
while Greenwood was an undergraduate. Then, for a time he was domestic chaplain to Lord Robert Rich of Rockford, Essex, a well-known Puritan sympathizer. Having embraced still more advanced views, however, he went to London and there associated himself with a Separatist congregation, where he could hardly have failed to receive Browne's influence once more. Although Bancroft referred to him as "a simple fellow" the fact that he led his older companion, Barrow, to accept the Separatist view would indicate no little force of character.

Greenwood was arrested in the Autumn of 1586 when a conventicle, at the home of Henry Martin at St. Andrews in the Wardrobe, was raided. Hearing of the arrest on the morning of November 19, Barrow hurried to Clink prison to see him. Barrow was seized, without a warrant, and taken to Lambeth for examination, despite his protests. He refused the oath, and would not answer the charge that he had said "There is not a true Church in England". He refused the offer of release on bail if he would promise to attend

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(1) This summary of the early lives of Barrow and Greenwood is condensed from Powicke: Barrow pp. 3ff; also Dexter: op. cit. p. 211; Strype: Whitgift II, p. 187.

(2) Dexter: op. cit. p. 212f; Mackennal p. 62; Frere p. 258f. (Frere gives the date as being in October.)
church; and was sent to Gatehouse prison. A week later, he and Greenwood were examined, but continued obdurate, and were sent to Fleet prison.

They were charged with holding the following "schismatical and seditious opinions":(1)

Our Church is no true Church for the following reasons: its worship is flat idolatry; unsanctified persons are admitted to membership; preachers are not scripturally called; the discipline is ungodly; no bishop or preacher preaches Christ sincerely and truly; the people ought to choose the bishops; every elder, whether or not a doctor or pastor, is a bishop; the Precise (Puritans) who refuse the ceremonies of the church, yet preach in it, strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, and are hypocrites walking in a left-handed policy, as Master Cartwright, Wigginton, &c.; all makers, teachers, and expounders of written catechisms are idle shepherds like Calvin, Ursin, Nowell, &c.; the children of ungodly parents should not be baptized, as of drunkards, usurers, &c.; set prayer is blasphemous.

Barrow said of these charges, "Much of the matter in this Bill is true, but the form is false."

Some months later, a special commission of chief judges and bishops examined the prisoners. The oath was waived, after Barrow objected to it, and an answer in writing was allowed. Eleven questions were presented, on prayer, the Prayer-Book, the sacraments, the ecclesiastical law and system, and the royal supremacy.

Barrow's replies may be briefly summarized as follows:

(1) Hanbury I, p. 352 quotes from Paule: Life of Whitgift, 1612, a summary from which this condensation was made.

(2) Frere p. 259 says that even Barrow with his "anti-clerical prejudice", admits this.

(3) Hanbury I p. 33f quotes Barrow's own account of this examination.
1. The Lord's Prayer was not used by the Apostles, and need not be now.

2. The Prayer Book is idolatrous, superstitious, and popish.

3. The sacraments as administered by the Church of England are false.

4. The Church of England is unscriptural, anti-christian, and false.

5. The queen may not make laws for Christ's Church beyond those contained in his Word; if the prince commands unlawful things, subjects must refuse to obey. The ungodly ought not to govern the church.

Following discussion of his answers, three questions were put to Barrow, in answering which he became entangled in the law passed by Parliament in 1581 in its efforts to restrain the Catholic, Campion.

Q. Will you take the oath of supremacy?
A. No, but I acknowledge the queen, and will profess entire loyalty.

Q. Ought the Church to reform abuses without tarrying for the prince?
A. Yes, even though forbidden on pain of death.

Q. May the Church excommunicate the prince?
A. Yes, and the pastor ought to pronounce sentence.

Both men were sent to Fleet Prison. A story to the effect that they were out on bail for a short time, but had to be confined again because of their activities, was told by

(1) Frere, p. 259 gives these.
Pagit, but is doubted by Pierce, who says that Barrow was not free at any time after his illegal arrest at the Clink. The prisoners sent a letter to the queen, protesting against their close confinement, and in the Spring of 1588 they were examined by the Privy Council. Whether any advantage could have come to them from this examination may be seriously doubted. At any rate, any such possibility was completely dashed when Barrow gave way to hearty but in­temperate language concerning Whitgift, who was present at the interview. Having been called "a Monster, a miserable compound, . . . . even that second Beast spoken of in the Revelation", in the presence of the other members of the Council, Whitgift was not likely to make any concessions in his attitude towards Barrow. Burghley, who had rather lured Barrow on in his bold speech, apparently enjoyed the Archbishop's discomfort; but that was not reason enough for him to make any particular efforts in behalf of the man whom he described as having "a hot brain". Greenwood was permitted occasional periods of freedom in the next five years, although he seems to have been confined the greater

(1) Prere p. 260 quotes the tale as a fact; Pierce: Penry, p. 359 doubts it, saying that Barrow was too im­portant to be released.

(2) See Appendix for selected portions of Barrow's account of this interview.
part of the time. Two more special hearings, and a series of fruitless conferences with a group of ministers appointed for the purpose were all that interrupted the ordinary monotony of imprisonment.

Despite complaints to Burghley that they were subject to constant spying, and had no materials for writing, Barrow and Greenwood managed to publish an extraordinary amount during their imprisonment. In the summer of 1588 they engaged in a bitter controversy with Robert Browne, whom they regarded as a renegade, for having subscribed to Whitgift. We have already remarked that they probably owed more than they realized to Browne's influence. This conviction is not dismissed by their indignant denials, which seem to suggest an uneasy awareness of the fact they do not care to admit. The altercation with Browne was not so extended as their exchange with George Giffard, who persistently called them "Brownists", to their great annoyance.

In 1590 Barrow composed "A Brief Discovery of the False Church". It was smuggled to Holland for printing. It declared that no ruler can make his subject members of the true Church, since that is God's prerogative, and dependent upon faith, confession, and repentance. It also affirmed the rights and duties of

(1) Powicke: Barrow p. 24f, 33ff; Frere pp. 260ff; Dexter: op. cit. goes into a long discussion of these conferences.

(2) Frere p. 260; Powicke: Browne p. 73; Pierce: Penry, p. 338f.

(3) L&nbury I pp. 40-70 deals at length with this exchange of pamphlets.
Christians, while it denounced the Prayer Book, rites of the English Church, canon law and discipline, and the Puritans, whom Barrow called "the Pharisees of these times."

Giffard's answer was "A Short Treatise Against the Donatists of England, whom we call 'Brownists', etc." He said "they go beyond Browne", but insisted that "they have all their furniture from him: they do but open his pack and display his wares: they have not a sharp arrow, which is not drawn out of his quiver."

To this, Greenwood replied with "An Answer to George Giffards Pretended Defence of Read Prayers and Devised Leitourgies", denying the allegations.

Giffard's response was "A Plaine Declaration that our Brownish be full Donatists . . . Also a replie to Master Greenwood touching read prayer, etc."

In 1591 there came from Holland a volume containing two tracts. Barrow's "Plaine Refutation of M. Giffards Booke, etc.", not only explained their arguments against the Church, but also outlined their views on proper church membership and polity. Greenwood's "Briefe Refutation of Mr. Giffards supposed consimilitude betwixt the Donatists and us, etc." rejected what was declared to be the Romish attitude of the Church, insisting that only voluntary choice and true faith could determine true church membership. Concerning Browne, Greenwood said, "First you term us 'Brownists' and 'Donatists'; whereas I never conversed with the men, nor their writings! I detest Donatus' heresies . . . . . . Browne is a member of your church; your brother; and all Brownists do frequent your assemblies!"

Giffard had the last word, "A Short Reply vnto the last printed books of Henry Barrow and John Greenwood, the chiefe ringleaders of our Donatists in England, etc."

The publishing of so much controversial writing while in prison, was made possible by an elaborate system of smuggling copy out of prison, and then out of England. In view of its being successfully managed, we can understand why
Dexter suspected Barrow of being Marprelate as well.

One interesting consequence of this controversy appears in the experience of Francis Johnson, minister of the English Merchant's Church in Middlebupgh. To him was assigned the task of burning all available copies of tracts by either of the prisoners. While seeing to this duty, he happened to read the joint volume which was their last contribution to the controversy. So persuaded was he by what he read, that he saved two copies from the fire, travelled as soon as possible to London, and there visited Barrow in the Fleet. Thereafter he became the recognized leader of the London Separatist group, endured repeated imprisonment, finally led the group back to Holland in exile, and there re-published the book which he originally burned. (2)

Greenwood's last period of freedom terminated when a conventicle was raided on 5 December 1592, and he was arrested along with Francis Johnson and others. The authorities were especially active against Nonconformists. Cartwright and his companions had but recently secured their freedom from the Fleet. Udall was dying in Harshalsea. Martin Marprelate had been silenced, but not apprehended. A fantastic conspiracy by a madman named Hackett, happened to include religious fanaticism as one of its elements, and therefore served as a convenient excuse for harrying all religious offenders. (3)

(1) Powicke: Barrow pp. 35ff describes the way in which the tracts were published.


On 21 March 1593, Greenwood and Barrow were tried under the statute of 1581, forbidding seditious libels. Quotations from their acknowledged writings were so interpreted as to appear seditious. On the 23rd they were condemned to hang. A reprieve interrupted their journey to the gallows next day. A week later a second reprieve came as the ropes were being adjusted around their necks. In the succeeding week, Parliament debated and passed the Conventicle Act against Catholics and Separatists. The measure was passed on 6 April 1593, the day on which Barrow and Greenwood were hanged.

The last Separatist to suffer the death penalty in Whitgift's primacy was John Penry. When the chase after Martin Marprelate became too hot, he fled to Scotland, where he was received with kindness by the Edinburgh ministers, who gladly hid him from the half-hearted searching parties of the Scottish government. Requests kept coming to them to apprehend Penry and Waldegrave, who had fled with Penry. However, the requests on behalf of the English Church came from Bancroft, who had mortally offended the Scots by a sermon at Paul's Cross in 1589, wherein he had quoted libellous assertions made by Robert Browne. There was therefore no great zeal to gratify him

(1) See Appendix for quotations from a contemporary account of this hanging. Cooper: Athenae Cantabrigiensis (3 vols.) Cambridge 1858. II pp. 151ff condenses the story of Barrow and Greenwood, adding a story that Elizabeth was much affected by the report of their death.
by turning the fugitives over to his mercy, especially since Penry wrote, and Waldegrave printed, a vigorous answer to Bancroft. Penry had enjoyed the hospitality of the Edinburgh ministers for nearly three years when he decided to return to England, in August 1592. He had by now moved beyond the Presbyterian view to the Separatist position, and perhaps felt guilty at continuing to accept hospitality under somewhat false assumptions. Besides, the hue and cry was less violent against Martin; and he wanted to advance the spiritual interests of his beloved Wales. To London he went, therefore, and joined the congregation of which Francis Johnson and John Greenwood (when out of prison) were the recognized leaders. On 4 March 1593, he narrowly escaped capture when a conventicle was raided in the woods at Islington. When news of his escape reached Whitgift, an emergency meeting of the Privy Council was summoned to issue a special warrant for Penry's arrest. For over a fortnight the warrant was not served; but on 22 March, Anthony Anderson, vicar of Stepney, who had been seriously exposed by Martin, recognized Penry and denounced him.


(2) Ibid pp. 249-385 gives a full account of Penry's life in Scotland, and to his arrest.
The Act of 1581 was cited against him, although he stoutly asserted his entire loyalty to the Crown.

Accused of drawing people from obedience to her majesty's laws, and from the Church of England, he said he had always urged men to loyal obedience to the queen. Of course he opposed the ordinances of antichrist; he said that he expressed loyalty to the queen by doing so, since she would certainly want her subjects to support true religion against violence and wrong-doing. (1)

While in Edinburgh, Penry had contemplated an address to the queen, in which he would try to persuade her to see the light more plainly, and to follow it more closely. The notes which he sketched at the time were never used. In a raid on his rooms, however, they had been seized. They were now produced as evidence of seditious purpose. Although the law had to be strained to the very breaking point to cover the case, he was condemned. On 29 May 1593 (2) he was hanged at St. Thomas a Watering.

The extreme violence shown towards Protestant extremists during the Winter and Spring of 1592/3 began to produce reactions in a widespread feeling of revulsion against the ecclesiastical authorities. The charge of treason was seen to be badly overworked against men whose most obvious offence was that they had offended the Archbishop. Parliament insisted that banishment be substituted


(2) Pierce: Penry pp. 446-481. Cooper: Athen. Cant. II p. 155 quotes the chief offensive portions from these notes.
for hanging. The resulting exile of religious offenders was in many cases pathetic, but at least it was not a case of being thrown into jail to rot.

In March 1593, Roger Rippon of Southwark, died in Newgate Prison, having been sent there from the raid on Islington Woods. His coffin was carried to the door of the judge who had committed him, with this inscription attached:

"This is the corpse of Roger Rippon, a servant of Christ and her majesty's faithful subject. Who is the last of sixteen or seventeen, which that great enemy of God, the archbishop of Canterbury, with his high commissioners, have murdered in Newgate within these five years, manifestly for the testimony of Jesus Christ. His soul is now with the Lord; and his blood cries out for speedy vengeance against that great enemy of the saints, and against Mr. Richard Young. Who in this, and many the like points, hath abused his power, for the upholding of the Roman Antichrist, prelacy and priesthood." (1)

The exiles to Amsterdam, under Johnson's leadership, issued in 1596 "A True Confession of the Faith and Humble Acknowledgement of the Alegeance, which wee hir Maiesties Subjectes, falsely called Brownists, doo hould towards God, and yeild to hir Maiestie and all other that are ouer vs in the Lord, etc." Relating persecutions against them, they told of twenty-four deaths in prison in London alone, as well as the executions of Coppin, Thacker, Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry. (2)

In general, those whose sympathies were with church reform, felt that a large measure of blame for this

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(1) Hanbury I p. 90; Pierce: Penry p. 374f quotes Strype: Annals IV, p. 186

(2) H.M. and M. Dexter: op. cit. p. 208f; Hanbury I p. 91-98, summarizes the tract.
blood-letting must be charged to Whitgift. Those, on the other hand, who felt strongly about maintaining the established ecclesiastical system, thought of him as a malign and faithful defender of order and decent discipline. Stability must be preserved, according to such a view, even though sincere men have to suffer for their erroneous and disturbing views. The men who actually suffered had no doubt that it was Whitgift's faults.

Penry's "Treatise" speaks of "Iohn Cant., as he writeth himself, whom both in respect of his anti-christian prelacy over God's church, and for the notable hatred which he hath ever bewrayed towards the Lord and his truth, I think one of the dishonorablest creatures under heaven, and accordingly do account of him." (1)

Those who have written the histories of these men have usually shared this view.

Pierce's judgement of Whitgift may be taken as sufficient to illustrate; his opinion of Whitgift may be condensed somewhat as follows:

Thoroughly consistent, he never yielded to intellectual or physical suffering, except when at Cambridge in 1565 he signed a petition asking Burghley to relax the edict requiring vestments; and he promptly apologized for that when he found it ill-received. Unmoved by threats or opposition, he had no weakness for luxury or ease. His success was both inevitable, and foredoomed, since the delusion that physical repression can cure all differences was certain to foster nonconformity. In Mary's day, he conformed sufficiently to avoid trouble, and then on Elizabeth's accession,

(1) Hanbury I p. 74 quotes this.
preached at Great St. Mary's on the text, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel." His retinue as Archbishop being elaborate and glittering, he would on great occasions be served "upon the knee". Essentially a Puritan in doctrine, he mercilessly punished those who challenged his views of church government. Though he had no pity for opponents, he would rescue them from torture and imprisonment if they would but agree to his Articles. He was narrow, mean, vindicative, and personally responsible for the martyrdom of Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry. (1)

His defenders have been equally positive concerning him. To official biographers, such as Strype, he appeared as a model of patience.

"Invincible patience was conspicuous in (him) under those many oppositions, taunts, reproaches, calumnies, clamours, lies, and unsufferable abuses he underwent in Parliaments, in Court, in city, in country: and for nothing else but for labouring to preserve and keep the Church of England, as it was legally established in the first reformation of it. All which notwithstanding, he went on steadily, and with meekness and forebearance persevered in his pious purposes, and succeeded at length beyond expectation; making good his motto, That he that beareth patiently overcomes at last." (2)

Even the modern historian from the point of view of the Church feels that Whitgift is not merely to be excused, but is to be praised for his fine spirit.

Prere devotes several pages to a discussion of Whitgift, the substance of which may be briefly presented thus:


(2) Strype: Whitgift I p. ivf.
He spent his life in the service of the Church, during which time he was misrepresented by his enemies, and since which time he has been misjudged. He possessed "loftiness and consistency of aim . . . honesty and incorruptibility . . . conspicuous in a sordid and self-seeking age." "His generosity in money matters (was) incontestable". Although he seemed strict after Grindal, "he . . . listened for three days to the bucolic remonstrances of the Kentish squires; and at the moment when Burghley supposed him to be establishing an inquisition, he was restricting his demands for subscription, so as to give a respite and breathing space to men who were aghast at the very idea of being brought back to obedience from the wayward paths of their own sweet will. In short, he knew how to temper official rigidity with personal consideration and kindness. Cartwright was not by any means the only puritan in trouble who profited by his mercifulness, nor Barrow the only prisoner whose lot was relieved by his interposition; indeed, he continually mitigated the rough justice of the Lords of the Council or the judges of the assize." (1)

In the light of historical facts as we find them, it is difficult to accept, without qualification, the interpretation of Whitgift which his special apologists have offered. But when we try equally to divest ourselves of nonconformist prejudice, we discover a man of considerable ability and force of character, determined to do his duty without regard for cost to himself or anyone else. If we grant his view of the Church, we must agree that he took the only course open to him. Had he been less severe, he might also have been less efficient, in which case, he would have found himself in difficulties with

(1) Frere pp. 304ff.
the queen. The fact that we may have nothing but disgust for the cruelty which was quite legal in his day, or that we may not share his opinion of the Church, should not prevent our recognizing the fact that he dealt with an impossibly difficult combination of factors. Some of these we have considered in our review of his primacy. Running through all the most difficult situations which confronted his effort to secure uniformity was the influence of Robert Browne and the persistent effect of his teachings. Let us now note particularly the facts concerning this man, Robert Browne.
CHAPTER THREE

Robert Browne: The Years of Open Revolt.

Although the exact date is not known, Robert Browne was born about the year 1550 at Tolethorpe Hall, which is the Manor House of Little Casterton, a Rutlandshire village a few miles from Stamford. The house appears to have been owned by the Browne family since 1377, when it was bought by John Browne, Alderman of Stamford (1374-6, -7) and "wool-merchant engaged in the staple of Calais." A son of this original owner was named John, and also served as Alderman. So, in turn, did his son John, who held the office three times. This third John Browne began the much needed work of restoring All Saints Church in Stamford, a fine building of Norman type, which had suffered severely in the War of the Roses. The work was carried on and completed by his two sons, John and William, who also continued the family tradition of public service:

(1) This material on the ancestry of Robert Browne is based on research presented in Cater: "Robert Browne's Ancestors and Descendants" in Trans. of the C.H.S. Vol. II, No. 3, p. 151ff. Powicke: Browne, p. 9f depends on Cater's authority. Crippen in Introduction to the reprint of Browne: "A Treatise of Reformation, etc." London 1903, p. 5, says that this John Browne came from Calais, but gives no authority for this. Cater says John Browne became owner of the "Mannour of Tolethorpe together with all its appurtenances, and the perpetual Advowson of the Chappel of the same: also all his lands, tenements, rents and services in the village of Little Casterton with the Reversion of the Patronage of the Church of the same."
John was Alderman of Stamford in 1448, 1453, 1462; William was several times Alderman as well as sheriff of Rutland and Lincoln counties, and founder in 1484 of Browne Hospital, the Bede House of Stamford, which still stands opposite the Corn Market.

The Browne family finally settled in Tolethorpe Hall during the lifetime of Christopher Browne, son of the fourth John. By this time it was certainly one of the leading families in the vicinity of Stamford. Christopher was not only Alderman and Sheriff, but member of Parliament from 1489 to 1495, and was designated "gentleman of the County of Rutland." Christopher Browne was twice married. By his first marriage, to Grace Pinchbeck, he had a son named Francis, who was to be Robert Browne's grandfather. His second wife, who was a Miss Bedinfield of Norfolk, bore him three sons, the youngest of whom was named Edmund. Edmund Browne, Robert's great-great-uncle, married Joanna Cecil of Stamford, whose brother had a son named William. Thus, William Cecil was a nephew by marriage to the half-brother of Robert Browne's grandfather, was in the same generation as Robert's father, and was thirty years older.

(1) Cater points out that this great-great-uncle of Robert Browne purchased Lilford Hall, which remained in the family until 1711, and is less than ½ mile from Achurch, Robert Browne's parish for forty years.
than Robert. Considering the distant connection between them, it is all the more remarkable that when William Cecil became Lord Burghley he was willing to acknowledge this slight connection with the young firebrand, Robert. Certainly he could hardly have been blamed if he had refused to consider that the relationship was sufficient to impose any particular obligations upon himself. It is possible, however, that a closer friendship existed between the families than would necessarily be implied by the relationship. William Cecil's grandfather, David Cecil, was a member of Parliament and therefore a colleague of Francis Browne, who succeeded Christopher, his father, as member for their borough.

Francis Browne won favour at court in some way, and was rewarded by being "priviledged in the 18 year of King Henry VIII, to wear his cap in the presence of the King himself, or any other Lords Spiritual or Temporal in the Land; and not to put it off at any time, but onely for his own ease and pleasure." This honour was conferred in 1526, eleven years after the birth of his eldest son Anthony, who inherited Tolethorpe Hall on the death of Francis in 1542.

Anthony Browne, who was several times sheriff of Rutlandshire, married Dorothy Boteler, daughter of Sir

Peter Boteler of Walton Woodall, Hertfordshire. They had seven children. Francis, the eldest, inherited Tolethorpe Hall when Anthony died at the age of 75 or thereabouts. Francis had married Lucy Mackworth, sister of a Baronet, Sir Thomas Mackworth of Normanton. We shall see that upon his father's death, Francis used his right over the living of Little Casterton church to assist his two clergymen brothers, Robert and Philip. A sister, Dorothy, married Guilbert Pickering of Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire, whose brother, Sir William Pickering, was one of numerous fond courtiers who fancied themselves suitors for the hand of Elizabeth.

We see, then, that Robert Browne was not a nonentity so far as family connections were concerned. He was related more or less intimately to several of the landed gentry in the district about Stamford. Moreover, the tradition of service in the public interest had been handed down in the family for nearly two centuries when Robert was born. They were responsible, respected people, whose social standing and general reputation in the community must have

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(1) Powicke: Browne p. 11 points out that Titchmarsh is only about two miles from Achurch, and that Robert Browne evidently rendered pastoral service at the time of the death of his brother-in-law, Guilbert Pickering, in 1599.
been assured. It can scarcely be doubted that we have here an additional explanation of the fact that Robert Browne enjoyed so great a degree of immunity from punishment, in spite of his repeated offences.

Of Robert Browne's early life very little is known. In 1570 he was admitted to Corpus Christi (Bene't) College, Cambridge. He graduated B.A. in 1572. Whether he had spent two years previously in another college, or how else he may have managed so that two years sufficed for his degree at Corpus Christi, is uncertain. At the outset of "A True and Short Declaration, Both of the Gathering and Ioyning Together of Certaine Persons: and also of the Lamentable Breach and Division which Fell Amongst Them" he writes:

"There were certaine persons in England of wich some were brought vp in schooles, & in the Vniversitie of Cambridge, and some in families & houeshouldes as is in the manner in that countrie."

Since he obviously belonged to the former of these two groups, we infer that he was "brought vp in school," presumably in Stamford. Crippen suggests that he entered

(1) Browne: "A True and Short Declaration, Both of the Gathering and Ioyning Together of Certaine Persons: and also of the Lamentable Breach and Division which Fell Amongst Them." (Middleburgh 1584) sig. A. recto (reprinted London 1888, p. 1)
Corpus Christi in 1570 because Thomas Aldrich, the Puritan leader, had recently been elected Master of the College. Upon leaving Cambridge, he began teaching school, as did some of his fellow-radicals.

"Some of these which had liued & studied in Cambridge, were there knowne & counted forward in religion, & others, also both there & in the countrie were more careful & zelous, then their froward enimies could suffer.

"They in Cambridge were scattered from thense, some to one trade of life & some to an other: as Robert Browne, Robert Harrison, William Harrison, Philip Browne, Robert Barker. Some of these applied theselves to teach schollers; to the which labour, R. Browne also gaue himselfe for the space of three years."

Where it was that he taught school is not definitely known. Powicke thinks it was probably at Oundle in Northamptonshire. Crippen says that according to tradition, it was Southwark. Pierce says it was in East

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(1) Crippen: op. cit. p. 5; Jessopp notes this coincidence of dates, without any suggestion that the facts are mutually related, in Dictionary of National Biography (63 vols. and later supplements) London from 1885, VII, p. 57.

(2) T. & S.D. sig. A recto

(3) Evidently Robert's next older brother

(4) Powicke: Browne p. 15

Anglia, probably at Bury St. Edmunds; and he thinks the dates were 1574 to 1577, although he does not say what happened between 1572 and 1574. Burrage, who also admits the possibility that it may have been Oundle, suggests Stamford, where family influence probably secured the position for him; he also reckons that Browne began teaching in 1575, possibly having spent the intervening years at Cambridge. Browne says he had "a special care to teach religion with other learning" and that he kept "his scholars in such awe & good order, as all the Tounsemé where he taught gaue him witnes." The state of the times, however, filled him with great concern for the future of these children. "Hereuppon he fell into great care, & was soare greeued, while he long considered manie thinges amisse, & the cause of all, to be the woful and lametable state off the church."

It was, then, not pique at any imagined insult which led him to explore the problem of the Church and its proper function. He was not being pressed too hard by any officious, ecclesiastical superior, but was a layman, a

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(1) Pierce: Penry p. 322. See p. 96 below for reason for doubting this theory.


(3) T. & S.D. sig. A. recto
teacher, whose concern for the Church grew out of his concern for the boys in his charge. The times seemed to him ominous in their import for the rising generation. Something ought to be done; and as he looked for the underlying cause, he grew certain that the state into which the Church had fallen accounted for the deplorable conditions in national life. What, therefore, was the matter with the Church? Wherein did it fail to measure up to what the Lord had intended it to be?

"Wherefore he laboured much to know his duty in such things; and because the Church of God is his kingdom, & his name especially is thereby magnified; he wholly bent him selfe to search & find out the matters of the church: as how it was to be guided & ordered, & what abuses there were in the ecclesiastical government then used.

"These things he had long before debated in himselfe, & with others & suffered also some trouble about the at Cambridge; yet nowe, on fresh, he set his mind on these things & night & day did consult with himselfe & others about the, least he should be ignorant or mistake anie of those matters." (1)
appeare, & also in those of the towne with whom he kept companie. So by word & practisse he tried out all things, that he might be staied both in iudgment & counsel, & also in enterprising matters, as his duetie should lead him." (1)

If his words mean anything, they seem to indicate that some sort of conventicle or "Prophecying" was being held, however informally. Pierce, assuming that this was at Bury St. Edmunds, believes that Coppin and Thacker were among Browne's converts, and attributes their first difficulties with the authorities to the effect of this influence. When we think of the vigilance with which radical school teachers are watched by the conservative elements in the population to-day, it does not surprise us to know that this disturbing young man was viewed with alarm.

"But this his dealig got hi much enuie of the preacher & sõe others where he taught, & much trouble also whõ he broke his mid more plainlie vnto thõ." (3)

We can imagine the vain attempts of some friends to persuade him to compromise. Refusing to change his ways, he was removed from his post, but evidently stayed on as a

(1) T. & S. D. sig. A recto
(2) Pierce: Penry, p. 322
private tutor, until the force of circumstances seemed too strong for him.

"Presetlie after this he was discharged of his schole by the grudge of his enimies. Yet he taught still with great goodwill & fauour of the Townseme, till such time as the plague increased in the Towne, and his schollers, though never so well plied & profited by him, were notwithstanding either flitting awaie vpon such occasions, or to hastilie sent to the vniuersitie, or because of their misguiding there, to some occupations, he thought that the fruict of his labor was too much unceraine, & tooke counsell if by sone better waie he might profit the church. Then he gaue warning to the Toune and departed to come hone, as his father willed him." (1)

Probably news of his discharge from school had reached home, either through his own reporting, or by some other means. Perhaps his father hoped then to accomplish, what he later gave up in despair, the achievement of making his fractious son see reason. Very likely the family were also worried lest he be stricken by the plague. Consequencely, his father urged him to do what his own sense of failure was also pressing upon him. His vision of what ought to be the result of his labours was so far from being realized in his young charges that he was easily persuaded to leave his teaching. But living at home soon palled.

His father evidently had scant sympathy with what must have seemed to him quite crazy ideas. Moreover, idleness had no

(1) T. & S.D. Sig A. recto & verso
attractions for the young man upon whom rested the burden of reforming the Church.

"So might he haue lived with his father, being a man of some countenance, & haue wanted noethinge, if he hadd beene soe disposed, but his care as always before, so then especially being set on the church of God, he asked leave of his father, and took his Iournie to Cambridge, fro wese a few yeares before he had departed."

Among the most respected and well-loved Puritan leaders in the whole region about Cambridge was the Reverend Richard Greenham of Dry Drayton. Browne lived with him for a time.

"He ther had deallig with M. Greeha of dreito, whoe of all others he hard sai was most forward, & thought that with him and by him he should haue some stai of his care, and hope of his purpose. Wherefore, as those which in ould tyme were called the prophetes & children of the prophetes & liued to gether, because of corruptions among others, so come he vnto him." (3)

However much others may have been alarmed or upset by Browne's views, Richard Greenham evidently trusted him, even to the point of violating the rules, and letting

(1) T. & S. D. Sig A. verso

(2) See Appendix for a further account of Greenham's standing.

(3) T. & S. D. sig A verso.
Browne into his pulpit without a preaching licence.

"He was suffered, as others also in his house, to speake of that part of scripture which was vsed to be red after meales. And although he said that without leave & special word from the bishop, he was to suffer none to teach openlie in his parish, yet without anie such leave he suffered R.B." (2)

The great authority and power exercised by the bishops appeared to Browne to be so completely contrary to God's will that he welcomed a heaven-sent opportunity to defy the ecclesiastical officials, by serving a church to which he was invited and encouraged by the local authorities.

"Notwithstanding, when R.B. sawe that the bishops feet were to much sett in euerie place, & that spiritual infectiō to much spred, euē to the best reformed places, he tooke that occasiō which the Lord did first geue him for redresse . . . when certaine in Cambridge had boath moued him, & also with consent of the Maior & Vice-chancelar, called him to preach among them . . ." (3)

According to Thomas Fuller, Browne preached in Bene't Church, at Cambridge, creating quite a stir at the time.

"He used sometime to preach at Bene't Church, where the vehemency of his utterance passed for zeal among the common people, and made the vulgar to admire, the wise to suspect him. Dr. Still, afterwards

(1) Dexter: "Congregationalism", p. 92 cites this good opinion of Greenham, who knew Browne well, as evidence strongly in Browne's favour.

(2) T. & S. D. sig A verso

(3) T. & S. D. Sig A verso
Master of Trinity, (out of curiosity or casually present at his preaching) discovered in him something extraordinary which he presaged would prove the disturbance of the church, if not seasonably prevented." (1)

The hierarchy was, Browne felt, a usurping power in what ought to be God's kingdom. Clearly, the Apostles had felt themselves inferior in authority to the Church, to whom they expected to give account of what they did. But the Bishops claimed a power over the churches which was essentially tyrannical, setting up and deposing ministers where it was plainly the Church's prerogative and obligation to call its own ministers. When Browne argued the point with his friends, some said that, with all their faults, the Bishops did have the word and sacraments of God, and should therefore be accepted, since God thus tolerated them. Browne, however, wrestled with the question, and came to the conclusion that since the whole ecclesiastical system was patently unscriptural, it could not truly be counted acceptable in the sight of God. What, then, should he do? Remembering that Christ had sat among the doctors in the temple, he decided to get along as best he could without any open breach on his part. But he would

(1) Fuller III, p. 62.
not by word or deed admit their authority over him, even when a licence to preach was secured for him.

"Howbeit the bishops' seals were gotten him by his brother(2), which he both refused before the officers, & being written for him would not pay for them; & also, being afterward paid for by his brother, he lost one and burnt another in the fire, & another being sent him to Cambridge he kept it by him till in his trouble it was delivered to a Jusitse of peace, & so from him, as is supposed, to the bishop of Norwich." (3)

Even with a licence duly issued in his name, he took care to explain to his congregation that it had no bearing on his right and duty to preach, since "his duetie, he said, was first to discharge his message before God & deserve no reprooche of them, & then also either to finde them worthie, or else if thei refused such reformation as the Lord did nowe call for, to leaue them as his duetie did bind him; . . . . " Indeed, the parishes were in so low a spiritual state that he could only conclude "the kingdom off God was not to be begun by whole

(1) Browne discusses this at great length in T. & S. D. sig A verso to sig. A3 verso; see ch.VIII below for a resume of this section of T. & S.D.

(2) Apparently he means Philip once more.

(3) T. & S. D. sig A3 verso. Powicke: Browne p. 19 mentions that the licence was dated June 7, 1579. Burrage: True Story p. 5f quotes the Latin text of the Dismissory Letters (6th June 1579), and the License to Preach (7th June 1579); he also translates both.
parishes, but rather off the worthiest, were they neuer so fewe." A half year in this relationship convinced him that the end he sought could not be attained by any such effort within the Established Church. Therefore, he gave notice of his intention to leave, refusing both the stipend which had been gathered together for him and an invitation to the pastorate.

Falling ill, he gave up "open preaching & . . . daily exhortation in sundrie houses". During either his illness or convalescence, he was visited by "the bishops officer named Bancroft" who read to him a letter issued by the Privy Council, containing instructions against permitting preachers other than those duly in charge of specific parishes. Browne bluntly retorted that if he had accepted the call he would certainly not have ceased preaching just because of this letter; and although he was ceasing to preach, he wished it clearly understood that this letter

(1) T. & S.D. sig A3 verso
(2) T. & S.D. sig A 4 recto
(3) Powicke: Browne p. 21f gives proof that this was Richard Bancroft, who later quoted Browne in his sermon at Paul's Cross. See p. 155 below.
had nothing whatever to do with that decision.

The task of "redressing" the abuses of the Church still weighed upon his conscience, but the problem was how to set about the matter effectively. Even in the liberal-minded surroundings at Cambridge he had come to the conclusion that little could be hoped for so far as the regular parishes were concerned. He remembered, however, that in Norfolk there were some "whome he harde saie were uerie forward." Here perhaps were some of those "worthiest were they neuer so fewe" who might be the nucleus for a fresh attempt to realize the kingdom of God. Perhaps they would be prepared for a voluntary association instead of the compulsory (and therefore antichristian) gathering in the Parishes.

While he was pondering the matter he came upon Robert Harrison, whom he had known in student days at Corpus Christi, and who was a Norfolk man. Harrison, being a great admirer of Richard Greenham, was about to ask his aid in securing a licence from the bishop. Browne, however, dissuaded him. He recounted his own experience,

(1) Powicke: Browne p. 22; T. & S.D. sig A4 recto; Burrage: True Story p. 8 quotes from the Council's letter, and Grindall's general orders which followed. They were respectively 17th and 18th January 1579/80.

(2) T. & S.D. sig A4 recto and verso. This apparent lack of personal acquaintance with the advanced reform group in the district about Norwich makes it seem doubtful that he could have taught at Bury St. Edmunds a few years previously. Otherwise his knowledge would surely be more direct.
declaring that so far as ordaining or licensing by bishops were concerned "he abhorred such trash and pollutions as the marckes & poison of Antichrist." The upshot was that Harrison returned to Norwich. Browne came soon after, and stayed with him at St. Giles Hospital, of which Harrison had been made Master by the Mayor and Aldermen following an effort to place him on the teaching faculty of Aylsham Free School. Harrison's unwillingness to accept the prescribed forms in the Prayer Book had been chief reason for his removal from the teaching position after he had occupied it less than a month.

Having settled at Norwich, the two men considered at great length what should be their attitude towards the Church. Harrison had greatly admired Greenham, and he also thought highly of John More and Archdeacon Roberts of Norwich. In 1576 these two and several others had petitioned against enforced uniformity.

(1) T. & S. D. sig. A4 verso
(2) See Appendix for the story of Harrison's experience at Aylsham School.
(3) Burrage: New Facts Concerning John Robinson, Oxford 1910, p. 21 tells how More was rector of St. Andrews, Norwich, a church which had purchased its patronage and could, therefore, choose its own minister. He thinks some of Browne's ideas of church polity came from what he knew of such churches as St. Andrews, Norwich.
(4) Peel: Calendar of the Second Parte of a Register; pp. 145ff gives a summary of each petition.
"Wee suffer ourselves rather to be displaced then to yeld to certen things. Our Bodyes, goods, lands, life, Wife and Children be in her Ma ties hands, onlie our souls, which must be either saved or dampned, we reserve to our God, who alone is able to save or dampne."

In 1578, however, part of the group had sent in a compromise submission, agreeing to the doctrinal articles and promising not to oppose the ceremonies.

It appears that a somewhat similar "Supplication of Norwich Men" was prepared and ready to send to London about the time that Browne arrived (probably early in 1580). He and Harrison both signed it. Browne does not mention the incident in his own account of his career. Peel suggests that he may have signed in haste or after great urging, and then later regretted doing so because its position was not sufficiently far advanced for his own conclusions.

Among the 175 signers of the Supplication were Robert Barker, evidently the one to whom Browne referred as a fellow student at Cambridge, John Flower, who may be

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(1) Peel: Calendar of the Seconde Parte of a Register, pp. 157 ff, gives the substance of this supplication, with 175 names attached to it.

(2) Peel: "The Brownists in Norwich and Norfolk about 1580" Cambridge 1920 p. 6 f. Peel also shows that this must have been written in 1580, not 1583 as appears in the manuscript copy of the Second Parte of a Register.

(3) See p. 86 above. Peel: "Brownists in Norwich" p. 8 calls attention to these names.
the "Uncle Flower" to whom Browne later wrote an important letter, and John Allens. Peel offers the interesting theory that this John Allens may have been a brother-in-law of both Harrison and Browne. Harrison had "certaine sisters," and when disputes began at Middleburgh, he accused Browne of having "condemned his Sister Allens as a reprobate".

"The faults they Laied Against him Were, For rebukeinge Rob. H. Sister of Want of Love, And off abhorring the Pastar: Which They Counted a Slan­dar. Likewise for rebukeinge her of Judgeing Wrong (5) Fullie on The Printer, Which Was also made a slander."

Apparently, then, Harrison's sister had married an Allens, or else Harrison himself married an Allens in Aylsham, in which case the "Sister Allens" would be his sister-in-law. Presumably the Allens baby, at whose christening Harrison as godfather made the scene which led to his being

(1) See p. 154 below.
(2) Peel: Brownists in Norwich, pp. 8 ff.
(3) T. & S.D. sig B 1 verso
(4) Ibid sig C5 verso
(5) Ibid sig C4 recto.
discharged from the school, was the child of some one of this family. Moreover, Browne's wife was Alice Allen, who Powicke suggests may have been from Aylsham, although the oft-repeated assertion is that she came from Yorkshire. That both men may have married into the Allens family certainly seems not impossible, and since Browne boarded with Harrison and his wife on arriving at Norfolk, it is easy to believe that he would have occasion to meet a sister of his hostess. At any rate, Browne was married either during his stay about Norwich, or else at Middleburgh.

We have no certain knowledge as to all that Browne was doing in the year which followed his coming to Norwich. But by the Spring of 1581 he had succeeded in stirring up so much revolt against the Established Church that Bishop Freke wrote from Norwich on 19th April to inform Burghley of the disorder which he had found at Bury St. Edmunds, when making a regular visitation to that town, and of the arrest of the two chief trouble-makers.

"... great divisions among the people, sour ... given to fantastical innovations; there were, moreover, diverse matters of importance exhibited and proved against Mr. Handsom, who is, in very deed, the only man there blowing the coals whereof this fire is kindled ... and herewith I send ..."

(1) See Appendix
(2) Peel: op. cit. p. 9 says this is first given without any stating of authority in Blore: History and Antiquities of Rutlandshire.
other articles ministered against one Robert Browne, a minister, and his several answers thereunto: the said party being lately apprehended in this country, upon complaint made by many godly preachers, for delivering unto the people corrupt and contentious doctrine, contained and set down more at large in the same articles. His arrogant spirit of reproving being such as is to be marvelled at, the man being also to be feared, lest, if he were at liberty, he would seduce the vulgar sort of the people, who greatly depend on him, assembling themselves to the number of a hundred at a time, in private houses and conventicles to hear him, not without danger of some thereabout." (1)

It is evidently this activity of the Bishop and his officers against them to which Browne refers when he writes "much trouble and persecution did followe yet some did cleaue fast to the trueth, yet some fell awaie." (2)

Burghley replied, two days later, that he supposed the Browne in question was a kinsman of his, in which case he felt sure that lenient treatment and persuasion would suffice to correct his waywardness. If not, he advised that Browne be sent to him at London.

"Forasmuch as he is my kinsman, if he be son to him whom I take him to say, and that his error seemeth to proceed of zeal rather than malice, I do therefore wish he were charitably conferred with and reformed . . . . and in case there shall not follow

(1) Hanbury: I p. 79 gives this from Lansdowne MSS. 33 (No. 13); Strype: Annals III p. 21 f. also gives report of it; it is quoted by Burrage: True Story p. 14 with the original spelling as it stands in the manuscript.


(3) Fuller III p. 62f quoted by Burrage: True Story, p. 14 (with citation from the edition of 1655)
thereof such success as may be to your liking, that then you would be content to permit him to repair hither to London, to be further dealt with as I shall take order for upon his coming; for which purpose I have written a letter to the sheriff, if your lordship shall like thereof."

Evidently this interest on the part of his influential kinsman served to secure a second chance for Browne. The outburst of repression against the whole company seems to have been followed by a period of quiet. The group, however, was far from subdued. They agreed that they must prepare to resist any repetition of suppressive measures, so that they might stand fast in the faith.

"There was a day appointed, and an order taken for redresse off the former abuses and for cleaung to the Lord in greater obediance. So couenat was geue to hould together." Taking each item in the covenant separately, they all agreed, "saiing: to this we geue our consent."

1. "... thei gaue their consent to joine them selues to the Lord in one couenant and fellowe-shipp together & to keep and seek agrement vnder his lawes and gouernment . . . "

2. "... thei agreed off those which should teach them and watch for the salvation of their soules whom thei allowed and did chose as able & meet for that charge, . . they praied for their watchfulness and diligence & promised their obedience."

(1) T. & S. D. sig C2 verso.
3. "... an order was agreed for their meetings 
together for their exercises therein, as for 
prayer, thanksgiving, reading of the scrip-
tures, for exhortation & edifying, either by all 
men which had the gift or by those which had a 
special charge before others..."

4. "... anie might protest, appeale, complaine, ex-
hort, dispute, reproue &c. as he had occasion, 
but yet in due order, which was the also de-
clared."

5. "... all should further the Kingdom of God in 
themselves & especiallie in their charge and 
household iff thei had anie, or in their 
friendes and companions and whosoever was 
worthie."

6. "... thei particularlie agreed off the manner 
howe to watch to disorders, & reforme abuses... 
. . assembling . . . teaching privatlie . . . 
warning and rebukeing both privatelie and open-
lie; for appointing publick humbling in more 
rare judgementes, & public thankgeuing in 
straunger blessings . . . choosing teachers, 
guides and relieuers when thei want; for separa-
ting cleane from vncleane; for receaung anie 
into the fellowship; for preseting the dailie 
success of the church & the wants thereof; for 
seeking to other churches to haue their help, 
being better reformed, or to bring them to re-
formation; for taking an order that none contend 
openlie, nor persecute, nor trouble disorderly, 
nor bring false doctrine, nor euell cause after 
one or twice warning or rebuke."

This renewed disobedience greatly perturbed Bishop Freke, 
who had supposed that the original suppression would suf-
fice against these rebellious folk. On the 2nd August he 
写了 to Burghley again, begging his aid against Browne, 
for the purpose of "suppressing him especially, that no
further inconvenience follow by this his return."

"... by the good aid and help of my Lord Chief Justice, and Mr. Justice Anderson his associate, the chiefest of such factions were so bridled, and the rest of their followers so greatly dismayed, as I verily hoped of much good and quietness to have thereof ensued, had not the said Browne now returned, contrary to my expectation... having private meetings in such close and secret manner as that I know not possibly how to suppress the same... if it would please your Lordship to give me your good advice, how to prevent such dangers as through the strange dealings of some of the gentlemen in Suffolk about Bury, is like to ensue, I should be much bound to your Honour for the same..."

It was about this time that Freke complained of favour shown to Coppin and Thacker by the civil officials in Bury St. Edmunds, to which complaint the accused men replied by charging the Bishop with exercising great severity, whereas they themselves sought to reform the offenders.

One of these officers, Sir Robert Jermyn, wrote to Burghley on the 28th July concerning Browne, begging the Lord Treasurer to keep Browne from getting himself into serious trouble.

On Browne's second coming to Bury, Jermyn informed Burghley, he had sent for him in order to caution him, pointing out that his course alarmed many honest and godly men, and might discredit all efforts at reform, by their extreme nature. Browne's answer contained many

(1) Hanbury I p. 20 quotes Lansdowne M33. 33 (No. 20); so also do Strype: Annals III p. 22f; Burrage: True Story p. 15 f. gives (as before) the original spelling.

(2) See p. 43 above.

(3) Strype: Annals III p. 30 f. This is condensed from Strype's account of the letter. Dexter: Congregationalism p. 70 gives the date as here reported.
things godly and reasonable, and such as might truly be wished and prayed for. At the same time, however, there were other things strange and unheard as well as utterly impracticable. He hoped that Burghley would put a check upon the young man's enthusiasm, both for his own good and for those whom he might lead astray, thus enabling him to render to the church a profitable service.

There is no definite information as to how often Browne was imprisoned during these months of activity about Norfolk. According to Fuller, Browne in later life "used to boast, that he had been committed to thirty-two prisons, and in some of them he could not see his hand at noon-day." He was certainly imprisoned in Norfolk in April. Presumably it was after Freke's letter of 2nd August that he was "held as prisoner at London." Word came to him that the covenanting group were greatly perturbed over the question of emigration. Some were most eager to find refuge in Scotland. Browne sent word from prison that they should not hasten to leave England. They might yet bear fruitful witness to the truth. Moreover, God would surely deliver them from too great persecution. If in such case, the Divine will should lead them abroad, well and good. But "rather indeed would he haue it to be a deliverance by the Lord then a cowardly fleeing off their owne devising." Scotland,

(1) Fuller, III p. 65
(2) T. & S.D. sig C2 verso
(3) Ibid sig C3 recto.
he was sure, would never do as a place of refuge.

1. "It framed itself in those matters to please England too much."

2. "We could not there be suffered . . . some corruptiō . . . from their parishes . . . or great trouble wrought vs from England."

He was less opposed to the idea of going "into Gersey or Garnsey," but thought they should move slowly. However, "diverse of them were againe imprisoned, & the rest in great trouble & bondage out of prison," whereupon they agreed "that the Lord did call them out of England."

The little company emigrated to Middleburgh, in Zealand, there to develop a true Church without hindrance from civil or ecclesiastical authorities. The exact date of their arrival is not known. By August 1582, however, Richard Schilders had printed Browne's first and most widely known book. It consisted finally of three treatises bound together, although in earlier copies (1) only two were included. The book was entitled thus:

(1) Copies containing all three are exceedingly rare, as Burrage points out, True Story p. 18.
A Booke
WHICH SHEWETH THE
life and manners of all true Christians
And howe vnlike they are vnto Turkes and Papistes
and Heathen folke.

Also the pointes and partes of all diu-
nitie, that is of the revealed will and worde of God are
declared by their seuerall Definitions
and Divisions in order as fol-
loweth.

Also there goeth a Treatise before of
Reformation without tarying for anie, and of the wicked-
nesse of those Preachers, which will not reforme them
selues and their charge, because they will
tarie till the Magistrate commaunde
and compell them.

By me, ROBERT BROWNE.

MIDDLEBVRGH.

Imprinted by Richard de Painter
1582

In those later copies which include all three treatises,
there is included, before the text of "A Booke Which
Sheweth," a preface to and the text of:

A Treatise vpon the 23 of Mat-
thewe, both for an order of studying and handle-
ing the Scriptures, and also for auoyding
the Popishe disorders, and vngodly communion
of all false Christians, and especially of wic-
ked Preachers and hirelings.

It is reported that Harrison provided the money to pay for

(1) Painter is, of course, the English for Schilders.
the printing of these three treatises, as well as his own "A Little Treatise vppon the firste verse of 122 Psalm."

On 22nd August, 1582, the English merchants in the Low Countries wrote to Walsingham, sending a volume containing the two tracts, and saying that they had submitted the book to Cartwright, who disapproved of it. They had therefore persuaded the authorities at Antwerp to do what they could to suppress all circulation of the tracts. Another letter on the 2nd of September reported that over a thousand copies of the book were known to have been printed, of which a great many had been shipped to England. The Prince of Orange was doing his best to suppress it. The company with Browne were a small, ill-conditioned group, who nevertheless seemed to have made numerous friends in Middleburgh.

"... beinge at Middelbourge, I found of Brownes boks to be sold openly: there have bene printed of them above one thousand, and many sent into England ... I understode ... that the Prince of Orange had written for the suppressinge of the books, which ar alredy sent into England ... . . . for in

(1) S(tephen) B.(redwell): "The Rasing of the Foundations of Brownisme." (London) 1588, sig A2 verso "To the Reader".


(3) Pearson 214 f quotes from S.P. Eliz. Holl. and Fland. XVII No. 3.
Middelbourge... there are none to be found. Browne was also sought but not found and yet I think not out of the towne; there is an assembly there of some thirty or forty persons, which are in very poore estate, and for the most parts visited with sicknes, not well agreeinge with the aire in those parts. They gave out of them selves that they are in all respects dutifully affected unto the Q. Matye... Yt shold appere that the Ministers and people in Middelbourge ar not ill affected vnto Browne and his followers, being persuaded that there voluntary exile is for matter of religion and for there consience, and many of the towne understanding enlishe, doe oftentimes repaire to there prayers and assemblies, which ar kepte in Brownes house which he hathe hired in the towne..."

The sufferings which the exiles endured because of the climate were a mere fraction of their woes. There developed among them a tragic spirit of dissension which soon made a mockery of their fine hopes for perfection. Browne's version of the troubles is the most complete account which we have. While he admits that there will always be differences of opinion and misunderstandings in the Church, he insists that there is "remedie of such thinges" in the Lord's ordinance, if only it be faithfully observed. Such differences as might be expected had been originally anticipated and provided for, but "when the pastor fell sick & could not be present at the exercises, nor visit them priuatlie in houses, the stirring did freshly beginn againe." The discontented members nursed their grievances

(1) T. & S.D. sig C3 recto and verso
secretly, and so grew convinced in their opposition. Harrison, hearing tales of uncharitable judgment by Browne against his sister, first talked of the matter with some of those who joined him in feeling irritated at their leader. Thereafter they presented their accusations in a formal meeting, at which Browne brought forward witnesses in his defence, to show that his words of criticism had been greatly exaggerated in the report given. Prior to the meeting he expostulated with Harrison for having been so ready to listen to an evil report, but his rebuke was not taken kindly. Harrison, brooding over Browne's words, declared he would withdraw from the group unless "there were some remidle procured." He also wrote out his grievances against Browne, but refused to show them to him when asked to do so. He also called a meeting of his sympathizers to discuss their grievances.

Browne's answer was to summon a regular meeting in his rooms, at which he insisted that the accusations against him be supported by at least two witnesses each, and that they be dealt with in proper order. His opponents, however, shouted down his attempts at securing any such orderly procedure. Browne said he would not remain in the meeting to be treated in such fashion; but "they were

(1) T. & S.D. sig C3 recto and verso.
further out of order, so that either twice or thrice he was forced to rise up & leave them." He was then "condemned as an unlawful Pastor"; they said he was not to "keep the exercises, also that he was to confess his faults before they would join with him." Remembering that this was his room, "he came in again & told them that he was unwilling they should use their meetings in his chamber after that manner."

Harrison and his party thereupon met elsewhere to condemn Browne. He had demanded written charges, which they now drew up, declaring: that he had falsely accused Harrison "of Notable apparèt wickednes" thereby breaking the covenant in receiving false reports against Harrison and his brother, and troubling the church in that matter; that he had entertained false suspicions against one of the church members in the matter of the pawning of a certain silver spoon; and that he had slandered Harrison for murmuring against him. When Browne "perceaued how that divers times priuile, and now also openlie thei cast him off, he also openlie pronounced it, that he had noe charge off them if they soe continued to withdrawe them selues." With all their discontent, the prospect of such a breach evidently sobered them, and they decided to try once more

(1) T. & S. D. sig C3 verso
to get along amicably. Harrison "both openlie in the Church and particularlie from man to man & From house to house did acknowledge that he had delt vnaduisedlie against R.B. in sundrie things."

Perhaps Browne's calm assumption of injured innocence was too much for them, with its perpetual reminder of how they had wrongfully dealt with a virtuous man. At any rate, "ffor all this the grudge lay hid in the harts of diuers and new meetings were had against R.B. where in agai accusations were had without Witnesses." Browne's account unconsciously reveals the intolerable manner in which he put himself in the right and the others in the wrong. Harrison, he says, listened to more slanders "& nether shame which before came on him, or the Iudgement of God by the death of his children, nor sundrie warnings otherwise could cause him to lay doth his malice & troublesome mind." Even taking Browne's account of the quarrel at its face value, one must still feel some sympathy for the bereaved parent whose colleague could be so complete a Job's comforter. The whole dreary affair must have been pitifully disillusioning to all concerned. After a winter or two of inclement weather, bickering among themselves, and more or less constant illness among

(1) T. & S. D. sig C4 recto
the whole company, it is hardly surprising to learn that Harrison began to suggest "that they might Lawfully Return INTO ENGLAND AND there have their dwellinges."

There developed a third movement of revolt which ended, like the others, in a temporary reconcilement and admission that the charges against Browne had been grossly exaggerated. The problem of genuine reconciliation was, however, too much for them.

"There was there whisperings, backbitings & murmuring's privately & among themselves, also openly grievous threats, taunts, reuiling's & false accusations were rife in their mouths."

Some of them threatened to bring new charges against Browne, but he said,

"... they could not joine with him in public prayer & thanksgiving being at one disagreement & not first reconcile. This was counted presumptuous intolerable to be spoke of him. And for that he charged some business bodies which were also blasphemers, not to come to the meetings, neither to his chamber in that manner he was grievously take up & miscalled off divers. Likewise for his wife there was much a doe, and for the power & authority which the Husband hath over the Wife. In this latter a doe R.H. was sick and came not abroad, but he had tales enow brought unto him, for which he afterward made a great stirring & business. But againe

(1) T. & S.D. sig C4 recto
(2) Ibid sig C4 recto & verso
their owe shame compelled the to come to agreement, & yet once more with one consent thei receaued R.B. for their laweffull pastor."

The ill feelings which had been engendered were too much for Harrison to forget. More tales were brought to him and he again absented himself, for which Browne proceeded once more to admonish him. Bitter words ensued. Whatever the merits of the original quarrel, the whole group had been forced into taking sides, and apparently the majority were by this time quite worn out by Browne's manner of dealing.

"Then was he openlie accused & chalæged for an heretick & codemned as worse the the pope & antichrist. The heresies laied against him were . ..":-

1. Holding that children are not automatically members of the church because their parents belong to it.

2. Holding that none can be counted God's people who have not given themselves to God and the church, or been so dedicated by others.

3. Saying that England was Egypt and that it was a sin to propose living there, when once free from it, even though the magistrates might tolerate them.

4. Saying (which he denied having done) that those who had joined the idolatrous worship practised in England, but had later renounced it, were members of God's outward church.

5. Rebutting those who tolerated contemporary abuses by referring to what had been permitted under ancient law.

(1) T. & S. D. sig C4 verso
Browne's embittered self-defence concludes abruptly with the charge that Harrison and his supporters forsook him, sold his books, stopped the sale of what remained, intending to burn them, charged him with false debts, forced his sympathizers out of their lodgings, and threatened to evict him.

Browne's account of the unhappy quarrel is the most detailed of any now known. As we have seen, it is definitely a self-defence, and yet it unwittingly reveals the fact that, in Middleburgh as elsewhere, it took two to make a quarrel. Browne was undoubtedly an overbearing and an exceedingly difficult person. Obviously the relations between the two men were poisoned by tale-bearing gossips as well as by temperamental incompatibility. Perhaps personal irritations within the Allens family also aggravated their troubles. The patent sincerity of each participant, and the heart-breaking trials of almost constant sickness and economic stress, make their ill-starred venture the more tragic to contemplate. After the rupture, Harrison wrote to an acquaintance in London. While he complained of the treatment he had received from Browne, he also verified Browne's contention that he interfered with the sale and distribution of his books. The letter is known only through being quoted some five years later by

(1) His overbearing manner is better understood when we take note of his teachings concerning submission to superiors, in Church as well as State. See Chapter Seven, below.
Stephen Bredwell, when he launched a bitter attack against Browne.

"Indeede the Lorde hath made a breache amongst vs, for our sinnes haue made vs vnworthie to beare his great and worthie cause. M.B. hath cast vs off, and that with the open manifesting of so many and so notable treacheries, as I abhore to tell, and if I should declare them, you could not beleue me. Which because this sheete and many moe would not suffice to rehearse, I will meddle with no particular thing, to declare it. Onely this I testifie vnto you, I am well able to prove, that Gaine dealt not so ill with his brother Abel, as he hath dealt with me . . . . Also I would admonish you to take heede howe you adventure your selfe to be a meane, to spread abroade any of that parties manifold heresie: and the other vpon the 23 of Mattheuwe, is a paternne of all lewd franticke disorder whoso haue eyes to see it. And I do not doubt but that the Lord will yet drive him on to worse and worse, seeing he hath so notably fallen from him. Giue not your selfe ouer to be abused: the Lorde open your eyes, and giue you grace to take profit by my writing, euene as I do giue it with a well meaning minde to doe you good."

Browne's "True and Short Declaration" was probably written while he was still in Middleburgh, but was probably not the first published reference to the quarrel, since we know that Harrison's "A Little Treatise vpon the firste Verse of the 122. Psalm" was in circulation in Bury St. Edmunds before June 1583. Harrison included in the treatise a statement which obviously referred to the schism as it was then developing. His words

(1) S.B. "Rasing the Foundation etc." sig A2 verso, "To the Reader".
do not necessarily indicate that the final breach had oc-
curred by that time, but they certainly reflect a good deal
of bitterness towards the "one" who had displayed "Anti-
christian pride and bitterness."

"And of late an other attempt haue bene giuen
that waie by one of whom I must needs saie, that the
Lord vsed him as a meanes to bring the truth to light,
in manie points concerning the true gouernment of the
churche: who, I wish for the glorie of God, if it had
ben his good pleasure, that he had stoode in integrity,
without swaruing and leaninge to Antichristian pride,
and bitternes. And for me to make thereof, may seme
very hard, which am not so able therein to saue my
self from the reproch of manie tongues, as I am to
cleare my selfe of the desruing the same . . . "

The constant wrangling was too much for en-
durance. It became evident that Middleburgh was not large
enough to hold both factions. Browne and his sympathizers
decided to leave. But whither should they go? He had
already spoken most positively against returning to England.
Besides, not even Burghloey's interest in him was guarantee
of safety at this period. In early June, their fellow
Dissenters, Coppin and Thacker, had been hanged at Bury St.
Edmunds because they sold the books of Browne and Harrison,
and endorsed the teachings contained in them. By the end of
the month, a special proclamation had been issued by the
queen, denouncing the books as seditious, and forbidding any

(1) Burrage: E.E.D. I p. 106 quotes this from Harrison's
"Little Treatise" sig D2 verso.
citizens to possess or distribute any copies of them, "as they tender her Maesties good favor, and will answer for the contrary at their uttermost perils, and upon such further paynes as the Lawe shall inflict upon the offendours. . . which her Maestie myndeth to have severely executed." It was not an auspicious moment for either of the authors to appear in England.

It was decided, therefore, to go to Scotland. In the late Autumn or early Winter of 1583 he departed, having "in companie with him 4, or 5 englishmen and their wives, and famelies." They landed at Dundee where, according to the account given by Calderwood, he got some support. From Dundee the company went to St. Andrews, where Browne "purchased a letter of commendatoun from Mr. Andrew Melvill to Mr. James Lowsone." With this, they reached Edinburgh, on Thursday, 9th January 1584, and took lodgings "at the heid of the Cannongate." The following Tuesday Browne appeared "before the sessioun of the kirk

(1) See Appendix for the text of this Proclamation.
(3) See Appendix for Calderwood's story.
of Edinburgh". He had perhaps, been invited by Mr. Law-
son, who was one of the prominent leaders in the Edinburgh
Kirk, his admission into the ministry of Edinburgh having
been one of the last functions in which John Knox par-
ticipated before his death in 1572. The Edinburgh Session
refused to admit Browne on probation, disliking both his
views and his "arrogant maner." A week later, Browne con­
ferred with some of the Presbytery, and "alledged that the
whole discipline of Scotland was amisse: that he and his
companie were not subject to it, and therefore, he would
appeale from the kirk to the magistrat." Lawson and John
Davidson were thereupon appointed to examine his writings
and prepare a case against him for examination the fol­
lowing Monday, and also for the basis of charges to be
preferred against him to the king. The examination was
held on Tuesday, 28th January, and lasted until early the
next morning. Browne acknowledged and defended his
writings. Thereafter complaint was made to King James
against these troublesome strangers. "But they were inter­
teaned and fostered to molest the kirk."

M'Crie, in his Life of Andrew Melville, cites
the story from Calderwood as an anecdote "not generally
known," which goes to prove that there was in Scotland
at this time "an insensate and despotical govern­
ment . . . . The court took this rigid sectary under

(1) Calderwood III pp. 230-237
their protection, and encouraged him, for no other conceivable reason, than his exclaiming against the ministers, and calling in question their authority." (1)

Calderwood makes no mention of any imprisonment, but Browne himself declared "... in Scotland, the preachers having no names of bishops, did imprison me more wrongfully than any bishop would have done." (2)

When Browne left Scotland is not known for certain.

His letter of 1588 to his uncle, Mr. Flower, which was quoted by Bancroft in the sermon at Paul's Cross on 9th February 1588/9, declared of Scotland that he had "traveled it over in their best reformed places: as in Donde, Sct. Andrewes, Edenborowe, & sundrie other Townes." (3)

Dexter thinks he must have spent considerable time in Scotland before his return to England. Burrage thinks he could hardly have observed serious trouble between King and

(2) Browne's letter to his uncle, Mr. Flower, 1588; published as "A New Years Guift" London 1904; p. 26 f.
(3) A New Years Guift, p. 26; Bancroft: "A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse, etc." London 1588, p. 75.
(4) Dexter: Congregationalism, p. 79.
clergy before June 1584. Because of Kennet's error in copying "Browne" instead of "Brayne" from Burghley's letter of July 1584 in reply to Whitgift, it was assumed by Hanbury that Robert Browne was the one referred to as being then in London, although it might have struck the historian as a singular fact that the archbishop made no particular reference to so notorious a character as Browne was at the time. Moreover, Strype specifically corrected the same error by Fuller in his Life of Whitgift. The error was carried on, however, even by Dexter, and again by Crippen, until Burrage called attention to the mistake in 1906.

The fact is that after the 28th January, 1584, the next date in Browne's life concerning which we can speak with certainty is the 7th October 1585. Peel says that Browne's first child was born in February 1583/4 but gives no authority for saying so. Powicke says that Mrs.

(1) Burrage: True Story p. 29; see p.123 below for evidence against this conclusion by Burrage.

(2) See Appendix for Fuller and Strype on this point; Hanbury I p. 22; Dexter, p. 79; Crippen p. 8; Burrage: True Story p. 30.

(3) Peel: Brownists in Norwich p. 10.
Browne presented Joan, their first child, for baptism at All Saints, Stamford, on February 8th 1583/4; and since Browne was almost certainly in Scotland then, he offers the suggestion that the ship from Middleburgh put in to Yarmouth en route to Dundee, that Browne secretly conveyed his wife to Tolethorpe from there, and that he then returned to Yarmouth and proceeded with the others, and their wives and families to Scotland. Burrage cites the date February 8th, giving Cater's research as the authority, but quoting the year as 1584/5 rather than the preceding year. Hence, he concludes that Mrs. Browne was with her husband and the others in Scotland, and that some time "in the Autumn of 1584" she must have been brought to Tolethorpe by her husband. The statement made by Cater is that the two eldest children of Robert and Alice Browne were baptized at All Saints, Stamford, the record being:

"Jone Browne baptized Feb viii" in 1584
"Anthonie Browne baptized May xvi" in 1585.

Remembering that the change of year was reckoned in England in the old style at that time, we see that the interval

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(1) Powicke: Browne p. 39.
(2) Burrage: op. cit. p. 31: E.E.D. I p. 113.
between these baptisms was only three months and a few
days, rather than fifteen months. Joan, then, must have
been approaching a year old; if she was not older. The
summer of 1584 is the latest that she might have been
born, in which case the probability is that her parents
had come from Scotland to Little Casterton by early
summer at the very latest. The most probable alternative
would be Powicke's theory that Browne had already brought
his wife there for safety before he went on to Scotland.
It is, of course, possible that the child was born in
Scotland or even in Middleburgh, but this seems unlikely.
The problem involved in transporting a newborn baby and
her mother would be likely to cause some mention that
would remain among known evidences. And if the little
girl had arrived before they left Middleburgh it is hard
to believe that her father would not have seized the
occasion to conduct a baptism according to nonconforming
usage. The most probable hypothesis, therefore, seems to
be that the Brownes left Scotland in time to reach Tole-
thorpe Hall by early Summer in 1584, if not earlier, the
baby girl being then born at the Manor House. Remembering
the "Raid of Ruthven" on 22 August 1582, when King James
was temporarily kidnapped by the Presbyterian lords who
were close to Andrew Melville; and remembering its
sequel in the trial and exile of Melville in February
1583/4, we need not suppose that Browne necessarily remained in Scotland until June in order to observe serious differences between the King and the clergy. (1)

For a time, after the safe arrival of his child, Robert Browne must have remained at Tolethorpe. His stay, however, would certainly be limited in duration. His father was not sympathetic to his ideas, and therefore the atmosphere would not be particularly congenial. Moreover, he was definitely suspect, since the Queen's Proclamation of June 1583. Perhaps he eluded those who would have apprehended him; or perhaps he failed to do so, and spent some of his time in one or more of the nation's prisons. As we shall shortly observe, Browne said that on the 8th of February he was "beyond the sea." Powicke thinks it likely that he was at Middleburgh part of the time, although one wonders whether he would return to those from whom he had so recently parted in bitterness (unless this was the time he arranged for the printing of "A True and Short Declaration . . "). Since Harrison evidently died in Middleburgh in 1585, one might like to imagine that Browne had received news of his illness and therefore went

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(2) Powicke: Browne, p. 40.
to Zealand for a final reconciliation. Such procedure is hardly characteristic of Browne, however, and there is no vestige of evidence that Browne ever made peace with his former colleague. Indeed, George Johnson later suggested that Harrison died of a broken heart, because of the failure of their venture at Middleburgh. Burrage, who first proposed the idea that Browne spent a part of this period in London, subsequently changed his opinion and suggested instead that Browne probably went to Norwich to see old friends, and was perhaps obliged to go abroad from there in order to escape arrest.

Some time during these months, he received a communication from "M. Far & M. Har. Londoners," according to Bredwell, who says they wrote for advice as to whether they might listen to preachers who remained in the Church. He says Browne replied, advising them to hear such preachers critically, and in the spirit of examining and testing their doctrine. Some time, also, whether at Norwich, Middleburgh or elsewhere, he was given a letter

(2) Burrage: E.E.D. I p. 112; True Story p. 31.
(3) S.B. "Raising the Foundation" p. 135 "Defence of the Admonition".
which Cartwright had written to Harrison after Browne and his friends had sailed to Scotland. Cartwright expressed the hope that Harrison would see his way clear to re-uniting with those who sought reform within the Church. The letter was evidently written late in 1584. Browne said it had been in circulation some five or six weeks before he saw it. If Harrison ever intended to answer it publicly, he was apparently prevented from doing so by illness and then his death. Browne, however, wrote an extensive reply which he certainly intended to have circulated, for he began it with a formal "Address to the Reader." This reply, which we shall examine later at some length, was an elaborate denial that the Church of England was a true Church of God.

"An Answere to Master Cartwright" was published in London. Browne denied having had anything to do with the publication, although he admitted writing it. His denial may be literally truthful, but to us it seems very much like quibbling. In spirit, if not in letter, it most certainly was an evasive statement, for it is obvious that he wrote the "Answere" with every expectation of having it seen by others. Technically, however, he probably spoke

(1) Browne: "An Answere to Master Cartwright; His Letter for Ioyning with the English Churches" London (1585) sig A ii recto & verso. When Browne wrote, Harrison was still alive, or at least Browne did not know of his death. Otherwise his reference to Harrison would surely have included some mention of his death.
the exact truth. The law forbade publishing seditious works, and for that reason he may have refrained from what would have been a most indiscreet act for a man already under grave suspicion. In a short time after "An Answere" appeared in print, he was taken into custody. According to Breiwell, he was "about Stamford." Burrage's explanation is that Browne, having composed his "Answere" and passed the manuscript on to someone, proceeded to visit his home. There he discovered that his wife had, in spite of his expressed wishes to the contrary, taken Joan to All Saints for baptism, and was now waiting the time when the second child should be born. Here then, before mid-May, Browne must have been seized and removed into custody to answer for the new book which he was, perhaps, surprised to see in print.

Browne's position was, to say the least, exceedingly delicate. His former tracts had formed the basis of prosecution against Coppin and Thacker, for violating the Act of 1581 against seditious libels. They had, moreover, won the added attention of a special Decree of

(1) S.B. "Raising the Foundations" p. 135 "Defence of the Admonition"

(2) Burrage: True Story, p. 35.
condemnation. Yet here was another unauthorized and almost equally offensive tract put into circulation.

Again Browne, or some of his family, appealed to Burghley. If, as seems probable, Browne was in prison from before the birth of his second child, Anthony, then he must have been held at least five months and probably longer, without receiving any direct news from home. He had almost certainly been living in hiding most of the time for several months before his arrest; he was very possibly much concerned about his wife and babies; he could hardly have helped being greatly discouraged about the fulfilment of his great vision of the perfect Church; he was probably in wretched health. His mood may be guessed from the concluding words of his letter to his "Louing Vnckle" on the last of December, 1588, when he declared "I am pore enough & broken to to much with former troubles, & therefore had no need of further affliction."

Everything seemed to have gone wrong, just as it had when he left off teaching. We have already seen that Browne was temperamentally so constituted that he reacted with more than average violence to the circumstances in which he found himself. This is not so say that he was abnormal, but simply that he was of a volatile nature, and

(1) A New Years Guift p. 43.
that a period of imprisonment during the summer of 1585
must have left him feeling desperately discouraged and quite
removed from the spirit of fine exaltation in which he
composed "A Book Which Sheweth," "A Treatise of Reformation",
"A Treatise on the 23. of Matthewe," and "An Answere to
Master Cartwright." One wonders what sort of scenes may
have occurred when he reached Tolethorpe to find that his
child had been baptized in the church in his absence. It
seems reasonable to suspect that his father's influence had
been strong in persuading Alice to have the child baptized
while she was still getting about before Anthony's arrival;
and it is therefore probable that when Robert returned and
expressed his disapproval of what was done, there must have
been many a long argument. Why should Robert make such a
bother about these matters? That would be the burden of
the argument, no doubt. And then, suddenly, came Robert's
arrest, followed by week after week of close imprisonment
and a chance to ask himself the same question.

This, of course, is largely speculation, but it
is put forward as an attempt to understand the frame of
mind in which Robert Browne finally came to the point where
he subscribed to Whitgift's demands.

As we shall see in our next chapter, Burghley
played a leading rôle in that affair. It is inconceivable
that Browne, even in his most discouraged moment would have
dreamed of such a submission on his own initiative. Nor was he the sort to subscribe because the Archbishop ordered him to do so. The submission was typical of that diplomatic compromising at which Burghley was a perfect master. In imagination we can see him in the rôle of go-between, finding out the minimum concessions which Whitgift would demand, and then persuading Browne to agree to them. Burghley would know almost instinctively how to interpret each article so that Browne would have the least difficulty in agreeing to it. When Bredwell tells us how Browne interpreted plain words to mean very much less than they said, we can almost hear Burghley pointing out to him that he could take them as meaning thus, and thereby silence his scruples. Browne admitted having written the "Answere to Master Cartwright," but would not admit any responsibility for its publication. Then he made his permanent peace with the Archbishop by signing the submission.

Bredwell says the subscription was in the following terms:

(1) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations" pp. 127-140 "Defence of the Admonition". Burrage: True Story p. 36; and Powicke: Browne p. 41 f, both quote from S.B.
1. "I do humbly submit myself to be at my Lord of Cant. commandmet, whose authority under her Ma. I wil neuer resist nor depraue by the Grace of God &c."

2. Bredwell says that Browne later claimed to have agreed "that where the word of God is duly preached, and the sacraments accordingly ministered, there is the church of God."

   Bredwell says the actual phrasing was:

   "3. Do you acknowledge the Church of England to be the Church of Christ, or the Church of God? and will you promise to communicate with the same in prayers, sacraments & hearing of the word? and will you frequent our Churches according to law or no?"

4. "Will you promise also quietly to behave yourself, and to keep the peace of this Church: and that you will not preach nor exercise the ministerie, waxtles you be lawfully called thereunto?"

5. "I refuse not to communicate in the Sacraments. For I have one child that is already baptized, according to the order and lawe, and by this time in mine absence, if God have guien my wife a safe deliverance, and the child doe liue, I suppose it is also baptized in like manner. Further my servants being three doe orderly cone to their owne Parish Church, according to the lawe, and communicate also according to the Lawe. To all these points that they are true, I do subscribe with mine hand and name, this 7. of October, Anno Dom. 1585."

   Bredwell says that when taxed with this subscription Browne explained the baptism of the first child by saying "that it was done without his consent and contrary to an order he had taken and appointed; for it was baptized in England he being beyond the sea." As for the fact that his servants attended church, "he was
not to force his servants against their conscience and custom, being newly come to him;" but, personally, "he never came to the same Church with them, the parson being a common drunkard, and infamous by sundrie faults." He had agreed to abide by the law, but "there was no lawe to force him to take such a parson for his lawfull minister, neither to ioyne with him in the prayers and sacraments." (1)

Browne's honesty in making his submission was seriously impugned by his contemporaries. Bredwell, who attacked him violently in 1588 is our source of information as to the subscription and Browne's explanation of it. Having quoted Browne's apologia, he remarks, "if all that is here sayde, touching his subscription, bee melted together as in one lumpe, where shall wee finde a more perfect image of a pestilent schismaticke, and one more voide of all conscience, than is this Browne, though Rome itselfe be raked through to find him?" Thomas Fuller, who, as a small boy, used to see Brown occasionally, was certainly no admirer, although he was less acrimonious than Bredwell. He did not accuse Browne of actual dishonesty, but he doubted if the submission represented any genuine change of heart.

(1) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations" p. 142 (erroneously marked 102) f. "Defence of the Admonition".

(2) ibid

(3) Fuller III p. 65.
"One may justly wonder, when many meaner accessories in this schism were arraigned, condemned, executed, how this Brown, the principal, made so fair an escape, yea enjoyed such preferment. I will never believe, that he ever formally recanted his opinions, either by word or writing, as to the main of what he maintained. More probable it is, that the promise of his general compliance with the Church of England (as far forth as not to make future disturbance therein) met with the archbishop's courteous acceptance thereof; both which, effectually improved by the countenance of Thomas, Cecil, earl of Exeter, (Brown's near kinsman and patron) procured this extraordinary favour to be indulged unto him."

If we take the submission as Bredwell quotes it, and assume that Browne was expected to accept it at its face value, then we must conclude that he was far from frank in the matter. If ever a man agreed to a statement, with mental reservations, he did. We may, however, ask whether this was not tacitly understood by both parties to the agreement. Certainly Whitgift was no fool; and neither was Browne an adept at dissimulation. It must have been plain enough that he was beaten but not convinced. However, it was not Whitgift's policy to insist upon motives or to dictate what men must mean by what they said. His task was to secure outward compliance to the ecclesiastical rule. He might justifiably have demanded that Browne recant from all the offensive statements he had written; but he was content to exact Browne's pledge that he would not in the

(1) Fuller evidently thought this took place after the Lord Treasurer's death, and that his son continued his protection and patronage of Browne.
future engage in agitation against the church system, either by anything he might publish or by interfering with proper church services. This was obviously what they both understood to be the essence of the agreement. Browne seems to have observed this much of the pledge with commendable fidelity. The temptation to ignore it must have been strong at times, and Bredwell cites, as we shall see, certain questionable instances. However, it appears that for the next thirty years Browne tried faithfully to live up to as much as he felt was mutually understood in his submission.

Contrasting the apparent implications of the submission with what Bredwell and other sources reveal, we are led to wonder whether Browne was deceiving Whitgift, or whether the whole affair was a case of rather cynical collusion between Browne, Whitgift and Burghley. There is, however, a third possibility: namely, that Whitgift, in return for a promise of good behaviour, agreed to what was, under the circumstances, a fairly merciful peace.

(1) Burrage: True Story p. 58 points out that when Browne agreed to certain articles required of him at St. Olave's School in 1586 (which we shall shortly examine) he added after his signature that he agreed with "distinctions & exceptions" named "before all the governors". Burrage suggests that similar reservations were probably explicitly understood between him and Whitgift in the present instance.
Thus, Browne won his freedom. Yet it cost him a high price. In the opinion of his contemporaries, he betrayed his convictions, and therefore sold his own soul. The judgment of posterity has been that from the 7th of October, 1585, Robert Browne ceased to be the hero of the struggle between authority and freedom in the affairs of church and state. Probably the verdict of his immediate family connections was that Robert had finally begun to show a bit of common sense.

Our present purpose is neither to praise nor to condemn, but merely to state the facts as we find them, together with such indications as we can offer to explain them. Thus we come to the fact that at approximately thirty-five years of age, Robert Browne brought to an end his years of open revolt.
CHAPTER FOUR

Robert Browne: The Years of Submission.

Having arranged for Browne's submission to the Archbishop, Lord Burghley evidently hoped that his young kinsman would thenceforth live quietly and with no further disturbance against the laws of the Church. The very day after the submission had been signed, he sent Browne to Tolethorpe with a letter to Anthony Browne, Robert's father, in which he commended the presumably chastened rebel to his good will and patient consideration. Burghley had more or less given guarantee to Whitgift of Browne's good behaviour, and it was understood that his sojourn at Tolethorpe would be in the nature of a parole in his father's care. In four months' time, however, the elder Browne had written to express his own despair at ever getting his son into a proper frame of mind, wherefore he sought permission to let Robert move from Little Casterton to Stamford. We may conclude that he was willing to keep a general eye on him, but felt the task of living under the same roof too wearing to be continued. Burghley granted the request.

Burghley's letter of 8th October was as follows:

(1) Fuller III p. 63 f. Incorrectly gives the year as 1584.
"After my very hearty commendations: Understanding that your son, Robert Brown, had been sent for up by my lord Bishop of Canterbury to answer to such matters as he was to be charged withal, contained in a book made by him, and published in print (as it was thought) by his means; I thought good, considering he was your son and of my blood, to send unto my lord of Canterbury in his behalf, that he might find what reasonable favour he could show him; before whom I perceive he hath answered in some good sort; and although I think he will not deny the making of the book, yet by no means will he confess to be acquainted with the publishing or printing of it. He hath besides yielded unto his lordship such further contentment as he is contented (the rather at my motion) to discharge him; and therefore, for that he purposeth to repair to you, I have thought good to accompany him with these my letters, and to pray you, for this cause or any his former dealings, not to withdraw from him your fatherly love and affection, not doubting but with time he will be fully recovered and withdrawn from the relics of some fond opinions of his; which will be the better done, if he be dealt withal in some kind and temperate manner. And so I bid you very heartily farewell."

Burghley's second letter to Anthony Browne was on 17th February, 1585/6.

"After my very hearty commendations: I perceive by your letters, that you have little or no hopes of your son's conformity, as you had when you received him into your house; and therefore, you seem desirous that you might have liberty to remove him further off from you, as either to Stamford, or some other place; which I know no cause but you may very well and lawfully do, where I wish he might better be persuaded to conform himself, for his own good, and yours and his friends' comfort. And so I very heartily bid you farewell." (1)

What happened in the next few years of Browne's life has been a matter subject to considerable discussion

(1) Fuller III p. 64.
by those who have written about him. Jeremy Collier, writing in 1714, stated that Browne was excommunicated by Bishop Lindsell of Peterborough, but gave no date for the incident.

"Twas Lindsell Bishop of Peterborough's Discipline which brought him to this Recollection. The Bishop being inform'd that Brown lived at Northampton and was busie in promoting his Sect, sent him a Citation to come before him; he refus'd to appear: Upon which contemptuous Omission he was excommunicated. Brown being deeply affected with the Solemnity of this Censure, made his Submission, mov'd for Absolution, and receiv'd it, and from this Time continued in the Communion of the Church."

Collier, it would appear, got the story from "Bibliotheca Scriptorum Ecclesiae Anglicanae" which had been printed in 1709. The author claimed to have the story on good testimony, and referred to Browne as "the old gentleman."

"Whilst this Dr. (Bayly) liv'd as Chaplain to Bishop Lindsell at Peterborough, one thing happened which ought not to be forgotten: I have it from a Grave and Reverend Divine now alive, who had it from his (Bayly's) own Mouth. The Story in short is this: The Bishop of Peterborough hearing, in his Visitation, that

(1) Collier: An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain, etc. (2 vol.) London 1714 vol. II, p. 582.

(2) "Bibliotheca Scriptorum Ecclesiae Anglicanae; or a Collection of Tracts Relating to the Government and Authority of the Church," London 1709, p. XII; this is also quoted by Powicke: Browne p. 57, and by Burrage: True Story p. 42.
Brown, the Ringleader of the Brownists, liv'd at North-Hampton, a Market Town in his Diocess, cited him to appear before him; but he neglecting, or refusing to appear, the Bishop, upon mature Deliberation, Excommunicated him. This so struck the old Gentleman, that he submitted himself to the Bishop, desir'd to be absolv'd, and being absolv'd accordingly, & re-admitted in the Church, never after left it."

Hanbury, in 1839, took the story from Collier, and declared that it occurred before the Autumn of 1591.

"having been excommunicated for contempt by the bishop of Peterborough, he revolted from his disciples, and was protected and rewarded by Burghley, Sept. 6th, 1591, with the rectory of Achurch, Northamptonshire."

Dexter, writing in 1880, cited the story from Brook's "Lives of the Puritans", and said it happened between 17th February and 21st November 1586. Crippen, in 1903, follows the lead of Jessopp, in the Dictionary of National Biography, saying that the excommunication occurred in the Spring of 1586,

(1) Hanbury I p. 25 f.

(2) "Bibliotheca Scriptorum, etc." p. xiii tells how Bayly was once reprimanded by Dr. Hammond for a sermon in which he advocated excommunication "but when Dr. Bayly told him the Story of Brown, the Dr. was satisfy'd, and thank'd him for his learned Dis­course." This is also quoted by Dexter: Congregationalism, p. 81.
and giving the Bishop's name as Howland instead of Linsell. When Burrage wrote his "True Story of Robert Browne" in 1906, however, he pointed out the various difficulties in the way of accepting the Spring of 1586 as the date of Browne's excommunication. He also rejected Dexter's hypothesis that Browne was the victim of insanity, a theory which Crippen had accepted. As will shortly appear, Dexter thought that the evidence pointed to a period of nearly ten years, beginning in 1616, as being a time when Browne was in an institution of some sort under treatment for his condition. Burrage suggested an alternative theory that Browne was under the shadow of excommunication during those years. We shall shortly examine the evidence which permits us now to state positively the principal facts concerning the excommunication of Browne, which occurred in 1631, while William Piers was Bishop of Peterborough. For our purpose at the moment it will suffice to point out that, contrary to the belief held for some time by students of

(1) Crippen in Intro. to Browne: "A Treatise of Reformation etc." p. 8; D.N.B. VII, p. 60.
(2) Burrage: True Story, pp. 41-3.
(3) Ibid pp. 69ff.
(4) See p. 183 below.
Browne's life and work, he was certainly not excommuni­
cated in the Spring of 1586.

On the other hand, Browne was in trouble with
the church authorities during the months in question. On
19th April 1586 Robert Browne was presented by the church
wardens of Little Casterton to Richard Howland, Bishop of
Peterborough, the complaint being "He will not come to the
Churche." His wife was cited on the same charge, and they
were to appear before the Bishop's official "in the Chapel
of the Blessed Virgin Mary within the Cathedral Church of
Peterborough." On 5th May the case was continued. The
third and last entry is 25th June, when it was stated that
the Bishop had taken the matter into his own hands, and
had had a personal interview with the accused, whereupon
the case dropped out of the records.

Powicke points out that since the churchwardens
of Little Casterton began the case against Robert and
Alice Browne, we may conclude:

1. That in spite of Burghley's permission to remove
them from Tolethorpe, they were evidently still
there.

of the C.H.S. vol. II p. 239f. Serjeantson: History
of the Church of St. Giles Northampton, Northampton
rejected completely the excommunication story, was
of the opinion that it grew out of this case against
the Brownes.
2. That it was probably the parson of Little Caster-ton whom Browne had described as "a common drunkard and infamous by sundrie faults" saying that "there was no lawe to force him to take such a parson for his lawfull minister, neither to ioyne with him in the prayers and sacraments."

3. That in the light of such circumstances as well as the local prominence of the Browne family, the Bishop probably felt that there was no effective case against these recusants.

After another interval of several months, we find that Browne was elected Master at St. Olave's School, Southwark on 21st November, 1586. Fourteen of the school governors agreed to his appointment "vpon his good behauiour & obseruinge theise artycles her vnderwritten."

1. That you shall not intermeddle yourself with the minister or ministry of this parish, or disturb the quiet of the parishioners, by keeping any conventicles or conference with any suspected persons.

2. That you shall bring your children to sermons and lectures in the church; and there accompany them for their better government.

(1) Powicke: Browne p. 43f.

(2) Burrage: op. cit. p. 44f. quotes the full statement, including names of the governors, and the date, from the Minute Book of St. Olave's Grammar School.

(3) Dexter: Congregationalism p. 81 f. gives the substances of these conditions from Waddington's Extracts from the Minute Book of St. Olave's School and also cites Waddington's "Congregational History" as authority that Browne's salary was 20 Pounds per annum. Burragge's version includes the original spelling all through.
3. If any error shall be found in you and you convinced thereof, that you shall, upon admonition thereof, revoke it and conform yourself to the doctrine of the Church of England.

4. That you shall read in your school no other catechism than is authorized by public authority.

5. That you shall at convenient times communicate in this parish according to the laws.

6. Not being contented to answer and keep these articles, not longer to keep the schoolmastership, but to avoid it.

Browne added, with his signature, that definite "distinctions & exceptions" were mutually understood as included with these provisions. (1)

Within two years of being accepted at St. Olave's School, Browne was attacked from two directions. From the point of view of those who remained loyal to the Church of England, while still seeking its reform, he was assailed by a physician named Stephen Bredwell, who was determined to expose him. At the same time, he was engaged in controversy by Greenwood and Barrow, as we have already seen in our investigation of those two Separatist leaders.

Bredwell, having indulged in several exchanges with Browne, published the collection of his own contributions to the controversy in a book which he entitled "The Rasing of the Foundations of Brownisme." The book bears only the initials "S.B." and was printed in 1588. The series of tracts which it includes obviously extended

(1) Burrage: True Story, p. 58.
over several months, at least, and in final form is preceded by both an Epistle Dedicatorie, and a section "To the Christian Reader, etc." It appears that "W.F." whom S.B. describes as "a certaine disciple of Robert Browne," had written to explain why he refrained from church attendance.

1. Church government is unscriptural, since it takes authority to redress abuses from the Church as a whole, and gives it to the bishops, which is Papist custom.

2. Though the Lord's Supper should be for sanctified persons only, the law requires all persons over 16 or 18 years of age to communicate, even though they may be most depraved.

To this letter, Bredwell wrote "An Answere resolutorie" in which he admitted that certain reforms were still needed, but insisted that the Church was not thereby utterly disqualified, since even the presence of wicked folk could not keep the righteous from true fellowship with the Lord.

(1) S.B. Rasing the Foundations, p. 1f "The doubts and objections of a certaine disciple."

(2) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations" pp. 3-10. "The First Answere".
1. "I graunt you . . . that wee cannot redresse faultes so fully as is to be wished."

2. The law provides censure and withholding of communion from notorious offenders, but gives this authority to the Church. The individual should reprove the wicked and seek to reform them.

3. The presence of the wicked does not invalidate communion for the righteous, as is proved by the presence of Judas at the Last Supper; to withdraw on such grounds would be to disrupt the Church and divide the body of Christ.

Bredwell's first answer was apparently shown to Browne by W.F. Now, Browne had promised not to disturb the church, but he had not promised that he would never express his views to anyone. He therefore wrote (but did not publish) an extended reply to Bredwell's "Answere." Thereupon "A Seconde Answere or reioynder to Brownes replie" (1) came from Bredwell. Quoting "that brainlesse answere to Master Cartwrights letter," he insisted that Browne knew very well that the Church had the authority to separate unworthy offenders. He reiterated at length his point that the task belonged to the Church and not to individuals, since the latter policy would merely institute "Brownes Anarchie." As for Browne's suggestion that a church ceased

(1) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations" pp. 11 (number not printed)
to be under the covenant because of failure to separate the unworthy, it implied the heresy of justification by works, which Bredwell would gladly allow him to disavow rather than hold it against him. Part of Browne's answer he characterized as being devoid of common reason.

"... it seemeth the author ... was not well in his wit, but malice had made him as those in Bedlam, that talk quite out of order and sense." (2)

Browne had written something about how the members of a body shake off a rotten member without themselves leaving the body. Bredwell said this showed him "as ignorant in natural things, as in divine. For blood commeth plentifully enough to rotten members, so long as they are unseparated ... . Let him follow this vein no longer, if he have any wit in his head." (3)

Browne had said that those who prevent reform should be exposed, even though to do so should involve risk of life itself. Bredwell retorted that it ill became Browne to talk thus, considering his record.

"We know, whatsoever he discourseth otherwhere of his fugitive life, that although some others have been hanged for his heresies, he hath not only been contented to let them go without his companie, but comming also to some triall of his courage before authoritie, there was not only no shew of that

(1) S.B. "Rasing The Foundations" p. 41 "The Seconde Answer".
(2) Ibid p. 41
(3) Ibid p. 45.
Heroical spirit, which he woulde haue you see in his writings, but contrariwise, shifting answeres, with subtill reseruations, shamefull and disorderlike giuing backe from the trueth it selfe, and finally a most hypocriticall subscription, least hee shoulde haue felt affliction in the least of his fingers." (1)

Meantime, Bredwell had written a "Detection of Ed. Glovers hereticall confection . . . together with an admonition to the followers of Glover and Browne." In this he had insisted that all of Glover's heresies were only the logical conclusion of what Browne had previously taught. This charge, coupled with his other attacks seem to have proved too much for Browne's temper, and he replied with an answer divided into 120 numbered sections. Bredwell thereupon wrote "A Defence of the Admonition to the followers of Browne: made in reply to a raging Libell of Brownes, sent abroade, in sundrie written copies, (2) against the same." He declared that he had "bene by this Libell, all bitten and torne, as it were with a mad dog." He dealt by number with various portions of Browne's "Libell."

(1) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations" p. 50f.
(2) Ibid. pp. 61-145 "A Defence of the Admonition".
(3) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations", p. 63 "A Defence of the Admonition".
Browne, he said, argued that a distinction must be made between the regenerate part of a man (which does not sin, though the man do so), and the unregenerate (which is condemned even though the man be justified in Christ). Bredwell retorted that this was "a playne axiomatical contradiction. The whole is good, a part is evil. Browne is sound, his braine is sicke." Pressed home, it means that justification is partial because of our shortcomings; which is another way of proclaiming justification by works. He also undertook, by citing various passages in Browne's books, to show that Browne advocated: forgiveness only to those who repent; excommunication by individual members (even to the point of one individual excommunicating a church); the theory that a church by failing to purge its membership disanulls the covenant with God, and thus secures justification only by works; the theory that discipline rather than faith in Christ is the groundwork of the Church.

(1) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations", p. 65
Dexter p. 125 and Crippen: p. 9 offer this as proof that Bredwell, a physician, considered Browne insane.

(2) Ibid p. 66f.
(3) Ibid p. 68f.
(4) Ibid p. 72
(5) Ibid pp. 72-110.
''This Troublechurch Browne, not receyuing the loue of the trueh, touching the being of a Church in Christ by faith, but striuing for other groundes and essentiaall causes thereof . . . is . . . compassed about with a strong delusion.'' (1)

Browne, having said that faith cannot be ''except we be so reneued, that no open grosse wickednesse appeare in us'', betrayed his own poverty of faith, according to Bredwell, by ''rayling, reuiling, and slaundering.''

Bredwell quoted passages from Browne's ''Libell'' as slanders against himself. The following will serve to illustrate. ''The hypocrisie of rayling P. and Bredwell with their partners, is hidden in rich mens houses, sometimes in deceytful fastings, as though we should haue present reformation, and somtimes in delicate feastings, in bribes, gifts, shew of almes to the poore, when all goeth into their own bellies or purses.'' (2)

''It is thy maner and thy partners, to force, to threaten, to make stirrings, and hurlie burlies and to driue man and wife asunder. Thine and their outrage cannot be satisfied with bloud. Thine and their raylings, slaundres and false accusations, haue brought diuerse of vs to death, some by the Gibbet, some by long imprisonment, some by flight and pursuit, some by

(1) S.B. ''Rasing the Foundations'', p. 112. ''Defence of the Admonition''.

(2) Ibid p. 114.
extreme care, death and sickness: some by seas, some by necessity and want, some by changing air, dwelling and place. The blood of all these shall be upon thine and thy partners heads." (1)

Bredwell taunted Browne with having called England Egypt, and then returned thither himself, as well as having condemned the Church of England, and afterwards subscribed.

"Must not that wo cleave fast unto him, that was denounced against those that laid importable burdens upon other mens shoulders, but themselves touched the not with the least of their fingers? Full many of his poor disciples lie in prisons, while he laugheth at liberty, and touching that, for which they suffer, addeth affliction to their bonds, by all his behavior." (2)

He then quoted the terms of Browne's subscription, together with Browne's explanation of what he had meant by it, pointing out that although he claimed to have admitted only the civil authority of the Bishops, the subscription made no such distinction. He recalled Browne's words to Harrison about the Bishop's licences being "trash and pollutions", and then told how Browne had recently been

(1) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations p. 115.

(2) Ibid p. 126.

(3) Bredwell certainly did not believe that Whitgift could have agreed to any reservations. See p. 134 above.
presented for recusancy by the parish minister of "S. Too-
lies in Southwarke" and had hastened to seek the protection
of "a Doctor and judge of such courts." At the same time,
the words in which he denounced Bredwell and others showed
that even two years after his subscription Browne still
associated himself with those who were in separation from
the Church. As further proof of this two-faced dealing,
Bredwell declared that for the two years Browne was at
Southwark he did not once attend communion at "Toolyes
Church"; and when the case was pressed against him he
"remoued his dwelling into another parish, & left a trouble-
some stink behind him in their church." Moreover, he had
acknowledged the Church of England to be the Church of God,
and pledged himself to good behaviour towards it. "This
I so lay downe, that the slipperie shifter should not thinke
to escape me, by drawing an interpretation from these
wordes, to his conuenticles at his pleasure." Actually,
however, his practice directly contravened this promise.

Bredwell cited the case of "the parish where he
lately dwelt," (which may mean Little Casterton) and
also "the parish of Olaues in Silverstreetes, a poore
woman in the which, he hath so strongly seduced, that

(1) Burrage: True Story p. 48 says that it was "up to
August 12 1588".

(2) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations" p. 134f "Defence of the
Admonition".

whereas myselfe sometimes had hope . . . to haue won her into our assemblies . . . he . . . overwhelmed the seele woman . . . so that . . . we see utterly no hope of her recoverie." She denounced an excommunication against her, and boasted that Browne's denunciation of Bredwell had been circulated a hundred miles distant from London. (1)

Browne also disturbed the congregation at Dertford and distributed answers to an exposure of him by "M. Edmondes" the lecturer there. Furthermore, he preached at a conventicle held at church time not far from Ludgate, explaining afterwards that he had been (2) "earnestly requested vnto it by those that were present.'

It was evidently after Bredwell had written his "Defence of the Admonition" that his attention was called to the controversy which had recently been carried on by Barrow and Greenwood on the one hand and Browne on the other. He had become so thoroughly convinced of Browne's dishonesty in the matter of the subscription that he was quite at a loss to comprehend this apparent reversal of attitude. As we shall see, when we examine Browne's "Re-proofs" of his opponents, there is a distinct difference in both attitude and tone between this and previous tracts (3) which Browne had written. However, we must bear in mind that Browne faced a completely different problem. Whereas he had formerly written against those who defended the Established Church, his present opponents were on the other

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(1) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations" p. 139

(2) Ibid. p. 139f.

(3) See Chapter Ten, below.
side of him. His task, therefore, was to defend his action in subscribing to Whitgift. Since controversy is apt to drive its participants to extremes which they would probably not seek in normal occasions, Browne now found himself in the position of answering the very line of arguments which he had previously supported. We may wonder if he did not see for himself the contradiction between his former and present positions. We may ask why he did not frankly admit that he had come to see some things differently. That, however, is to ask why Browne was not someone else. Not every man can weigh himself in his own judgment. Browne was not the sort who could easily admit that he had been wrong or even mistaken. He had not gone so far as that for the archbishop. Why, then, should we expect him to do it for Barrow and Greenwood?

Bredwell's account of the controversy is characteristic:

Among all the leaders of opposition to the church "there is none . . . that can justly take the garland from Rob. Browne; . . . they must, even Barow and Greenwood, with the rest, acknowledge him the shop of their store, and the steele of their strength. . . . In doctrine I knowe they differ, but diversitie of practise was cause thereof. Barow and Greenewood nakedly discovered their profession, and are prisoners. Browne cunningly counterfeiteth conformitie, & dissembleth with

(1) S.B. "Rasing the Foundations" sig A recto and verso. "To the Reader".
his owne soule, for libertie ... . Hence cometh that grudge, quarrell and heart-burning among them. They expostulate with him as a coward, and one that shrinketh in the wetting. He againe nippeth them for their eagerness, in running before their olde maister, and thereby obscuring his light, as though the truth (forsooth) had first bin revealed by them. It seemeth, they would not hear a sermon to gain their liberty. But it is manifest that he, to redeem trouble, hath learnt to apply himself to all times, places, and persons."

From Bredwell's statement about Browne's actions at Southwark, it appears that he may have left St. Olave's (1) before Bredwell published his book. At any rate, our next certain date concerning him is the last of December in this year 1588. On that day he wrote a letter to his "Uncle Flower". It would seem that this gentleman, perhaps wishing to help him counteract Bredwell's attack, had asked him for a statement concerning "names & titles, aucthoritie & gouernment" in the Church, with special attention to "presbyter" and "elder". Browne's reply, as we shall see when we consider it later, was not an orthodox presentation of discipline as it was conceived and practised by the Church of England. However, he quickly showed himself out of sympathy with Presbyterian ideas, which he condemned, with special reference to what he had seen in Scotland. With this testimony against the Puritans, the ecclesiastical authorities were quite willing to respect his pathetic plea that no further action be taken against

(1) Burrage: True Story p. 62 thinks that Browne's departure from St. Olave's may have been brought about by Bredwell's violent attack.

(2) See Chapter Eleven, below.
him on the basis of the statements in this letter. Evi-
dently Mr. Flower saw to it that his letter was promptly
seen by Whitgift and others, for on 9th February 1588/9
Richard Bancroft, preaching at Paul's Cross, quoted Browne
against the Presbyterians, quoting also from "a treatise
against one Barowe," of which we have no evidence other
than this.

"Yet for your better understanding, what to
think of this kind of government (for never a bar-
reill will prove the better herring) you shall heere
the opinion of one of our owne countrie men, who was
in Scotland about the same time, and observed verie
diligentlie the wonderfull pride and insolence thereof.
'I judge,' saith hee, (writing of this Parliament now
assembled) 'that if the Parleament should establish
such names, and those the officers according to those
names which seeke their owne discipline, that in stead of
one Pope we should have a 1000, and of some Lord
Bishops in name a 1000 Lordly Tyrants in deed, which
now do disdaine the names. This I have found by ex-
perience to be true: I can testifie by triall of Scot-
land, which have travelled it over in their best re-
formed places: as in Doudee, Saint Andrewes, Edenborough,
& sundrie other townes: and have knowen the king in
great danger, and feare of his life by their lordly
discipline, &c.' And againe: 'I have seen all maner of
wickednes to abound much more in their best places in
Scotland, then in our worser places heer in England.'

"Further it may please you brethren to heare the
same mans judgement of such, as do labor so busily in this
matter: in a treatise of his against one Barowe.
'Whereas you charge us' (saith he) 'in denieng Christ
in his offices, and consequently not to be come in the
flesh: it shall appeare by your presbyterie or eldermen,

(1) See p. 128 above.

(2) Bancroft: "A Sermon Preached At Paules Crosse, etc."
p. 75 f. This sermon was also printed among the tracts
and sermons included in "Bibliotheca Scriptorum etc."
It is pp. 245-315 in this volume, and the quotations
from Browne are on p. 295 f.
that indeed you are and will be the aldermen even to pull the most ancient of all, Christ Iesu himselfe by the beard; yea and seeke not onely to shake him by the lockes of his haire out of his offices, but also all his ancients under him, I meane the lawfull magistrates and ministers, which have lawfull authoritie from him.

"Wherefore not we but you rather seeke the glistering blase of great name; and if once you might get up the names of Elders and Presbyters, what mischief, crueltie, and pride would not streame from that name, even as fire from a blazing star to set on fire the whole world? ... For every busie foole, the more busie he were in discrediting others, and seeking mastership among the people, the better elder he should be judged. Yea and this new name of an elder given him, were even as a sacrament of grace, and would seale up all his knaverie: that whatsoever filthiness dropped from him, yet the skirte of his ancients gowne should cover it.'

"This mans opinion heerin I know will be greatly contemned, because I think he hath bin of another judge-ment. But yet they may give him leave to speake, as his experience (which is no foolish master) hath taught him, For commonly it comes to passe, when rash men run hed-long into any new devises that posteriores cogitationes solent esse sagientiores: their afterwits are best. Howbeit let him finde what favor at their hands he shall. I must indeed confess, that if this matter had onely depended upon his report, or opinion, I would not at this time have made mention of him. But it is far otherwise." (1)

We are not surprised to learn that the publicity given to these assertions by Browne did not enhance his popularity either in Scotland or among the Presbyterian and Separatist

(1) Remembering Browne's account of his first encounter with Bancroft, we cannot but be struck by the irony of circumstances which led Bancroft to cite him as his authority. See page 95 above. Bancroft obviously thought Browne's conformity far from perfect, even at this date.
groups in England. King James, who obviously did not relish the reference to himself, wrote some fifteen years later his own unflattering opinion of Browne. Following a custom frequently adopted before and since his time, he dismissed Browne by using the most opprobrious epithets which he could think of at the time, "Anabaptist" and "Family of Love."

"... as to the name of Puritanes ... the stile thereof doth properly belong onely to that vile sect amongst the Anabaptists called the Familie of loue ... Of this speciall sect I principally meane, when I speake of Puritanes; duiers of them, as Browne, Penrie, and others, hauing at sundrie times come in Scotland, to sowe their popple amongst vs (and from my heart I wish, that they had left no schollers behinde them, who by their fruites will in the owne time be manifested). . . ."

An anonymous retort was soon printed in answer to Bancroft. It was entitled "A Briefe Discovery of the Untruthes and Slanders (Against the True Governement of the Church of Christ) contained in a Sermon preached the 8. of Februarie 1588, by D. Bancroft." The author is generally agreed to have been John Penry, then in Edinburgh. He insisted that Browne's treatment in Scotland was neither more nor less than he deserved, being "a knowne Schismatike ... a man

(1) Basilicon Doron or His Maiesties Instructions to His Dearest Sonne Henry the Prince, London, according to the copie printed at Edinburghe. 1603. sig. A4 verso.

(2) See p. 74 above.
very fit to be one of your witnesses."

"Browne, a knowne Schismatike is a man very fit to be one of your witnesses against the Eldership. His entertainment in Scotland was such as a proud ungodly man deserve to haue. God give him and you repentance, if it be his will, otherwise you shall make an hard reckoning both of you, before the judgement seat of Jesus Christ, for the slaunders which you haue raised vp against the gouernement of his kingdome heere upon earth."

The next six months in Browne's life are without any known traces by which we can tell where he was living. Aside from Bredwell's implied assertion that he had left St. Olave's Grammar School, we do not know whether he remained near London or returned to the neighbourhood of Stamford, nor where his wife and children may have been. Cater thinks that William Browne, who was married at Achurch in 1623, may have been the son of Robert and Alice, in which case he was probably born some time between 1585 and 1592, but no record is as yet known which would indicate certainly where or when he was baptized, or whether he was a member of this family. It would appear that Robert must have interviewed Burghley in London some time about June

(1) A Briefe Discovery of the Untruthes and Slanders (Against the True Governement of the Church of Christ) contained in a Sermon preached the 8. of Februarie 1588, by D. Bancroft. (Probably printed in Edinburgh 1590) p. 44.

1589, for on the 20th of that month the Lord Treasurer gave him a letter in his behalf, to Bishop Howland of Peterborough. Burghley again expressed his hope that Browne had become "dutiful and conformable," and recommended that Howland give him an opportunity to prove himself in some church.

"To the Rev. Father in God, my very good Lord the Bishop of Peterborough. After my very hearty commendations to your Lordship: Although it might seem somewhat strange that I should write to your Lordship in the favour of this bearer, Robert Browne, who hath been so notably disliked in the world for his strange manner of writing and opinions held by him; yet seeing he hath now a good time forsaken the same, and submitted himself to the order and government established in the Church, I have been the rather moved to recommend him to your Lordship's favour, and to pray you if haply any conceit may be in you, that there should remain any relics in him of his former erroneous opinions, your Lordship would confer with him, and finding him dutiful and conformable, as I hope you shall, to receive him again into the ministry, and to give him your best means and help for some good, and am not a little glad at the reclaiming of him, being of kindred unto me, as your Lordship, I think, knows. And so I very heartily bid your Lordship farewell."

Bishop Howland evidently did not share Burghley's optimism, for he made no move whatever to carry out this request. Powicke concludes from this letter that by this time Browne was evidently ready to subscribe to the whole

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(1) Lansdowne MSS. 103 (No. 60) quoted with corrected spelling by Hanbury I p. 24. Hanbury is convinced that Burghley used Browne as a tool in carrying out his policy of using Nonconformists and Church sympathizers to weaken each other's influence.
Prayer Book, for the sake of finding the peace and quiet of a parish. We may, perhaps, assume that Browne's own arguments against Barrow and Greenwood had led him to the point where he perceived that he could not logically stand against them, and at the same time refuse to enter the fold of the Established Church.

During the years that his mind was most active in seeking the correct formulation of church government according to scriptural plan, Browne was also interested in the general problems of education. His two experiences as a school master reveal the fact that both religious and secular education claimed his attention. Since he was convinced that the Bible contained all the necessary rules and provisions for the perfect Church, it is hardly surprising that he looked to the same source for a complete plan for all education. The theory had previously attracted his notice, as we shall see in our examination of his Middleburgh writings. Now, during 1589 and 1590 he seems to have given much time to the elaboration of this idea. With his fondness for drawing up tables and definitions, which he exercised at great length in "A Booke Which Sheweth," he prepared "Latine tables and definitions" in which his theory was explained. These he sent to Burghley, urging him to show them to certain Bishops, and perhaps

(1) Powicke: Browne p. 48.
other learned men as well. Less to our surprise than to his, they were "neglected, or through greater business forgotten." After some period of impatient waiting, he composed a treatise on these "tables and definitions" which, on the 15th April, 1590, he sent to Burghley, together with a letter which is all that is now known to survive as evidence of this matter. He had, he said, "altered the arts, and the rules and termes of art, by evidence of the word: and corrected many errors of al our Professors." He was prepared to defend his thesis "against the multitude of philosophers, doctors, and writers heretofore." If only Burghley would help him, he would demonstrate how in one year scholars could learn from the Bible what they could scarcely learn in ten years at the Universities! Logic, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, metaphysics, ethics, economics, politics, all these as taught in the universities would be confuted and corrected in one year.

"And if it were not, that I am become odious to many for the truth sake, I would ... in very short time perfect them in the former studies ... I mean, if I were authorized to read public lectures, and make profession accordingly. For, as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and Pythagoras, made many thousand scholars ... I would hope, by your Lordships good countenance only, to perform much rather the like: and that in al quietnes also: not meddling to condemne or controvl any learned man, or any kind of profession."

(1) Lansdowne MSS. 64 (No. 34) quoted by Strype: Whitgift III p. 229 f. See Appendix for the full letter.
Burghley obviously did not give him the slightest grounds for hope on this score. He was, as we have seen, certain that Browne would do well in a Parish; but he had no illusions about this short-cut to universal knowledge. In Dexter's opinion, this letter of Browne's confirms the theory that his mind was disordered. As Powicke points out, however, he was only carrying to its logical conclusions a view of the Scriptures which was common among the Puritans of his day. In addition, it must be remembered that Browne was now about forty, he was naturally discontented with long periods of idleness, he was in none too good odour with the Church, and had twice terminated teaching engagements under personal suspicion because of his views. He wanted to instruct the minds and souls of others. Indeed, he felt definitely called to the task. But all paths seemed barred. Small wonder, then, that he tried to

(1) Dexter: Congregationalism p. 122. Another instance which reveals a point of view quite out of keeping with accepted ideas to-day is to be found in Browne's letter to his Uncle Flower (p. 35). Referring to the "Kings of the East" in the Book of Revelations, he says: "I have proued in a seueral treatisse in latine, touching the herring; Fishes hauing a writing of letters vpon them, taken in the east seas, that they signifie the princes of the protestants." Nothing further is known of the treatise in question.

(2) Powicke: Browne p. 49. Browne's sarcastic attack on formal logic and rhetoric, in "A Treatise vpon the 23. of Matthewe", also throws some light upon his boldness in undertaking to refute and correct the education provided in the Universities of his day. See Chapter Six, below.
work out a scheme whereby he might follow his calling without running foul of the hindrances which had so far balked him. His plan may not commend itself to us any more than it did to Burghley, but we can at least understand the motives which impelled him to suggest it.

Evidently it was during the next twelve months or so that his father, Anthony Browne, died. Thereupon, Robert's eldest brother, Francis, inherited Tolethorpe and its attendant patronage of the church at Little Casterton. Francis offered Robert this living. "On the thirtieth day of June, Anno Domini 1591, Robert Browne, clerk, was admitted and instituted to the rectory of the ecclesiastical parish of Little Casterton, in the County of Rutland and diocese of Peterborough," etc. He was serving as rector at the time of the Bishop's visitation in that year, but by late summer had removed to the parish of Achurch-cum-Thorpe Waterville in Northamptonshire. He was succeeded at Little Casterton by his brother, Philip, who was instituted in the month of November, 1591.

The living of Achurch-cum-Thorpe Waterville had reverted to the patronage of the crown, which meant, in effect, that it was Burghley's to do with very much as he

might choose. He presented Browne to the Rectory of Achurch on 24th August 1591. On 2nd September Browne was admitted and instituted by the Bishop of Peterborough.

"On the last day of September, 1591, Robert Browne, Bachelor in Arts of Corpus Christi Cambridge, was admitted to the holy orders of deacon and priest."

Thus did Robert Browne make his final gesture of surrender to the ecclesiastical order, some dozen turbulent years after declaring of the Bishop's authorization that he abhorred such trash and pollutions. That he was prepared to accept the system is further borne out by the fact that barely two months after his ordination, namely 6th December 1591, he brought suit against one John Backhouse, for withholding tithes.

The troubled years which we have been noting in the life of Robert Browne were all within the first half of his life. Although the remaining forty years were not without conflict they were, comparatively, quiet and uneventful. So far as the main stream of English civil and religious life were concerned, Browne was practically buried.

(1) Cater and Serjeantson, ibid.
(2) Serjeantson p. 194.
at Achurch. His name lived on as a by-word, but his personality was never again intimately associated with it so far as the general public was concerned. Twenty months after he had become settled at Achurch, Parliament was exercised over the problem of dealing with the Brownists; and Barrow, Greenwood and Penry, who were looked upon as ring-leaders among the sect, were sent to the gallows. But the man whose name had become a term of opprobrium was simply forgotten.

For a period of nearly twenty years, life seems to have gone smoothly at Achurch, and we may hope that it was happy and well. Robert and Alice Browne, settled quietly in the Rectory of Achurch, apparently devoting their attention to the parish and to their growing family. Browne, who was evidently determined that no complaints should rise concerning him, kept neat and careful records in the Parish Register, printing each name in large and clear old English style, and taking pains to make necessary corrections with great care. His first entry was 22nd December 1591, and from that date his entries continue regularly for twenty-five years. Among other items, he noted in due order the baptisms of six children born into his family.

The names and years were: Francis, 1592; Thomas, 1593; Bridget, 1595; Grace, 1598; Alice, 1600; John, 1603. His eldest daughter, Joan, was married in 1606, and was the mother of five children before her death in 1627. His eldest son Anthonie was married in 1614, and before Robert's death there were eleven children in Anthonie's family. Thomas was twice married, and was the father of four children before Robert died. The William Browne, whose relationship to Robert is not definitely known, was married at Achurch in 1623, and had four children. Thus, records exist of eight (or perhaps nine) children born to Robert and Alice Browne, and twenty (or twenty-four) grandchildren before the time that Robert died.

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it seems reasonable to assume that the score of years following his institution at Achurch were years of domestic peace and happiness for the family of Robert Browne. The records in the Register seem to indicate a state of general good will in the parish as well. Dexter, having seen the book, noted that Browne had at times added comments to the regular entries, and concluded that these were "uncalled for" and "severe", and give further indication of Browne's unsettled mind. Cater, however, goes carefully into the matter, and gives extensive quotations which surely bear out his contention that Dexter's conclusions were scarcely warranted.

(1) Dexter: Congregationalism p. 122.
(2) Cater: "Browne and the Parish Register pp. 127-135."
The comments made by Browne consist largely of briefly identifying facts, such as "widdow," "a servant of ours," "a beggar boy," "farmer," "cottager," "shepherd," "a stranger who came from Waddenhoe & died at his brothers house," "gentlewoman & widdow," "bachellar," "laborer," "an aged man," "an ould poore maied."

Perhaps Dexter objected to the fact that when Browne baptized children born out of wedlock he noted that fact as well. However, the standards of propriety in Victorian days can hardly be used as a test for the vocabulary of Elizabethan times. That Browne was not insensitive to the tragedies of a rural parish is indicated by two entries for the year 1603:

"Christnings Nouem 26 An Dawkins said to be the daughter of one Williain Dawkins of unknown dwelling."

"Burials Dec 2 An Dawkins ye child of a sorowning woman called Juda Stalay alias Dawkins."

The examples quoted above are a fair indication of the nature of the unusual comments made by Browne, all of which Cater says he has cited. Certainly they are far from indications of mental incompetency on Browne's part. On the contrary, they stand as silent witness that during all these years, Browne justified Burghley's faith in his capacity as a parish priest.

From the meagre evidence which we have concerning Browne's private affairs between 1580 and 1510, it appears certain that his wife, Alice, must have been a woman of fine loyalty and noble spirit. She evidently endured much discomfort and trouble for his sake during the early years of their marriage. She also seems to have exerted a truly steadying influence over him. It was apparently her moderating influence which helped to keep peace with the ecclesiastical authorities, as in the
baptism of Joan and Anthonie; although the instance of presentation at Little Casterton seems to indicate that she shared her husband's unwillingness to worship at a church whose minister failed to command their respect. Then, after they had settled at Achurch, it was probably due to her patient helpfulness that their life was both calm and pleasant. Undoubtedly it was not only a great personal loss to him, but also a considerable tragedy for his remaining years when she died in June 1610. The tranquility which had characterized nearly twenty years of life at Achurch did not long endure after Alice's death.

After an interval of two and a half years, Robert Browne remarried. His second wife was a widow of Stamford, named Elizabeth Warrener. The licence secured by them on the 5th February 1612/13, was made out for "Robert Browne Clerk, Rector of Achurch & Elizabeth Warrener of Stamford St. Martins, widow." Permission was granted for the marriage to be "either at Achurch or Stamford St. Martins." Nine days later, they were married. The clerk at St. Martins evidently knew Browne's connections with Tolethorpe, but was not aware of his being an ordained

(1) Dexter: Congregationalism 117; Powicke: Browne p. 51
clergyman, for the record is: "Robert Browne, gent, &
Eliz. Warrener, married Feb. 14th."

In the absence of full information it is, per­
haps, unfair to blame this second marriage for the fact
that Browne soon began to get into difficulties in his
parish. Remembering his early life, we may marvel that
nothing of the sort had previously happened at Achurch.
It is, however, a striking coincidence that the death of
Alice, with whom he had lived peaceably at Achurch, should
be followed not only by his remarriage but also by diffi­
culties both in his home and in his parish. Doubtless
Browne was not an easy man with whom to live. Perhaps it
was asking too much of Elizabeth Warrener to suppose that,
with both of them well past their youth, she shouli be able
to live harmoniously with him in a parish which had, pre­
sumably, learned to love and trust his wife Alice. Possibly
it is surprising that malicious gossip did not become un-

(1) Cater: "The Later Years of Robert Browne" in Trans. of
the C.H.S. vol. III p. 303 Burrage: True Story, pp. 68ff,
works out an elaborate theory of mutually agreeing
dates for this period of Browne's life based on
the assumption that Browne's second marriage was
"in All Saints, Stamford, Nov. 24, 1618" his bride
Obviously, however, this is a mistaken theory.
bearable until a year and a half had gone by. At last, however, the first break occurred when one of the parish, William Lynhall by name, was brought to court for spreading slander.

Presented before the Surrogate's bench on 12 October 1614, Lynhall was suspended "for speaking of unreverent speeches of Elizabeth Browne the wyfe of Mr. Robt. Browne or minister." (1)

Prosecuting the one who engages in gossip is not, however, a certain means of settling all the conflicts of which the gossip may be only an indication. It soon became apparent that all was not well either in the Browne household or in Achurch parish. The sad facts concerning his domestic troubles at this time may be quickly stated. Within a year of the case against Lynhall, Browne was cited in the court of the Archdeacon of Northampton on two counts: "our parsonage houses to be in decay and 4 Tenants dwellinge in them" and "for not being resident on his parsonage."

The case was first recorded 17th October 1615, and was revived in the two successive years, although it appears that Browne never again occupied the parsonage, since it fell into such decay that his successor, the Rev. Peter Asheton D.D. was forced to build a new rectory in 1633. (2)

(1) Cater: "The Later Years of Robert Browne" p. 304.
(2) Cater: Ibid.
Although Browne evidently separated from his wife within the year after Lynhall's plain speaking, she lived on for a time in the parsonage, where her conduct seems to have been open to such suspicion that in 1618 she was brought into court on a charge of grave misconduct.

On 14th October 1618 "Mrs. Eliz: Browne and Bartholomew Smithe of Wadenhoe" were cited "for keepinge Companie together in the parsonage house of Thorpe Achurche as the fame goeth, in the nighte . . . . " She was simultaneously charged with John Broughton of Pilton. After two months of failing to appear as ordered, she came to court and paid fines for previous absences. At the same time Broughton was formally cleared of all charges of misconduct. What became of the case involving Bartholomew Smith is not revealed in any known document.

Five years elapsed, of which no known records exist to shed any light on Elizabeth Browne's movements. Then on 29th October 1623 she sued her husband for restitution of conjugal rights. Although notice was served on him, he ignored it. Three times the case was called in a space of six weeks, and then drops from the record. Apparently Browne refused, at this time, to have anything to do with his wife. Yet a reconciliation must eventually have taken place, as we shall see when we come to consider his will.

While this domestic tragedy was in progress,

(1) Cater: The Later Years of Robert Browne p. 305.
(2) Ibid p. 306.
(3) When we examine "A Booke Which Sheweth", in Chapter Seven, below, we shall find that Browne's view of the "covenant of government" in marriage permitted separation on grounds of conscience without considering it a breach of the marriage covenant proper.
Browne was also in difficulties in the parish. As far as is known, he had observed the required forms in his conduct as minister at Achurch during the first twenty years of his incumbency. The Archdeacon's visitation records to the rural deanery of Oundle have not been preserved for the years prior to 1607, but Browne's record is included from that year, and shows fairly regular attendance until 1617.

In 1607 he did not appear, for some reason, but all was regular for the four years following. In 1612 he was not present, but was excused when his curate, Thurlbie, presented excuses for him. He was next absent in 1615, and was suspended until he should pay a fine, which he evidently did in a short time. He was therefore restored to official favour. The following year, he and his curate, Henson, were both present. For the next ten years, however, he was absent, although his curates did appear, and no official comment was made concerning Browne's absence.

It is not clear exactly what happened during the decade from 1616, except that some sort of breach had occurred in the parish. The Parish Register for that year reveals the fact in the case of two records of baptism and one burial, to which are appended the comment "in schisme." A third baptismal record originally included the "schisme"

entry, which was later scratched out. It was in the previous year that Browne was first cited for having left the parsonage, and having permitted it to fall into decay. The explanation appears to be that a split had occurred in the church, the exact nature of which we do not know, and Browne had removed himself, both from his wife and from his parsonage, to take up residence in another section of his parish. Then, on June 4th, 1617, "his lordships officer" began a suit against Browne.

The natural inference is that Browne had become lax in his observance of the required forms of worship and ecclesiastical order. We have already observed that when he subscribed thirty years before this time, his subscription seems to have indicated little, if any, change of conviction as to the essential nature of the Church. He promised to make no disturbance; and that promise he seems to have kept. Now, however, the even tenor of life was completely disrupted by the death of his first wife, and his stormy second marriage. Feeling, no doubt, uprooted,

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(1) Cater: op. cit. p. 308; D.N.B. XV p. 380 gives Fuller as authority for saying that although Bishop Dove was twice charged with remissness for allowing silenced ministers to preach, he had a reputation generally for great strictness. Perhaps some of the "schisme" party inspired this suit by bearing tales of Browne's laxness.
he appears to have sought the company of those most con-
genial to him, with the result that his inclinations to-
wards freedom of worship were encouraged, and the breach
with those of differing views grew wider.

This interpretation of what occurred seems to be
supported by the fact that when his curate, Arthur
Smith, appeared before the Archdeacon in Browne's ab-
sence, in 1617, he was disciplined because when "asked
by his Lordship's judge if he have worn the surplice,
admitted he hath not since he served the cure." He was
reprimanded but absolved, after being ordered "to weare
the surplice every Saboth, and to do other rites and
ceremonies according to the booke of Comon prayer." (1)

It would seem that Browne's old obstinacy re-
asserted itself, and that, refusing to give satisfaction
to the ecclesiastical court for the charges against him,
he was "suspended ab execucione officii sui clericalis." He
would be still officially the Rector of Thorpe Achurch,
but he would be for the time suspended. This, then, would
account for the fact that his absence would not be com-
mented upon in the Archdeacon's records, provided his
curate appeared as his acting substitute.

For the four years following 1617, Smith was
present as required, and no particular facts were re-
corded about Achurch. When Smith was instituted

(1) Cater: The Later Years of Robert Browne p. 307;
Serjeantson p. 195.

(2) Cater: op. cit. p. 308. This was quite a different
thing than the excommunication which Burrage sup-
posed occurred at this time.
vicar of Oundle in 1621, the Record Book bore the comment "Mr. Smith gon from Achurch." His place as curate was taken by John Barker. The record for 1622 remarked "There is a strange preacher." For that year and the three which succeeded, Barker duly appeared, Browne being still absent. (1)

According to persistent tradition, Browne spent this decade in a thatched house at Thorpe Waterville. Cater reports finding that it was still known as "The Old Chapel" and "Chapel House," that it formerly bore the date 1618 on its chimney, and that according to local legend "a parson of Achurch was turned out, built this chapel house, held services there, and ended his days in gaol." This explanation also fits in with Fuller's remarks about Browne, which are based on boyhood recollections of life in his father's parsonage at Aldwinkle, near Achurch.

"For my own part, (whose nativity Providence placed within a mile of this Brown's pastoral charge,) I have, when a youth, often beheld him. He was of an imperious nature; offended, if what he affirmed but in common discourse were not instantly received as an oracle. He was then so far from the sabbatarian strictness to which some preciser Brownists did afterwards pretend, that both in judgement and practice he seemed rather libertine therein. In a word, he had in my time a wife, with whom for many years he never lived, parted from her on some distaste; and a church, wherein he (3) never preached, though he received the profits thereof."


(3) Fuller III p. 65.
Incidentally, it was probably some similar account of Browne's domestic troubles which Robert Baillie of Glasgow received, after it had passed through several re-tellings, in the form of an assertion that Browne used to beat his wife. When we remember the common willingness of men to credit the worst about a man whose views they do not like, we are disposed to regard this bit of gossip with great scepticism. Moreover, we may feel certain that opponents in the church would surely have raised the charge against him had any grounds for it existed.

"The course of his life, to his deep old age, was so extremely scandalous, that more than ordinary charity is needfull to perswade that ever he was led with a good spirit. I have heard it from reverend Ministers, that he was a common beater of his poor old wife, and would not stick to defend publikely this his wicked practice; also that he was an open profaner of the Sabbath . . . ." (1)

Dexter quotes from Pagit a further embellishment of the tale to the effect that whenever taxed with the error of such conduct, Browne's defence was that "he (2) did not beate her as his wife, but as a curst old woman."

If, as seems probable, Browne spent some ten years as leader of a separated congregation at Thorpe Waterville, although

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still officially connected with the parish church at Thorpe
Achurch, some incident, of which we have no hint whatever,
must have arisen to change his policy in the Spring of 1626.
On Palm Sunday of that year, he seems to have resumed his
former custom of conducting services at Achurch, as though
nothing had happened. It may well be that his return was
prompted by some conflict with his curate, Barker. For we
discover that although his churchwardens accepted his re-
turn complacently, Barker and one Thomas Olyver, com-
plained to "his lordship's officer," who brought suit
against the churchwardens on 26th April 1626.

The charge was that despite Browne's suspension
they tolerated him when he "did notwithstandinge upon
Palme Sunday last reade dyvine service & preache on the
same daye." Moreover, "upon the 15 of Aprill now in-
stant beinge the Sabothe daye he did reede prayers &
preache and Administer the Sacramente in the Churche
there." (1)

Serjeantson thinks that the Churchwardens probably escaped
with a reprimand on this occasion. Evidently Browne made
some sort of peace with the authorities, since there ap-
ppears to be no further mention of his suspension. Further-
more, he resumed the custom of keeping parish records in
his own hand.

Whether there were changes among the churchwardens

(1) Cater: "The Later Years of Robert Browne" p. 309;
   Serjeantson p. 196.
in the next two years, so that they no longer agreed to his laxness, or whether they were themselves threatened with another suit is not certain. However, he was presented by his own wardens on 8th November 1627 "for not usinge of the crosse in baptism, & for not weareinge of the surplice, & for omittinge of some parte of the booke of common prayer." Certainly the old breach in the parish was not healed by Browne's return to his pulpit, as is evidenced by the fact that Browne himself brought cases against several of his parishioners.

Thomas Sanders was presented "upon a fame for givinge the Minister evill speeches in the Churche." He asserted in defence "that that wch Mr Browne sayd to him in the Church was A lye." The case, however, went against him. He was suspended from entering the church, and ordered to perform a penance.

On the same day, nine adults, including Thomas Olyver and his wife, and also the Olyver children, were presented for "absenting of themselves" from the Parish Church.

For two years the unhappy situation continued, evidently become more bitter as time went on. In the Autumn of 1629 it once more reached the point of an open break, with Browne again making "schisme" entries in the

(1) Cater: The Later Years of Robert Browne p. 309.
Register. Two of them relate to christenings, and two other to burials. As in the case of Middleburgh, one is moved with combined irritation and pity for Robert Browne. In this instance the tragedy seems all the greater because it follows upon so long a period, first, of apparent harmony in the parish, and then at least a mutual toleration of differences. Now, after nearly forty years of life at Achurch-cum-Thorpe Waterville, the eighty year old pastor is seen bringing his life to a close amid bickering and hard feelings. Moreover, the bits of evidence reveal heart-breaking tragedy running through it all.

There were three christenings in 1629 which he noted as having taken place at Lilford. One was a daughter of Thomas Saunders, the man whose son had been christened at Lilford in 1616, with an entry of "schisme" which was scratched out. The 1629 entry has no such comment at all. One of the two remaining is the pathetic case of the infant son of Allen Green. There are two entries:

October 25, 1629, "Allen Greens child baptized in schisme at Lyllford named John."

October 31, 1629, "Allen Greens child buried in schisme."

The other "schisme" entry under "Buriels" is the name of John Cranfeald "who liued, dyed & was buried in schisme." (1)

The other side of this quarrel appears in the Archdeacon's book under the date of 19th November 1629,

(1) Cater: Robert Browne and the Parish Register p. 135.
wherein are cited various complaints made against Browne. (1)

The citations are these:

"Thorp Achurch Magrum Browne Rcorem ibm. Presentatur for that he refused to baptize the child of Allen Greene & turned it from the church."

"Magrm Browne predictum: Presentatur for that he refused to bury the dead."

Similarly are listed: "for that he doeth not read divine service according to the booke of Common Prayer", "for that he doeth not wear the surplice;" "For that he doeth not use the Crosse in baptisme."

These were not charges that could be lightly disregarded by the Church officials. Browne did not appear to answer to them, but his son John appeared and swore "that his father is not able to come to this courte without danger of his healthe." The case was therefore postponed for three weeks. On 10th December 1629 the court sat again, and this time Thomas Browne swore to his aged father's incapacity. Four weeks later (7th January 1629/30) Browne again failed to appear, but nothing seems to have been done in the matter. Meanwhile, however, Browne continued to keep his Parish Register, and among entries for 1630 is the record of the baptism of "a child of my ungracious godsonne Robert Greene baptized els were in schisme."

(1) Cater: The Later Years of Robert Browne p. 310.
(2) Ibid.
The Greene family and others, who opposed the Rector, were not disposed to let the case drift unnoticed. On 4th December 1630, Alien Greene and Robert Dust presented arguments to William Piers, recently consecrated Bishop of Peterborough, that since the summons had long ago been duly served and ignored, Browne should be declared contumacious, and accordingly should be excommunicated. The Bishop, for special reasons ("ex causis eum specialiter novendis") would not deal with the case directly but ordered the Archdeacon's court to take it up again. This was done at Oundle on the 16th December. Browne appeared, and was ordered to have his answer ready at the next sitting of the court. He did as instructed, offering his defence on 12th January 1630/1. He was told to present himself a fortnight later, when the case would be settled. The court met, 26th January, but Browne failed to appear. His name was called thrice, without response. He was thereupon declared contumacious and subject to the usual

(1) D.N.B. XLV p. 272 gives 24 October 1630 as the date of his consecration; he had been Dean of Peterborough for eight years previously.

(2) After 6 years as Dean of Peterborough, Piers must have been familiar with the facts relating to Browne's ten year suspension. Perhaps he also knew something of Browne's side of the quarrel at Achurch.
fines. Witnesses against him were admitted by the court, and were told to have their case against him in proper written form for the court's next sitting. This was done, and the testimony was duly examined by the court on the 17th February, the result being much obscure legal phrasing.

Cater, having discovered these facts in the "Archdeacon's Official Book," came to the conclusion that Robert Browne was not actually excommunicated, especially since it happens that Philip Browne, his next older brother, was proceeded against, and was actually ex-

(1) Cater: The Later Years of Robert Browne p. 311 f; Serjeantson, p. 196 f.

remains excommunicated." On 17 February, it was reported that he had been denounced in church "in festo Natalis Domini 1630" and "remains excommunicated."

After this work of research by Cater, investigation by Serjeantson disclosed still further facts regarding Robert Browne. The case did not die as Cater supposed. Eight months elapsed, and then it was revived. On 17th October 1631, Browne was cited to appear and show cause why he should not be deprived of his benefice. The case was continued 3rd November, 17th November, and 2nd December. On 15th December 1631, the Instance Book of Peterborough Registry recorded "Robert Browne stands excommunicated," and the sequestration of his benefice was considered. On 15th March 1632 he was stated to be still excommunicated. On 5th April, he was cited, on petition of Allen Greene and Robert Dust, to appear "in the Lady Chapel of Peterborough Cathedral, on May 29th next . . . to be removed, deprived, and inhibited from his Rectory of Achurch for non-conformity (proper ejus inconformitatem.)"

He was personally served with notice to this effect on 26th May at Achurch, as Roger Mason testified on 31st May. He was thereupon called thrice but did not appear. The Bishop (William Piers) heard the case in person. Rejecting the proposal that he declare Browne contumacious, he decided that another chance should be given him to appear at a court
in September 1632. The page on which the record of the September court should have been entered was left blank in the Instance Book. It appears, however, that the living was officially sequestered, Wm. Duste, Nicholas Blackwell, and Wm. Fesant being appointed sequestrators, since they produced their accounts at a court held 14th March 1633. Meanwhile, on 7th December, Alien Greene and Robert Duste applied for expenses incurred in the prosecution of Robert Browne, and were duly paid on 24th January.

Further notice of the case exists in records for the year 1633. On 28th March, R. Woodruffe and Thomas Saunders stated that Mr. Browne the sequestered rector, had been suspended and excommunicated by the Reverend Father in God, William (Piers) late Bishop of Peterborough, that the fruits and tithes of the said Rectory had been sequestered by the same Bishop into the hands of certain parishioners, and that the sequestration should be continued so long as the suspension and excommunication remained in effect. The three original sequestrators resigning, three successors were appointed. Since the curate

(1) This must have been one of Piers' last acts in Peterborough, since he was translated the following month to Bath and Wells. D.N.B. XLV p. 272.

(2) Serjeantson p. 197 quotes successive numbers of Instance Book, Peterborough Registry.
Mr. Lewis, whom Piers had appointed to Achurch, was retiring, Thomas Aspin M.A. was appointed to serve "during the suspension and sequestration of the said Robert Browne." The sequestrators were ordered to pay forty marks a year as stipend to Aspin, applying the balance to:

1. The sowing and tilling of the Rectory Glebe land.

2. The needful expenses of management.

Any residue thereafter was to be given to Mr. Robert Browne for the sustentation of himself, his wife and his children.

While the records quoted are such as reveal primarily the activities of those opposing Browne, especially Greene and Dust, there is evidence that the Parish was not unanimous in all this affair, for the Correction Books of Peterborough Registry reveal the cases of eight persons so far out of sympathy with the procedure against Browne that they violated the sequestration of the Rectory in August 1633.

On 15th August, John Hartwell admitted carrying away some hay even though forbidden to do so by one of the sequestrators. He was excommunicated.

William Browne, Maria Lovell, Eleanora Covington, and Hugh Treves were excommunicated for similar cause.

(1) Serjeantson p. 197 f.
(2) Ibid p. 198 f. quotes Correction Books (Peterborough Registry).
On 22nd August, John Browne confessed to having violated the sequestration, and performed the required penance.

On 26th August, Hugh Treves and Maria Lovell, confessing their guilt, sought absolution from the sentence of eleven days before, and were restored.

On the same day Robert Kinge of Pilton pleaded guilty to removing "some halfe a dozen loades of haye."

Mr. Bottomley of Pilton confessed "that he did pitch the cart one the behalfe of Mr. Browne, and by that manner did violate his Lordship's sequestration." He was duly penitent, and was absolved.

The indication of these facts is that Browne was still about during late August 1633. Therefore, it must have been either at the end of the Summer or early in the Autumn that Robert Browne suffered the final ignominy of arrest and imprisonment, on complaint of "my ungracious god-sonne Robert Greene." Fuller, who tells the tale in his own sprightly manner, adds that Browne died in Northampton jail.

As for his death in the prison in Northampton, many years after, (in the reign of King Charles, anno 1630) it nothing related to those opinions he did or his followers do maintain. For as I am credibly informed, being by the constable of the parish (who chanced, also to be his godson) somewhat roughly and rudely required in the payment of a rate, he happened in passion to strike him. The constable (not taking it patiently as a castigation from a godfather but in anger as an

(1) Fuller III p. 66.
affront to his office) complained to Sir Rowland St. John, a neighboring justice of the peace, and Brown is brought before him. The Knight, of himself, was prone rather to pity and pardon, than punish his passion; but Brown's behavior was so stubborn, that he appeared obstinately ambitious of a prison, as desirous (after long absence) to renew his familiarity with his ancient acquaintance. His mittimus is made; and a cart with a feather-bed provided to carry him; he himself so infirm (about eighty) to go, too unwieldy to ride, and no friend so favourable as to purchase for him a more comely conveyance. To Northampton jail he is sent; where, soon after, he sickened, died, and was buried in a neighboring churchyard; and it is no hurt to wish that his bad opinions had been interred with him."

Baillie, not content with the version which Fuller reports, declares "his injustice, in not paying the small pittance he was indebted to him whom laziness in his Calling made him to keep for the supply of the cure of his Parsonage, did bring him to prison, in the which, for that very cause, he continued till death." (1)

This final imprisonment could scarcely have lasted more than five or six weeks at the most, for the parochial register of St. Giles', Northampton, declares:

"Mr. Browne, Parson of Aychurch, was buried the viij th of October, 1633."

Elizabeth Browne, to whom he must have become reconciled, evidently arranged for his funeral. The churchwarden's account at St. Giles' reports:

"1633. Received of Mrs. Browne of Aychurch for ye great bell . . . 0 1 0."

Moreover, shortly before his

(1) Baillie: "A Dissavasive" p. 14 (2) Serjeantson p. 201. (3) Ibid.
death, Robert Browne made a will in favour of his "deare and loveinge wiefe Elizabeth Browne, who hath ever bine a most faithfull and good wiefe unto me." 

"On October 19th, 1633, administration was granted to Elizabeth Browne, widow of Robert Browne, clerk, lately Rector of Achurch, in the County of Northamptonshire. 

"A nuncupative will was exhibited, and proved in April 1634. It read as follows:--

Memorandum that upon or about the First daie of October in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand sixe hundred and thirtie three, Robert Browne, late of the Parish of Thorpe Atchurch in the Countie of North- ton, clerke, deceased, haveinge an intent to declare his will nuncupative whose should have and enjoy those temporall goodes which God in Mercie had blest him withall, ex- prest his will therein in manner and forme followeinge. . . Vidlt I doe give and be­queath all my goodes, chatties, and estate whatsoever unto my deare and loveinge wiefe Elizabeth Browne, who hath ever bine a most faithfull and good wiefe unto me. And I will, and my mind is, that none of my chil­dren shall have or enjoy any parte of my said estate, and to that end I have securitie to shewe from sone of them. But if anye person shall thinke or saie that I have not delt like a Father with them, I doe hereby lett such knowe that I have heretofore myselfe advanced, preferred and given unto each of them more than their due, and proportionable part of and out of all my said estate. These wordes or verye like in effecte were spoken by the said Robert Browne being in perfecte mind and memorie in the presence of us whose names are hereunder written. Signum Willelmi Browne, John Coles." 

Thus ended the long and stormy career of Robert Browne. Having failed to make any lasting friendship among

(1) Serjeantson p. 201 f. quotes from records at Somer­set House.
those who might be sufficiently articulate to defend his name and reputation, he was for many years known to posterity by little save the unflattering reports of his opponents. By those who shared Bredwell's opinions, he was considered a charlatan and hypocrite. By those who honoured Barrow and Greenwood, he was regarded with contempt as an utter renegade. By those who were partisans of the Presbyterian movement in Scotland, he was held to be a common liar and traducer. By the Church of England authorities, he was looked upon as at best an embarrassing adherent, and at worst an incorrigible rebel. Nearly two hundred and fifty years elapsed after his death, before Dexter was so confused by the apparent inconsistencies in the man's life that he could only arrive at the charitable opinion that Browne was a brilliant man, unfortunately touched by insanity.

It may well be that further details will yet be discovered to shed light on various aspects of Browne's life. However, the total available facts which, so far as the present writer is aware, are here gathered together for the first time in fairly complete form, offer a picture of no little interest. The writer's interpretation of events may not always be correct, but they seem to be both justified by the evidence and also mutually corroborative. They reveal a man who was both strong-willed and
strong-minded. He had the virtues and also the defects which such a nature implies. The virtue of independence was highly developed within him, at the consequent impoverishment of the capacity for co-operation. Finding it almost impossible to work with others he was, doubtless, his own worst enemy. Like other men, he was not always consistent. He must often have been a maddeningly difficult person with whom to deal. Nevertheless, he wins our sometimes grudging respect for the persistent way in which he refused to be overawed by entrenched authority. Reminding Bancroft from his sick bed that it was not the Privy Council's letter which induced him to leave off preaching at Cambridge; defying the Bishop of Norwich; telling the Edinburgh Presbytery "that the whole discipline of Scotland was amiss"; grudgingly admitting Whitgift's power, while still refraining from disavowing his opinions as to the ecclesiastical system; refusing to worship in a church whose minister he considered entirely unworthy; repeatedly ignoring citations to appear at ecclesiastical courts; accepting excommunication rather than conform to what he had always believed in his heart were "trash and pollutions"; and finally, riding off to jail before he would give in to what he evidently considered an impertinence on the part of his godson: these are not the sort of things which make a man deeply loved by those who must deal with him. Nevertheless,
they are all in character. They belong to the life of a man who was convinced that the individual is precious in the sight of God, and of equal importance with any king or priest. His frailties are apparent for all men to see. They need not, however, obscure the fact that there was a robust, if rebellious, spirit of independence in the man. That quality may have been his undoing, but it was also the outstanding contribution which he made to the thought of his time, when religious and political ideals of high importance were in the process of formation.
PART TWO

THE WRITINGS of ROBERT BROWNE.
CONCERNING PART TWO

The Chapters in this section comprise summaries of Robert Browne's extant writings. Each chapter includes the substance of one tract or treatise, included with which are quotations of sufficient length to indicate the method and style employed by Browne in the development of his various points. The arrangement is chronological, except that "A Treatise Vpon the 23. of Matthewe" is included before "A Booke Which Sheweth." It was actually written later and then, the printing being unfinished, it was inserted in the subsequent copies of the work in the position indicated. Because it is less well known than the others, more extensive quotations from it are here included.

With the argument of his various writings thus before us, in the order of their composition, we may then be able to trace the development of Browne's teachings during the years of his greatest influence upon religious thought.
Brown indignantly denies the assertion of his opponents that he and his party "bear evil will to their Princes Queen Elizabeth and to their country, yea... forsake the Church of God, & condemn the same, and are condemned of all, and... discredit & bring into contempt the Preachers of the Gospel." He declares of his accusers "they are the men which trouble Israel, and seek evil to the Prince, and not we... they forsake and condemn the Church and not we." The true cause of resentment against him is, he declares, his open denial of their claim that reformation must wait upon the permission and instruction of the civil magistrates, and that the Church must, perforce, tolerate wickedness within itself. He proposes to deal with these points, declaring first of all his firm belief in the Queen's sovereignty, and the Pope's wickedness. The Pope, he declares "is Antichrist, whose kingdom ought utterly to be taken away." The

(1) p. 17 in reprint; sig A2 in original edition.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Ibid.
Queen's power is civil and supreme. She and her agents have authority of life and death over "all . . . either of the Church or Common wealth, and none may resiste Her or the Magistrates vnder her by force or wicked speaches, when they execute the lawes. Seeing we graunt and holde thus much, howe do they charge vs as euill willers to the Queene?" The only answer must be that "wee hold all those Preachers and Teachers accursed which will not doe the duties of Pastors and teachers till the Magistrates doe force them thereto."

The argument of his opponents is, he insists, a slander against the civil authorities. They say they must wait for the Magistrates and Parliament before building the Lord's house.

"They want the ciuill sworde forsooth, and the Magistrates doe hinder the Lordes building and kingdome, and keeps awaye his gourernement. Are they not ashamed thus to slander the Magistrate? They haue runne their owne swordes vpon the Wall and broken them, and nowe woulde they snatche vnto them the Magistrates sworde. Indeeede can the Lordes spirituall gourernement be no waye executed but by the ciuill sworde, or is this the judgement that is written (Psal. 149) Such honour shall be to all his Saintes?" (3)

(1) p. 18 or sig. A2 verso (It is not clear whether he means that it is morally wrong to resist, or that the civil authorities render it impossible. The queen certainly claimed more authority than he grants in this passage.)

(2) Ibid

(3) Ibid.
Having torn off the bands and chains which are the Church's spiritual power, they would fasten them on the Magistrates, making these officials more than Gods, and worse than beasts.

"For they teache that a lawefull Pastour must giue ouer his charge at their discharging, and when they with holde the Church gouernement, it ought for to cease, though the Church goe to ruine thereby." (1)

They would substitute their rule for God's, putting Magistrates in the very place of Christ. Worse still, "they first proclaime the names and tytles of wicked Bishoppes and popishe officers, and the Lordes name after." Thus, although a man be called on by God to bear witness, yet the Bishops may silence him. They would, in fact, usurp the divine prerogatives, giving them to Bishops and Magistrates.

"Beholde a great and most wholesome riuer, and yet their pudle water is preferred before it. Except the Magistrates will goe into the tempest and raine, and bee weather beaten with the haile of Gods wrath, they muste keepe vnder the roafe of Christes gouernement. They must bee vnder a Pastorall charge: They must obeye to the Scepter of Christe, if they bee Christians. Howe then shoulde the Pastor, which hath the ouersight of the Magistrate, if hee bee of his flocke, bee so ouerseene

(1) p. 18 or sig. A2 verso.

(2) Ibid.
of the Magistrate, as to leave his flocke, when the Magistrate shall unjustlie and wrongfullie discharge him." (1)

These Preachers and teachers not only do whatsoever the Magistrates command, but they refrain from doing that which is God's will, lest the Magistrates object. But it is slander for them to blame the Magistrates for their own failures. If it be true that the Magistrates are responsible, then they are enemies of God's purpose, and should be opposed by all who serve the Church.

"Now then if the Magistrates be enimyes vnto the Lords kingdome, why are not these men better warriars to vpholde the same? For they giue vp the weapons of their warfare into the enimies handes, and then say, they can not doo withal." (2)

The Christian's weapons are the keys of Heaven, with which to bind or loose, retain or remit sins. Still they make no open stand against evil.

Shirking thus, "they haue no right to call them selues the Church of God, or lawfull Pastors thereof. Christ is at the right hande of God, gone vp into heauen saith Peter (1 Pet. 3) to whom the angels and powers and might are subjecte, howe then shoulde his kingdome tarie for the Magistrate ... In the throng which is made to escape a burning, would they tarie for the Magistrate to make them a waye, and should they not rather if they could, make a way for the Magistrate? They see that the kingdome of God is with strife and

(1) p. 18 or Sig. A2 verso.
(2) p. 19 or Sig. A3.
great labor, and yet they will have it with ease and the civil sword must get it them. Jerusalem (saith the Prophet) (Dan. 9) and the streets and Wall thereof, shall be built even in a troublesome time, and to tarry till it be built without troubles, is to look for a conquest without going to battle, and for an end and reward of our labours which would never take pains."(1)

Christ says his kingdom is not of the world, but they thrust Bishops and Magistrates into the chief place, although they have no more ecclesiastical authority than any other Christians, if they are indeed Christians themselves.

"Therefore hath God made these teachers fools, and these spiritual professors as mad men. For woe unto you, ye Priestlie preachers and Doctours, hypocrites, which are a snare to the people, and fill up their measure of iniquity, while ye pretend the Magistrates authority. For will any man else give over his calling, or abbreviate the full execution thereof, when the Magistrates forbid them, will they cease the teaching or due guiding of their households and charge for their dischargings, and should the labourers in God's spiritual husbandry give over and cease. For it is God's husbandry (I Cor. 3) and not theirs, the Church is his building and not theirs. They are but members thereof if they be Christians, and are not any way to stay the building, neither is it to tarry or wait upon them. But these wicked preachers eat up and spoile the Lords harvest them selves, and then set open the gapp, as though the Magistrates brake in like wild bores, and spoiled the harvest. They say, behold we have a Christian Prince, and a mother in Israel: but can they be Christians, when they make them to refuse or withstand the government of Christ in his Church, or will

(1) p. 19f., or Sig. A3 verso.
not be subject unto it. If they therefore refuse and withstands howe should they be taried for? If they be with
them, there is no tarying: and if they be against them,
they are no Christians, and therefore also there can be no
tarying." (1)

The worthy dare not wait for the unworthy, lest they be like those who, having put hand to the plough, look back. "There­
fore woe vnto you ye blinde guides, which cast away all by tary­
ing for the Magistrates. The Lord will remember this iniquitie,
and visit this sinne vpon you." Not trusting his spirit, how­
ever, they rely on civil power. They are unwilling to let the leaven work, and insist upon trying to raise the lump by force. Scorning small beginnings, they do nothing at all. However, having made Christ a rock of offence, they shall stumble upon it. They have accepted the yoke of Antichrist, supposing that civil power will release them from it. They would bring the Kingdom of Heaven by decree, "that men may say Loe the Parliament, or loe the Bishoppes decrees." The kingdom which is within, and comes only by obedience to Christ, they despise.

Such reliance upon man's power rather than God's is seen more plainly when we contrast it with Elihu's refusal (in Job 32) to depend on man's title and authority. "But these men name them selues, some the Bishoppes Chaplaines, some my Lordes Chaplaines, and some the Queens Chaplaines, and call them their Masters, to whom their calling and ministerie must serve at

(1) p. 20 or Sig. A3 verso. (2) p. 20 or Sig. A4 (signature omitted) (3) p. 21 or Sig. A4.
Thus the Lord's spiritual message must be beautified with these titles of men, (The right Honorable, my Lorde, &c. who is my very good Lorde and Maister,) Yet Christe him selfe saitheth (Mat. 11) that the Preachers nowe in his kingdom, have greater authoritie than Iohn Baptist, and Iohn Baptist greater than the Prophetes before him." If Jeremiah, then was called to rebuke civil rulers, today's preachers have even more certainly such a calling. Yet they have given the keys in their possession to the Magistrates. For them to say they would have done otherwise had they been Prophets or Apostles is vain. If the civil authorities had no right to depose Apostles, they have no more right to interfere now.

No worldly official may depose the Preacher from God's calling. A magistrate who tries to interfere with the exercise of God's gift should be resisted. If he promotes a man in the exercise of such gifts, he may be obeyed, but not otherwise. It is, indeed, God's call alone which should be obeyed. Christian freedom involves the right to choose what is edifying, expedient, and right. If a Magistrate attempts to interfere with the free use of God's gift and calling, he must be disobeyed.

(1) p. 21 or Sig A4 verso.
"So the it is an abuse of my gift and calling, if I cease preaching for the Magistrate, when it is my calling to preach, yea & woe unto me if I preach not, for necessitie is laid upon me, and if I doe it unwillingly, yet the dispensation is committed unto me (I Cor. 9) And this dispensation did not the Magistrate give me, but God by consent and ratifying of the Church, and therefore as the Magistrate gave it not, so can he not take it away. In deed, if God take it away for my wickednesse and euill deserte, he may remove me from the Church, and witholde me from preaching: but if God doo it not, and his word dooth approve me, as most meete for that calling, I am to preache still, except I be shut vp in prison, or otherwise with violence with helde from my charge. For the Magistrate so using me cannot be a Christian, but forsaketh the Church: and how then should my office in the Church depende on him which is none of the Church? And the welfare of the Church must be more regarded and sought, then the welfare of whole Kingdomes and Countries . . . . " (1)

The day is coming when the Lord shall judge these men who oppose his will, and he will cut them off, head and tail, branch and rush. (Those who try to usurp the Lord's authority are the head, those who permit them to do so, are the tail.) The true example should be Jeremiah, whom God called to speak for him, promising to sustain him against all opposition. Therefore they who have full authority and calling are not to tarry. Every lawful Pastor or Preacher has such full authority, even as did Paul. They may proceed without any holding back. It is not sufficient to protest that we may teach as Paul did, but may not act without permission. Paul says he held back nothing profitable. "Howe then shoulde hee kepe backe the gouernement

(1) p. 22f. or Sig. B recto and verso
of the Church whiche is all in all?" Paul said he offered himself as our example. Therefore, we may not claim various distinctions between his position and ours.

It is incumbent on all to do as Christ commands. This means building the Tabernacle. These men would have us wait for the Magistrates, although Christ and the Apostles are before us, as Moses was before them. For which Magistrate should we wait? Those in our own charge, or others? Surely we are not to abandon our posts at the bidding of those in other flocks. Shall we, then, depend on those in our own flock? "If they be of their flockes, why should they tarie for the? vnlesse they will haue the sheep to force the sheepeheards vnto his dutie." The Magistrate may force him, but it is shameful for him to delay until such time as he is forced.

They should be ashamed to expect the Magistrates to do what is properly their task. Moreover, the Lord's kingdom cannot be built by force. Apostles and prophets alike were forbidden to attempt such a thing. Moses and the good kings of Judah found that they could not compel any to accept the covenant, although they might afterwards

(1) p. 23 or Sig. B2.
(2) p. 24 or Sig. B2 recto and verso.
use force on those who neglected what they had agreed to
do. Reuben and Gad were attacked for this reason, but with
a later generation, Hezekiah would not use compulsion since
God's covenant with their forefathers had been long since
annulled.

"Nowe therefore let the wise understande these
things, and the Lorde be mercifull, and deliuer vs from
these unreasonable and euill men. For there is no ende
of their pride and crueltie which ascende vp and sit
in the Magistrates chaire and smite the people with a
continuall plague, and such of them as have not yet got-
ten the roume, do crie for Discipline, Discipline, that
is for a ciuill forcing, to imprison the people or other-
wise by violence to handle and beate them, if they will
not obeye them." (1)

God will surely punish them, for usurping power in the
church against his divine purpose, and for trying to force
his Kingdom.

"This shall appeare afterwaide: In the meane time
let them knowe that the Lords people is of the willing
 sorte. They shall come vnto Zion and inquire the way
to Jerusalem. (Ierem. 50), not by force nor compulsion,
but with their faces thitherward: yea as the hee goates
shall they be before the flocke, for the haste they
haue vnto Zion . . . " (2)

His people shall seek for a covenant to bind them. For it
is the consciences of men that lead them to seek God and
to avoid his displeasure.

(1) p. 25 or Sig. B2 verso.
(2) p. 25 or Sig. B3 recto.
It is argued that since Moses and the kings of Judah reformed the Church, and were tarried for, the people must still wait for the Magistrates. It is, however, a shameful thing to compare modern Magistrates with those who were high priests and symbols of the coming Christ. How false to say that those who should have undertaken reform waited for Moses or the kings! If Zechariah and Haggai waited, it was to secure building material with the aid of Zerubbabel. Now, however, it is a spiritual rebuilding which is needed. Further, the Prince was the symbol of Christ, while the prophets were not magistrates but were spiritual leaders who directed the work. Though the king ordered them to cease, they would not delay. To say that they tarried is to blame them for not hewing timbers and transporting stones, although they both directed and assisted the labourers. One might as well condemn Solomon for not personally preparing the material for the Temple. Furthermore, it would prove nothing if they had delayed. For the high priest and the prince stood for Christ's priesthood and principedom. Their ecclesiastical authority is unknown to the magistrates of to-day. It is the lawful preachers who now share the warrant to build God's Church, having authority greater than they had in ancient times.

Modern magistrates should, like Moses, the judges
and the kings, seek reform of the Church. Their authority is, however, purely civil.

"Yet may they doo nothing concerning the Church, but onelie ciuilie . . . to rule the Common wealth in all outwarde Justice, to maintain the right welfare and honor thereof, with outward power, bodily punishment, & ciuil forcing of me. And therefore also because the church is in a common wealth, it is of their charge: that is concerning the outward provision and outward justice, they are to look to it, but to copell religion, to plant churches by power, and to force a submission to Ecclesiastical gouvernement by lawes & penalties belongeth not to them, as is proued before, neither yet to the Church." (1)

If they are Christians, they will gladly submit themselves to the Church, as becomes Christians. If not, should the welfare of the Church and the salvation of men's souls, depend on them?

Browne says his opponents try to justify themselves by quibbling over proof that Moses and the kings and judges were symbols of Christ. Because he will not set them and the magistrates before Christ, they call him and his party Anabaptists and deniers of authority. The proof of his contention has often been declared. Jacob prophe­cied a ruler and Lord of Israel, namely Christ, who was to come. Until then, those in the royal line of David should wield the power and occupy the throne, foreshadowing him. Thus all in David's line were symbols of him. Solomon's

(1) p. 26 f. or Sig. B3 verso and B4 (sig. not printed).
marriage foreshadowed the Church and her children. Even the wicked kings, in the fact of their authority and calling, represented him, though they perverted that authority. The ritual of the Temple showed them fulfilling the obligations of priest and king in symbolic forecast of the coming Lord. The importance of David's line is shown in Zechariah, Hosea, Jeremiah, and the Psalms.

If the former priests and kings were glorious because of what they represented, how much more so are those who stand in their stead to-day! They are endorsed by God's sustaining and not by man's appointing. Paul says they are greater in importance than Moses and the prophets. Authority in church government belongs to the Church, not to the magistrates. They are supreme in civil power, but if they are Christians they are subject to the Church and must even accept rebuke from it in case of transgression. "They are in deede to keepe their Royal dignitie, yet keeping that they are to abase then selues vnto God before the face of the church." Numerous passages in the scriptures bear out this contention. Nevertheless, says Browne, his adversaries grope like blind men, and try to avoid the issue by saying "that concerning outwarde policie we must tarie for the Magistrate". This is, however, a futile answer; for

(1) p. 28 or Sig. B4 verso
(2) p. 28 or Sig. C.
spiritual power has nothing to do with outward policy. They simply try to divert attention from the need for immediate reformation, by discussing the magistrate's civil authority.

"For we knowe that when Magistrates haue bin most of all against the Church and the authoritie thereof, the Church hath most flourished. Woe to you therefore ye blinde Preachers and hypocrites: for ye spreade a vaile of darkenes vpon the people, and bring vpon them a cursed couering, because by your policie you hide them vnder the power of Antichrist, and keepe from their eyes the kingdome of Christe. The Lordes kingdome must waite on your policie forsooth, and his Church must bee framed to your ciuill state, to supplie the wants thereof: and so will ye chaunge the Lordes gouvernement, and put your deuises in stead thereof .... Goe to therefore, and the outwarde power and ciuil forcings, let vs leaue to the Magistrates: to rule the common wealth in all outwarde iustice, belongeth to them: but let the Church rule in spirituall wise, and not in worldlie maner: by a liuelie lawe preached, and not by a ciuill lawe written: by holinesse in inwarde and outwarde obedience, and not in straightnesse of the outwarde one-lie. But these handsome Prelates . . . the Lorde hath . . . made . . . despised and vile in the sight of the people . . . And the Lorde hath refused them, they shall beare no more the name of his message." (1)

"Of their wicked aunswere, that they can not remedie things, and therefore they will tollerate."

The solemn feasts and church festivals of those who will not reform are like idolatrous rites, a degradation and blasphemy. "And they haue said plainlie (as in the days of Malachie) (Mala. 1) the table of the Lorde is not to be

(1) p. 28f. or Sig. C.
regarded. For though hoggges and Dogges come thereto, yet who can redresse it: or why should the Communion be counted polluted vnto vs?" Thus they permit what is forbidden, and justify the unjustifiable, sanctioning evil by accept­­ing evil-doers and persecuting all who protest. Darkness has indeed fallen when such folly is not recognized. For to tolerate evil means to abandon all effort to redeem the sinner. Isaiah says the Lord's people must be holy, which means unstained by evil associations. Heresies, wicked examples, evil manners, must all be put away. If, then, any evil must still be endured let it at least be only among those outside the Church, whom God shall judge.

A little leaven moves the lump. How then shall we permit a little evil among us, especially when it is not so little, since it is said to be impossible to remedy? Having been purchased of God, let us not be in bondage to other men's sins.

These tolerating priests do not belong within the Church. It is a city of truth and holiness, but they allow pollutions among them on the pretext that they are incurable. Where such things exist cannot be Zion. God's rule in the Church is not that of man. Evil must needs be endured in civil life; but in the Church, even though the

(1) p. 29 or Sig. C verso.
hypocrites be permitted to grow like tares, no incurable disorder shall be permitted to spread. If it be allowed to do so, then that place must cease to be God's dwelling.

The power to separate the ungodly is what Paul calls the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. By it kings and nobles are bound, that honour may be to the Saints. Though we walk in the flesh, our weapons are not carnal, but through God every thought is made captive to Christ. Every power and wickedness opposing God and his Church shall be defeated. Christ's scepter, being right, will keep his people unspotted and, in the end, fulfil their obedience.

"Howe then dare these menne teach vs, that anie euill thing is tolerable in the Church, as though the church gouernement could not remedie it: yea and so tolerable, that all men should be brought into bondage thereby: yea into so foolish bondage that they should protest a thing to be euill, and so think they are excused to practise the same."

(1) p. 31 or Sig. C2 verso.
CHAPTER SIX

"A Treatise upon the 23. of Matthew, both for an order of studying and handling the Scriptures, and also for avoiding the Popish disorders, and ungodly communion of all the false Christians, and especiallie of wicked Preachers and hirelings."

The treatise begins by stating the proper methods to be used in "handling of the scripture." There are steps which may be taken in the number and order appropriate to the occasion, the last of all being the chief in importance.

1. Know the language used in Scripture, and thus be certain that the text is not corrupt.
2. Seek to understand the specific phrasing.
3. Explain the meaning of words, whenever there may be misunderstanding.
4. Test the conclusions thus reached by what is known of divinity and order through other sources.
5. Note the various questions raised.
6. Clarify them by contrast and by illustration.
7. Apply the truth, correcting faults with rebuke from the Scriptures, declare the truth and pronounce judgment by the same means, and exhort and strengthen the weak.

(1) Sig. D2 verso.
Browne insists that the merits of knowing the original languages of scripture may easily be counteracted by the vain and pompous manner in which such knowledge is exhibited. He sarcastically describes such empty displays of apparent erudition.

"For their hootpotch at Paules Crosse or at Sainte Maries in Cambridge, must needes be sanced by vaunt of the tongues. Paule doeth wishe, That They all could speake languages, therefore these will speake Latin, when no man doeth neede it . . . And you may smell out their spirits by the sent of their Greeke or Ebrewe sentences. They cast them forth as he that giueth flowers to feede the hungrie, or would make a feast with the smell of a posie . . . These Maidens of the Bishoppes are called to the Pulpit, and there euerie Maiden must hurle to them her dressing out of a hoode . . . Their Latin is phisik to make hole the sicke, and their greeke and hebrewe will blesse you fro euill spirits . . . For as soone as they haue stood vp in famous places & shewed their vniuersitie degrees, and how wel they become their hoods or their skarlette gownes, and of what standing in Cambridge, and reading they are in the tongues and Doctors: There may then be none like them: then must you needes call the Rabbie, Maister Doctor, My Lords Chaplen, Maister Preacher, and our Diuinitie lecturer. This Phisicke will heale all at Paules Crosse in one day. For so soon as they haue shewed it and receyued a Dinner, and their honour and the hope of some preferrement, all is made whole, and they goe away as if no bodie were sicke . . . " (1)

(1) Sig. D3 recto and verso.
"Against wayne Logicke, being their helpe
in the seconde pointe."

Browne criticizes the important place given to
conventional Logic by preachers and theologians of his
time. He insists that it is contrary to the Christian
teaching and spirit.

"Beware ye Preachers, that ye haue your Logik:
that will be good foode for the sheepe ... Did euer
any godlie professes their Logike before that Christ
came in the flesh, or since his coming, tyll the
coming vp of Antichrist was it studied and learned; was
it then nothing needefull, and is it nowe so needfull?
... by it is the exercise of prophecie or mutuall
edifyinge, also the righte use of Synodes or generall
meetinges, of determining controversyes, of discussing
matters, of communinge, disputing, and searchinge out
the truth, cleane taken awaye. By that also, the people
which haue not learned Logicke, are shutt out and dis­
couraged from talking, pleading, and mutual edifying
in the churche meetinges ... Paul disputed, but did he
vse syllogismes? Christ also disputed, and had he such
Logike, and when he harde and posed the Doctours did he
shewe anie such skill? But they answere that the
Apostles had no neede in deede of suche helpes as we
haue ... Nowe suerlie they that picke Logicke out of
their doctrine or writings, doe mingle their filthe
with sweete water and put in drosse to beautiful pure
goule ... Paul ... saith: O Timothie keepe that
which is committed vnto the, and suide prophane and
vaie bablings and oppositions of science falselie so
called. But they say we cannot prooue that Paul doth
meane Logicke in those places, and bring Caluin and
Beze and the auncient fathers against vs ... . . . Paul
woulde roote out all their philosophie, and Beza but
some parte ... Paul saieth the servaunt of God muste
not strive, but muste bee gentle towards all men, and
apte to teache. But when the Syllogisme cometh then
cometh babbling and contention: for the leafe will shake
with the winde, & churlish wordes are sone moused, by
such boisterous reasoninges. Though you warne such
disputers to be ware of heat in disputinge, yet they are sooner in the fier, then you can tell how it kindled . . . . . " (1)

Formal Logic is, moreover, an empty pretence, leaving one as ignorant at the end as when he started.

"But what, saye they, is there no vse of Logike? What saye you then to a thinge, and the cause thereof? . . . . I graunt there be Causes: But when a Cause is giuen must it be written vp for Logike? Is Logike the trumpet of God's workes . . . . And will Logike cause vs to know the Causes or can we sett the face thereof, or the eyes to look them out for vs? . . . . For if you want wise dome, Logike doeth onely tell you that there be causes thereof, but this is mocke foole, when I am out of the way, to saye, there is a right way, and not to shewe me the same." (2)

Formal Logic lays great stress on supposedly learned definitions and esoteric distinctions, which make an impressive showing, but are of little value when compared with orderly, straightforward intelligence.

"Beholde all their Logike is in names and wordes without anie vse . . . . Somethings agree, say they, and partake together. If you call not this a secrete, they will byte you or prepare them selues to battle. Some things also differ and cannot well be ioyned, as to saye a good man is naught. To learne so hard a lesson is worth a Cambridge degree . . . . This is deepe kookerie, not. to know howe to dresse and make readie all

(1) Sig. D3 verso, D4 recto (signature not printed) and verso.

(2) Sig. D4 verso.
meates but to knowe what is a Sorte, or what is meant by things sundrie, what is a Species and what is Genus. O the light of Logike, it doth rippe vp such secretes. It will teache the Carpenter to hewe chippes for trees, and the souldiour to kille strawes instead of men... So then when we knowe the kindes and sortes of things, we shall easilie give them names, but to teache vs onelie, as Logike doeth, that there are names, and there are sortes, and that wee must seeke them out, is to counsell vs not to walke, because we must bee long time in learning whether our feet will beare vs...

... They demaund here whether Definitions be vn­lawfull. We answere that to name the kindes and sortes of things, and to name their natures is not vnlawfull. But their idle arte of Defining is vnlawfull, and to thrust their Definitions as mysteries into our bosomes, or to terme the naminge of things or their natures whereby they are called, by the wordes of their vaine arte is wholie vnlawfull. If they aske why we then vse the names, and haue laboured also so much in defining, we tell them that wee returne their owne weapons vpon them: not that we care for such weapons, but because they feare them so much, we haue tryed if they may dis­maye them in their follie, and turne them to the trueth. Saloman was so wise, yet had hee no wisedome in their definitions, nor understanding of such Definitions... his way of studying and searchinge out of things was by minding and pondering them, one by one, by turning himself to beholde wisedome and madnes and follie, yea by experience especiallie... And to this labour he sendeth them, but not to Rhetoricke and Logike." (1)

Such enthusiasm for vain Logic has no place in true study of the Scriptures, nor among those who would be proper Christians.

"As for Moses learning, which they say was in Rhetorick and Logike, because he knewe the wisdom of the Aegyptians, they wolde teach vs that he allowed vaine Artes... the Aegyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Children of the East, the Grecians, and the Romanes

(1) Sig. D4 verso, E recto and verso.
knewe such thinges, but they had not the true knowledge. For when they professed themselues to be wise (saieth Paule) they became fooles . . . . I saye of those triflinge bookes of Aristotle and of all that vaine Philosophy, that God hath smitten vs with madness and with blindnes, and with astonishment of hart, that we sholde not see the follie of them, but dote so much vpon them. O ye foolish Disciples of suche heathenishe wiserdes, . . . . ye say ye may not looke on Hollye Scriptures, nor search out wisdome and knowledge, tyll you haue throughlye learned Aristotle, or spent your seuen yeares at Cambrige, in studying of the sciences . . . Ye haue too long . . . doted about wordes, 0 ye vaine men, and weared your selues with your Logike fopperies, and fedd yourselves with the winde. Therefor shall the wynde take you awaye, and vanitie shall pull you awaye. You cleanse your handes with Logike, you saye, to handle the Scriptures purelie: nay rather you haue swallowed vp such filthye stuffe, and haue cast the vomite thereof vpon the Scriptures. You haue fedd also others with those your berayinges, therefore shall the Lorde feede you with wormewoode, and giue you the water of gall to drinke." (1)

"Against their Rhetorike in that point, of doubtfull and harde wordes."

Like Logic, formal Rhetoric becomes a sort of slavish devotion to the forms and descriptions of speech, at the expense of attending to what is said. Any sensible person, however, would know that knowledge of technical terms has nothing to do with intelligence, sincerity, or spiritual understanding.

"When I say, this is a riotous citie, a carelesse citie, you cannot knowe my meaninge, except you know a Metonomie. A Metonomie is a by name or a nickname. For the citie is put for the people in the citie . . . And doo we understande such speaches anie whit better,

(1) Sig. B verso, E2 recto and verso.
because we call them bynames or nicknames? . . . . Euen so when they say, this speach is a Metonomie, and this is a Metaphor, they may as well say, that the one came from your elbowe, and the other from your knoockles.

"To saye, O well done, or O honest man, to him that is vnhonest, or so untowarde in his busines, is made a Trope called Eironie, that is, the way or manner of mocking, or iesting, or contrarie speaking . . . If one say to mee, O honest man, and I aunswere, you mocks me, doth he understande my aunswere. For I should haue sayed, you doe Trope me, or you are Eironicall towards me. But to say, you ieste at me, is to plaine . . . So this speach, The Elephant would drinke vppe Iordan, is their Trope called Hyperbole that is ouermuch or ouerloftie. So the name they glue to it, is more harde then it is . . . . . And Synecdoche doeth signifie a containing or houlding within a thinge . . . For if I saye, This finger shall doe it, for this, I will doe it, then all my bodie (saye they) is contayned in my finger.

"A Metaphor is a goodlie Trope, as to say, A minde lightned with vnderstanding, a man set on fire with anger, and boyling in displeasure . . . O witte to stoppe shoes. O Rhetorik farre fetched, even from the dunghills of Greece, those rotted devisings of vain Philosophers . . . . . If God say to his people he will breake the yoake from off their necke, and take the burden from their shoulders, they must goe learne Rhetorike to Vnderstand him. It is a Metaphor, a carying ouer, for the yoake is translated from the Oxenecke, and the burden from the Asses backe, to bee vpon the people. But if one say, that by the yoake is meant distresse and affliction, or such grievous euilles are likened to a burden, then their Rhetorike dooth lose her vauntage . . . And if they say, we can not know the meaning without such wordes of Arte, I aunswere, that a man needeth not spectackles to see the Sunne shine, and yet their Rhetorike is so farre from being spectacles to see the trueth, that it is rather a couering vnder which they playe Bo pepe, and mocke holy dayes with the trueth . . . If Tullie say (A citie besieged, distressed, weakened, and spoyled) this is Epizeuxis saye they, wee must imitate this: . . . So a quicke witte . . . . will saye, that Justice is in esteeming, examining, determining, resigning right and due. Nowe they ende all in Inge and this whistling sounde of Ing is made deepe Rhetorike: yea, an Oracle of so great a power, that if an Orator doe liuelie pronounce it, the they which heare it must leape out of their cloathes for
delight thereof, and must be as men rauished with such eloquence. . . . O mysteries, O Rhetorike so faire and so glorious a Ladie, thou art, worthie to be the Queene and the Mother of Uniuersities, such is thy grace, and so gracelesse are they that loue thee not.

"It were too long to lay out all their follie . . . What should I write of their Epiphonema, of their Aposiopesis: and Epanorthosis. . . . But for all these Figures, and for the rest, I demaunde, Are they wordes onelie, or are they wit and wisdome? They are but wordes of Arte, they saye, yet they teache vs wisedome. Now surelie, wordes without witte can shew little wisedome: . . . It is but follie to learne and shewe wordes instead of matter . . . All this is galiant stuffe, and without this can neither Diuinitie stands, nor any point of wisedome, or of knowledge be in vs. O woefull de­lusion, the Lorde hath suerlie bin sore displeased, which hath so long glu'en vs vppe to such vayne imaginations."

As the Lord confounded the supposed wisdom of the Scribes, he will also set at nought the elaborate rhetoric which comes from the heathen philosophers. As evidence of what occurs, we have the example of Augustine, Ambrose, Origen, and others of their time. They were learned in rhetoric, but given up to vile errors and monstrous heresies.

"If the Lorde made the wisedome of those men to perishe, and hid their understanding which were the Scribes and expounders of the Lawe, no maruell if he shewe the thoughtes of these men, to be vaine, and the euill imaginations of these heathen Philosophers . . . They will teache them an Exordium as if one could not beginne to tell a tale, except the Grecian tale tellers had tolde him howe to tell it . . . As if reason, duetie and experience, should be thrust out, that Rhetorike might come in . . . . Should one forget to tell his tale or the goodnes of his cause, except Rhetorike did put him in remembrance? . . . . If a man do pleade for

(1) Sig. E2 verso to E4 verso.
his life, will he say nothing for him selfe . . . because he hath no Rhetorike? . . . Behold they which are wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning euill, have no neede of such deepenes. The righteous in times past haue knowne no such wisedome, and in the length of their dayes they sought out no such mysteries . . . Yet forsooth for warranting of such stuffe, Augustine and Origen, and Ierom, with such auncient fathers must be brought in. And was there not a declining euen presentlie after the Apostles times? Did not great abuses and errours spread verie largelie, both in preaching & guiding the church, and in judgement, opinions, and manners: . . . And if they did stagger in these things like the drunken, How should we knowe their vprightnes in Rhetorike and Logike? In the yeare 310. Bishops did clyme aboue Pastours, and Archbishops aboue Bishopsps, which though they did many yeres before, yet then it was established vniuersallie, so that the chusing of Mini­sters, the controversie of church matters, the excommunic­ation of men, the reformation of abuses, the deter­mining of Church decrees, were either forced by Anti­christian power in some Bishop or Archbishop, or Metrop­olitan, or by some of their officers vnder them, or else, did wholeie hang vpon them alone. Now . . . who can follow such halters, to learn to walk vprightlie . . . How manie foolish toyes, prophane fables, and vile errours be in Augustin, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and others, and what monstrous heresies, and Philosophicall delusions, are forged & maintayned by others, and especially by Origen, that Rhetoricall and Logicall mocker . . . The Lord hath taken such wise men in their craftines, and hath also cast away our counsell, and layed our follie on vs, which would thus be mocked by them." (1)

"Against their curious Methodes and Divisions, which is their onelie helpe in the fourth point, for the agreement and difference, and following of matters."

The Scriptural manner of teaching and writing involves taking matters one at a time to deal with them

(1) Sig. E4 verso and F recto.
plainly and sensibly.

"The Philippians had both learned, and receyued, and hearde, and seene in Paule, what things soeuer were true, or honest, or iuste, or pure, or partayned to loue, or had good reporte, or vertue, or prayse in them, and were commaunded to thinke on those thinges as they had learned and scene them in Paule. But did Paule teach them by Divisions, to leape beyonde the middes before they had the right beginning? . . . Howe often doeth Paule falle into this question of the Rhetoricke and eloquence of the Corinthes, and of vaine wisdome, such as the Grecians delighted in . . . They define Methode to be Dianoian, that is deriuing or finding out of one matter by an other . . . But what wise man woulde call an order or waye, either a findinge out or a judginge? For an order is the maner of setting or handling anie matter, and the maner of handling is the right use of our counsaile, in applying it to practise. But Judgement or Inuention be cleene an other thinge. . . . Now therefore order of Methode is not Inuention, neyther is it Judgement, no more than the worcke of a man is the man himselfe, or the thinge founde out and judged, in the findinge or judging thereof." (1)

This scholastic method has as many rules as though it were a game or an elaborate dance; and yet even Aristotle, whom they delight to quote, does not fulfil all the requirements. It is all too ridiculous to deserve our serious attention, except for the fact that through such folly the truths of scripture are mutilated and obscured.

"The Definition, say they, must first be giuen, and then must follow the Division. But disordereth Aristotle made Divisions and parts of Logike, and yet no Definition was giuen tyll manye hundreth yeares after. Well you must pardon Aristotle the master of order, though he kept none order. For he that may teach what

(1) Sig. F verso.
he liste, and speaketh all Oracles, maye doo what he
liste, but none can finde fault . . . But looke further
into the Methode of Logike, & you shall finde it so
patched, as is the cloake of a beggar, and so filled
with good order as is a tubb of kitchin sincke drosse.
For inuention, they saye, is that parte of Logike, which
is in findinge out Argumentes. Soe the difference of
finding is finding, as before the Definition of reasoning
was the Art of reasoning. Now the Argumentes they make
artificiall or with out art. So a part of their Art
they make to be without Art, and yet will handle it also
as belonging to their Art. This is to playe handie
andie, & turn both sides of the hoode, and to finde witt
in neyther . . . 0 miserable dotage, how, should men thus
trifie with learning, except they willingly woulde make
it an Idol or bable to play with? But see what leaping,
skipping, turning and returning there is in their method?
. . . and so they goe dauncing to and fro, through their
whole Logik. This method wil not weary the, for it is a
daunce, and they know their turnings so well, that they
can never turne from them to goe right on their way. It
were toe much to shew all their mockeries . . . I thought
good to write these things, that in handing of the
scriptures, we might take heed of such vanity & knowe
that our wisdom to salvation, is by the holy scriptures
& not by vaine Logike, as Paule doth teach vs. . . . If
any yet thinke that we are deceiveued & out of the way,
let the beware of the issue of the rounce way, which
though it seeme cleane in their eyes, yet death will be
the ende, except they returne.

"We make hast to shewe by example, how to meditate
& handle the Scriptures, and could not but briefly touch
these former things before hande.

"Now letting other things passe, we come to the
Scripture." (1)

Matthew 23.

"The Text. The spake Iesu to the multitude and
to his Disciples."

The doctrine here is that "all are called, and
may be led to salvation if they will obeye: but especially

(1) Sig. F2 recto and verso.
the Disciples and they of the Church." Various texts are quoted from Romans, Psalms, Isaiah, to show how God calls even the disobedient and wayward nation to him, even as those in the highways and byways were invited to the marriage. "And this Gospell of the kindome saieth Christe, shall be preached through the whole world for a witness (1) vnto all nations."

"For the difference of the doctrine from other pointes of diuinitie, and for the agreement of the same. We see that Christ speaketh to all, but chieflie to his Disciples." All are called, but the Church chiefly so, where the seed grows and bears worthy fruit. In our misery God remembers us, giving his Son as a light to the Gentiles, and calling those whom he has predestined. The order God follows is knowledge, mercy, love, will, counsel, foresight, choosing, predestining, and giving his Son to become our salvation by suffering our miseries and over-(2)

As for the way in which he calls and leads us to happiness, it is this:

(1) Sig. F3.
(2) Sig. F3 verso and F4 (signature omitted)
1. God plants and gathers his Church under one kind of government.

2. He makes covenant with it to be its God and Saviour.

3. He gives his promise to the seed of the Church.

4. He gives it his spirit.

5. He receives it to die to sin by repentance.

6. He gives baptism as the seal of this suffering and repentance.

7. He receives it to one communion of grace through Christ's atonement of (a) mediation (b) intercession (c) redemption (d) justification (e) sanctification.

8. Christ instructs, corrects, rebukes, and separates us, calling us from the wickedness about us, to happiness in his grace.

Thus, we come to the truth by following one step after another, without following all the sterile formality and fruitless labelling of terms which are so greatly honoured in Logic and Rhetoric. Taking the points of doctrine revealed in the scripture, we may find their fullest meaning by following them as they develop, and then dealing with the doubts and questions which arise.

"The Doubts and Questions about the Doctrine."

"Seyng Christ spake to all the multitude, it may be asked, whether they which haue his message, may preach where they list, and to whomsoeuer they will. As whether

(1) Sig. F4 verso.
they maye goe to Rome, and preache to the Pope and his Cardinals, and if anie Bishoppe shoude sende for them, or the King or Queene should commaunde them, whither they should come and preach before them, and if they place them in a benefice, or anie parishe doo call them, whether they be tyed to that benefice, or The whole Parishe be their charge. Likewise also if anie blaspheme, or be frowarde and persecute the truthe, whether still we must offer it to them and preache amonge them."

"The Applying with proofe, rebuke, and exhortation.
Against disordered preachinge at Paules Crosse in London, Also before the Queene, before Bishoppes, and Noblemen, and against Sermons by turne and course in famouse places,
Against preaching Lecturers hired thereto, and against Popish Parishes. And Lastlie, against all preaching to those which by resisting and frowardnes, do shewe them selues vnworthie."

If any land refuses to establish the true kingdom of God, and engages in persecution of those who are faith­ful, then God will forsake that land and it shall be as Egypt. Such is the state into which England has fallen, where even the Universities and the Court itself permit

(1) Sig. G
heathenish practises. Therefore all who truly love God must flee from the land.

"It is written that God will remove the Candlestick out of his place . . . the abomination of desolation shall be set up . . . and then must we flee and stand not still. For the Lord hath taken mercy and compassion from that place. And if in all England, . . . whether great cities, or universities, or the Court it selfe, we see not the kingdom of God maintained but persecuted and the true worshippe of God refused a false worshippe and idol service wilfullie suffered, and many popishe obominaciouns vphelde and established, from thence the Lorde doth take awaye his kingdom . . . Yea, none maye continue to preach the truth vnto those, when once they haue boldly testified it, and they put it from them, and make the selues vnworthie thereof . . . they must forsake that citie or countrie . . . If some desire the kingedome and sell not all they haue to buye it, and the place where it is, and will not come and dwell there, they are vnworthy thereof . . . If the whole church be persecuted . . . and lawes be made against all, though as yet they be not executed on some, yet the persecution is generall and they are called awaye.

"In Egipt the whole church was in bondage, and it wholly departed. Yet did Pharaoh giue leaue there to worshippe God rightlie. But answere was made, it is not meete so to do in this place . . . Soe also in Englande . . . the true worshippe and reformation of the church, is an abomination to the Bishoppes, and other wicked Preachers and people, & what stirrings and hurlie burlies would they make? But they saye we must abide such troubles. Indeede . . . we tempte God . . . if when we maye goe out of Egipt . . . we will not, or murmure against it . . . Yet they saye wee must not flee, because there is hope to wynne others. Nay there is danger . . . lest those which are wonne, should be partakers of their sinnes, amonge whom they tarye . . . " (1)

Moreover, the claim that the preaching at Paul's Cross, or at Court, or in parish churches, can be called a true Church is plainly false.

(1) Sig. Q recto and verso.
"But nowe for Preachyng at Paules Crosse in London and before the Queene in that maner, and for Parishe Preachers and hired Lecturers, we neede not here stande vpon them, because they are afterwarde answered in the text.

". . . to proue such their preaching and Parishes unlawful and that neither they preache the worde of message, nor are his church & people, we alledge the first point which followeth the doctrine. . . . . Whosoeuer are not gathered from all false churches and from their false gournement, can neither be the Church of God, nor Preachers in the same. . . . Whosoeuer are not receyued to the Covenaunt of Christ, which is made with all his people, before they can be his people, they are not the Church of Christe, neither canne be Preachers therein . . . If to their Parishes God haue not giuen his Promises, nor made them partakers of them, howe are they his people?" (1)

According to formal logic, it is said that the Bishops call preachers to Paul's Cross or to the Court. These places are likened to Jerusalem, and are made the subject, to which the preachers are adjuncts and must therefore adhere. Again, it is said that the Church is the whole, the preachers the part; and the part must join the whole.

"O Logicke full of fine deuises, it doeth flie aloft in the cloudes to cast us down these mysteries . . . . We saye, therefore, O ye prelates, not by your Logike Oracles, but by the worde and doctrine. Is Paules Crosse Jerusalem, or is the Lordes name there? Is not your name sounded there, as by the blast of a Trumpet? My Lorde Bishoppe there controllith, in his name the Preacher standeth vp, as the wolfe doeth in a visarde, he hath the Bishoppes name in parchement, for that is his licence, it is a Theeues quittance though he

(1) Sig. G2.
came in by the windowe, it is the Scourecoastes Passe-porte, though he roaue out for his praye . . . Three such seales, haue threefold grace, but the money which buyeth them, hath that grace seuenhundreth foule . . . Is this Jerusalem . . . Do they mean to plante his church at Paules crosse? . . . Doo not there those Bishops make the word of the Preacher to serue, and his message to be slauishe?" (1)

The preachers who meekly accept such abuses, and try to find excuses for them are as culpable as the worst offenders. For the Bishops are not the Church, and God will have nothing to do with a church so much opposed to him. To escape from popish control and then come into such bondage as this, is merely to come from one condemnation to another.

"Nowe therefore ye Preachers, because ye subscribe that the Lordes gouernement is wanting, and yet let vp other Lords, or suffer them in his place . . . you can not preache my worde . . . the Bishoppes . . . treade downe the Lords Sanctuarie . . . Yet you saye, the Bishoppes gouernement is tolerable, and take the teeth of those wolues, for a discipline to the sheepe . . . . . For all are made thruales and slaves to their polcie, to builde the church, and to worshippe God after their devisinges . . . and their feete doe sticke faste in the myre and dirt of all Poperie. . . . Why rest you in those Parishes, 0 ye stubborn children? . . . . . Please against their Papishe Parishes saith the Lord, euen against their mother church . . . 0 ye my messengers, take ye no charge of such Parishes, for they be not Zion . . .

"They say, They call no Preachers to preach, but God and the Church, because their authoritie is of God and the church, and the Queene and the people agree to receyue them . . . For they are faire Cages, though the birdes be unclean. Knowe ye not an honest woman, for shee doth loue fornicators. So may you knowe the true Church, for shee loueth such Prelates. 0

(1) Sig. G2 verso and G3.
Church of price, O the famouse Church of Englande. Tell ye the Church, that is, tell ye the Bishoppe of the Dioces . . . We giue say the Bishops, then wee take saye the Preachers . . . O ye Wolues, and worse than hirelings, which not only leave the flock when ye see the Wolfe come, but also rauen and deuoure the flocke, as the Bishoppes giue you leave. . . . They proclayme in Pulpittes and subscribe with their handes, That a Popishe discipline and gouernement is among them: yet say they, we haue the worde and the Sacramentes, and so also haue the true gouernement in Part. What Parte hath Christ with Belial, or how can they be subject to that Anti-christian gouernement, & chalenge also a part of Christes gouernement? . . . Can they haue anie Parte of Church gouernement, when neither by rebuke, nor by separation, they can cleanse the church of such greeuoues wickednes, but as it pleaseth the Popishe officers? . . . Is not this to bee seruauntes to menne, yea to obey men rather than God? Beholde they shewe their sinnes as Sodome, and hyde them not, and say, that the Lordes gouernement is not able to redresse then, and therefore they must bee tolerated . . . . Therefore thus sayeth the Lorde, I feede not my flocke at Paules Crosse in London, or Saint Maries in Cambridge, or in your Englishe Parishes. O ye my sheepe, goe ye not thyther, as though there were my fould, and there I rested & fedd my flocke: for there be shepheardes and flockes also that followe the, which are not of Christ, for they hold of Antichrist . . . Thou art deceyued O England, thou art gone from one destruction vnto another: Thou hast escaped the snare, but art fallen into the pitte . . " (1)

"Verse 2 and 3. The Scribes and the Pharises sit in Moses seate.

3. All therefore whatsoeuer they bid you observe, that observe and doo; but after their worked doo not; for they says and doo not.

Against Parishe Preachers and hired Lecturers, and all that Popishe rabble, and against the hearing and receyuing of them as lawfull Pastours and messengers from God."

(1) Sig. G 3 recto to G4 verso.
"The Lorde doeth shewe thee O Englande, if thou wilt searche the Scripture, and knowe his voyce therein, the crooked pathes which thou hast made thy selfe, & thy great rebellions. But thou are obstinate, thy necke is an Iron synewe, and thy browe brasse. Behoulde thou seest not because thou wilt not see: a visarde hath deceaued the, and the sheepe's clothing hath mocked the: and thou saiest, I will follow my shepherdes which haue put away Antichrist, and yet behoulde such rauening and mischeeve as was neuer the like, and wickednes is gone forth from thy shepherdes into all the land. But let them heare his voice which sheweth them what their church and state is, and what is that reformatiō whereof they boast. The Scribes & Pharises sit in Moses seat, saith he."

"The doctrine of the wordes agreeing with other Scriptures and with our 114. question."

Being either Levites, or trained in the schoole of the prophets, the Scribes and Pharises were lawfully called. But whoever preaches or takes charge without lawful calling is a stranger, a hireling, and false prophet. Such are like robbers who enter not by the door of the sheep fold, or like blind guides. The exponents

(1) Sig. G4 verso.
of Logic and Rhetoric say that Moses' pulpit or doctrine are meant, though it may be asked why they change the usual symbol whereby "seat" means government or authority. "Belike to iustifie the Pope and Peters chair at Rome." They insist that even though ministers be most unworthy of their calling, yet the sacrament may be received from them, since they are in Moses' seat. Thus they force men to follow blind guides, and to offer prayer and thanksgiving through unworthy spokesmen. But so long as discipline is denied, they cannot be God's representatives.

"Beholde is this not to giue vs gall and worme-woode mingled in our drinke . . . to call a foole to be our maister, and to welcome a messenger as bringing good tydinges from the Deuill and Satan? . . . Is it not to put the sheepe's clothing on the rauening Wolfe, and then make sport that the sheepe are beguiled? . . . Beholde dare they preache such thynges, or that by Moses Seate the Lord Iesus did suffer vs to receyue the Sacramentes of such kinde of Ministers? Yea they are more boulede and shameles then thus, and haue made their faces more harder then stones. For though they haue such weight of Scripture to beate downe this follie, yet one poore delusion alledged falslie out of Caluin, must shift it of, all. For it maketh no matter, say they, who bring vs a letter or gift, so that the gift and the letter be good. So they will take goulde of a theefe to iustifie his theeuerie, and he that doeth steale a message, and counterfet a handwriting is welcome vnto them . . . Haue I sent them saieth the Lorde, or commaunded them, when they cause my people to err, by their lyes and by their flatteries, saying, ye are his people and church, though ye be polluted, and abominable? Haue these dumme dogges or tolerating preachers, my letters and seales? I neuer gaue them, sayeth the Lorde, they are stolen and counterfet . . . and if they haue my message, why holde they their peace at the wicked Bishoppes discharging, as if they had his message onelie? . . . To preache some trueth as wicked
men may doo, and to preache the Lorde's word of message
is not all one . . . his message cannot be without his
government . . . But you . . . haue not yet planted my
Church sayth the Lorde, by gathering it from the wicked
and vnworthie, and yet this is the first dutie of all my
messengers . . . Therefore because ye haue not planted
and builded my church, sayeth the Lorde, that it may be
vsable, nor purged and cleansed it from open abominations,
both yee and all the workes of your handes . . . are vn-
cleane and accursed vnto you . . . Yet forsooth it is
made great wickednesse, not to heare these Preachers,
for they sitte in Moses Seate, and are not blinde guides.
Nay they sitte in the seate of Antichrist, and if they
were blinde, they should not haue had this sinne: But
nowe they saye that they see, therefore their sinne re-
mayneth." (1)

Confessing that Christ ought to reign, they yet
wait for the Magistrate's permission, postponing his Discip-
line until Parliament shall decree it.

"Is not this to skorne the Lorde's kingdom, be-
cause it growth as the Musterdseede, and is hidden as
the leauen, and commeth vp as the corne sowne in the
fielde. But yet these wicked Preachers rise vp against
this, and crie out that they haue the cheefe. They haue
the worde and the sacramentes, and as for the Gouerne-
ment or Discipline, it is but an accessorie and hangbye,
neeedefull in deede, but yet they maye be without it, &
be the church of God notwithstanding . . . " (2)

It is claimed that even papists have God's coven-
ant because they are baptized, but if they are not and
cannot be the outward Church, then their sacraments are not
valid. The true Christian, then, cannot partake of the

(1) Sig. H verso and H2.
(2) Sig. H2.
communion with any whom they know to be unrepentant sinners, without sharing their offence. Every Christian is, in God's sight, a king and priest; and as such he may and should rebuke those who do wrong.

"So they teach also, that Papistes haue the couenaunt, and the promise, because they are Baptised . . . . . Can an Assemblie of Idolaters bee my church, saith the Lorde? And howe then should the Papistes haue my promises and couenant . . . . Is their blinde readinge, or popishe inchaunting a baptising in my name? Is not this rather baptisinge in my name, when the signe of washing or sprinkling of the parties baptised, is applied to my worde duellie preached, and that by him whom they knowe to haue his Message from me. The Sacramentes are markes of the outwarde church . . . Nowe therefore if they be not that outwarde church . . . what shall we account of their Sacramentes? . . . they are without this (spiritual) communion which can haue no gatheringe, planting, separation or reforming of their church, but by their spirituall Courtes, Popishe officers, and their excommunication, absolution, lawes and penalties, which are altogether Antichristian . . . . What is then the Baptisme of those, which can not be of the bodie of Christ, whom also his government doth separate from the Church? Now whereas they aunswere, that the Ministers sinne . . . is their sinne, & not ours, we aske them, doth not the Church partake with the minister, and is not euery Christian a King and a Priest, to rule with Christe by open rebuke, if no other doo in season rebuke, and by with holding of those from their communion and fellowshippe, which are without the couenant?" (1)

The individual Christian's obligation is such as he may not shirk, whatever the personal influences or the force of numbers which seek to make him do otherwise. He must recognize the Church only when it is truly the Church;

(1) Sig. H2 verso.
and must then forego all else for its sake.

"And . . . are the baptised presented to the minister, or to God and the church, or . . . doth the minister receaue anie to fellowship, or rather the church? . . . For . . . the Church is cheefe. . . . . And though the Minister should fall, yet the Church must stande sure. And though all men should do wicked-lie, yet may not we follow a multitude to doo euill. Yea . . . if . . . a whole congregation will not be re-formed, we muste pleade against them, yea forsake them, and houlde them accursed. Yet againe for this matter, they bring in Caluin against vs, and accuse vs for Ana-baptistes and Donatistes: For we say of that fifte to the Corinthes, That Paule doeth speake of the spirituall communion, which is onelie in the Church, and this they call heresie . . . For Paul . . . teacheth the woman whiche beleueueth to abyde with the vnbeleuing man, and the seruaunt whiche beleueueth, to keepe with his Maister, except they bee frowarde and persecute . . . For then they may flee . . . If the Husbande would not goe, should the Wyfe tarie, for all are commaundd to goe, and none to stande still . . . For to vs it is commaunded, That we seeke the place whiche the Lorde hath chosen to put his name there . . . This is commaunded to all, and therefore, though the husbande will not, yet the wife must doe it, or the husbande, though the wife bee against it . . . " (1)

Those who defend the Church as it is established say that they have both an inward and an outward calling. In fact, however, they have neither sort in any valid way. They walk after the flesh, they tolerate gross abuses, and they cruelly persecute the flock whom they should protect. Yet they talk of an inward calling!

(2) Sig. H2 verso and H3.
"Now for their calling, because they stand vpō that, let vs see what it is. It is inwarde and outwarde, they saye: And they haue them both . . . If they walcke . . . after the fleshe, howe can they saye, that they haue the spirite or be inwarde called? . . . And where is their wisdome when they refuse Christ Iesus to raygne over them, except he come by ciuile lawes and decrees of Parliaments....?...If the good spirit doe not leade them as it were by the playne waye which the church gouernement sheweth them, what spirit or inwarde calling haue they? . . . .

"Nowe whereas they alledge for their inwarde calling, that they pray and preach for Discipline, and are sorowfull also for thinges amisse, and careful to re-dresse them, wee answere, that their backwardnes and frowardnes doeth shew the contrarie. For though some of them refuse to weare a surplesse, or be precise in some other pointes, yet it is with horrible tolerations of the same thinges in others, and with doubling also, and & mitigatigs, relentings, & protestings in most shameful maner. Therefore this fayre shewe of deuotion is but greater hypocrisie: and . . . why should thei not be those spirits of Diuils working miracles, and as the Froges which go out of the mouth of the beast, to gather the Magistrates and peoples against vs . . . As for the Bishops and their officers and fellow partakers, they succeede the Martyrs, they saye, and are carefull for the vnitie and prosperitie of the Church, and therefore they are inwardlie called . . . . They loue the fleece and thinke on the fatte, and this is their inwarde calling. Doo not all menne tell you whom they like best, they suffer the frowarde among them, as did Bishop Boner. For eyther they pro vide them such houses, where no light nor ayre can come to them, belike least it choake them, or else they dryue them away and set them farre of, because they loue not to hurt them . . . Be-holde, haue they not nowe an inwarde calling? They pro-fesse & vowe in their hартes to helpe Christes little flocke. But doo they paye their vows in their palaces and parishes, as Philpot did his vowes in Smithfield? . . . They threaten, pursue, imprison, and smite the sheepe because they loue them, and are inwardlie called thereto . . . . They take in hand to build the Lordes house, and now moe then XX yeares are past in studying for the groußdwork. O perfect work, whē shal it end, which is so lōg in beginning." (1)

(1) Sig H3 verso to H4 (sig. omitted)
Their outward calling consists of currying favour with some patron, or church official, through whom a comfortable living may be secured. The man with such a calling must humble himself to Bishops whose very office is corrupt. Yet they have the effrontery to pretend that God and the Church have called them!

"Thus we see their inwarde calling. Nowe let vs come to their outwarde. How got they their roames, Benefices, and liuings? Did we send for such guesse to Rome or to Louane, for they get into the sheep folde though the dores be shut against them. Came they not in at the windowes . . . ? . . . Be not Cambridge degrees an high ladder to go vp? . . . And is not the fauour of some Patrone or Bishoppe, or worldly man, the strength of these ladders? Did they not finde out a liuing, before they foud out meete people for their calling? . . . This, this is a due outwarde calling . . . They tooke vs by the hande, as though they would leade vs, but they haue bounde our handes behind vs. For when we looked to chuse them for Pastours, they came vpon vs by force, and yoked vs to their parishes, and snared vs with inioynings, and did beate vs with penalties. . . Are not our Ministers duelie examined? . . . Beware ye Priestes that ye can speake Latin. And in anie case forget not your Catechisme. By these two shall you spitte out your grace vpon others, and men shall feeds on your graceles spuinges . . . Kneele downe ye Preachers, that the Bishoppe may ordayne you sitting in his chayre. His holie handes shall blesse you, They are washed from blood as was Pilates, and as the nose of a Wolfe which will rauen no more. Then must you take your Licenses in parchement, and paye well for them. Prepare a Boxe for your waxe, printe your message therein, and keepe touche with the Bishoppe, least he open your Boxe, and your calling flye awaye.

"Beholde, this is their outwarde callinge, and if a man haue this, they are called (they say) and sitte in Moses seate. For may not a reading minister
serue for a better, if he be thus called? . . . So
Satan doth call Theeuws to steale, and should they not
freelie doo it? Should not one murther seuen thousands
to learne not to kyll? Or should not these Bussards"...
. . . . (1)

[By reason of trouble the print was staid]
CHAPTER SEVEN

"A Booke WHICH SHEWETH THE life and manners of all true Christians, and howe vnlike they are vnto Turks and Papistes, and Heathen folke.

Also the pointes and partes of all diuinite, that is of the revealed will and worde of God, are declared by their seuerall Definitions and Divisions in order as followeth."

[NOTE: This tract is printed in outline form. On the left hand pages are two columns, one headed "The State of Christians," the other "The State of Heathen." On the right hand pages are given "Definitions" which are then subdivided into words or phrases under the general heading "Divisions." By extensive use of plain print, black letter, and script, and by ingenious use of brackets for the "divisions," a great deal of material is presented in fairly systematic form. Although it is manifestly impossible to give anything like a similar presentation without varying styles of printing, the following analysis seeks to offer the main substance of the ideas incorporated in the tract.]

Numbers 1 to 3 introduce a theological discussion of the nature and purpose of God by explaining that we are called Christians because of our voluntary covenant with God, whom we serve through our knowledge of him. (1)

"Christians are a companie or number of belieuers which by a willing covenant made with their God, are vnder the government of God and Christ, and keeps his Lawes in one holie communion: Because they are redeemed

(1) Sig. Al verso and A2.
by Christe unto holines & happiness for euer, from which they were fallen by the sinne of Adam."

We lead a godly life "by knowing God & the dueties of godliness: and by keeping those dueties." To do so, "we must knowe the Godhead: and the all sufficiencie or most blessed state thereof."

Numbers 4 to 26 enumerate systematically what we know of God. We know:

1. His unity in trinity.
2. His perfect sufficiency.

This we see in his Majesty, infiniteness, might, power, and holiness.

3. His perfect wisdom.

He knows all, foresees all, plans and pre­destines all.

4. His justice and righteousness.

"He is zealous and ielous for equitie and innocencie . . . loueth these and rejoiceth over them which do right and dutie . . . . hateth all vanite and wickednes, and is angrie therewith . . . He hath given unto all things power and means to obey and serve him, if they had kept it."

5. His grace and goodness.

"His goodnes is his holines in doing good, and increasing his blessings towards his creatures, more than the goodnes which is in them deserueth."

He provides for all according to their necessities.

(1) Sig A1 verso to A3 (2) Sig A2 verso to A4 (sig. omitted)
(3) Sig A3 verso to B (4) Sig A4 verso to B2 (5) Sig B2 verso and B3
6. His redeeming love to man.

"God hath provided the means of salvation . . . He foreseeth & purposeth what help we shall have . . . He hath given his promise to helpe . . . He hath redeemed and saued vs by his sonne Christ Iesus."

Numbers 27 to 35 deal with the person and work of Christ, telling of his incarnation, his redemptive suffering, his choosing us in mercy and love, and his calling and leading of us into his church.

"He suffered our miseries for vs . . . Because he was a man, he did also abide the wrath and dreadfull curse of God which was due vnto man . . . He suffered also in his members, which are his people and church . . . hee overcame sinne . . . overcame and tooke away the wrath of God, and the deabe of the Lawe . . . overcame the miserie and curse it selfe . . . He hath obtained the loue of God . . . . also the meanes of our happines as proceeding from God . . . His Electing or choosing is his free consent or will . . . to saue vs for his names sake, without anie desert of oures . . . His Predestinating of vs, is his full consent or counsaile, whereby he is setled to saue those whom he hath chosen . . . His calling of vs in trueth, is when the meanes which moue vs to seeke vnto Christ, are cleare to the conscience . . . In the New Testament our calling is . . . by the first planting and gathering of the church . . . "

Numbers 36 to 63 take up the Church: It is established by covenant and "seal" of baptism.

(1) Sig B2 verso to B4 (sig. omitted)

(2) Sig. B3 verso to C3.
"Howe must the churche be first planted and gathered under one kinde of gouernement?"

First, by a couenant and condicion made on God's behalfe.

Secondlie, by a couenant and condicion made on our behalfe.

Thirdlie, by vsing the sacrament of Baptisme to seale those condicions and covenants." (1)

God's covenant is that he will be our God and Saviour if we are faithful to him, the promise extending to our seed, and being reinforced by the giving of his spirit. We, in turn, must pledge ourselves and our households to him, publicly confessing his laws.

Presentation in baptism is primarily the parent's duty for the infant, although an unbaptized believer who has reached years of discretion may present himself. When baptism is performed, it must be accompanied by appropriate preaching. Then, the "bodies of the parties baptized must be washed in water, or sprinkled or dipped in the name of the Father, and of ye Sonne, and of the Holy Ghost, vnto the forgiuenes of sinnes, and dying thereto in one death and burial with Christ." The Church must receive the baptized persons with thanksgiving and prayers. (4)

The Church is thereafter strengthened through the grace and power of Christ, and its own proper discipline, the "seal" being the Lord's Supper.

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(1) Question 36, sig C2 verso  (2) C2 verso and C3
(3) Sig C3 verso and C4  (4) Sig. C3 verso to D.

(sig. omitted)
"How must it be further builded, accordinge vnto churche gouernement?

"First, by communion of the graces & offices in the head of ye church, which is Christ.

"Secondly, by communion of the graces and offices in the bodie, which is the church of Christ.

"Thirdly, by vsing the Sacrament of the Lords supper, as a seale of this communion." (1)

1. Christ is the high priest, the prophet, and the (2)
king and lord of the Church.

He has secured for us forgiveness, justification, and sanctification. He teaches by his own words and by those whom he sends, thus appointing to each his appropriate duties. He executes his laws by overseeing us, rebuking offenders, and separating the wilful and unrepentant.

2. The Church has the offices of teaching and guiding, cherishing and relieving. These offices are fulfilled, in respect to many churches, through synods and prophecies; in local churches it is by counsel of the elders. The individuals whose special charge is to fulfil these offices are:

Over many churches

Apostles: to condemn error and to induce the erring to reform.

Prophets: to declare specific dangers, and to save the people from them.

Evangelists: to help the other two.

(1) Question 44, sig. D verso. (2) Sig D verso to D3 (sig. omitted) (3) Sig D3 verso to E.
Over particular churches

Pastors: to exhort and guide those who have duly called him.

Teachers: to teach and point out the way, being rightly called.

Elders: to assist the other two, being forward in gifts.

Relievers or Deacons: to gather and bestow aid from the church to those in need.

Widows: to pray for the church, and to visit the afflicted and distressed.

3. The Church has also the graces of all believers who do good.

Every Christian is, under Christ:

A King: to watch over others, rebuke the wicked, withdraw from the impenitent.

A Priest: to pray, to intercede, to turn others from iniquity and to lead to sanctification.

A Prophet: to exhort, counsel, and advise others in mutual helpfulness.

The Lord's Supper must be ministered in proper order and with due preparation.

There must be separation from the unworthy, re-dressing of all known offences, and strict examining of consciences. There must then be due preaching (not blind reading), whereby the meaning of Christ's passion

(1) Sig E verso to E 2 (2) Sig E2 verso to F.
must be explained, the meaning for us must be made clear, and proper thanks must be expressed. Thereafter the elements are to be taken reverently by the minister, who uses the scriptural words of the institution of the Lord's Supper, as he gives them to the rest. Prayer of thanksgiving, petition for further profitting, and pledges of obedience must then follow.

Numbers 64 to 81 are entitled "The Jewish state before time, and at this day." Browne declares that the Old Testament tells of almost innumerable episodes, events, persons, regulations and objects, which were in essence allegories of the Christian dispensation which was yet to come. (However interesting it was to Browne and others who shared this belief, the whole section is of little interest to us at present, except as a fair illustration of the ingenuity which can be exercised when once the Old Testament is examined from this point of view.) There are ten pages devoted to this allegorizing of the Old Testament, showing "ceremonies and shadowes" which by "outwarde sensible signes . . . teach vs spirituall graces."

Numbers 82 to 87 deal with conversion and what it entails. We must:

(1) Sig F verso to G2.
(2) Sig G2 verso to G4 (sig. omitted)
1. Judge and condemn ourselves.

Reckoning our sins, we must realize their enormity and acknowledge that we deserve punishment.

2. Suffer affliction.

Yielding ourselves for due chastisement, and suffering the pangs of conscience, we must mortify ourselves because of our sins.

3. Repent.

We must feel shame and anger with ourselves because of the evil devices and desires which we have cherished.

4. Be raised and quickened again.

Through faith in Christ's redemption of us, we must be assured of forgiveness and new life.

5. Enjoy blessed and holy lives with God in Heaven.

This shall be in the communion of the saints.

Numbers 88 to 107 present the duties of godliness which we owe in this new life. We owe the duties of religion and holiness towards God in the following ways:

1. We must esteem God.

Reverencing his majesty, we must be ashamed of ourselves in comparison with him. Acknowledging his justice, we must avoid his displeasure, by seeking righteousness and hating

(1) Sig G4 verso to H2.
vanity. Knowing his goodness, we must love him heartily, rejoice in his favour, trust in his help.

2. We must honour and worship God.

Humbling ourselves in meekness, patience, and lowliness, we must confess our faults and seek forgiveness and aid from him. We must also acknowledge his goodness, giving him thanks and praise.

3. We must serve him faithfully.

Learning his will through his word and guidance, we must do our duty with zeal and joy, exhibiting skill, industry, and steadfastness. Having thus faithfully served him, we may render our account with good conscience and peace.

Numbers 108 to 111 consider the special obligations which are due to God's name and kingdom, and for keeping the Sabbath. These consist of:

1. Special occasions of worship and thanksgiving.

2. Special furtherance of his kingdom.

We must edify, rebuke and exhort one another as the occasion requires. We may honour him by invoking his name as witness to our truthfulness. Recognizing that what seems chance may be God's will, we may honour him by lots. We must duly resort together in his name in church meetings.
3. Special duties for the Sabbath.

We must forsake worldly tasks in order to fulfil special duties to God. Such tasks as are needful and unavoidable, may be carried out.

Numbers 112 to 185 are all included under the general heading of "dueties of righteousness concerning man." Browne, however, divides the presentation into eight groups, which are the sections now remaining before us.

Numbers 112 to 120 have to do with the assuming of responsibility on the part of superiors or "Gouernours" This proper preparation or fitness involves:

1. Assurance of gifts and of God's calling.

Knowledge, godliness, proper age for responsibility, and birth and parentage are the gifts which are necessary.

God's calling consists of general and specific commandment, and an inner compulsion to the task.

2. The compliance and agreement of men, that authority shall be exercised by these particular persons.

In the case of church officials, this means confirmation of their gifts, and obedient acceptance of their authority by the Church. If the Church has already

(1) Sig I3 verso to K (sig. omitted)
(2) Sig I4 verso to K3.
been "planted" it should freely choose its officers, under leadership of the elders, who then ordain them in the name of the Church.

The authority of civil magistrates comes primarily from God. The acceptance of their control on the part of men is like the acceptance of church officials, except for differences such as there would necessarily be.

In households, the authority of parent over child is a natural duty. In all other relationships in the household, authority depends upon mutual consent.

(Between husband and wife this covenant of government, which is not the bond of marriage itself, is broken by cruelty or persecution; and the injured party may leave the other with good conscience, the marriage covenant remaining unbroken.)

Numbers 121 to 126 concern the duties of governors. These are of two sorts:

1. Esteeming and upholding the right and due.
   
   This involves showing zeal for equity, love and favour towards those who do their duties, and hatred towards vanity and wickedness.

2. Appointing duty to others.
   
   This is done by expounding the scriptures, and by exhorting and "dehorting" so that those taught may choose the right and eschew the wrong. Then, those in positions of superior responsibility must guide the others in worship and prayer and in the settling of

(1) Sig. K3 verso to K4 (sig. omitted)

(2) Sig. K4 verso to L2.
disputes, and the understanding of duties by word and example. Finally, they must supervise, examine, and reward both good and evil according to their deserts.

Numbers 127 to 135 explain two of the duties of submission on the part of those who are to be under the control of these superiors.

1. They must esteem those who are over them.

This means reverencing their worth and superiority, fearing their authority, applauding their righteousness, grieving at their displeasure, loving them, rejoicing in them, and confidently hoping for favours from them.

2. They must honour their superiors.

This is to be done by humbly exhibiting lowliness of heart, despising one's own rights while patiently accepting the discipline of those who are in authority. It also necessitates confession of faults, and petition for pardon and favour from them, with due expression of gratitude for their goodness and kindness.

Numbers 136 to 146 take up the further duties of service which must be shown to those who are in positions of superiority.

1. We must learn of them.

This is to be done by getting knowledge from them, worshipping God under their
guidance, yielding to their judgments, and accepting as our due tasks the duties which they appoint.

2. We must obey them in our calling. (1)

This means: to take counsel that we do our duties properly and with foresight; to do our duties with eagerness, zeal, courage, and joy; to do our duties efficiently, being "handsome and tydie" about it; to do our duties quickly and carefully, having patience and persistence to carry the work on to its completion.

3. We must render account to them. (2)

This we do by having clear consciences, and by having been faithful and thorough.

Numbers 147 to 163 have to do with those free duties which we owe to others. These are of three sorts:

1. We must esteem them. (3)

We must recognize and reverence the image of God in others, feeling due humility in ourselves. We must love them, rejoice in their fellowship, and hope and trust in their favour. We must show mercy, compassion, and sympathy, suffering with them in their shame.

(1) Sig M verso to M2.
(2) Sig M2 verso and M3.
(3) Sig M2 verso to M4 (sig. omitted)
2. We must honor them.

We must speak with respect and courtesy to others, ministering to them, yielding to their requests and opinions, pardoning their offenses, appeasing their anger, showing ourselves gentle of speech, forbearing, and patient. We must in turn, seek their aid while we exhibit contrition and penitence for our own faults. Through all, we must acknowledge and properly requite the goodness and kindness of others.

3. We must seek to please them.

This we must do by praying for them, by teaching them and helping them, in example and in mutual conference of edifying, exhorting, comforting, "dehorting," and re-buking. We must also sustain them by judging, defending, reconciling, giving, lending, endorsing, visiting, and ministering to them.

Numbers 164 to 173 comprise a list of more personal duties.

1. We should defend our state and welfare.

We do so by resisting the enemy and boldly answering in behalf of our cause.

2. We should use our state comfortably.

We must use God's blessings against dulness, grief, weakness and weariness, hurt or un-comeliness.

(1) Sig M3 verso to N2
(2) Sig N verso to N3
(3) Sig N2 verso to N3
(4) Sig N3 verso to N4 (sig. omitted)
3. We should use our state honourably, particularly in respect to marriage.

This we do by temperance, while we avoid self-indulgence, lust, and all impurity. Especially is this to be manifest in our right use of marriage, in which we take care that we marry only partners meet and fit in age, sex, kindred, behaviour, personage, state and calling. Betrothal and marriage must be with due regard to the proprieties, and the good will of our friends. Marriage must then include mutual giving of self in married intercourse, so that the marriage may be blest with children. This marriage must be based not only on fidelity to each other, but also on temperance, and purity of thought and deed.

Numbers 174 to 180 deal with duties to "goods and furniture."

1. We have the duties of getting and increasing our goods.

We fulfil the duty by exercise of our callings in study and learning, and by diligent and skilful labour.

2. We have the duty of saving them when procured.

This is done by keeping our possessions in good order and in good repair, spending and bestowing without waste.

3. We have the duty of doing right with what we have.

This necessitates faithful dealings with others, by paying debts, keeping pledges,

(1) Sig N3 verso to 02  (2) Sig Oj verso and 02
(3) Sig Oj verso and 02  (4) Sig 02 verso and 03.
restoring what is borrowed, and taking proper care of other's goods which we may have for a time. It also necessitates honest dealing in bargaining and in paying or earning wages. It further necessitates letting each have what is his, without robbery, oppression, or craftiness, and with restitution made for any fraud.

Numbers 181 to 185 concern certain special duties *(1)* "for name and credit" in dealing with people.

1. There is the duty of truth.

   We must observe simplicity, steadfastness, and the habit of taking things in their right meaning.

2. There is the duty of secretness.

   We must keep trust without betrayal, without tale-bearing, and without whispering or backbiting.

3. There is the duty of harmlessness in reporting of others.

   We must avoid slander, false witness, and evil words concerning them.

4. There is the duty against covetousness.

   We must be content with our own lot and circumstances, not being envious of others.

FINIS

*(1) Sig 03 verso and 04 (sig. omitted)*
A True and Short Declaration, Both of the Gathering and Ioyning Together of Certayne Persons: And Also of the Lamentable Breach and Diuision Which Fell amongst Them.

[NOTE: The autobiographical portions of this Declaration have already been quoted at some length in Chapter III, above. They will, therefore, be very briefly noted here.]

Browne begins with the description of his activities as a teacher, following his years at Cambridge. He tells of putting into practice his convictions about the Church, with the resulting dismissal from his teaching post. Engaging for a time in private tutoring, he finally returned to his own home. Before long, however, he had gone back to Cambridge where he associated with Richard Greenham, until he was invited to preach regularly in a church.

At this point, he says, the church problem presented itself to him in the following terms:

1. He had been called to preach in a certain church.
2. Who, then, had the authority to call him?
3. The Bishops' claim to that authority was false.

"To be called and authorized by them, he thought it unlawful."
4. The primary authority over the Church belongs to Christ.

   God "hath appointed him over all things, to be the head of the church, which is his body."

5. Next under Christ comes the Church as a group.

   "Which Christ also teacheth, where he saith If he will not vouchsafe to hear them tell it unto the church . . . Therefore is the church called the pillar & ground of truth . . . & the voice of the whole people, guided bie the elders & forwardest, is said to be the voice of God . . . Therefore the meetinges together of manie churches, also of euerie whole church, & of the elders therein, is aboue the Apostle, aboue the Prophet, the Evangelist, the Pastor, the Teacher, and euerie particular Elder."

6. Bishops, then, should be subject to the Church, and any authority they claim over it they have usurped.

   "For the Apostles did geue accoûtes to the Church of all their doinges . . . But these being got aboue the Apostles will sit in the throne of Christ, & as Christ is not inferior to the church, no more will thei be."

7. This claim to great authority proves them to be, indeed, antichrists.

   "Nai thei presume further then Christ . . . these do force vpō the people euerie where, & in sundrie places against their willes, not onlie ministers vnknowne, but also such as are knowe to be blind buserdes, wicked fellowes & idol shepherdes . . . Howe high then do thei lift themselues which will rule alone as lorde over the flock, . . . which will be Rabbies, Doctors & reuerend fathers,"
though we haue but one doctor & Father, as saith that high doctor, Christ . . . thei haue refused his gouernment & chosen their owen popish discipline instead thereof."

8. In practice they prove to be hostile to the Church's welfare.

"They are makeshifts & troublers seeing they rule rather because they seeke their owne advantage, or glorie, or mischievous purpose, then the welfare & benefit of the church."

9. The Bishops are indeed antichrists in the Church, and tyrants in the commonwealth.

"For they rule by three sortes of lawes, as by the ciuil, the canō, the commō lawe, which are three kingdoms vnto them, or as the Popes triple crowne, & by pretending the fourth lawe, which is the word of God, they ouer-rule to toe much."

Discussing this problem with others, Browne found some who thought that since the Bishops preached God's word and administered the sacraments, they should be acknowledged even though open to some criticisms. Therefore, he considered carefully whether this could truly be said of the Bishops. He came to the following conclusions:

1. To preach the word is to bring God's message, teaching people to turn from their evil ways.

2. Preaching which is not to this effect is false.

(1) Sig A2 verso to A3 verso (signature omitted)
3. Further, such preaching must turn people from their specific sins.

4. In reality, however, the Bishops lead people into their greatest abominations.

5. Preaching a sermon, even if it be true, is not enough in itself.

"... for the servant which telleth a true tale, hath not done his masters message nor the errand for the which he was sent, except he tell and speake that for the which his master set him."

6. It is not even enough to preach Christ's laws if the people's obedience is also abused, and the Bishop's laws are added to those of Christ. In fact, this only defeats Christ's purpose.

"For example: ... whereas God commandeth to plant & to build his church by gathering the worthy & refusing the unworthy ... they booke, by their contrarie lawes, both papistes & careles worldlings as crooked trees to build the Lordes Sanctuarie, & force the wretched to their worships & service as if dogs might be thrust vpon God for sweet sacrifices. Proud forcing is meeke building with them & devotiō compelled is their right religiō."

7. They are worse than the Pharisees, as the following points indicate:

a. They substitute "the bread of uncleanness, instead of the puer word of God," defiling it with "traditions, tolerations, & falsifinges."
b. By means of spiritual courts, excommunications, dispensations, absolutions, and by taking bribes and fees, they "do let so manie lose to all misrule and filthiness."

c. They pollute the Lord's house by mingling the clean and the wretched together, excusing themselves by saying "they cannot remedie it."

d. Laying great stress on the sacraments, they say it does not matter if God's rule is lacking in the Church, although it is that which sanctifies the sacrament.

8. Christ called the Pharisees blind guides, warning against them, although they occupied Moses' seat by virtue of their original calling. The Bishops have not even a proper calling, being usurpers.

Having reached these conclusions, Browne was resolved to avoid any dealings with the Bishops which might compromise the truth. He refused to make use of licences which his brother procured for him; and repeatedly declared his opinion that, so far as he was concerned, the Bishop's permission to preach was quite irrelevant. He cared only for his duty to bear God's witness to the congregation which had properly called him. His observation of even the best parishes convinced him that God's kingdom would grow only from the leaven of a small minority who were truly worthy. He therefore took leave of his congregation refusing both a permanent call and the stipend
they had collected for him; and when Bancroft read to him the official order against unauthorized preachers, he retorted that his decision to cease preaching at Cambridge had no reference to any such pronouncement.

"Of R.B. Coming to Norwich."

Recovering from an illness which had detained him at Cambridge, he decided to go to Norfolk to seek the company of those who would not stay in the corrupted parish churches. Despite the law requiring attendance at the parish church, he was convinced that the true Christian must withdraw.

"For the abomination is set vp, antichrist is got into his throne, & who ought to abide it?" (1)

At this point he renewed his acquaintance with Harrison. He found him earnest in seeking the truth, although too willing to accept compromise because of his admiration for Mr. Greenham and others. Browne explained to him his own view that the Bishop's licence and ordination were "trash and pollutions . . . the marckes & poison of Antichrist." Harrison returned to Norwich, and Browne followed, making arrangements to board and lodge with his friend.

(1) Sig A4 verso (2) Ibid.
"The Talk & Counsel Which R.B. & R.H. had together about matters of the Church and Kingdom of God."

Browne congratulated his friend on renouncing all dealings with the Bishops. Harrison replied that he had prayed to be prevented from entering the established ministry if God wished him not to do so. However, he admired "M Robardes, M More, M Deering & others" and hoped they might be persuaded to join the revolt against the corrupted church. Browne considered this a futile hope, since the Puritans would not leave the Church whose abuses they decried.

"for their liuing, their glorie & credit with the people stood on it, & thei had fought out manie fetches, & got an euē waie on both sides. Thei haue their tolerations, mitigations, & other trim distinctiōs, as of things partlie laweful & partlie unlaweful, necessarie & lesse needfull, matters of faith & matters besides faith, ordinarie & extraordinarie, with a number such like. Thus thei both please the people & the bishops also & so are praised & maintained bie the people, & also suffered off the bishops ... " (1)

They discussed the parish churches, agreeing that if unlawful guides were followed, the parishes could not be Churches of God. They differed, however, on the question whether ministers who conformed to the canon law could do any good.

(1) Sig. B.  (2) Sig. B to B2.
1. R.H. believed that faith might originate in the reading of the scriptures.

R.B. said it might be nourished thus, but could only come into being from hearing the word preached.

2. R.H. said that in his own experience faith came from such reading.

R.B. replied that we may misinterpret our own experience, supposing the working of the Spirit of God in us to be faith when it is not. For faith is "a conscience of our redemption & happiness in Christ, whereby we Wholie yield vp our selues vnto hi in all newness of life." Such renewing must then be made manifest in our works, or else it is dead. God's spirit is in us even when it is not apparent, but faith must bear witness in changed life.

They then discussed the question as to whose preaching might bring forth this faith.

1. R.B. said any Christian "hauing faith & knowledge, & speaking the word of God vnto others might winn others."

R.H. agreed, since he had himself won his own sisters to faith.

(Browne says that subsequent events showed how thoroughly they had been won.) He added that this made preaching mean more than merely public teaching in the pulpit.

2. R.B. said this was the point of the whole matter, since true preaching is speaking and teaching truth, in the home or anywhere else. It is "not tyed to the pulpit, nor to degrees, to persons, to the tippet, or surplisse, or cornered cappe . . . " etc. Public and private preaching differ, of course, but either kind may produce faith.
Their discussion on faith's origin led, therefore, to these conclusions:

1. It comes by hearing.
2. Hearing comes by the word preached.
3. The word is preached by those sent.
4. Those sent may have public message and authority, or they may merely be expected to edify others when they can.

"What Good the Publick Preaching Doth now a daies in England."

Harrison thought certain preachers accomplished much for God's kingdom. Browne said such good was doubly cancelled by the ill effects of their toleration of evil.

"... thei ... turned ... & made their followers more carles of goodnes then even thei were, yea & not onelie careles, but ... bitter persecuters, if anie went beyond the or were more toweard then thei ... Woe to them - hypocrites which saie thei desire reformation & yet thei themselues are most vnreformed. Thei sai thei mourne and prai for amendment & behould thei are fed of the rich and vpheld bie great men, they liue in pleasure and haue courtlie honor & no man is the better but all are worse and worse. Yea others also do rightlie learne their hypocrisie, for as thei ... ... will shewe their zeal & devotion in smaller things and let greater ouerpasse, so also their followers will seeme godlie, yea touched in hart and humbled, yet are they openlie defiled with greuous offences & wickedness."

(1) Sig B2 recto and verso.
"Howe and Wherefore the Companie left the preachers and their followers: & of the ignorance & sinne in the preachers and people."

Though Harrison was still interested in those preachers who seemed sincere, Browne declared that even the best of them were both ignorant on some of the main points of religion and the ministry, and far too deeply involved in the ecclesiastical system. Their tolerance of that system, and their violence in its defence made them also antichrists. This was not only a serious shortcoming, but a positive sin. Therefore, Browne declared this essential policy:

"That we are to forsake & deny all ungodliness and wicked fellowship and to refuse all ungodlie communioon with wicked persons." (1)

His reason was that the Established Church was built on the "Popes Canon lawe" as foundation, and the authority and power of canon officials as the cornerstone. Against this it was argued that as officers appointed by the queen, these ecclesiastical officials must at least be honoured for their civil standing. Browne replied that regardless of approval by parliament, queen, and council the system was still of men and not of God, and could not be regarded otherwise.

(1) Sig B2 verso.
To mingle civil and religious offices was "flatt antichristianitie . . . For if once ecclesiastical persons, as thei call them, get ciuil offices thei become that second beast which is antichrist." (1)

The argument that they followed the martyrs who sought the Lord was, he said, like Judah and Benjamin claiming to sacrifice to the true God. The Scribes and Pharisees also claimed the word and sacrament. As for kinship with the martyrs, they could claim none of it so long as they persecuted those who would redress the abuses of the Church.

To say that the time for reformation is not ripe is to echo those who put off building the Temple. The fact that many say the same thing proves nothing. Nor will it do to say that a partial building will suffice, and that Christ is being preached, even though by envy and strife.

"Behould their worthie buildinge: it is made of strawes, the beames be stubble and the walles be haie & withered grass . . . those their vile and popish decrees and traditions are the synewes & veins of that monster Antichrist." (2)

The established liturgy was, Browne insisted, a mere empty and meaningless imitation of the vain forms of the popish mass. (3)

(1) Sig B3
(2) Sig B3 verso
(3) Ibid.
"Their stinted service is a popish bead row full of vaine repetitions as if seaven pater nosters did please the Lord better than six: & as if the chattering of a pie or a parate were much the better because it is much more the enough . . . . For the minister & people are bridled like horses & euerie thing appointed vnto them like puppies: as to heare, read, answere, knele, sitt, stand, beginn break of, & that by number, measure & course, & onelie after the order of Antichrist.

"And what difference is there betwene praiing on beads & mumblings vp of so manye Lordes praiers, so manie bablinges bie the priest, & so manie answeres by the clark & people? For no part of the service must be left out by the bishops injunctions."

Against rigid formalism, Browne and his followers found warrants in scripture:

(1)

1. Such forms, being read without application to the word preached, are contrary to both Old and New Testament.

   Preaching accompanied the ancient sacrifices, and the Apostles preached when the sacraments were administered.

2. Prescribed prayers, not coming from the heart, are mere lip service.

   To restrict a preacher in the matter of prayer is "altogether a popish superstition, or rather an heathnish follie."

3. To say that what is not good in the service may be ignored, even though read, is to put worship into bondage to men.

4. Depth of feeling on such occasions means nothing.

   Paul was full of zeal when he persecuted the Church.

(1) Sig B4 to C.
5. That good words and prayers are included is of no consequence.

Witches may use fair words. Balaam's evil counsel was displeasing to God despite fair words.

6. Paul's delight in all manner of preaching does not apply here any more than to the Pope or to monks and friars.

"... would Paul rejoice in ... or tolerate ... profane baptism with godfathers & godmothers with crossing and confirming of children."

7. These precepts of men are popish superstitions; but the scriptures warn us against being servants of men.

8. Christ gives us liberty to serve not men but God.

Thus, churching of women is a disordered and improper ceremonial. If the woman is not of the church it is a false rite. If she is of the church, she has not ceased to be. As an outward ceremony it is, therefore, quite vain. Baptism of the child, properly done, and when one or both of the parents may be godly, is a blessing. "But the churching of women can be no sacrament: nether is their bodily deliverance a public blessing: nai rather is it a curse if they be unthankfull & wicked. Therefore for their privat blessing let them privatlie geue thackes."

Other abuses and errors were also noted by the company.

(1)
1. The connivance of bishops and preachers in forcing "those wretched blind ministers" upon the people.

2. Disregard of proper discipline, by substituting "those woefull convocations of bishops instead of church synodes and ... uniuersitie degrees, disputations, and commonplaces, instead of church prophecie."

3. Vestments and ceremonials "more vaine & ridiculous then the pharisaical phylacteries & fringes."

4. Craven submission of churchmen to civil officials.

5. Meek obedience to Bishops, regardless of God's calling.

6. Timidity in the face of flagrant abuses.

7. Pastoral love of gain and honour, regardless of the flock's needs.

8. Separation of preaching and practice in the Church.

9. Betrayal of the people's real interests through:


"These and a thousand mo abominations haue thei amongst thê & confesse themselves that thei can not re-dresse them. So thei hould one communicô with hoggs & dogges, even open vngodlie persons, & haue no remedie."
We know from Paul that the true gospel is repentance towards God and faith towards Christ. Both are denied in those churches, so that Christ and his gospel are trodden underfoot. Neither those who wilfully stand in open sin, nor those who tolerate them, can build God's house which must stand on the foundation of obedience to Christ. That foundation is laid by:

1. Preaching the things which concern the kingdom of God.

2. Preaching and baptizing in the name of the Father, teaching as Christ has told us.

The foundation is held by believing and receiving the doctrine of Christ in profession and practice of life.

"Therefore saie no more ye wicked preachers, that ye hould the foundacion or that ye preach . . . You have not gathered the people fr6 the popish parishes and wicked fellowship, nether have planted the church by laying the foundacion thereof, for hereby is the foundacion tried when we make & hould the couenant with the Lord to be vnder his gouernment."

Wielding the whip and sword of popish excommunication, they have broken the yoke and burst the bonds asunder . . .

(1) Sig C verso and C2
(2) Sig C2.
Far from building the Lord's house, they set fire to the better timber, and tear down the better stones.

"The order agreed on for guiding & establishing of the companie in all Godliness & such like."

The doctrine stated above was shown to the company, and openly preached among them. Many stood fast in persecution, although some recanted, and others were afraid to join. On an agreed date, the loyal ones met to accept the covenant, section by section.

1. They joined in covenant to renounce the disorders and wickedness of the Established Church.

2. Selecting their leaders, they prayed for their watchfulness and diligence, and promised obedience to them.

3. They agreed upon an order for their meetings, including prayer, thanksgiving, scripture reading, exhortation, edifying, appropriate discussion.

4. They made provision for anyone to appeal, protest, complain, exhort, dispute, reprove, etc., should the necessity arise.

5. They acknowledged responsibility for furthering the Kingdom of God both in one another, and in any others who were worthy.

6. They agreed upon an order of discipline for both private and public offences, as well as for public thanksgiving and counsel in church matters. Included, were plans for choosing officers of the church; expelling intractable members and receiving new ones; examining progress or shortcomings in the church; developing fellowship with other congregations; preventing strife within the church body.

(1) Sig C2 (2) Sig C2 to C3.
God blessed their agreement, but persecutions forced them to emigrate, although Browne persuaded them to wait until God's leading was unmistakeable.

"Of the Breach and Division Which Fell amongst the Companie." 

Many disputes broke out as the result of opposition to Browne, these being led by Harrison and other discontented persons. Although they were repeatedly forced to confess their own errors and contentiousness, yet they persisted in making trouble until the company was at last irrevocably divided.

(1) Sig C3 verso to C4 verso, given in detail in Chapter Three above.
CHAPTER NINE

"An Answer to Master Cartwright His Letter for Joyninge with the English Churches: whereunto the true copie of his sayde letter is annexed."

"To the Christian Reader Grace and Peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ &c."

The answer which appears herewith is put before the copy of Cartwright's letter because:

1. We are more prone to embrace man's error than God's truth.
2. If error be once received it prejudices us against God's word, however good and effectual it may be.
3. The reader may thus weigh the answer with the arguments which prompted it.

"It is expedient . . . that the scriptures be faithfull searched by the godly Reader, to see whether these things be even so or not."

"An Answer to Master Cartwright His Letter," etc.

Cartwright's letter "is in many mens handes, and was seene abroade vnsealeed and open, as if he cared not who shoulde reade it." Therefore, and since the subject matter is of great importance, Browne says, he has decided to answer it. Having been circulated some five or six

(1) Sig Aii recto and verso.
weeks, the letter might have been ignored at this date had not Cartwright and others accused Browne and his sympathizers of serious errors.

"... seeing he will needes make vs enemies to the common and ordinarie good lawes of the Realme, to the Church of god in the Realme, and to the peace and welfare of the common wealth: Let vs answere his cauilles ... least any any man doe beleue them as trueth."

Cartwright has said of Browne’s teachings: "That the outwarde profession made by the lawes of the lande, and the assemblyes of the Church held accordingly are con-
déned as vnlawfull." This, Browne says, means that he is represented as opposing: "1. The lawes of the lande. 2. The outwarde profession by the lawes. 3. The apparant Churches of Christ, 4 and the lawfull assemblyes thereof."

Browne denies all four aspects of this accusa-
tion, on the following grounds:

1. The laws which he opposes are "Popish canon lawes". The common good laws are also against them, being in fact a bulwark to the Church by suppressing vice and all sorts of evil.

(1) Page 1 in "An Answere"
(2) p. 2.
(3) pp. 2-6.
2. The "outwarde profession by the lawes" to which he objects is devoted to "olde Popish traditions and orders."

Here, also, the common law is with him.

For civil laws reject evil doers, whereas canon law counts all alike worthy of the Church. Civil laws protect the Church, and do not warrant the assumption of authority by the Bishops, since it is "her Maisties permission" alone by which their power is maintained. Civil law permits wide latitude of worship. It demands church attendance, but is not responsible for the Bishop's support of incompetent and ignorant men. If the Magistrates enforce the law's intent, they will "first see that the church be better ordered that men may come with comforte, and not with heart burning to their conscience." It is canon law alone which forces the Church to accept the wicked in its ranks. Outward profession according to such laws is certainly unlawful.

3. The primary matter in controversy is "whether the ordinarie assemblies of the professors in Englande be the Churches of Christ." Without having seen Harrison's original letter, Browne is sure he must have denied only "the ordinarie abused assemblyes of false professors."

Though Cartwright would deny this distinction, it is surely obvious that outward profession is revealed by public assembly which, in these cases, is notoriously corrupt.

Whether such corrupted profession can be the mark of a true and lawful Church is the great issue. Cartwright "prooeuth idem per idem: it is so, because it is so." Justifying the outward church by its inward spirit, he proves that spirit by the evidence of outward profession. Not only is this ridiculous, but "shamelesse and blasphemous doctrine." He would have
one true Christian in a congregation of hypocrites
make it a Church of God.

Cartwright's argument would make faithful Christians
superior to Christ himself, loosing those on earth whom
God binds in heaven.

(1) God condemns the wicked, but Cartwright says
"The Temple of the Lorde, the Temple of the Lorde,
allis the Temple and Church of God."

If this were true, the reverse ought also to apply, so that
many wicked ones would prevent all from being the Church.
Yet this is not so, since I alone am condemned by my
wickedness; and I alone am justified by my faith. St. James
and St. Paul both make works the test of faith. Therefore,
to permit unrepentant offenders to remain in the Church is
(2) to break the covenant with God.

"... to haue a filthie polluted profession in
publique assemblies, is to make all other profession
filthy and polluted."

The covenant of God cannot remain unless we turn from in-
iquity, and maintain an upright and good profession. To
serve God with one's lips while one's heart is far away,
is not to be a burning lamp or golden candlestick before

(1)p. 7.
(2)p. 7f.
God. Christ told the Apostles to establish churches not for lip service, but for three purposes: "preaching the word, ministration of the sacraments, & reformation of life." The last is most important, since preaching and baptism are of no avail unless they produce altered lives.

The Apostles recognized no church "but where their good & godly profession was shewed, and the contrary refused." Hypocrites may be in any church, but Paul warns against associating and eating with those who openly offend. Had this meant private intercourse it would disorganize family and social relations, whereas Paul plainly meant holy feasts, that is the sacraments.

It is vain for Cartwright to say that existence of a preaching ministry makes a Church, since there may be a variety of preachers.

Papists have preachers but their assemblies are not God's Church. Furthermore, a Protestant preacher might lapse into wickedness, leading his people with him. Moreover, a man might be one of God's elect without membership in any outward church. A preaching minister, then, does not make an outward church part of God's spiritual Church; while an unpreaching minister, whatever good he does, is responsible for much mischief.

It is also a waste of time to argue that a Church does not cease to be such through lacking a valid minister. Any two or three joining in the truth and

(1) pp. 9-12
(2) p. 12.
separating from wickedness are an outward, visible Church (1) with the power to bind and loose on earth.

Persecution does not change their status, even though they shrink to a handful, as in Noah's time. Paul writes of certain households as being Churches, since they have Christ's power, and meet in his name. Not preaching nor sacraments, but Christ's power to suppress the unworthy, constitutes a true Church. This is God's gift to his saints. It is given not to a selected few, but to all whom he calls. Failure or refusal to exercise it shows those who fail to be "bondslaves of men." Unrepentant offenders must be cast off, private offenders being dealt with privately. But there need be no waiting upon those who are the church's foes.

We come, therefore, to Cartwright's enthusiasm for assemblies, and his toleration of ecclesiastical courts and officials who purport to be the Church. They usurp the right to make or suspend ministers, and they exercise control through fees, bribes, penalties, etc. Paul says our weapons should not be carnal. Rebuke, exhortation, and separation from fellowship are the Church's proper weapons.

Paying a fine cannot cancel evil, nor can money revive one who is dead in sin. Such practices are antichristian and unworthy. Besides, we may not wait on the pleasure of such courts before correcting those who err. Paul rebuked the Corinthians because they delayed both in expelling the incestuous person, and

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(1) p. 13f.
(2) pp. 15-17.
in receiving him back, penitent. Besides, these canon officials don't know the members of the flock. The humblest Christian is a king and a priest under Christ to execute the Lord's purpose against such usurpers.

Though Cartwright represents Browne as saying that a church's validity depends upon whether the minister is competent or dumb, such is not his contention. What is vital is that the covenant be kept by outward discipline and government.

This was shown when Reuben, Gad, and Achan were cast off for ignoring God's commandments concerning sacrifice. The modern equivalent is failure to maintain proper discipline in the church. It is an offence "to measure the visible church, by a compasse of ground, by a number of householde, by stint of tythes & tenthes as we see in our parishes." It is no more a place that makes a church than it was the mountains or Jerusalem. Spirit and truth constitute proper worship. Paul denounced circumcision as a return to bondage under the old law. Similarly tithing only delays the planting of the true church. Jericho was destroyed when the State seized Church tithes and lands in England. But a new Jericho is arising, built by Satan. His eldest sons were scourged and called to repentance under Queen Mary, but "his youngest sonnes are these latter reformers, whom God also will certainly plague except they repent.'

Cartwright has criticized him for saying the dumb minister is naught, yet making him important. In respect to goodness he is, indeed, nothing; but in evil influence he is all too important. Alas, Christ is not the head of these churches. The dumb ministers are that, except when the

(1) pp. 17-20.
Bishops interfere. "Then they are heades, and both the
dumbe ministers and hireling preachers, may serue well
(1)
ynough to be the tayle."

There is no use trying to defend dumb ministers
by citing Korah. He and his followers were denounced
by Moses, and later either swallowed up in the earth
or killed by plague. The very censers they had de­
filed were cherished as a warning against sin. "Where­
fore . . . if all the dumbe ministers were hanged vp in
the Churches and publike assemblies, for a warning &
terror , . . . they would be . . . a holy signe."

The seals of the Covenant, that is the Sacra­
ments, are given as proof that they are Churches of God,
Cartwright insisting that the preaching ministers have
these seals. He claims, therefore, that discipline is a
minor point. The two, however, cannot be separated, no
(2)
matter who thinks they can.

That European Churches honour the English
churches proves nothing. Weight of numbers cannot
carry an argument against truth, though the Papists
claim that it does. The godly, discerning spiritual
things, may properly judge the Church. It is no more
true that "the churches of two wholelandes" are all
accepted by European Churches than that they are all
cast out by Browne and his friends. Having helped
exiles in Mary's day does not mean that Continental
churches now approve of everything in the English
churches. Even if it did, the godly must still for­
sake blind guides, as Jeremiah testified against a
whole nation. "For though Kingses & nations & all the
world, would take any knowne wretched liuer to be a
brother, and communicate with him, yet neither the

(1) pp. 21-24.
(2) pp. 24-32.
the smaller part of an assembly, neyther I alone ought to do it." Not that one man may excommunicate. "We ought to tell the church." But if the rest hold back, we dare not, lest we share the sinner's guilt. Jeremiah stood firm against many. Paul and Barnabas withdrew from the Jews who opposed them at Antioch. Christ told his disciples to shake from their feet the dust of the place which opposed them. The judgment against the wicked citizens is because they reject the Lord. The godly must either excommunicate the ungodly or separate from them. And to refuse the Lord's discipline is to deserve excommunication. This does not mean that Browne is a Donatist. He has never claimed to be without sin. What he has said is that unless gross sins are corrected within a church it ceases to be a Church of God. He denies the charge, however, "that for want of this discipline we guie al the english assemblies the black stone of condemnation." He has never indulged in such a generalization.

According to Cartwright, faith in Christ is the essence of a Church, and discipline is accidental. Browne retorts that abiding by his discipline is part of holding to Christ. To sever his power from him would be to make him a dead Christ. His discipline and authority over us make him our king. If we deny him these, we make him a mere idol.

"So then if the power of the word to bynde & lose, to remit or retaine mens sinnes, to promise lyfe, and to rebuke and giue over to execration be taken from Christ or the church of Christ, what remaineth but an Idol or counterfet Christ, and Idol or counterfet church?" If faith alone is the essence, we rule out of the Church those who are too young to know what faith is. On the contrary, however, not faith in Christ but Christ himself is the life and essence of the Church. Faith is but a means. We must accept him as king, priest, and prophet, by accepting his discipline.

(1) pp. 33-35.
Church discipline is divisible into two inseparable aspects: government and submission. The duties of government are examining, reforming, relieving, and separating. The duties of submission are learning, believing, honouring and serving. None of these may be omitted. Thus, it is true that forgiveness is a duty commanded by Christ; but it is dependent upon repentance. In short, (1) discipline involves:

1. Gathering the worthy, and rejecting the ungodly.

2. Keeping the covenant and sacraments unpolluted, through correcting those who err, and excluding the persistent wrong-doers.

To neglect discipline, for any cause, is to serve men and not Christ.

Every Christian is a king and priest before God, having power to judge offences, and to make offerings. To permit wickedness or to consort with evil-doers is to forfeit that kingship and priesthood. To neglect use of the keys is to cease being God's Church. A church is condemned not merely by the minister's fault but by its own.

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(1) p. 36 (incorrectly numbered 34) to p. 38
(2) pp. 39-42.
The Church at Corinth had the power although it omitted the exercise of it. At least they did not cling to popish discipline; and they repented when Paul rebuked them. In like manner, they mended their ways when rebuked for abusing the sacraments. When Paul called them "faithful" and "saints" it was not for their faults but because they still had the discipline, though some neglected it. Paul called the incestuous one "a wicked man and not a Saynt." His warning against judging referred to rash or unreasonable condemnation. Christ warned against criticising faults which we have ourselves, but this does not prevent our showing others their shortcomings. So we may take note of the Dutch error of transubstantiation, without calling it a heresy, unless it be violently and obstinately insisted upon. And though Cartwright mentions neglect of circumcision and passover in the Wilderness, God specifically allowed omission of them until the Promised Land should be reached.

Claiming that Jerusalem was God's city even without its walls, Cartwright says that discipline does not make a Church. The analogy is false. The Temple made it God's city. Besides, Jerusalem without its walls was a ruinous heap. As for the Church, its walls are not only discipline but the gathering of saints into one house of God.

Nehemiah said the city without its walls was "a destroyed and waste citie." Cyrus called the place Jerusalem, but it "was an heape" until it was rebuilt. Walls make a courtyard, and "where no yarde is, there may be vynes growing, but there can be no vineyards."

To call dumb ministers "vnlawfull and Idol ministers, while calling their sacraments valid is "as if one

(1') pp. 43-45.
should condemn a thief and justify his theft." If not messengers and ministers of Christ, they are of the devil. (1) Cartwright's argument is:

1. They are unlawful, yet ministers of God.
2. Yet they are not lawful ministers of God.
3. They are called by the Church, though forced upon it.
4. If not of God, they must be of the devil, yet the Church authorizes them if the Bishops send them, so they may not be refused.
5. Their read services are to be accepted as from Christ.
6. Their sacraments are similarly to be received.

This is to say that Christ sends dumb blind ministers; the Church must accept them in place of qualified ministers; the bishops may force on a church those whom even God cannot approve; and a congregation is God's Church though led by the devil's ministers! If they are unlawful even in men's eyes, "they are of the Deuill, and plantes which the heauenly Father hath not planted, and therefore shall be rooted vp." This is why Christ took his disciples apart from the Pharisees.

Cartwright would have us accept anyone who is called a minister. Yet these false shepherds destroy the flock, and would subject us all to popish bondage. With

(1) pp. 45-47 (incorrectly numbered 37).
their stolen sacraments and counterfeit badges, they are not comparable to the Scribes and Pharisees whose service was prescribed by law, and who were duly called and qualified.

Even so, Christ would not let his disciples follow the Scribes. How much less would he approve these whom the Bishops force upon the Church. We dare not say "the more which sinne in a matter, the less the sinne is." Though Christ and his Apostles could not force even lawful ministers on a congregation, Cartwright would have us meekly accept an unlawful ministry, thrust upon us, which would be to overthrow Christ's kingdom and priesthood. He admits that the Scribes and Pharisees were to be heard only in respect to the truth they spoke. But dumb ministers cannot speak Christ's truth. Though the Levites read part of their service, they expounded the truth. As for us, the scriptures show that "the Sacramentes might never be ministered but of preachers and with preaching."

It is in vain to compare dumb ministers with Magistrates. They are properly compared with traitors, whom we must avoid. We no more depend on dumb ministers for the sacrament which is our right, than upon thieves for that to which we are entitled. It is, moreover, foppery to say that to teach is the substance of only a lawful minister, as judgment is the substance of only a lawful magistrate. An ungodly man might be a lawful magistrate, but an ungodly man cannot be a lawful minister of

(1) pp. 48-54.
God's Church. Lawfulness is the very essence of the true minister.

Since Cartwright has chosen to cite the Scribes for proof of his argument, Browne proceeds to point out the flaws in this comparison.

The Scribes were not, as is claimed, deceived in the Messiah. They knew he should come, but they failed to recognize him. So did the Apostles, at the beginning. Moreover, they may be excused in part, since Christ bade his Apostles keep the truth a secret until after the resurrection. The ancient Fathers had faith in the Messiah without knowing that Christ should be he, yet they were justified by faith. The Scribes, therefore, were condemned not by ignorance but by "their forward refusing of a further knowledge."

Similarly, Cartwright condemns Scribes and Pharisees for teaching justification by works. Their teaching was true enough in that they taught justification by Law, for those who should keep it without any breach. Yet they acknowledged our common sinfulness and need of God's mercy. Indeed, Christ's demands for perfection are even more difficult. Their fault was in demanding ceremonial observances more difficult for others than for themselves, who lived in Jerusalem on the bounty of the people. Their real offence was in holding to faith in the Messiah, and then rejecting him when he came, thus teaching salvation through Law

(1) pp. 55-57
(2) pp. 57-59.
rather than through Christ.

To refer to the parable of the self-righteous Pharisee as proof of false doctrine among all Pharisees is absurd.

Christ never implied that his illustration described them all. He rebuked those who trusted in themselves for salvation. One might as well say all English preachers trust in riches because some do so. Besides, those who err in all points cannot be excused by comparison with those who erred in a few.

It is false to say the people were never forbidden to come to the sacrifices of false prophets. Even if it were true, it would not apply to the case of sacraments.

"... it is a flat commandment even to all the people, not to touch those polluted sacrifices of the Priests, not to communicate nor partake with them therein." In Isaiah the people were denounced for tolerating blind watchmen. Indeed, all evil-doing must be eschewed. Therefore "the godly had no medling with such wicked men, nor with their sacrifices." So long as open wickedness remained, priests and people alike broke the covenant. Elkanah and his wife did not accept the ministrations of Eli's wicked sons. David, in the Psalms, says he will not eat of the delicacies of the wicked, thereby meaning their sacrifices, since he daily ate in Saul's house. The whole nation was blamed when the young men of Judah were permitted to marry daughters of a strange God. In the same way, "those wicked prelates & popish officers are yet married to our churches: The papists & wicked men are thrust into our churches to receive the sacramentes with vs." Christ permitted eating with publicans.

(1) pp. 60-62.
(2) p. 62f.
(3) pp. 63-69.
and sinners, but the Lord's Supper is different, since one must then be free of offence with his brother and may not join with the unrepentant. The scriptures bid us slay false prophets; and in practice the Jews excommunicated them.

It simply is not possible for "dumbe dogges" to minister true sacraments. When Cartwright objects to an individual excluding such false prophets from the Church, he mistakes what really happens. Actually, the godly person withdraws from evil company.

It is a perversion of Paul's meaning, to quote his joy in the fact that Christ was preached in diverse ways, without including his warning against "dogges and euill workers . . . concision from the Church."

Paul declares with tears that he wishes those who trouble the Church were dead. What pleases him is that, despite everything, good conquers evil and ignorance. He welcomed strife not in the Church but in the world, for it would show that warfare against wickedness had begun. "But Paul discommedeth contention in the Church, and saith, . . . this is not to eate the Lordes supper."

It is true that Christ sent the leper to the priests; but it was not that he might communicate with them. Again Paul's dealings with the priests were

(1) p. 70
(2) pp. 71-73.
confined to those who kept the faith, sacrificing in the
name of Christ, the true High Priest.

The ceremonial law was not deemed a sin, but was
simply no longer necessary. To supplant the old law
by the new testament was necessarily a gradual process
of overcoming the ignorance of the Jews. Having been
trained under the law, they found it harder to change
than did the Gentiles. Hence Paul's counsel of patience,
and his distinguishing between what is permissible and
what is sin. "... our vyle abuses and vngodly dis­
orders, ... are not as the ceremonies of the Lawe. ... but they are altogether forbidden by the word of God."

While Hezekiah permitted many who were not clean
to eat the Passover, it was a case of ceremonial, and not
spiritual, uncleanness. Even then, king and people were
required to repent. How much more important that open
wickedness be redressed or cast out!

There is no help for Cartwright in the case of
Jeremiah being suspended. He did not consent lightly, but
was compelled by the tyranny of his persecutors.

"And Ieremie also ceased not to preache still,
notwithstanding that a tumulte, and much stirring had
bene among the people, and priestes, and princes and
Prophetes, and all for his preaching."

Cartwright further errs in saying that, in a day

(1) pp. 73-77.
(2) p. 77f
(3) p. 78f.
of great corruption in the Church, Christ acknowledged the full authority of the Church. For one thing, the times were not so devoid of any virtue, since John the Baptist had already prepared the way. Moreover, the priesthood was not so corrupt as Cartwright implies:

1. Dividing terms of office into yearly portions was a convenient plan for getting the work done.

2. If the Romans exacted bribes, they forced the system on the priests.

2. The payment of taxes was unavoidable.

Consequently, Christ did not condone great wickedness when he sent the leper to the priests. Until such time as they began to persecute the righteous, it was permissible to have dealings with them. When that time came, however, Christ neither reverenced them nor gave them any account of his doctrine.

Finally, Cartwright's case is refuted by his own claim that the priests were degraded. Hosea clearly says "like people like Priest." It is shameful even to suggest that we may communicate with unlawful ministers. Far better would it be to defend them, even on false grounds, than to admit their wickedness, and then say we should

(1) pp. 79-81.
communicate with them. They are usurpers, false prophets, and as such the Scriptures repeatedly denounce them. It is vain to say that we do not make an evil man a minister by communicating with him. How else would he have a parish? If we do not make such men ministers, then who does? It must be the devil. Or, to be more accurate, the parishioners who accept them, "together with the diuel and officers do make them ministers." To tolerate them is to share their guilt. It is not a light matter to accept as genuine the sacraments which they have obtained by evil means. We are not to justify thieves or any other sinners. If they are open and unrepentant, we must avoid them. 

(1) pp. 81-85.
CARTWRIGHT'S LETTER.

[NOTE: To make the foregoing "Answer" more intelligible, and to offer a basis of comparison with Browne's next writing, the following summary is placed here, even as Browne included the original letter at the conclusion of his reply. For convenience, Cartwright's points are here presented in catalogue form.]

"An Answer Vnto a Letter of Master Harrisons by Master Cartwright, being at Middleborough."

Having offered Harrison the choice of verbal or written discussion, Cartwright has received no reply, and therefore concludes that a written answer is desired. On reading Harrison's first page he had hoped that a reunion might be possible, but the conditions laid down on the next page showed such an end to be far distant. Hoping, however, for mutual profit, he takes time from the press of other affairs to write this letter. Harrison's view is that to receive without repentance those from the English Churches would be to accept members from "no lawfull assemblies;" wherefore, to join with them would mean uniting with a body of which Christ it not the head.

Cartwright, therefore, proposes to show that the

(1) p. 86.
ordinary assemblies of those who profess the Gospel in England are Churches of Christ. Those having Christ for their head and foundation are God's churches; and such are the assemblies of England.

1. Believing Christ to be our righteousness, we are members of his body, stones laid on him to become his spiritual house.

This faith is shown by profession and by testimony of the spirit of God, through graces poured on them to "apparent sanctification of members of the." Such are members of his body, having his holy spirit, fulfilling the covenant by which the Lord gives them his spirit and puts his word in their mouths. This spirit the English churches have, and must therefore have God's word. Divers lamps have been set up whose light goes to almost all the land. It would, then, be unfair to deny that the Church is among the golden candlesticks of the sanctuary.

2. There are those in every church who do not truly believe. Their number does not make it less the Church, provided there is one true believer among them.

3. The candlestick may be dark where the preacher is dumb, but where there is a preaching ministry, there the lamp shines.

(1) p. 87.
4. Being a true Church through having a preaching ministry, a Church does not cease just because the minister goes away.

It may be said that a dumb minister is worse than none. But if a true Church loses its minister and receives a dumb minister, does it suddenly become a Synagogue of Satan? This makes the dumb ministry too important.

The chief in the synagogue is Christ, through faith in whom they grow to be one body, and not the dumb minister, whatever his shortcomings.

5. It may be a fault to consent to a dumb ministry, but it is not apostacy.

Moses did not cast out those who chose Korah, Dothan and Abiram. Shall the churches on whom a dumb ministry is forced "be reputed for runnagates from the Lorde?"

6. The English Churches, having the seals of God's covenant, are in covenant with him.

Though dumb ministers lack these seals, the sacraments of qualified ministers are valid. The obstacle, then, seems to be adequate discipline.

7. The European Churches honour the English Churches, which fact may at least delay hasty rejection of them.

If excommunication of an individual must be with great care and deliberation, how much more so the casting out of the "Churches of two whole Ilandes." When the majority oppose

(1) p. 88  (2) p. 89.
excommunication of a member, his opponents must suffer him to remain. The favourable verdict of other churches should require tolerant dealings by the minority in this case.

8. As for lack of discipline "for which you give them all without exception the black stone of condemnation from being the churches of Christ," it is a minor matter compared with faith, which is the essential.

The Apostle addresses the faithful, the saints, or the Churches, showing that whatever their faults, they have the essential, which is faith in Christ. For 49 years the people of Israel neglected circumcision and the Passover, except for one occasion. Yet they were still God's Church. In modern times the Dutch Churches err in discipline and observance of the Lord's Supper, but are still in the roll of God's Churches. Some of the "assemblyes of our profession," having true discipline, are denied the sacrament, yet they are true Churches

9. A preaching ministry and obedient people are the essentials of a true Church. Yet minor defects in either part do not nullify their status.

The truth is seen in the analogy of a man who, though crippled, is still a man if his vital parts are intact. If his members are displaced, he ceases to be a man. So, too, a church, if it lacks the head which is Christ, or is otherwise a jumble of parts. Jerusalem was still God's city before Nehemiah rebuilt the walls. It is not walls that make a city nor hedges that make a vineyard.

(1) pp. 90-92.
10. A dumb ministry is unlawful and harmful when persisted in, yet the sacraments are still valid, since the Church has called the minister.

11. Christ commanded that the Scribes be heard because the Church had called them. Otherwise we should readily see that they were as unlawful as are the reading ministers.

a. They were deceived in the Messiah, not knowing that Jesus was the Christ.

b. Teaching justification by the law of works, they made works more important than mere fruits of faith, and hence an intolerable burden.

12. Dumb ministers are no worse than this: they might, indeed, preach falsely instead of not at all.

The prophets warned against the errors and corruptions of false teachers and priests, but did not forbid the people to come to sacrifices as the law provided.

13. Living in times of gross corruption in the Church, our Saviour bade the leper go to the priest, without specifying any particularly worthy priest.

Contrary to law, the high priest held office yearly, and paid simony, as well as bribes to the Romans.

Yet the Lord honoured him for his office, and
rendered account to him of his doctrine, as to a judge in spiritual causes.

14. Jeremiah acquiesced when suspended from coming to the Temple.

He forbore making a disturbance; and he sent Baruch to read his sermon.

15. If a magistrate cannot perform all his duties, no one refuses to accept that which he can do, though it is not all. Similarly, we may strive for a more adequate ministry while using what we have.

Ability to teach "is of the substance of a good & lawfull minister of God," but the bare essential is to have the church calling. A magistrate should be able to judge between his subjects; but if not, he is still entitled to his office if duly chosen. A man having church calling is a minister even if not fully satisfactory. Hosea's words "because they have refused knowledge they shall be no Priestes vnto him" refers to choosing a priest, not accepting one already called.

16. To speak of participating in the impiety of those ministering might equally have been said in Old Testament times, but the Prophets do not say so. We should share the guilt if our communicating made a man a minister; but it does not.

(1) p. 94 (2) Ibid (3) p. 95.
The son who accepts land or goods from his father does not participate in the sin if his father has committed murder. Still less do we, when we but receive the Lord's gift conveyed by the dumb minister.

17. To refuse the Sacraments would be to reject the Lord as well.

If the only minister available to me is an adulterer my communicating does not make me participate in his sin. Neither am I guilty of the dumb minister's impiety.

Here, then, with fear and trembling, is Cartwright's answer. He is assured of its truth, but will gladly attend to any comments or corrections, confident that Harrison is one "whō the Lord in mercie hath be-stowed good graces upon."

(1) p. 95
(2) p. 95f.
CHAPTER TEN

"A Reproofe of Certene Schismatical Persons
and their Doctrine touching the Hearing and
Preaching of the Word of God."

[A manuscript, first printed in 1907 with the title "The
Retractation of Robert Browne."]

Browne writes briefly to explain that he has been
frequently criticized and seeks now, in all fairness, to
answer the attack and to confute the error associated with

(1) Retractation, p. 1

You seeme to seeke quietnes and peace, and to
profer and call for loue in debating theis matters:
Then geue forth no cruel verdite against vs, and let
ech syde stay all rash iudgment and sentence, tyll the
trueth be duely skanned, afterward duelie offered and
charitable vrged, and then let the obstinat be iustly
reproued. If you had delt herein according to this and
according to our request long ago herein there had bene
more peace and loue then in deed we haue found at your
hands."

Although he has not even a whole sheet of their writing at
hand, he knows the general argument against him and is

(2) p. 1f.

Well it walcking abroad, now a long tyme as I
heare in other mens hands, & gathering strength to it
selfe, because it hath had no full nor due check, I
tooke in hand this present wednesday, in the name &
feare of God, If it may be by his grace & fauour to
stop the euill course thereof.
"The Lord set our hartes & penns as sanctified means, & appointed to believe & testify his trueth onelye, Amen."

The first question is concerning the word of God, "who haue it or preach it, & who haue it not, or preach it not." He finds it difficult to know what they mean, since "word" may be variously defined.

1. A word known or believed may be written, preached, given as a message, offered as testimony.
2. The word revealed in the law of nature is the means whereby God created all things.
3. The Son of God is also called the word.
4. There is the word of common testimony possessed by good and bad.
5. There is the word of power.

Again, there is the question as to which preachers are meant in this matter.

"... though you meane wicked preachers, yet what particular persons be so, the doubt remaineth, and you ought to iudg charitablie of those whom you know not."

That evil preachers are not worthy ambassadors of God, Browne agrees. But they have been called, even though they have been unfaithful. To say that they do not know the word, would be to absolve them of blame for their evil ways.

(1) p. 2f.  
(2) p. 3f.
To say that they have a part of the truth but cannot declare it, is absurd, for if it was God's word of truth it still is. Otherwise the reprobate can never hear the voice of conscience. Yet we are told that the very devils believe and tremble. Whoever denies, even to the wicked, the right to teach God's word, would make it impossible for magistrates and parents alike to guide the young.

"For All men know that teaching, counseling, declaring, preaching, expounding are lesse, or are a smaller degree of libertie & power, then commaunding threatening punnishing & correcting ... if we denie the lesse to the wicked we boath put out the ey & break the arme of all gouerment, yea further, we much rather denye ye greater also . . . "

A favourite method of these critics is to judge preachers by their accomplishments. If they bring men to faith, they are said to preach the word. If not, then it is said that they have not preached it. But, Browne points out, a faithless and stubborn company may reject God's truth; wherefore, the response of the hearers is not an infallible test.

It is still claimed, however, that these preachers are false preachers whose people are false worshippers. No good, it would seem, can come from them, since they are evil. If this be so, asks Browne, how do these critics

(1) p. 4f.
(2) p. 5f.
account for their own realization of the evils in the Church? Was it not made plain by these very preachers whom they now despise?

"for how haue you believed. By the spirit say you, for it may blow where it listeth: what in deed, without anie word of God: Doeth the spirite worck a beleife, when there is no word, which you should beleue . . . But you will say that you beleived by hearing of some while they stood vpright. Those some are none at all, by your account. For none say you is vpright but a greuous offender, who judgeth it lawfull to heare wicked preachers."

The only way out of admitting this argument is to agree that this knowledge of God's truth must have come otherwise than through spoken preaching, as for instance from the writings of Wycliff, or Huss, or Jerome, or Luther. He is ready to grant that God's word may be thus revealed to men. However, the crucial point is that a wicked man may read and be converted, which means that God's word can work effectively in spite of man's wicked-ness.

"And when they preach or read the word, they preach it, as being of the message of God by the writers thereof, and are also messengers them selues, though vn-faithful . . . And therefore is that saing generall even to those that would pretend, that they knew not the word. The Lord hath shewed the o man, what is good . . And God saieth that he will rebuke or take the house of Israel in their owne hart And againe that they shall know there hath ben a prophet among them, By which words is ment, that the most rebellious shall know the word of God . . and . . they may & ought to testifie, be they neuer so wicked."

(1) p. 6f. (2) pp. 7-9.
This being so, when a wicked man speaks the truth, the act itself is good, and so also is God's grace working the truth, however reprehensible the man may be in other respects.

God's grace worked upon occasion in the acts of Ahab, the people of Ninevah, Pharoah, Nebuchadnezzar, and many another who showed favour to the Israelites, even though they were idolaters at the very time. In the same way we must confess that the Papists have at least done God's work in preserving for us the written scriptures.

The argument against this position contends that Satan cannot do good against himself. Browne insists, however, that while the act may have neither virtuous intent nor good effect upon the doer, it is nevertheless good in itself, and is justified by God as a righteous deed which helps to further his purpose. It may, indeed, work to the condemnation of the one who has spoken or acted thus, while he himself remains so devoid of grace.

Laban, still clinging to his false God; Balaam, continuing to prophesy falsely; Saul, established in his wickedness; Caiaphas, directing persecution against the chosen ones; those and others are cited in proof of this point.

A further writing from his opponents' pens having reached him, he now proceeds to discuss it. They apparently insist that the test of a true preacher is his due calling and practice, according to the word. They

(1) p. 10f. (2) p. 11f.
accuse Browne of saying that wicked men are good or faithful ministers. This he denies. He has said that they may preach the truth even though they are wicked men; but this is by no means to say that they minister the sacraments in a manner pure and undefiled. What he has said, he repeats, is that God's word begets faith, and that it may even be (1) presented by unworthy men.

"and so the question with maine saile and merie mood doeth come home to his Hauen, Namelie that those wicked preachers, haue still that spiritual grace of the word, of the knowledg, testifying & preaching thereof of communicating good & grace thereby vnto others, by the blessing of God, and that therefore there is a lawful communion with them, in that common grace of the word."

Browne's opponents, it seems, do not agree between themselves on some points. For this he chaffs them, while answering what he considers the errors of each. One of them has denied that any faith can be wrought by wicked preachers, while the other says that a faith may be produced, but it is not true faith, the faith of Christ. This, Browne declares, is sheer nonsense. He has already shown that faith can be wrought, and he now insists that it is vain to try to qualify its nature. Faith is faith. If it fails to produce works, it is not the faith which is at fault, but the man's evil nature.

(1) pp. 13-16  (2) pp. 16-19.
"For if our corrupt nature, do kill the faieth which is in vs, then the bad worcks which follow our nature, are not to be imputed to the faieth, nor to the deadnes thereof . . . As if the Shipp Maister did synck his owne ship, when he dieth, and the tempest cometh vpon his vnskillfull mariners, & distroyeth both them & the ship . . . though it be dead, tho it is vnable to geiue lyfe, or to lyue it selfe vnto further grace, yet thus far it is quick, in warning, accusing, & gryping their conscience to cal them to repentance and there­fore that faieth is good of it selfe & not damnable, & worcketh not euil."

Browne's second chief point is that if men beget faith, or become the means whereby others believe, then they are sent of God.

In this respect Cyrus, although a heathen idolater, was "The Lords shepherd & messenger, I say, called & stirred vp of God."

This, however, is not to justify those who usurp their alleged calling.

"If it were that some did vsurp, should we therefore snatch we care not at whom, as you do, or runn vp­on all, which straight may receiue not theis your opinions?"

At the same time, it is unfair to judge men only by their natures, without any charitable recognition of their graces. After all, the best of men have faults aplenty, yet we do not condemn them out of hand. No more should we judge the unregcnerate solely by their shortcomings. Their good is

not the best, as it would be if they were truly reconciled

to Christ. Neither are the virtuous man's faults as
heinous as those of the wicked. Nevertheless, such good
as there is must not be ignored, however hampered its ex-
pression may be; and we see that they may sometimes "preach
rightly & truelie."

"Now if they occupie or vse their guift amisse,
yet their sending & calling is good & right. . . Therefore . . . they have a calling, . . . preach the word,
& by your owne confession . . . beget faieth." It must,
therefore, be according to the gift, commandment, and
blessing of God.

Insisting that his statements have been mis-
quoted, Browne obviously reproves the lawyer, Barrow, with
this admonition: "The most skillfull Lawyers will geiue
leave to their Clients to tel their owne tale, and will
not alter their cause & quaestions."

Once more he charges them with a failure to agree,
this time over the question whether all who bring the gos-
pel are blessed. Browne says that this is certainly true,
and that even wicked men may have the blessing of being
witnesses to the truth, while they are deprived of the
blessing of reconciliation. Their failure to impart the
full gospel is a curse to them, but less so than if they
withheld all. This is not a defence of their wickedness,
but it is an argument that these men may have some measure

(1) pp. 19-21

(2) p. 21.
of grace, and some perception of the Word, on which account they should not be unequivocally condemned.

Browne's third point is that the preachers in question preach the Law and therefore ought to be heard.

Again he finds disagreement between his opponents. One has granted that the preachers might have the word and gospel, since this may be said of even the devils; he contends, however, that in their mouths the Law is like the sacrifices of Korah. Browne says this is absurd. Knowledge of God's law may and should be spoken by every man, whereas the ministration of the sacrifices in question was definitely restricted. Hence, to refuse to hear the law from these men is to reject the law and not merely those who speak it.

"For the wicked Father, magistrate, preacher, neighbour, doeth often tymes know the will & word of God better & further, then the good child, subject, parishioner, freind, or neighbour."

The objections to his argument in this matter seem to Browne as untenable as in the previous points. It will not do to say that because wicked men have no right to excuse their wickedness they therefore have no right to preach the Law. Of course they have no right to pervert

(1) pp. 22-25.  (2) p. 25  (3) p. 25f.
it. To say, however, that they may not speak it at all, is plain heresy which would deny to parents, magistrates, or preachers any right or ability to teach those under their authority. The previous proofs of Saul, Balaam, (1) Cyrus, etc. apply here as well.

It is futile to quote instances of abuse and wickedness within the Church. Browne knows they exist, and is among the first to condemn them. This, however, does not mean that what is good shall be ignored because there is evil in addition. As for that, there is no harm in hearing them preach untruth, so long as we do not accept it as true.

"For Jeremie did heare the false prophet Hananie, & said (amen) to his prayer. That is, to that good, . . . but yet he reproved the euil . . . And commaundement is geuen to trie the spirits, that is, the preachers both good and bad, true & false."

Against the argument that only a trial hearing is permissible, Browne replies that in that case hearing itself is no sin, since otherwise it would not be right in any circumstance.

"... you will not permit, adulterie, witchcraft, drunckennes etc vpon triall."

(1) p. 26f. (2) p. 27f. (3) p. 28.
What, indeed would they propose? That every listener receive permission from them as to whom he might hear?

He objects also to general charges of heresy against the ordinary preachers. Let those specifically offending be condemned; but let there be an end to indiscriminate accusations.

Eleven classes of abuse had, it seems, been enumerated by his opponents. By way of answer, he proposes to "retourne a. 11 for a 11."

1. We may freely witness truth to the worthy; but when the unworthy threaten the extremities of the law, the limits of the law need not be exceeded. This is sufficient "to stop their owne mouthes, & to leaue them without excuse."

2. It is "but an infirmitie" to speak against Secretaries, even if they are innocent, so long as the motive is zeal and not malice.

3. If sin has not been clearly exposed as such, it is "but an infirmitie" to cloak it under pretence of Law.

(1) p. 28f.
(2) p. 29f.
4. If those who have been baptized by unfit ministers are accepted into church fellowship as sufficiently baptized, it is no sin at all. How great is the sin, however, when one who agrees to this, proceeds to oppose the sacraments administered by such ministers!

5. What gross sin is it to say that magistrates may oppose Christ, and yet be his substitutes over the commonwealth?

6. If one deny the right of judgment and control to a rash and contentious multitude, who prove their incapacity in such respects, what gross sin is it?

7. If we are taught that we may communicate with sinners and hypocrites who are undetected, or that we should accept even abused sacraments so long as we avoid the abuses, what gross sin is it?

8. If we call "the Bysh, & the Commissaries . . . ministers of iustice . . . (with) a fatherlie, & honorable right therein", what gross sin is it?

9. If, disliking superstitious and needless ceremonies of ordination, we acknowledge the Bishops' right to "call, authorize, trie, confirme, & warrant . . . ministers", what gross sin is it?
10. If we say the effectiveness of the "keys" is hindered, while their right and power remains, what gross sin is it?

11. If one thinks it worse to communicate personally with known offenders than to join in the sacraments with undetected hypocrites or wicked folk, what gross sin is it?

The further argument has been offered that since God has his temple, peculiar and proper for the preaching of his law, there may be no hearing or preaching in evilly ordered meetings. Browne denies that any place is exempt from the ministry and use of God's word. He protests that few preachers, if any, would be so rash as to consider their churches entirely free of error, but this certainly does not discredit every person in them.

His argument having been denied in respect to six points of development, he repeats these, insisting that they are not "monsters".

1. The popish ministry is to be condemned, but there may be a common and lawful ministry of Papists and others, to read and expound the scriptures.

2. If papists preached as is now commonly done, they might beget faith also.

3. Wicked men may beget faith through their preaching.

4. The spirit may work faith through even wicked men's preaching.

(1) p. 31  (2) pp. 31-35.
5. That faith which is common to all comes first by hearing, since even reading would convey nothing to us, had we not first learned what the words meant by hearing them explained. Thereafter, justifying faith, which builds upon the foundation laid by common faith, may in some cases be wrought by reading.

6. There may be other means whereby faith is wrought, but for the first reformers it had to begin with preaching of evil preachers, since there were no other kind to be heard, and common faith must begin with preaching.

One of his opponents has said that Browne's arguments about the begetting of faith fails to prove his point. "But we pray him to wype his eyes & looke better." For, Browne repeats, it has been clearly pointed out:

1. that these preachers preach the word;
2. that they are sent of God;
3. that they are blessed as bringing the same gospel.

The other writer thinks faith must be begotten of reading and conference. Conference with whom? demands Browne. If with the unreformed, then evidently such can help to bring faith. If with the reformed, we merely put the point off one stage; for how did they become reformed? This, Browne says, is the crucial question. It cannot be evaded or ignored. Moreover, let this critic see where his argument leads. If he denies that one can get the beginning of faith from an unworthy preacher, what about Luther?

(1) p. 35.
He either got his faith this way, or not at all. One answer admits that even papists may be capable of presenting some measure of truth; whereas the other denies that Luther had faith at all. The right answer is obvious, without being any justification of the sins of those who are wicked preachers.

There follows at some length a defence of his statement that the inward man must be reformed before the outward man is changed. His point was that the inward man enters the inward kingdom of Christ by means of preaching, whether it be received from worthy or unworthy spokesmen; and only then may he be of the outward kingdom. He has been criticized for making a "nice" distinction, and for making a false temporal distinction. He denies both accusations with an elaborate discussion of the time relationship between cause and effect.

Again, his opponents argue that private brethren, not the converts of preachers, might have preached to them and begot faith in them. He does not deny that such may have preached to them; but the question is: Did they beget faith? Here, once more, he elaborates the argument that in a day when there was no reformation, Luther must have derived faith from the preaching of unreformed men. Otherwise, he contends, Luther would have lacked a knowledge of

(1) pp. 35 to 38                         (2) pp. 38 to 42.
the very fundamentals of faith.

As though it proved their whole case, they have next insisted that far from being converts of the preachers whom they heard, the Reformers turned from them. Browne asks, in effect, "What of that?" The two things are not mutually exclusive. One may get faith from a preacher and at the same time reject his errors and shortcomings. Indeed, the very fact that it can be done, verifies the validity of the faith derived from them. Actually, Browne claims, the ordinary preachers are faithful in warning people against various sins. He has heard many preachers, and he believes that his testimony will be substantiated by any unprejudiced observer, that they repeatedly, and almost universally, warn against the sins which may most readily entrap men.

He enumerates 50 varieties of abuse commonly denounced in the pulpits. These include a variety of abuses with respect to the Church, disloyalty to it, and to the kingdom of God, failure to institute God's discipline, rebellion against that discipline, submission to man's rules rather than God's word, and finally a long list of personal sins.

This, he declares, amply proves that these preachers beget justifying faith, whereas the negative assertion that they never can do so is impossible to support, since God alone

can judge the hearts of men. If necessary he could bring forward further proof by showing the subscription of many preachers to those points of religion which all men know produce faith.

"But ... you yong Maisters, which haue eaten and filled your selues of your ould Maisters labours, do now kick vp your heeles against them, and not onely would put them from their right, saiing that the Gospel & true faieth did first of all come from you but also do chalendge them as dastards because you dreame or rather crack a victorie before hand."

One of the writers having quoted against his argument the saying of Christ that we may not look for grapes on thorns nor figs on thistles, Browne answers him. Natural man, he explains, is always bereft of grace and therefore devoid of good. However, knowledge of the Gospel, the presence of conscience, and zeal for God's glory may exert influence upon even unregenerate men, thereby working in them the spirit of grace, though not of adoption.

"... they may & do minister grapes & figges vnto others."

Furthermore, Christ did not mean that we may have no communion with the wicked in common graces, but only that we

(1) p. 51  (2) p. 51f.
must not accept their evil as being good.

"For if they be thornes or thistles their fruits no doubt will be accordingly, & will bewraye them."

Finally, on this point, Browne insists that Christ meant to show that such men may have a due place in the world, but not as leaders in the Church. Their evidences of common graces may be properly received, but they ought not to be allowed to continue propagating heresy. Yet even heretics may be heard for the purpose of refutation. The preachers in question, however, are not deliberate heretics. Even his opponents say that they have never known the true faith; from which it follows that they are not rebels against it.

Browne's argument on this issue, then, he states thus:

"We alledge that the preachers ouerthrow the kingdome of Antichrist. Whereupon we conclude that they are not the ministers of Antichrist."

It is useless to argue that these men have helped to build that kingdom and therefore cannot also oppose it, since Satan cannot cast out Satan. For the glory of God's grace is that he does set the wicked against themselves. It is

(1) p. 52
(2) p. 52f.
(3) pp. 53-55.
not Satan's power that makes them do good works, but God's. Cyrus and the Samaritans are examples of how God may accomplish his work through unregenerate heathens.

His opponents have named ten commonly defended abuses concerning which Browne writes in reply. The abuses named were:

1) Ordinations, seals, licenses 2) testimonies 3) fooles coates 4) masse booke. 5) Afterward you name Antichristian government 6) Popish Bishops 7) courts 8) Commissions 9) suspensions 10) depositions.

"Upon all their flames of displeasure, we pour the milk of their quiet answers . . . "

"First that you should love those preachers, who have taught you the doctrine of true faith . . . "

"Secondlie you should knowe the difference of condemninge abuses, & justifinge right Namelie that the Bishopps are lawful Magistrats & officers. . . 

"Thridlie you should learne that The Bishopps & Courts, & all higher Magistrats haue authoritie to deale in all spiritual & ecclesiastical matters, & . . . there is no duetie, lawe, deed, cause . . . etc. which ought not to be spiritual. . . 

"And therefore the magistrats haue power, & a right of administration in all those ten things you named.

He goes on to argue that free criticism is, and has been, permitted both within and outside the Church, so long as it

(1) p. 55
(2) p. 55f.
is offered with humility and restraint. Indeed, he is sure that this freedom to criticize is a great blessing because it means that the worthy are "furthered & edified."

Referring to a dispute concerning Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 34, Browne insists that the preachers prophesy against Baal as faithfully as did the prophets of old. The Bishops, he says, are not Baal, but are lawful authorities. Evidently referring to his opponents' imprisonment, he says:

"Neither were it a Baalish tyrannie in anie magistrat if they should take from such railers their libertie, bereaue them of their goods & livings, & thurst them from their ministerie. Also you have made it manifest, that that is Baalisme in your selues, to chalendge a fatherhood and power . . . as you do . . . at your pleasure."

Further controversy, it would appear, has developed over the meaning of Matthew 23:3. Browne declares that when Christ spoke of the Scribes and Pharisees as sitting in Moses' chair, he meant that they were duly called and chosen for the positions which they occupied. The men themselves might have fallen into various errors and abuses, but the office itself was not thereby defiled. Christ was saying that they had right and authority to minister the law and must, therefore, be shown appropriate

(1) p. 56f.
(2) pp. 57-59.
honour and obedience.

"But whatsoever title the world giveth anie preacher or minister, if he do his dutie we must honour him, and not dispightefully call him, as you do, the excrement of Antichrist."

Of course, if they far exceed the authority to which they are called, that is another matter. Even unlikely appearing persons, however, may have an inward calling of God, despite their grave shortcomings.

"... the vsurping hireling which fleeth the woulfe, is therefore but an hirelinge. yet hath he a common calling & seat of Moses, if he preach the trueth & word of God in great measure."

It is ignorant and, indeed; "vile error" to say that the spirit of grace and of delusion can not be in the same man. What human being, however reconciled to God, is without his own evil spirit which strives against the spirit of God?

The final pages are occupied with answering by number certain objections which are not given in their original form, but are, apparently, repetitions of previous arguments. The "Reprofe" ends with these words:

"Thus you see, how farr you haue runn to wearie your selues in vaine. For all this your discoursing will not proue, but that we may heare the preachers, yea by occasion, wicked preachers & false prophets, And

(1) pp. 59-61.  
(2) pp. 61-63.  
(3) p. 63.  
(4) p. 65.
that in all good & common graces both worldli & spirituall, we may joine with the wicked, so that we joine not with them in euil.

"And the same grace, & spirit of discerning & triing, which you wish & pray for to vs, do we wish & pray for to you & that to come from God our Father for his Christ's sake.

"Wo to them that are wise in their owne eis, & prudent in their owne conceit.

"He that justifieth the wicked & he that con-demneth the righteous are both alike abominable."
CHAPTER ELEVEN

Robert Browne's Letter to His Uncle, Mr. Flower.
[Published in 1904 with the title "A New Years Guift." ]

Answering a request for a statement on certain specified subjects, Browne says it is difficult to know what to say on such weighty matters. That the mystery of Antichrist has grown since St. Paul's time, is certain. Only a blind man could fail to see that Antichrist has already come. It is well, therefore, to be on guard against such pollutions.

Men are obsessed about title and rank in Church and State, as Christ foretold. It was against this that he gave warning, saying none should be called Rabbi, Doctor or father. Indeed, he predicted that usurpers would come under pretence of title, claiming his authority. The next step is when the title itself seems to be the important thing.

Antichrist came when churchmen, ashamed to ask for civil honour, demanded spiritual titles from the early Emperors. Though the man might be most unworthy, his title was to be reverenced. Actually, however, those in office deserve honour only when they earn it; for while the magistrate may compel outward compliance, he cannot make one accept a pastor or doctor against conscience. Nor should such be received unless they prove themselves to be called of God.

(1) p. 23
(2) p. 24f.
Though names are warranted in Scripture, they may in fact serve only to conceal proud popelings. If the titles were authorized by law they would soon be claimed by petty tyrants who now scorn the name of Bishop.

Experience both in England and Scotland convinces him of this. Particularly in Scotland did he find preachers and elders disturbing all the land, endangering the king, and attacking local officials as well. The consequence of such conduct was, he declares, widespread wickedness. Similarly, in England, it was preachers of discipline who complained about him and secured his imprisonment fully three times to every one action by the Bishops.

This, then, is what we may expect concerning the titles of elders, pastors, doctors, and deacons.

As for the actual offices themselves, every church must have them, though they may not bother with the names. Once let them be recognized by law, however, and they cease to be Christian, trying to impose control over the lives and purposes of magistrates and people. Yet the fact remains that the office of Elder does, of course, exist, and that it is a symbol of the Church and its position.

The Church is that grave and ancient elder of which Christ is the Elder and pastor. With respect to Christ's manhood it is the Elder, since he is the Son of Man, meaning son and child of the Church. With respect to men, the Church is elder, since it must exist before any one can be chosen to the office of elder. Even Paul who founded the Church at Corinth called himself not its elder but its servant. He and Cephas were their's, they were Christ's, and Christ was God's. Thus

(1) pp. 25-27.  
(2) pp. 27-29.
each individual is inferior to the Church, even as it is inferior to Christ, and Christ (touching his manhood) is inferior to God. Indeed, even those who stress the name admit that, although Paul founded churches, the ordinary elder is called by an existing church which is in effect an eldership itself.

Scripturally, an elder is one of special wisdom and honesty who may therefore counsel and advise. One need not have title or power to be an elder in actual fact, and in the eyes of God. Laying on hands, or enforcing fasts, in order to establish elders, doctors, or deacons, is to introduce "Popism." By God's word, excommunication, deposing of false teachers, and judging in ecclesiastical affairs, are put in the hands of those of highest authority and gifts. Chief authority belongs to civil magistrates. To challenge or to deny their gifts and authority, or their power in ecclesiastical causes, is gross presumption.

Murder, adultery, felonies, blasphemy, rebellion, all these are ecclesiastical matters in their essence.

As for choosing and deposing ministers, the titles of Doctor, pastor, priest, and presbyter rightly belong only to those who can demonstrate their gifts and calling. The magistrate, therefore, must restrain

(1) p. 29
(2) p. 30.
controversies and heresies arising from this freedom to choose and reject ministers. He must, however, do so as God prescribes:

1. If unfit ministers cannot be removed, let the people gradually fall away.

2. If specific complaint is made against a minister who cannot be removed, let the case be judged by neighbours and friends, the plaintiff quietly refusing pastoral ministrations, until a proper hearing may be had; or let the plaintiff remain suspended until he is duly condemned and found guilty.

3. To avoid heresies, let the orthodox alone be allowed to withdraw, their views being duly examined; and let them be unmolested, if there be no error or disorder in them, only serious faults being punished.

4. Let only the orthodox take part in choosing officers, under the magistrate's supervision, and with any just dissent permitted. Then let ordination be in the name of all who have participated in the choice. It will not then matter whether or not a Bishop participates in the ordination.

In serving a parish, one preacher with appropriate helpers is enough.

1. He may have 2, 3 or 6 helpers, arbitrators, or presbyters. (The name is unimportant.)

2. A teacher who is found to be qualified and called of God may be authorized.

3. The wiser ones may, by general consent, be called upon for advice.

* * *

(1) pp. 30–32. (2) p. 33.
At least one folded sheet of the manuscript has been lost. It evidently included a discussion of five degrees in the rise of Antichrist.

* * *

The sixth degree is the raising of fellow Antichrists to overrun the world. All this has happened since the exaltation of the Chief Antichrist (the Man of Rome).

Turks, Saracens, Persians, barbarians, Egyptians are his fellows.

The seventh degree is the working of all the rest to the end of the world.

There are, also, seven degrees of the falling of Antichrist.

1. The first has already been shown.
2. The second is the exposing of the people's iniquity.
3. The third is the displaying of false doctrines and heresies.
4. The fourth is "notifying all grosse ignorance, etc."
5. The fifth is the shaking of Antichrist's throne. It is now going on in the attacks on corrupt clergy, which must be properly recognized in order to avoid the sixth plague of being

(1) p. 33
(2) pp. 34-36.
bewitched into defending this tottering state.

6. The sixth degree is Rome's fall and burning.

That Rome is referred to in the prophecy is proved thus:

a. It is the city on seven hills.

b. The number of the beast (666) is in Hebrew equivalent to the Latin ROMANUS.

c. The kings of the east are the Protestants, all of whom are eastward from Spain and Rome. This disproves the mistaken idea that the Turks and barbarians are meant; Browne has previously explained this in a "several treatisse in latine, touching the herring fishes hauing a writing of letters vpom them, taken in the east seas." The kings shall overthrow Rome. Though Gog (antichrist of Rome) joins Magog (antichrist of the barbarians) to attack the church, Christ shall defend it.

7. The seventh is the eternal plague of Antichrist in the fire and judgment upon the wicked.

This, says Browne, explains his views of the Church "save that I have conceiled some matters offensive to be delt in."

There remains only Discipline for him to discuss.

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(1) p. 36. Remembering that this was more than three years after Browne's subscription, we should be glad to know what items he has here "conceiled."

(2) pp. 36-43.
It is to begin with, not compulsion by force, but is Christ's spiritual power working in his Church. Browne complains that he has been falsely accused of condemning all of England, or all English Churches, as lacking such discipline. On the contrary, he has always maintained that whoever has and lives by God's word has the discipline, government, or kingdom of Christ. It involves certain points which it is fatal to the Church to deny. He does not mean that a church which fails through mistake or ignorance is no church; he is, however, referring to refusal or deliberate contradiction in any of these essential ways:

1. When the word of God is lacking, denied, or limited to man's caprice.
   To be denied the right to confess and testify to true religion is to be in thralldom to Antichrist.

2. When none has "libertie to commaund or instruct by this word."

3. When mutual counsel, exhortation, admonition, instruction are prevented.

4. When the power of the keys is not applied as occasion requires.

5. When the godly may not separate in communion from the profane and ungodly.
6. When any "dare not or will not keep companie with the brethren for mutual edifinge."

7. When ministers are forced upon congregations by man's authority.

8. When freedom of testimony or protest for truth is forbidden.

9. When the Lord's ordinances are denied by disputes over worship and polity.

10. When force and civil authority supplant the Christian virtues.

These are "lenitie, gentlenes, patience, mercie, kindnes & charitie."

11. When various abuses break the covenant and overthrow discipline.

These include such things as: atheism, idolatry, witchcraft, wilful disobedience, contempt towards the sacraments, dividing or forsaking the church, oppressing the church, profane living and speaking, rebellion against superiors, degrading God's call, seeking justification by works, false pride, malice, injustice, carnal sins, vanity, idleness, dishonesty, slander, malicious gossip, etc.

12. When to these (or in place of them) any acknowledged doctrinal heresies are added.

The proper method of applying this discipline is the holding
Browne concludes with New Year greetings, and an apology that he cannot send a more worthy gift. If this has any worth it will be because his uncle considers that it does. In any case, he hopes it will be kept safe, where it will not cause him any trouble. "For I am pore enough & broken to to much with former troubles, & therefore had no need of further affliction."

He adds a postscript concerning the Greek term "presbyteros." Literally, it means "elder." If it is to be translated "priest," then it must signify senior or elder in years, unless violence is to be done to the original. Peter uses it himself, meaning that he is an elder. It is also applied to other ministers, and to those who have authority but do not preach.

Paul says "that the presbyters or elders which rule wel are worthie duble honor, specially they that labor in the word and doctrine."

Browne's views, however, are already made clear. He will only add this: In days of the ceremonial law, the elders then known prefigured the elders who, when the ceremonies were abolished, were first in gifts and graces. Thus it is apparent that neither name nor office is important, but the use of the gifts and graces.

(1) p. 43  (2) p. 43f.  (3) p. 44.
PART THREE

EVALUATION and CONCLUSIONS.
CHAPTER TWELVE

Browne's View of Church and State.

Before proceeding further it may be well for us to take note of the fact that we have now dealt with all the material which we are to use in this study of Robert Browne as Churchman and Theologian. In our historical study we saw the development of the Elizabethan Church controversy, in which his influence played an important part. Then we put together from the conflicting evidence the most complete account of Browne's life possible, on the basis of what is now known about him and his relations with the Church. Following this, we traced the development of thought, and the arguments put forward in each of his extant writings. Now, therefore, we may undertake the final task of evaluation and summing up.

In doing so, however, it is obvious that we must face certain difficulties. There is no escaping the fact that three classes of contradiction appear in what we have been considering thus far. First, there is an evident divergence of attitude and teaching within the various writings of Robert Browne. Second, there is a contrast between the programme which he set forth in writing and the programme which he actually carried out in his own life.
And third, there is a difference between what Browne wrote and did, and the thing which his contemporaries seem to have meant when they talked about "Brownism." What shall we make of these apparent conflicts?

So far as the first problem is concerned, it may help to reconcile the differences if we remember the circumstances under which the various writings were produced. Covering a period of time between 1582 and 1589, these writings might naturally be expected to reveal changes of emphasis, to say nothing of changing opinions. Seven or eight years might find any man expressing himself in different terms, even if his opinions had undergone no significant alteration. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that each of the writings which we have examined was to some extent an apologia. The only possible exception is "A Booke Which Sheweth," yet even here Browne sought to make clear not only what he thought but also why he thought it. The other six are all written in the mood of self-justification, to defend the writer against the criticism of various opponents. Being, in this sense, written for specific occasions, they naturally reflect different convictions. In addition, Browne followed the time-honoured tactics of defending himself by attacking his opponents, wherefore there is not only vigour but also a measure of violence in what he writes. The result is a tendency to present his
case in extreme terms, which make normal differences between his writings appear greater than they really are.

As for the second question, we know that in practice Browne did change his position, although he sought to minimize the appearance of change by claiming that he had been entirely consistent. In his late twenties and early thirties, his teachings about the Church and about its relation to the State were distinctly radical both in substance and in implication. Some, but not all, of his views he moderated under the influences which we have noted in our study of his life. In his own defence, he stressed the things in which he had not changed; but the fact remains that at forty years of age he was not doing what he himself had advocated at thirty.

Concerning our third point, we must realize that Browne first came to general notice through his first, and most extreme, writings. England at large knew nothing of Robert Browne until there suddenly appeared from Middleburgh "A Booke Which Sheweth," the Introduction to which was "A Treatise of Reformation Without Tarying for Anie." Of these two, the Treatise was the more shocking to the Elizabethan public, and naturally the first thing which people read from Browne's pen. Bold utterance was combined with an almost fatally successful phrase. "Reformation without
tarrying for any" became a sort of slogan for the summing up of all extreme feelings of dissatisfaction with Church and State. It was primarily because they not only sold the Treatise but endorsed it personally, that Coppin and Thacker went to the gallows. Sir Christopher Wray reported officially "The book acknowledged her majesty civilly. But so was their terms, and no further." Without doubt it was chiefly this fact which earned for Browne and Harrison the distinction of a Royal Proclamation, condemning their books for being "seditionous" as well as "schismaticall and erroneous." Browne had succeeded too well. Eager to reform abuses within the church, he identified himself in the public mind as one opposed to the Elizabethan establishment. "Brownist" became one of those convenient epithets which one used to discredit an opponent by suggesting that his ideas were on the verge of treason. Whether Browne himself was ever a "Brownist" in this popular interpretation of the word is open to doubt. Certainly, if he was one, he soon ceased to be.

Thus we discover that what Browne could never deny having written was at once the thing for which he became most notorious, and the thing to which he least tenaciously held. No doubt he often wished that he had

(1) See p. 44 above.
been less emphatic when writing those words. At the same time, there is no question that this was one of the most lasting and important points he made, even though he abandoned it himself. It was, so to speak, a bugle call to religious freedom. Yet Browne neither answered the call nor wanted to do so. In spite of what he wrote in the heat of the moment, he was personally content with an arrangement whereby the State should defend, protect, and in a measure control the Church. By combining relevant points which he made, we may see briefly the extreme views which in this connection became identified as Brownism, and the more moderate ideas which quite plainly characterized Browne's own deepest convictions.

According to the position taken particularly in "A Treatise of Reformation" Browne described the Church as an institution which ought to be independent of State control. Planted by God, and under the supervision of Christ, it owes responsibility not to the State but to God alone. Though the head of the State was in ancient times priest as well as ruler, thus foreshadowing Christ, the heirs of that position were at first the Disciples and laterly the Preachers, and not the civil magistrates. In fact, history clearly shows that the spiritual health of the Church is

(1) Treatise of Reformation p. 20.
(2) Ibid p. 26f.
best when the State actually oppresses it, for then the Church ceases to look to civil compulsion for its own strength and growth.

The State should co-operate with the Church, not dominate it. The civil magistrate, who may supervise its external affairs, has no right to compel religion, or to force the Church into submission to civil rules and penalties. The magistrate who is a Christian will submit to pastoral guidance and correction. Any other magistrate must be disregarded by the Church which cherishes its covenant with God. Craven submission of churchmen to civil officials is a gross abuse of their true calling. The Prophets and John the Baptist accepted the obligation of speaking words of counsel and rebuke to those in civil office. The preacher's duty in such matters is equally clear. Nor may the magistrate legitimately try to silence him whom God has called to speak. The one so constrained by God dare not hold his peace, though he be cast into prison for disobeying

(1) Treatise of Reformation p. 28f.
(2) Ibid p. 26f.
(4) True and Short Declaration Sig C.
(5) Treatise of Reformation pp. 31 and 28.
the magistrate.

In civil matters, the Queen is supreme, and neither she nor her magistrates may be resisted. In the Church, however, God is the head. No officials, whether Bishops or magistrates, have any more authority in the Church than any Christian. Unless they are themselves Christian, they have not, indeed, any rights there. Hence, to give authority to the Magistrates, under which they may remove ministers or interfere with proper discipline, is to put them above Christ. At the same time, less authority means less responsibility. The magistrate has no special duty to reform the Church. Therefore it is slander to blame him for the corruptions which continue in it.

This bold and defiant attitude towards civil authorities was, we may assume, the result of Browne's troubles in the region about Norwich. Ecclesiastical officials had not hesitated to use the civil rod in chastening him, and he felt strongly that it was an evil thing to have God's clear call to him thus interfered with by the

(1) Treatise of Reformation p. 22f.
(2) Ibid p. 17.
(3) Ibid pp. 18-20
(4) Ibid p. 18f.
magistrates. This accounts for his emphatic denial of their right to exercise such jurisdiction.

However, he had more than this to say about Church and State during the Middleburgh period. He was convinced that the true Church can only be a voluntary gathering of those who have entered into proper covenant with God. This was an essential part of his teaching, and we may safely conclude that it was in his eyes a principle which he could never abandon. He might enter into a truce with the Established Church. He might even exercise the instrument of law against contentious parishioners at the Church. Yet it seems certain that in his heart he always thought that "the Lord's people are a willing sort." (1)

Before leaving England, he advised against going to Scotland, because of misgivings about the parishes. His ten year absence from the Church pulpit, more than thirty-five years later, seems to imply a similar lack of confidence in the parish plan. Consequently, we find that his Middleburgh writings, with which we include his Answere to Cartwright, give evidence of a profound dissatisfaction with the parochial conception of the Church.

His teachings on this point seem to grow from the conviction that Church and State can never be

(1) Treatise of Reformation p. 25.
considered coterminus. The Church simply cannot be described in terms of parish boundaries, or numbers of households, or tithes. God has chosen his people to be separate from the wicked, wherefore his Kingdom will not come by means of parishes, and the State should not even try to keep Christians tied down to them. The Church of God being entirely different from what the parochial system implies, the Christian must withdraw from the parish churches, despite the laws to the contrary, for as constituted they are intolerable. Under existing conditions, the Bishops are antichrists in the church and tyrants in the commonwealth, deriving their authority from a mingling of civil and religious offices which is flat antichristianity. The State which fosters such a condition is as bad as Egypt, and must be forsaken by God's people. Indeed, even if there were no persecutions indulged in, the State would still be insufferable to the genuine Christian, who could have no choice but to flee from Egypt, lest he be under condemnation with all the wicked.

(1) Answere to Cartwright pp. 17-20.
(2) T. & S.D. Sig. A4 recto and verso.
(3) Ibid Sig B2 verso.
(4) Ibid Sig A2 verso and B3
(5) 23 of Matthew Sig. G to G2.
The severity of this judgment he considerably lessened after making his subscription. Nevertheless, he was not nearly so ready to disavow this conception of the voluntary Church as he was willing to modify the defiant hostility with which he first wrote concerning the civil magistrates. The change of emphasis with respect to the magistrates is apparent in his reply to Cartwright. He seems not simply to be frightened at the storm he has raised but actually to regret what he considers a misinterpretation of his position.

He complains of being grossly misrepresented in his attitude towards the laws of the land. His quarrel is not with them, but with canon laws. The civil law gives no comfort to the hierarchy. While the Bishops hold authority by virtue of the Queen's permission, the civil laws actually tend to protect the Church from them, by allowing latitude of choice in matters of worship, and by authorizing no such domination as the Bishops exercise. Interpreted according to their manifest spirit, the civil laws would certainly force the Church to reform many of its practices before requiring men to attend its services.

This, we may conclude, represents his sober attitude towards the civil laws and their administration.

(1) Answer to Cartwright pp. 2-6.
Even before writing the Answere he gave evidence of such feelings. In Edinburgh, when he found himself challenged (and apparently threatened) by the Presbytery he "alledged . . . that he and his companie were not subject to it, and therefore, he would appeale from the kirk to the magis¬trate." Following his subscription, the remaining two writings of which we know both amplify this view of the magistrates' rights and powers. They are far from repeating his bold words about defying the magistrate, and choosing prison rather than silence. Instead, they considerably expand his original concession that the magistrate may supervise external affairs of the Church.

If the penalties of the law are invoked against a preacher, he may properly give in and remain silent, since he has done what he could to touch the consciences of the wicked. As for Bishops, Ecclesiastical Courts, and Magistrates, they all have authority to deal in spiritual and ecclesiastical causes, since every offence is essentially a spiritual matter. When they act therefore, they have both power and right to do so.

To civil magistrates, indeed, belongs chief authority

(1) See p. 119 above.
(2) "The Reformation of Robert Browne", p. 29
(3) Ibid p. 55f.
in ecclesiastical as well as civil matters, for this same reason. When the Church exercises the right to choose its officials, it should do so under supervision and control of the magistrates, who should restrain any controversies or heresies that arise. Under the law ample opportunity is given for proper criticism, and when Bishops and Magistrates restrain those who abuse this privilege they are by no means exercising a Baalish tyranny.

Thus we see that in respect to the relations between Church and State Browne was by conviction an Erastian, as Powicke says. It has been claimed from time to time that Browne owed much of his teachings to Anabaptist influence in Norfolk, and that his references to the State are among the most positive evidences of the fact. It is manifestly impossible to identify every factor which may have influenced him, or to prove the degree of importance which should be attached to each. The present writer, however, agrees with those who doubt whether in this respect

(1) "A New Years Gifft" pp. 30ff.
(2) Retractation pp. 56ff.
(3) Powicke: Browne p. 79.
at least, Browne owed any appreciable debt to Anabaptism. If anything he heard or read in Norfolk led him to deny the civil magistrate's authority in church affairs, the idea certainly did not really master his thoughts. Moreover, the writer sees no reason for supposing that Anabaptist influence is a necessary hypothesis in order to explain why Browne wrote as he did in the Treatise of Reformation. The man's own temperament, reacting to his recent experiences, would seem sufficient cause to account for what he wrote, and would also seem to explain his change of emphasis on afterthought.

As for his views concerning the parishes, the writer is disposed to accept Browne's own claim that he was moved by the apparent hopelessness of reforming the Church under the existing system. Of course his failure to mention Anabaptist associations in the True and Short Declaration is not sufficient evidence in the matter. To argue from silence would be meaningless under the circumstances, since Browne also neglected, for instance, to give even a hint that he had signed the Supplication of Norwich Men. However, the account which he gives of the development of his thoughts on the problem of the parishes seem both reasonable and

(1) Burrage: True Story p. 9f; Powicke: Browne p. 28
(2) See p. 98 above.
credible. Furthermore, it explains his departure from Cambridge in a way which indicates that his basic convictions on this question were formed before he came to Norwich. Starting with the facts of church abuses, which we have seen to be notorious, he discovered that any attempt at alteration was blocked by the combined plea that the parishes could never be made perfect, and that the civil authorities were not disposed to aid those who tried to introduce reforms. Granting his sincerity in wanting to abolish abuses, it seems reasonable to credit his assertion that he looked into the Scriptures to see wherein the existing churches differed from the ideal. That the convictions which he formed were, therefore, fundamentally his own interpretation of what he found in the Scriptures seems to the writer to be beyond doubt. He was not one to be overawed by big names. He could write scathingly of the

(1) This, of course, does not preclude the possibility that various aspects of his teachings were suggested by people with whom he discussed these questions. There is no telling, for instance, how much he owed to discussions with his fellow students at Cambridge, who were "counted forward in religion." However, it was Browne who dominated the discussions with Harrison; and we may safely conclude that, so far as we may ordinarily assign authorship of ideas to an individual, these were Browne's original views.

Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (13 vols.) Edinburgh from 1908 Vol. II p. 874, Powicke, writing on "Brownism", says "Browne did not borrow his conception of a Church."
early church fathers, and he could refuse to be silenced by references to Calvin and Beza. That his idea of the constitution of the Church differed from Genevan teachings was no reason in his eyes why he should keep silence. He was certainly capable of independent thinking, and he seems to have done much of it before he left Cambridge for Norfolk.

Assuming this interpretation to be true, we may justifiably regret that circumstances did not induce Browne to examine more carefully the conflict between the authority of the State on one hand and conscience on the other. With the logical persistence of which he was capable, Browne might have become truly a prophet of religious freedom. However, he did not explore the subject seriously, although he had stated principles which were potentially of great significance. His focus of attention being elsewhere, he chose to ignore the idea of separation of Church and State. Nay, more than that: he rejected it, after having given it momentary thought. To him it seemed more important that the State should protect the Church than that the Church should set loyalty to God over against obedience to the State. The "utter sundering and separation of Church and State" which Dexter says Browne taught was, therefore, implicit in his early writings, but was not taken seriously by the man himself.

(1) Dexter: Congregationalism pp. 101 and 105f.
We may agree that he deliberately advocated a voluntary church system which was quite opposed to the parochial plan so commonly accepted in his day. Probably as the result of the Middleburgh failure, he modified his position in this regard, yet we may feel certain that he always believed the essence of this teaching. It seems, however, a violence against the facts for us to assume that he may be counted among the genuine prophets of a free Church as concerns its relations with the State.
Browne's Views on Church Discipline and Government.

On the problem of how the true Church should be constituted, Browne's views underwent certain changes, as did his ideas regarding Church and State. Nevertheless, we find that, fundamentally, his opinions remained more nearly constant, although his expression of them changed considerably, as he found himself answering quite different opponents. We may most clearly see both resemblances and differences if we first combine the main points of his Middleburgh writings on this subject, and then note what his later writings indicate.

As he originally conceived the problem, it seemed obvious to him that the Church is first and foremost the voluntary joining together of those who by covenant with God are his people, and by covenant with Christ are members of his visible body. One man alone cannot be a Church, but even two or three, or a single family, may be a true Church.

(1) Treatise of Reformation p. 24; A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 1-3, 36-44; 23 of Matthew, F4 verso; True and Short Declaration, Sig. C verso - C2.

(2) Answere to Cartwright p. 13f; A Booke Which Sheweth, No. 35.
Because of this primary foundation on the covenant basis, it follows that if a group of people will not or cannot abide by the terms of the covenant, they automatically cease to be a true Church, and become instead an instrument of antichrist. Whereas the individual Christian's obligation is to serve God faithfully, the Church's primary responsibility is to observe the discipline which Christ demands. Holding commission under Christ to exercise the "power of the keys," the Church must, therefore, purge itself of all ungodly and wicked persons, if it hopes to continue within the covenant. The essence of true discipline, then, is the separation of the ungodly. (1) Failure in this respect is fatal to the Church. Baptism and communion are seals of the covenant with the individual and the Church, but they cannot secure the covenant if discipline is ignored. (2)

Furthermore, responsibility in this matter is individual as well as collective. Every Christian is a King, a Priest, and a Prophet in God's sight. Therefore, he must

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 59-63; Treatise of Reformation pp. 29-31; 23 of Matthew, Sig. G2, H2; Answere to Cartwright pp. 17-20, 24ff., 33-35, 43-45.

(2) 23 of Matthew, H2 verso; A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 39-43, 59-63.
see to it that he abides by the covenant, which he cannot do if he connives at retaining an antichristian government in the Church. He must watch over others, rebuke them if they go astray, pray for them and for the Church, turn them from iniquity to sanctification, exhort, counsel, and advise. If, when he has done all this, they remain unrepentant in wickedness, he must withdraw from them. Moreover, he must not be deterred by a multitude of voices. Though all men urge him to tolerate wickedness, though even his own family oppose his departure, he still must separate from the ungodly.

The antichristian nature of the ordinary English churches is immediately observable in three common abuses. One is the custom of permitting known offenders to partake of the Lord’s Supper, while the godly are forced to

(1) 23 of Matthew, H2 verso; A Booke Which Sheweth, No. 55
(2) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 56-58; Answere to Cartwright pp. 9-12, 39-42, 70.
(3) True and Short Declaration, Sig B3 verso; 23 of Matthew, H2 verso and H3; Answere to Cartwright pp. 24–32, 39-42.
communicate with them in this defiled sacrament. So long as this is even permitted, to say nothing of enforced, the covenant is utterly broken. The true Christian has no choice. He must depart. To remain, even while protesting against the abuse, would be to share the sin, and come under its condemnation. Those, therefore, who denounce such errors, and at the same time give their tacit consent to them by remaining in those churches, are equally culpable with the worst offender.

The second great abuse is the maintaining of an unworthy and unqualified ministry. Ministers who will not or cannot preach, who merely read through the service as though it were a popish mass, are an offence before God. Unless they can preach to the end that men are turned from wickedness to repentance, they are not valid preachers. Consequently their ministration of the sacraments is abused as well, since both baptism and the Lord's Supper must be accompanied by proper preaching. Even incompetent ministers, therefore, lead the people astray, while those who are personally ungodly are obviously and openly ministers of antichrist. The church or the individual who tolerate the continued presence of such corrupt ministers thereby

(1) Treatise of Reformation p. 29f; A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 59-63; Answere to Cartwright pp. 7ff, 20f, 36-42, 63ff; True and Short Declaration, Sig. B2 recto and verso.
forfeit all claim to the covenant.

Finally, among the abuses to be mentioned, is the
totality of the hierarchy. It is diametrically opposed to Christ's plan.
Full authority over the Church belongs only to Christ.
Next under him comes the Church as a group, to whom the
Bishops must be subject. To reverse this relationship is
to usurp power, and thereby to oppose the purpose of Christ.
All attempt of the Bishops to exercise special authority
over the Church is utterly antichristian. Their very of­
fee is an abomination and their licences and ordinations
are trash and pollutions. To accept their domination is to
substitute man's rule for God's. They are the supreme em­
bodyment of antichrist in the English churches, and who­
ever accepts their authority becomes equally guilty with

Properly speaking the Church can accept no
officer who presumes to dominate. In God's sight all
Christians are of equal worth and importance. A Church,

(1) 23 Matthew, sig. G4 verso; A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos.
42, 62; True and Short Declaration, Sig. B3 verso-C
verso; Answere to Cartwright, pp. 9-12, 15f, 21-24,
45-57, 70, 81-85.

(2) Treatise of Reformation, pp. 18, 20, 21; 23 of Mat­
thew, Sig. D3 recto and verso, C verso and C4 verso,
E4 verso; True and Short Declaration, Sig. A verso-
A3 verso, A4 verso, B, B2-B3 verso, C recto-C2; Ans.
to Cart., p. 15-17, 21f.
being a group of Christians, must always be acknowledged as superior to any office-bearer whom they have chosen. Whoever may be placed in such positions of office must be duly selected by the voluntary and mutual agreement of all the church, and when ordained to service is ordained in the name of the whole church. A church should not accept any minister who has not been freely chosen and called to be over them. To attempt to force a minister upon a church is to violate the covenant.

One who has been duly called, may then exercise government over the church, since his calling is token of the church's willingness to accept his authority. In this respect government in the Church is fundamentally the same as government in the Civil State or in the Family. Its very existence is based upon the free consent of the governed. However, when that consent is properly given, then the ensuing government involves, on the one hand, right fulfilment of responsibility by the governor, and on the other, appropriate obedience and submission by those governed. At the same time, this does not mean any slavish obedience. Opportunities for mutual counsel and admonition must be

(1) 23 of Mathew, H verso and H2, H3 verso-H4; A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 55, 114, 117-119; True and Short Declaration, Sig A verso-A2 verso, C; Answere to Cartwright, pp. 15-17, 39ff., 45ff., 81ff.
regularly provided for within the Church. So, also, must provision be made for the presenting of complaints and the free expression of criticism, within due limits of Christian charity.

The appropriate offices within the Church are for the purposes of teaching, guiding, cherishing and relieving. In the relationship between several churches, this mutual assistance may be rendered through synods and "prophecies." Those having special charge should be Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, their several duties being to condemn evil and promote righteousness, to warn against specific perils and save the people from them, and to render whatever service is appropriate to these tasks. Within individual churches, general counsel should be given by the elders of the church. Those specifically charged with responsibility are Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Relievers or Deacons, and Widows. The Pastor should exhort and guide those who have called him to this office. The Teacher should instruct, and point out the

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 110, 117-163; 23 of Matthew, Sig H2 verso; True and Short Declaration, Sig C2-C3; Answere to Cartwright, pp. 36-38.

(2) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 49-51.

(3) A Booke Which Sheweth, No. 52.
way. Elders should be those in the church who are especially gifted and may thus assist the Pastor and Teacher. Relievers or Deacons should gather and bestow the church's aid to those in need. Widows should pray for the church, visiting the afflicted and distressed.

It will be observed that in its general outlines this conception of the Church follows the pattern which is characteristic of all churches having Congregational government. Browne certainly thought in terms of autonomous local churches which, though they might enter into mutual fellowship, would be essentially independent groups. So far as individual rights and prerogatives were concerned, the members of such churches would all be on a parity. He recognised no gradations of authority and no inherent distinctions between clergy and laity. In his conversations with Harrison, the two men agreed that preaching (informal in nature, but valid in results) may be effectively done by those who are not designated as ministers.

The discipline which he advocated was essentially democratic. The choosing, ordaining, and (if necessary)

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 51, 53, 54; True and Short Declaration, Sig. C2 verso.
(2) True and Short Declaration, Sig B-B2.
the deposing of any officer in the Church was to be by majority agreement. His cry against magistrates, bishops, and tolerating preachers was based upon the fact that they seemed to conspire against this freedom of action on the part of the church members.

Apparently in complete contradiction to this position is Browne's discussion, in "A Booke Which Sheweth", of the respective duties of government and submission. The relationship implied comes close to being autocratic domination. In addition, it contributes materially to our understanding of Browne's own domineering manner at Middleburgh, for it shows that he was acting not so much on temperamental caprice as on definite principle. The contradiction in all this is less real than apparent. For the prerogatives of office in the Church belonged only to those whom the members freely chose; and the members could, with full right, de­pose the officer-holder who had forfeited their confidence. The democratic basis might be momentarily obscured, but it was still fundamental.

Burrage more than once expresses the opinion that Browne was chiefly influenced by the Presbyterianism of Cartwright. This view may be defended as being literally

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 112-146.
(2) Burrage: True Story p. 10; E.E.D. p. 95.
true, but to the present writer it seems misleading. Browne's account of relinquishing the offer of a church at Cambridge, together with the programme which we have described immediately above, can scarcely be interpreted as evidence of Presbyterian ideas, except in the sense that all Separatist teachings of the time were bound to spring from Puritan beginnings. The writer is much more inclined to agree with Powicke, that before leaving Cambridge in 1580 Browne had already reached conclusions which were more characteristic of Congregational than of Presbyterian polity. His reluctance to put any hope in such men as "More" and "Robardes" seems further evidence on this point. His failure to mention the fact that he signed the Petition of Norwich Men appears to indicate still further that, although he was persuaded (by Harrison, presumably) to add his name to the petition, he felt no satisfaction in the thought that he was identified with this group. Their position represented a compromise with the Established Church which seemed intolerable to him.

It is also beyond doubt that if Browne was most largely influenced by the Presbyterianism of Cartwright, neither Cartwright nor other Presbyterians recognized that

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fact. Cartwright's letter and Browne's answer have been sufficiently referred to above. So has Stephen Bredwell's opinion of Browne and his teachings. A third, and later, Presbyterian opinion is to be seen in what Robert Baillie of Glasgow wrote about Browne and Brownism. In Chapter Four, we have cited from "A Dissasive," Baillie's violent opinions regarding Browne personally, as he expressed them in 1645. Two years later, in "Anabaptism . . . unsealed," he wrote to prove his contention that Browne and his followers owed all their inspiration to the Anabaptists. He was disgusted that they should have separated not only from the Church of England but "from all the rest of the reformed." Another offence was that "they acknowledge no Nationall Church, nor any Church visible, but a Congregational which they make absolutely Independent and uncontrollable by any superior Synod . . . But the worst of it is, that this supreme, absolute and Independent Jurisdiction of everyone of their Congregations must be placed not in the officers nor any company of them, but in the whole multitude." It is true that this was written nearly fifteen years after Browne's death, and more than sixty

years after Browne wrote his Middleburgh tracts. Nevertheless, it reveals plainly what "Brownism" stood for in the eyes of an ardent Presbyterian. That Browne meant to teach, or was understood to teach, anything which could be described as a variation of Cartwright's views, seems therefore an extraordinary conclusion to draw from the available facts.

On the evidence of the Middleburgh tracts, the writer also finds it difficult to agree with Burrage's conclusions as to what Browne intended with respect to the Church of England. Burrage thinks he was like the Puritans in wishing to reform the Church rather than to separate from it. In such a case, his departure was always meant to be temporary, looking forward to the day when the self-imposed exile might end. Burrage admits that before a degree of reformation satisfactory to Browne could have been accomplished, the Church of England must have become, for all practical purposes, Congregational in type. However, he interprets Browne's views of the magistrate's authority as evidence that it would still be a State Church.

Browne's precise intentions are not plain in this respect. We have already seen that he favoured Erastian views even while advocating Congregational independence. Obviously he had not adequately considered the

(2) See Encyc. Rel. & Ethics V pp. 358-365, art. on Erastianism.
practical complications of such a policy. However, the writer believes that the ideal Church which Browne seemed to have in mind was radically different from the Church of England as Browne knew it. The Established Church must have undergone an almost complete transformation before he would ever agree that he and his company could return.

Founders of new sects or denominations are apt to believe that they are merely leading the enlightened apart, until the slower majority have corrected their mistaken practices. In this sense, Browne may not have intended permanent separation. Yet the Church he described, a voluntary, covenanting Church with democratic polity, would scarcely have been recognized by either Browne or Whitgift as having any resemblance to the Church of England. When he wrote about fleeing from Egypt, Browne surely intended the departure to be permanent, or at least until the English churches should be so fundamentally changed as to be no longer the same. To speak of this as "reform" is too mild a term.

We have already indicated that the Congregational system was later modified in Browne's teaching. The disillusionment resulting from the Middleburgh affair is undoubtedly a major reason for this. Revising his ideas in the light of that experience, Browne reached the point where he could be persuaded to subscribe to Whitgift.
The change that had come over him is reflected in the words with which he defends himself against the criticism of Barrow and Greenwood: "If anie denie power & authoritie to a rash and contentious multitude, to haue their voice & rule, in matters of judgement, which haue no judgement, or are parciall and wicked & can not vse their judgement rightlie, what gross synne is it?" Behind these words we see again the unhappy and contentious company at Middleburgh. Browne might still have faith that members of such a church are equally precious in God's sight. Could they be trusted, however, to exercise the privileges and the necessary self-restraints of democratic government? The theory might be sound; but, in practice, some sort of compromise might be necessary. Although Browne could not bring himself to defend autocratic government in the Church, he would at any rate deny that it was a sin to have doubts about democracy. Nevertheless, his faith was not shattered even though it was disturbed. His Letter to his Uncle, Mr. Flower, still presents democratic polity, modified though it may be.

When Browne's reply to Barrow and Greenwood reached his hands, Stephen Bredwell did not know what to make of it. He was certain that Browne could not be trusted. At the same time, he had to admit that the

(1) Retractation p. 30.

(2) S.B. Rasing the Foundations Sig. A-A2.
arguments in this instance shattered the Separatist contention that incompetent or evil preachers prevent a church from being acceptable in God's sight. How could Browne, hypocrite though he might be, write such an argument? Bredwell's perplexity has been easier to understand since Burrage's discovery of Browne's original manuscript at Lambeth Palace Library. Indeed, the long period during which the manuscript lay unidentified, was due to the fact that it seemed impossible for Browne to have been the author. As recently as 1925, Scott Pearson has asked whether it might not really have been written by Cartwright rather than Browne. The present writer, after seeing the manuscript, and examining Burrage's arguments for attributing it to Browne, is convinced that Burrage is in the right in this matter. Therefore we must not fail to take into account what the Reproofe reveals concerning Browne's views.

We have seen that Browne vehemently denounced the Church of England, because of her threefold abuses. Having subscribed in spite of such opinions, he now found himself obliged to defend his actions by answering his former criticisms.

(1) See Burrage's account of this in his Introduction to the Retraction.

(2) Pearson: Cartwright p. 312.
He admits that there are sinners within the fold of the Church, and he deplores the fact. At the same time he insists that no mortal man is perfect, wherefore charity of judgment should be exercised by all of us. This applies equally well in the matter of ministers. Some may be open to extreme criticism, but this is no reason why all should be condemned. Moreover, not even general wickedness would necessarily invalidate all of their work. Part of God's truth may be made known to men of quite low character. Indeed, conscience could otherwise accomplish nothing. Furthermore, how could the first Reformers have received faith except by the preaching of those who were unreformed? How else could his present opponents have received their own faith? If, therefore, God may use imperfect spokesmen, any refusal to listen is, in fact, a rejection not only of the speaker but of the message as well. It is even possible that a Papist

(1) The Retractation of Robert Browne pp. 3f, 19-21, 27f, 51f, 63.
(2) Ibid p. 4, 28f.  (3) Ibid p. 4ff, 10-16.
(4) Ibid pp. 7-9, 35-38, 40f.  (5) Ibid pp. 6f, 35f, 38f, 51.
(6) Ibid pp. 22, 26f.
could be used by God for the proclaiming of the Word.

As for the Bishops, it is wrong to deny their authority entirely. What gross sin is it to call "The Bysh. & commissaries" ministers of justice, and to admit their right of supervision, even when their ceremonies of ordination are (2) superstitious and needless? After all, the Bishops and Magistrates are recognized as lawful authorities by the civil State. They have jurisdiction over a multitude of matters which, when they are closely examined, prove to be essentially spiritual and ecclesiastical problems. Therefore, they are rightly recognized as being responsible for church matters as well as civil affairs. Moses' seat, it should be remembered, represents lawful authority and administration of justice. The office itself demands respect, no matter what we may think of the person occupying it. The civil authorities habitually permit a latitude in matters of criticism, which atones for many defects. Any orderly person who makes reasonable complaints, in a decent and proper manner, finds that there is no interference with his freedom. These officials are not only recognized by law, but are in no sense tyrants in their exercise of office.

(1) Retractation p. 29f.  
(2) Ibid pp. 29f.  
(3) Ibid p. 55f.  
(4) Ibid pp. 59-63  
(5) Ibid pp. 56ff.
These seem strange arguments to come from the pen of Robert Browne. However, they are not so inconsistent with his previous ideas as at first appears. He had always contended that faith originated through hearing God's word proclaimed. This was the driving power behind his demand for worthy preachers. At some time, then, he must have been confronted by the question, "How did Luther and the other early Reformers receive their faith?" Granting his first contention that preaching is the primary source of faith, there could be no denying that those who started the Reformation must have received their faith from preachers who were committed to various erroneous views and practices. If God had used erring men as his spokesmen, he could still do so.

Probably the full force of this argument struck Browne during the months of imprisonment, immediately after the Answere to Cartwright was published. It dealt a fatal blow to his self-confident denunciation of the English churches. His Answere had admitted that not all of those churches should be condemned. Now, however, his own argument had turned upon him, and had become a defence of Cartwright and other "tolerating preachers." He might still disagree profoundly with the remedy they advocated; but he could no longer denounce their toleration.

Browne had not been in the habit of admitting
that he might be wrong. When the logic of his argument exposed the fallacy of his own former position, it must have been a most unsettling experience. If his judgment had been so far mistaken in the case of the preachers, what about the Bishops? Some such mood of self-questioning must have taken possession of him with the result that he was persuaded to subscribe to Whitgift. He must admit that the Bishops were legally constituted officials. Therefore he would have to offer his obedience, however reluctantly.

The decision quite obviously aroused no enthusiasm in him. The most he could bring himself to do, in the way of defending the Bishops, was to ask rhetorically what great sin there might be in acknowledging their authority. It is a feeble plea for them under any circumstances, especially so from a man capable of such vigorous expression as characterized Browne’s writing when he was genuinely convinced. It seems clear that he was far from persuaded himself. Whitgift might require him to submit to his authority but he could not make him believe in it. At heart, Browne was still convinced that the Church should be superior to any of its officers.

This conclusion is verified in Browne’s letter to his uncle. Having been asked to discuss Elders and Presbyterians, his attack was directed against Presbyterianism.
Nevertheless, his argument was far from what might be expected of an orthodox apologist for the Church of England. He admitted that to express all of his opinions would get him into trouble. His references to Elders and Doctors might have applied to Bishops equally well. Under the circumstances, he expressed himself with extraordinary freedom, indicating a continued conviction that the basis of church government should be democratic, even though he was now prepared to put this democracy under the supervision of the magistrates. A reading of the letter makes it seem increasingly surprising that Bancroft should have quoted from so unorthodox a statement. Had the letter been available to the reading public, Bancroft would scarcely have cared to call attention to it, even for the sake of discomfitting the Presbyterians.

Browne contends in the letter, that antichrist has already come, and that he is made known by the obsession for rank and title, which dominates many people in the churches. To use names taken from the Scriptures makes no difference, when once they are legally established. Forthwith, the individual possessing such legal sanction becomes

(1) A New Years Gifft p. 36
(2) Page 155f above.
(3) A New Years Gifft pp. 23ff.
worse than a Pope himself. The truth is, and always has been, that Christ is greater than the Church, and the Church is much greater than any individual in it. Elders deserve the name when their years and gifts justify it, so that it makes no real difference whether they have the title or not. To establish them in their tasks by laying on of hands becomes mere superstition.

Chief authority belongs to the magistrates. Under their supervision those who are sound as to doctrine should have freedom to choose or to remove their officers, as well as freedom to make complaints in proper and seemly manner. Those chosen should be ordained in the name of the Church, without the necessity of having the Bishop officiate at the ordaining. The Church should be under the guidance of a Preacher, a Teacher, and duly selected advisers.

The existence of a true Church depends upon recognition of a number of essential rights, the principal effect of which is to assure freedom for the expression and practice of religion and the right to purge the church body of those persons and influences which might degrade it. Opportunities for mutual

(1) A New Years Gift pp. 25-27 (2) Ibid pp. 27-29
(3) Ibid pp. 29 and 43f. (4) Ibid pp. 30-32
edifying, the right to determine who shall be ministers, and the holding of regular, weekly inquiries for the exercise of proper Christian discipline are all included in this programme.

Browne's subscription was commonly regarded as an abandoning of his original teachings, and as we have already seen, it was deplored as such by those who held to those theories. It is now apparent, however, that even as Bredwell charged at the time, Browne had changed his views far less than was generally realized. He remained, at heart, a believer in democratic polity as the ideal for the Church, even though experience showed that it might have to be curtailed in practice. The legal authorizing of church officials seemed to him to be always a mistake, and although he submitted to the Bishop as a legally empowered official, it was always a grudging acquiescence which he made. Episcopacy aroused no enthusiasm in him, nor did Presbyterianism. The polity in which he really believed was far more nearly what we know as Congregationalism.

(1) A New Year's Gift pp. 36-43.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Browne as Theologian

Browne was best known to his contemporaries, as well as to posterity, through his teachings about the Church. We know that he was deeply disturbed over the condition of the Church, and that his proposed remedy was offensive to most of those who took the problem seriously. Of these, there were many, including the Queen. Elizabeth could remain relatively unmoved by doctrinal controversies, but the question of conformity appeared to her to be extremely important. In this respect she both influenced and reflected public sentiment. Had Browne wished to propagate unorthodox opinions on theological matters he might possibly have done so with impunity, if at the same time he had taken care to be outwardly conformable. The fact that he has no particular fame as a theologian does not necessarily indicate anything more than an apathy to such matters among the Englishmen of his time.

When one reads Browne's writings, he sees that Browne regarded himself as a theologian of importance. His first book consisted originally of two portions. While those who read it were usually most deeply impressed by

(1) See Chapter One, above.
"A Treatise of Reformation," to Browne this was not the significant part of his book. It was indeed little more than a Preface, the title of which appears only as a sort of after-thought in the book's full descriptive name. The portion of the book which Browne regarded most highly was "A Booke Which Sheweth." In his opinion, this should profoundly influence the religious thought of his day. As though to make the point even more clear, he wrote "A Treatise Vpon the 23. of Matthewe" to be included in the later copies of his book. The whole first portion of it was a defence of his own method of dealing with doctrinal questions. One cannot read it without being conscious that Browne considered his theological method fully as important, in its way, as anything he might say about the Church.

Browne had no patience with the reverence shown to formal rhetoric and logic in the Universities. To him such study seemed both a waste of time and a hindrance to true religion. All that resulted was a spirit of pedantry and a misguided enthusiasm for assumed erudition. If men were to know religious truth they must be freed from such fetters. Pretentious learning, such as he saw being displayed in certain prominent pulpits, filled him with scorn. God reveals truth through simple, straightforward means, not by artificial devices and elaborate rules. Of this
Browne was certain; and he forthwith proceeded to expose not only the uselessness but the ludicrous folly of such solemn pretence.

The proper method of discovering or discerning truth, according to Browne, is based on two principles. First, we must realize that the chief source of knowledge for us is the Scriptures. In them can be found all that is essential for us to know regarding both doctrine and practice. In the second place, straightforward common sense, which moves step-by-step along the way, is the means by which we may best understand and interpret what we find in the Scriptures. Naturally, it is necessary to know the language in which the books are written, and to know the meaning of the particular terms employed. Nevertheless, such technical knowledge is of no avail unless it is accompanied by good sense and understanding, instead of complicated rules and hair-splitting definitions.

Such was Browne's opinion of proper theological method. In practice he may be said to have tried faithfully to carry out his own precepts. If his writings seem impractical, or if his teachings do not arouse

(1) 23 of Matthewe Sig D2 verso - F2 verso.
(2) Ibid. See also Browne's letter to Burghley, in Appendix.
a response in us, it is not because he indulged in schola-
tic abstractions, or insisted upon using archaic or arti-
ficial expressions and phrases. It is, indeed, astonish-
ing to discover how relatively modern are the presentation
and expression of his doctrinal statements.

Our difficulty in accepting what he writes is
more likely to be the result of two factors which would
not have been criticized in his day, and which have many
followers to-day. It is obvious that Browne, in keeping
with contemporary practice, used the Scriptures without
any thought of discrimination or interpretation, in the
sense which is familiar to us. He had a knowledge of the
Bible which enabled him to make profuse reference to inci-
dents and texts that might support his various statements.
We find also that he cited Old and New Testaments with
equal emphasis and with applications which now and then
seem fantastic to us, but were not likely to be objected
to in his day. His frequent and unhesitating use of inci-
dents in the early history of the Jewish nation, in order
to justify his contentions with regard to the churches in
England, is but one type of such indiscriminate reliance
(1) upon Scriptural proof-texts. Again, his enthusiasm for

(1) A Treatise of Reformation p. 26f, and Answere to Cart-
wright, p. 18f, are two illustrations of this point.
See, also, Cartwright's letter p. 290 above.
allegory as a method of Biblical interpretation led him into statements which are sometimes meaningless to us, and at other times appear simply absurd. The linking of literalism and allegory produced such futile results as his claim that the marks on certain herring fish prove "the kings of the east" mentioned in Revelation to be really the Protestant rulers in Europe, and that they will soon overthrow Antichrist, who is well-known to be the Pope. It is only fair to Browne to admit that he was neither the first person, nor the last, to employ these methods of dealing with Scripture. We may not share his interest in them, but we must agree that they are preferable to the sort of rhetoric and logic which he so mercilessly exposed. At least he tried to apply the method of sound reason and practical common sense to the working out of a system of theology. The main features of that system may be found in all of his Middleburgh writings, but especially in "A Booke Which Sheweth."

GOD. God's nature is seen to be unity in trinity, made manifest in the Godhead. God's attributes are included in two main classifications: all-sufficiency and

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 64-81
(2) A New Years Guift, p. 35.
holiness. His all-sufficiency is manifest in might, majesty, power, and supremacy. His holiness is to be seen in wisdom which knows, sees, plans and predestines all things, in righteousness and justice which he shows in all his works and dealings with us, and in grace and goodness which characterize his providence and his redeeming love.

(1) God's purpose is that all should obey him. To this end he particularly calls the Church. He accomplishes his purpose through knowledge, mercy, love, will, counsel, foresight, choosing, predestining, and saving.

God's way of salvation is to plant and gather churches under one kind of government. With each church he makes covenant to be the God and Saviour of the people in it, and of their seed as well, so long as they abide by the covenant. In the fulfilling of this covenant, he sends his Spirit and receives the people of the Church through their repentance. The seal of the covenant with the Church is baptism. God then receives those who pledge themselves to him, into one communion of Grace through Christ's covenant.

CHRIST. In his person, Christ is the incarnation of God, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 4 to 26.
(2) 23 of Matthewe, Sig. F3
(3) Ibid F4 verso; A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 36, 37, 39.
Virgin Mary. As a man, he endured the wrath due unto man, and continues to suffer through his members, which are his people and Church. By accepting this burden, even though free of any blame for himself, he takes away God's wrath. By rising again he has overcome the misery and the condemnation. Thus he has obtained redemption, justification, and happiness for us, as well as happiness for himself.

Christ's purpose is to save those whom he has predestined. This purpose of salvation he accomplishes by means of mediation, intercession, redemption, justification, and sanctification, on our behalf. We on our part must do our share by attending to his instruction, his correction, his rebuke, his command of separation, and his call to happiness.

Christ's method of salvation is apparent in the Churches. These he plants and gathers in order that the consciences of those who are called may lead them into it. He is the High Priest, Prophet, King, and Lord of the Church. In carrying out these various functions, he secures salvation for the Church while at the same time he establishes proper discipline within the Church. By covenant he agrees to do his part, on

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 27-35.
(2) 23. of Matthewe, Sig. F4 verso.
condition that the Church shall maintain the discipline he has established. The seal of this covenant is the Lord's Supper.

**THE CHURCH.** The Church is Christ's visible body, established on his express command for the threefold purpose of preaching his word, ministering his sacraments, and reforming lives into obedience to his will. The last named purpose is the proof of the fulfilment of the others, since both are vain unless they result in reformed lives. A Church, therefore, exists whenever two or three, or more, are gathered together in willing covenant with Christ, and with lives rendered obedient to him. As integral parts of his Church, they have the power of the keys, being commissioned by him to bind and loose on earth whatever is bound and loosed in heaven.

Contrary to a common but mistaken view of the Church, its essence is not faith in Christ. Christ is its life; and faith is a means by which the Church is built; but the essence of the Church is the government and discipline of Christ. If these are lacking, then

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(2) Answere to Cartwright, pp. 9-14.
Christ is not truly the Church's life, but is made a mere idol. The Church must render obedience to Christ or else cease to be his Church. The presence of an individual Christian cannot justify a congregation of hypocrites. Having forfeited the covenant, they are bound in heaven, and cannot be loosed on earth.

**BAPTISM.** The Church is founded by covenant and seal. The members must publicly confess God's laws, having given themselves and their households to be his people. The seal of this covenant is baptism, which must be performed with due decorum and solemnity. The persons baptized are presented to God and the Church. They are received for baptism through their own choice, or through that of faithful parents acting on behalf of children of tender years. Baptism may be by washing, dipping, or sprinkling, and must be properly accompanied by preaching. It is of no avail, unless the person baptized abides by the covenant. Baptism has meaning only as the symbol of a covenant, and is no guarantee of the validity of a Church, since this is a matter which depends entirely upon the respecting of the covenant.

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(1) *Answere to Cartwright*, pp. 6ff, 33–35.

(2) *A Booke Which Sheweth*, Nos. 36–43; 23 of Matthewe, Sig. H2 verso.
THE LORD'S SUPPER. The Church is sustained by communion of the graces and offices in Christ and the Church, of which the Lord's Supper is the seal. Christ's salvation of the Church is contingent upon the maintaining of his appointed government and discipline. The Lord's Supper being the sign or seal of this mutual agreement, the Church must take care that it is not abused. The unworthy must be separated, lest their presence at the communion should defile all. Those who remain must then be sure that any offences among them are redressed, and that their consciences are clear. If they are thus fittingly prepared, the gospel shall be rightly preached and applied, and the bread and the cup shall then be distributed according to Scriptural usage, and with great solemnity. Afterwards there must be prayer of thanksgiving and of self-dedication. What was said of baptism applies here as well. The sacrament is a symbol, having no inherent power to make any people Christians if they have not fulfilled their part of the agreement with Christ.

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 44, 59-63; 23 of Matthewe, Sig H2 verso; Answere to Cartwright, pp. 69ff.
FAITH. Faith is "a conscience of our redemption & hapines in Christ, whereby we Wholie yield vp our selues vnto hi in all newness of life." It originated only through hearing the word of God preached. Such preaching need not be formal preaching in a church service. It may be the speaking and teaching of truth at home, or anywhere else. The only necessity is that there shall have been some one called of God to declare his truth in spoken words. When, as sometimes happens, a person seems to have received faith through the reading of the Scriptures, what has actually happened is that God's spirit within him has been stirred by what was read. Since every person has at least some degree of the divine spirit within him, this may happen in a number of different circumstances, but it is not the birth of faith. Only hearing can produce faith, although reading may promote and nurture it.

Another indication of faith as distinct from God's spirit is the result which comes from it. The spirit in a man may remain so completely hidden that its presence is scarcely suspected. Not so faith. It must bear its witness in altered lives and good deeds.

(1) True and Short Declaration, Sig B-B2.
If faith is not apparent, it is not present; for true faith cannot be hid and will not hide itself.

This is not to say that good works justify the unredeemed. The teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees that salvation was by the law was, even at its worst, qualified by the provision that the law must be kept without any infractions, while they acknowledged our common sinfulness and need of God's mercy. So we know that works alone cannot justify us. However, the absence of right works proves one to be condemned, since faith is of such a nature that it cannot exist without finding appropriate expression in deeds.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. The Christian must of necessity find that his religion affects his life in the three varieties of relationship which are inescapable. The first of these involves his relations with God. Being in covenant with him, the Christian must mortify and humble himself, in affliction and repentance, before he can be raised and quickened with newness of life. Thereupon, he owes the duties of religion and

(1) True and Short Declaration, Sig B-B2. Also Answere to Cartwright, p. 7f.

(2) Answere to Cartwright, pp. 60ff.
holiness to God, fearing, honouring, loving and trusting him, while serving him with zeal and faithfulness.
There are duties of worship which necessitate sincerity, forbid formal liturgies and set prayers, and require effective preaching. The Christian will also further God's kingdom by engaging in special acts of worship, by edifying, rebuking, and exhorting, by reverently taking oath in God's name, by using lots to ascertain the divine will, and by having Church meetings.

The second class of relationship is that of the Christian with his fellowmen. If he is endowed with appropriate gifts, is called of God, and is duly chosen by others, he may occupy a position of authority. In such case, he has the obligation of ruling with justice and wisdom, being jealous for the right, and faithful in example. If he is one of those who are being ruled, he must, as a Christian, owe certain obligations of respect, honour and obedience to whoever is over him. In addition, he always owes to others the duty of proper appreciation, respect, and goodwill, which may be expressed by various kinds of counsel and assistance.

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 82-111; True and Short Declaration, Sig. B4-C.
(2) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 112-163.
The third type of relationship affected by one's religious obligations is that of personal dealings. The Christian must use his state and conditions to increase whatever is good, honourable and pure. Especially will he be guided and controlled by religious purposes and obligations in the matter of matrimony, making sure that his marriage, and all that leads to it and results from it, shall be governed by righteousness and sobriety. Finally, he will realize that every aspect of his life is related to his duties as a Christian. In commercial or business affairs, in household matters, and in every sort of association, he will deal with uprightness, simplicity, and incorruptible good faith.

It is clear that Browne's attitude towards theology was fundamentally practical. He did not deal confidently with abstractions. Metaphysics did not interest him; and his writing in this respect reveals neither originality nor force. Spiritual religion interested him, in the sense that he believed every Christian should be in personal relationship with God; for that reason, prescribed liturgies and ritual services were distasteful to him. On the other hand, there was nothing about his religious attitude which even broad definition could

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, Nos. 164-185.
describe as mystical. His observations on the various doctrines were directed towards activity rather than contemplation. Theology was important to him, not for its own sake, but for its bearing upon man's necessities and obligations. According to the spirit of his writings, the very test of doctrine would be the consequences which proceed from it in conduct.

It will be remembered that Bredwell accused Browne of advocating justification by works. Browne would never admit such a charge; it was, in fact, untrue. Bredwell's contention has some point to it, however, when we see the insistence with which Browne stressed the practical results of faith. He did not actually identify faith and works, but he made it clear that faith cannot be genuine without works. Though discipline may not be all that a Church requires, it is an inescapable necessity. Its absence condemns the group as being no true Church.

The difference between Browne's teaching and Anabaptism has already been referred to in connection with the question of Church and State. Doctrinal differences may also be noted in what has been given immediately above. Walker points out that Browne's early teachings

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(1) See pp. 146 and 148 above.
regarding separation, the evil of waiting for the magistrate, the independence and democratic polity of each congregation, and the voluntary nature of membership in the Church, all bear close resemblances to Anabaptist teachings. When Walker then proceeds to indicate differences, even on these very questions, we see that the similarity is not so profound as at first appears. We have discussed in preceding chapters the questions of separation, of attitude to magistrates, and the proper constitution of the Church. We may now note that although Browne approached the Anabaptist's view of baptism as a mere symbol, he rejected their essential teaching of believer's baptism; he not only allowed oaths, but regarded them as a possible means of paying special honour to God; he plainly did not teach non-resistance; and he did not consider civil office incompatible with a Christian profession.

It seems much more in accord with the evidence in hand if we say simply that Browne's theology was based upon the commonly agreed Reformation doctrines of his time. The same is true of other contemporary movements in Protestantism, all of which reveal many similarities. Having been brought up in circles where

(1) A Booke Which Sheweth, No. 40
(2) Ibid No. 110.
(3) Ibid No. 164
(4) Ibid Nos. 117 and 118.
Puritan ideas were favoured, it was natural that Browne's doctrinal views should be predominantly Calvinistic. As we saw in Part One, even the heads of the English Church (1) were Calvinists in theology.

At the same time, it is evident that Browne had his own characteristic way of dealing with even commonly agreed matters. He was impatient of traditionalism, whether in educational methods, in Church government, or in the expression of doctrines. He had no hesitation in denouncing either Aristotle or the early Church theologians, and he was equally ready to reject the authority of Calvin, Beza, or the Bishops. This quality of independence, expressing itself in revolt against any authority which sought to impose itself upon him, was interpreted as arrogance by those who disliked him. We must admit that the term does describe his manner. At the same time, we may properly point out that it led him to practise a freedom in dealing with matters of doctrine, which was a true contribution to theological thought in his day. The content of what he taught may not have been particularly original,

(1) See pp. 17, 21, 27, above.

(2) The first sections of the "Treatise upon the 23. of Matthewe" shows this clearly.

(3) See pp. 101, 114, 119, 158, 175, above.
but its manner of expression helped to emphasize his conviction that Christian belief must bear fruit in life, and should affect the whole scope of a relationship into which the Christian enters.

A complete discussion of Browne's theology requires that we take note of his last two writings. In most respects, we may assume that he held to his earlier opinions. However, the necessity of defending his change of attitude towards the Church of England forced him to make certain declarations which are quite incompatible with his former assertions. He had previously insisted that no one who practised or tolerated any wickedness could either know or declare God's word. This was the point to which he repeatedly returned in his "Answere to Cartwright." As we saw in our preceding chapter, the necessity of accounting for the faith of the Reformers, compelled him finally to admit that misguided men may beget faith by their preaching. The result was destructive of his confidence concerning the preachers whom he had declared to be evil. It also compelled him to revise what he had to say about faith.

He ceases to say that faith without works is dead. In place of such an assertion, he now points out that faith is always true and effective. The only difficulty is that man is by nature corrupt, and never can be perfect so long as he remains man. Thus, his evil nature
may paralyze the good works which his faith tries to perform, and it is unfair to judge anyone on the basis of his misdeeds and failures alone.

Concerning the nature of faith, he has an additional and important declaration to make. Faith, he says, is of two degrees. First is common faith, which originates with hearing God's truth spoken by someone whom God uses for the purpose. This is essential, since we could not even read understandingly unless we had first been told the meaning of the words. Common faith, however, may fall short of what is needed. It must be followed by justifying faith. This second degree of faith may come by hearing or it may come by reading.

Another distinction is that of the inward and outward man. In conversion, the inward man must first be reformed. Through preaching he enters inwardly the Kingdom of God. Whether the preacher be worthy or unworthy, himself, makes no difference. Afterwards, he who has become inwardly a member of the invisible kingdom may outwardly enter the outward kingdom.

(1) Retractation, pp. 16–21.
(2) Ibid, pp. 31 ff.
(3) Ibid, pp. 35–42.
Concerning God's grace, Browne insists that it may operate in the most unlikely persons. Every good deed, whoever performs it, is a deed of grace. It may indicate this by convicting the conscience of the sinful person who has performed the deed and so has been used by God as the instrument of his purpose. If a preacher who is sinful is used by God for the preaching of his truth, then he is an instrument in the overthrowing of antichrist, and may not truly be called a minister of antichrist. The spirits of grace and delusion may, in fact, be in the same person; and it is a vile error to say that they cannot be.

There can be no doubt that in the "Reprooфе" Browne is a great deal more tolerant and more broad-minded than previously. At the same time, even one who may have felt little sympathy with his intemperate manner of writing in the Middleburgh period must feel a certain regret as he reads the "Reprooфе." The earlier intolerance is lacking; but so is the passionate conviction. One feels that Browne has taken a step without being truly convinced. Though he may defend himself, it is as though he could think of nothing better than double negatives for his defence. He is not certain that his present position is right. He has

(1) Retraction pp. 11f, 19, 22-25, 44f, 51ff, 63.
merely come to feel that it cannot be proved to be wrong. The difference between these two attitudes is much more significant than may at first appear.

As a consequence of this change, we may note Browne's altered conception of faith. He so thoroughly weakens the effect of what he formerly wrote about the fruits of faith that he renders it almost void. We may justifiably protest that if faith is to be considered effective, regardless of whether it makes any changes in one's life, then it will need to be defined in terms quite different from those which Browne himself employed while he was at Middleburgh.

In much the same way, we may criticize his statements concerning preaching, and the spirit of Grace. Does he mean that since God can use even a corrupt spokesman, it is not particularly important whether the preacher's character is good or bad? This seems to be the implication of what he has written. We may welcome the fact that he shows a great increase in tolerance. But what about the urgent need for reform in the pulpit? It is not surprising that those who had followed his previous teachings were appalled at this surrender of principle. The question of God's grace leads to a similar conclusion. When Browne broadened his viewpoint so that he acknowledged
evidences of grace in even the most unregenerate, he cancelled the emphasis of his previous teachings.

The change to a broader basis of doctrine may be defended as indicating a much more charitable point of view. At the same time, the middle path, onto which Browne had moved, was a path of compromise. He surrendered all claim to leadership when he took this step. What he taught with respect to theology, had never been as significant as how he taught it. Now, with the decision to compromise, Browne's writing lost the boldness of manner, and the impatience with authority, which had constituted his greatest contribution to the discussion of theological matters.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Summary.

As we bring this study of Robert Browne to a close, we may profitably review the matters of principal significance which have come to our attention. Such a summary should begin with the reminder that our attempt to examine and evaluate Robert Browne as Churchman and Theologian has involved a consideration of the man himself, as well as his writings and his influence. The division of our study into three sections was indicated by the very nature of the material.

The historical portion began with a survey of the Elizabethan church problem in its first fifty years, and continued with a more detailed account of events during the first decade of Whitgift's primacy. The writer believes that this study of the Elizabethan Church presents a more balanced view of the conflicting forces than is to be found in most of the accounts examined, for many of them indicate a large degree of personal bias. The writer also believes that he has given the most probable answer to the question of why Whitgift accepted a submission from Robert Browne, when it must have been grudging at best, and almost certainly included a number of exceptions and qualifications.
With the general situation thus described, we then entered upon a careful study of Browne’s life.

So far as the writer knows, this is the first complete account of the life of Robert Browne to include all that is now known about him. In addition, it attempts to describe and to interpret the man’s motives, as far as they may be learned from his own record, and from the accounts written by others.

The picture which our study revealed was that of a man who had a clear and logical mind, and a strong will. He was led into a study of the church problem through disapproval of the abuses which he found to be tolerated in the Church of England. He became convinced that authority in the Church should be on an essentially democratic basis, and that membership in it should be the result of voluntary covenant between the individuals and God. His attempt to establish an ideal Church having failed, he finally made his submission to the Archbishop, and so ceased active opposition to the Established Church. The period of open revolt had lasted some ten to fifteen years. It came to an end when he was about thirty-five years of age, and was followed by more than forty-five years of conformity. For the last half of his long life, Robert Browne lived quietly in the rural parish of
Achurch-cum-Thorpe Waterville. He did not again disturb the peace of the Church at large; yet the evidence of his life shows that he still resented the claims of authority, and apparently still believed that voluntary church membership was better than a parochial system. When he died in 1633, it was after having been excommunicate for nearly two years because of insubordination.

The second portion of our study was taken up with a presentation of the main arguments to be found in the seven extant writings of Robert Browne. In each case, the various points were given in the order in which Browne developed them. Included in each chapter were frequent excerpts from Browne's text, so that both context and style might be clearly shown. The writer believes that this section of the study is of particular value, because it offers a more comprehensive summary of Browne's writings than is to be found in any available book.

The third portion consisted of two chapters on Browne's attitude to the Church, and one chapter on Browne as a theologian. The writer has tried to evaluate Browne as Churchman and Theologian on the basis of the evidence presented in the previous parts of this study. Indications are given for thinking that in certain respects Browne's reputation exceeded the man's own intention or achievement, whereas in other ways it has been less than
he deserved. In the writer's opinion, the evidence shows that Browne came closer to the views of Congregationalism than to any other polity; that he reached these conclusions by a process of reasoning which was substantially his own; and that although he has been commonly credited with teaching the independence of Church from State, he did so without really meaning to do so, and without pursuing the subject as he would have done, had it been a real conviction with him. As a theologian, Browne was essentially a Calvinist, although he imparted his own characteristic touch to his expression of doctrinal views. His chief value as a Theologian is less what he wrote, than how he wrote it. His contribution in this respect was an independence of spirit and a practical, common-sense method of approach. As a theologian he did his part in helping to rescue theology from bondage to traditional and highly conventionalized forms.

Robert Browne was a man with his full share of human frailties. At the same time, he was possessed of intellectual tenacity and independence of spirit, which made his contribution to English-speaking Protestantism important far beyond his own time. Present day Christians, who take religious freedom and the idea of individual worth in God's sight, for granted, owe more than is commonly realized to the sturdy and original mind of Robert Browne.
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When Thomas Gibson was arrested in 1582 as a party to the distribution of the books by Browne and Harrison he was already under suspicion because of an incident in the church of Bury St. Edmunds. Where the Queen's arms appeared on the wall, the following inscription had been started on either side of the arms:

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot.

Therefore because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, it will come to pass, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

This was started and then changed thus:

I know thy works, and thy patience and thy love, and thy works; and that they are more at the last than at the first.

And then followed:

Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, which maketh herself a prophetess, to teach and to deceive my servants; to make them commit fornication, and to eat meat sacrificed unto idols.
It was found on examination that the first sentence was put up by order of "Thos. Gybson, a bookbinder in Bury".

(1) Strype: Annals III, p. 176f. Powicke: Browne, p. 22, says that it was Bancroft who first noticed this inscription, when preaching at Bury St. Edmunds at the time of the assizes in 1583.
II. The Correspondence Between Burghley and Whitgift in July 1584.
(relative to the Articles of Examination)

This exchange of letters is extensively quoted by both Fuller and Strype. According to Strype, Fuller's version is "very corrupt, by interpolations, defalcations, alterations, and omissions of words and sentences." A comparison of the two (in the 1842 edition of Fuller's Church History, and the 1822 edition of Strype's Whitgift) shows that the differences between them are not of a serious nature, so far as our present purpose is concerned. The following summary, which does not attempt to be a complete copy, gives the substance of the correspondence from the modernized version in the later edition of Fuller, with certain corrections by Strype duly noted.

The exchange began after Burghley had recommended two men from Cambridge to Whitgift. They returned to him with complaints about severe treatment at the Archbishop's hands. This prompted Burghley to write his first letter of protest on 1st July 1584.

Burghley wrote that he had received many complaints about "your Grace's proceedings, so vehement and so general against ministers and preachers; as the papists are thereby greatly encouraged, and all evil-disposed persons amongst the subjects animated, and

(1) Strype: Whitgift I p. 316.
thereby the queen's Majesty's safety endangered." He had always replied that the archbishop sought only to avoid schism in the church, and that very few were proceeded against. His listeners had not always been satisfied, and now he himself was astonished to discover "an instrument of twenty-four articles of great length and curiosity, formed in a Romish style, to examine all manner of ministers in this time without distinction of persons." Having heard from Whitgift that the two curates whom he recommended were "contentious, seditious, and persons vagrant", he had reproved them sharply. They, denying the charge, asked to be examined. Thereupon he had sent them to the archbishop, supposing they would be justly treated. But they informed him that they were required to swear in answer to a mass of charges which they were not allowed to see, and which were so confusing that they dared not answer for fear of getting themselves into further trouble. He had then sent for the articles of examination, and found them "so curiously penned, so full of branches and circumstances, that I think the Inquisitions of Spain use not so many questions to comprehend and to entrap their preys. I know your canonists can defend these with all their particles. But surely under your Grace's correction, this juridical and canonical siftener of poor ministers, is not to edify and reform. And, in charity, I think they ought not to answer all these nice points, except they were very notorious offenders in papistry or heresy... I desire the peace of the church... concord and unity in the exercise of our religion.... But... according to my simple judgement, this kind of proceeding is too much savouring the Romish Inquisition, and is rather a device to seek for offenders than to reform any."

Whitgift replied on 3rd July, saying that he had kept Burghley well acquainted with what he did. He never bothered anyone for mere failure to subscribe, but only for violation of the law's strict requirements. General, vague complaints he ignored, being sure that he could deal with specific charges. He believed his only fault was a too lenient policy toward offenders. It was far-fetched to say he encouraged papists, since he demanded obedience to the Prayer Book and Articles of Religion, both of which Rome condemned. The only way he might please the papists would be to let the laws of God and man be flouted. He understood, indeed, that the papists were aiding these offenders. Burghley's estimate of the articles offended and hurt him. They had been carefully framed to prevent injustice to the innocent. Where other courts might pry into any man's private life, these articles dealt only with the public practise of those who were pledged to follow specific rules. The two men
in question, especially Brown were chronic disturbers, whose unsupported claims he hoped Burghley would not honour as proof of his (Whitgift's) harshness. Even if a judge abused his powers, the fault would not be in the law. And in this case responsibility to an impartial judge was a check on even the harshest local register. As for himself, surely Burghley knew he would not persecute the innocent. Peace in the church must rest on discipline, which, in turn, must include adequate firmness with trouble-makers. His own conscience was clear of any acts except those required by the responsibility entrusted to him. He would justify her Majesty's confidence, caring not for "honor of the place (which is onus to me) nor the largeness of the revenues, nor any other worldly thing." Neither would he fear "the displeasure of man, nor the evil tongues of the uncharitable, who call me 'tyrant, pope, knave,' and lay to my charge things which I never thought." His duty being clear, he hoped Burghley would not interfere with it, but would rather encourage him in it.

Burghley's reply, Fuller tells us, was said by some to have resulted from the fact that Whitgift's letter reached him during an attack of gout. He said the archbishop was trying to clear himself by blaming him. He had no wish to interfere with the punishment of offenders. "Your Grace promised me to deal, I say, only with such as violated order, and to charge them therewith, which I allow well of. But your Grace, not charging them with such faults, seeketh by examination to urge them to accuse themselves; and then I think you will punish them. I think your Grace's proceeding is, I will not say 'rigorous or captious', but I think it is scant charitable. I have no leisure to write more, and therefore I will end; for writing will but increase offence, and I mean not to offend your Grace. I am content that your Grace, and my Lord of London, where I hear Brown (Brayne) is, use him as your wisdoms shall think meet. If I had known his fault, I might be blamed for writing for him; but when by examination only it is meant to sift him with twenty-four articles, I have cause to pity the poor man." (2)

What Fuller calls "The Archbishop's calm Letter to the half-angry Treasurer" was written 15th July. Whitgift asked if it was in vain that he had been at pains always to consult Burghley at every step. Surely the Lord Treasurer

(1) Strype says Fuller is in error; the man's name was Brayne.

(2) Hanbury I p. 22 says this letter was written 17th July, which must be an error if Fuller is correct in giving 15th July as the date of Whitgift's reply.
would never have suffered such insubordination as the two men in question had practised. He had broken no promise, since he could have deprived the men simply for failure to subscribe, instead of taking extra steps to please Burghley. He would not even honor with a denial the slander that he was trying to imitate Popish usage. "There is a difference betwixt wilfulness and constancy. I have taken upon me the defence of the religion and rights of the Church of England . . . wherein your lordship and others (all things considered) ought in duty to assist and countenance me. It is strange that a man in my place, dealing by so good warranties as I do, should be so encountered; and, for not yielding, to be counted wilful. But I must be contented: Vincit qui patitur; and if my friends forsake me herein, I trust God will not, neither the law, nor her Majesty who hath laid the charge on me, and are able to protect me." Expressing regret that Burghley should hint that the men were treated more harshly because he sent them, he hoped that the witness of two "so meanly qualified in so evil a cause" should not destroy their long friendship. He was sending a complete statement of his policy and practise. "I desire no further defence in these occasions, neither of your lordship nor any other, than justice and law will yield unto me. In my own private affairs, I know I shall stand in need of friends especially of your lordship; of whom I have made always an assured account. But in these public actions, I see no cause why I should seek for friends; seeing they to whom the care of the commonwealth is committed ought of duty, therein to join with me."
III. Concerning Puritan Patrons.

Throughout the Elizabethan church controversy an important factor in the determining of policies was the considerable support given to the Puritans by certain persons in high station. The subject is broad enough, and sufficiently documented to warrant a volume or two if one were to discuss it at all adequately. Without attempting more than a few quotations by way of illustration, we may, however, indicate a few facts concerning the problem as it was seen from the opposing points of view. It is hoped that these glimpses will suffice to illustrate both the extent and importance of Puritan patronage in political and ecclesiastical affairs.

The strong Puritan party at Court was usually considered to be led by the Earl of Leicester, who was regarded by the Puritans as their foremost champion. In political circles, however, Leicester's motives were frequently regarded as open to suspicion. In 1567 Sussex, regretting Leicester's opposition to the proposed marriage of Elizabeth to the Archduke Charles, wrote:

"If Protestants be but only Protestants! but if some have a second intent which they cloak with religion, and place be given to their counsel, God defend the Queen with His mighty hand." (1)

(1) Quoted by Neale p. 154.
Another radical leader was Walsingham, who was about Elizabeth's age, and was related to her through his step-father. Neale calls him "the embodiment of the crusading spirit." Fuller says, "Amongst all the favourers of the Presbyterians, surely honesty and wisdom never met more than in sir Francis Walsingham."

Naturally, the champions of the Church have not been so ready to acclaim the Puritan supporters as heroes. Peter Heylyn, whose "Aerius Redivivus" in 1670 sought to expose Presbyterian iniquities, referred in caustic terms to the Puritan patrons of the previous century. He tells in disgust how Knollys arranged for both French and Dutch refugees to maintain Presbyterian churches in London in 1565, and how Leicester, Cecil, and others on the Privy Council joined him in protecting Presbyterianism in the Channel Islands, even though it was forbidden in England. He names those who connived at encouraging Puritan disobedience in 1568:

(1) Neale p. 227f.
(2) Fuller III p. 57.
(3) Peter Heylyn: "Aerius Redivivus: or the History of Presbyterianism, etc." Oxford 1670 p. 250 f. Heron, p.126f uses the incident as proving how Elizabeth used religion for political ends.
(4) Heylyn p. 252.
"It cannot be denied but that this faction received much encouragement under hand from some great persons near the Queen; from no man more than from the Earl of Leicester, the Lord North, Knollis, and Walsingham; who knew how mightily some members of the Scots, both Lords and Gentlemen, had in short time improved their fortune by humoring the Knoxian Brethren in their Reformation."

Referring to Cartwright's incorrigibility (as he considers it) he tells how the plan was carried through to give Walter Travers a Presbyterian ordination in the Channel Islands, after which both men returned to England and were shown various favours:

"And now at last they are for England, where Travers puts himself into the service of the Lord Treasurer Burleigh, by whose Recommendation he is chosen Lecturer of the Temple Church; which gave him opportunity for managing all affairs which concerned the Discipline with the London Ministers. Cartwright applies himself to the Earl of Leicester by whom he is sent down to Warwick, and afterwards made Master of an Hospital of his Foundation. In the chief Church of which Town he was pleased to preach, as often as he could dispense with his other business."

Heylyn then goes on to charge that although Cartwright promised to keep the peace, he actually used every opportunity to undermine the established order.

Support of the Puritans by influential leaders was a frequent source of anxiety to the bishops. In Parker's primacy, Sandys, then Bishop of London, wrote to Burghley and Leicester, lamenting the difficulty in securing preachers at Paul's Cross who would not "pour out the poison of sedition."

"The city will never be quiet, until these authors of sedition, who are now esteemed as gods, as Field, Wilcox, Cartwright and others be far removed from the City.

(1) Heylyn, p. 290f.

(2) Strype: Whitgift III pp. 32-5.
The people resort to them, as in Popery they were wont to run on pilgrimage . . . There be some Aldermen, and some wealthy citizens, which give them great and stout countenances; and persuade what they can, that others may do the like . . . Truly, my Lords, it is high time to lay to your hands, if you mind the good of God's Church, the safety of this State . . . I will do what I can . . . But I am too weak. Yea, if all of my calling were joyned together, we are too weak. Our estimation is little; our authority is less. So that we are become contemptible in the eyes of the basest sort of people. How or by what means, or who is in the fault, I will not dispute; but leave it to the Searcher of all hearts to judge.

"But, good my Lords, even for that reverence that you bear to the Almighty, even for that love that you bear to the Church of Christ, even for that duty which you bear unto her Majesty, and the safety of this her State; as God has called you in authority, and given you ability, so earnestly, prudently, and speedily resist these tumultuous enterprizes of these new fangled fellows and tumultuous people: and seek by what means you can, the peace of the Church, the tranquillity and safety of this realm. I could not in duty, but thus much to say unto your Lordships."

Since Burghley was to be interceding for Robert Browne within a decade, and since Browne's teachings made the ordinary Puritan teachings seem mild by comparison, it is obvious that the good Bishop's exhortation fell on inattentive ears. Indeed, Sir Christopher Hatton was for some time the only member of the Privy Council upon whose sympathy the ecclesiastical authorities could rely. To him, Whitgift wrote in 1583:

"I marvel how it should come to pass that the self-same persons will seem to wish peace and uniformity in the church, and to mislike of the contentious and

(1) Fuller III p. 48.
disobedient sort, yet cannot abide that anything should be done against them, wishing rather the whole ministry of the land to be discomfited and discouraged, than a few wayward persons (of no account in comparison) suppressed and punished. Men in executing the laws according to their duties were wont to be encouraged and backed by such; but now it falleth out clean contrary. Disobedient, wilful persons (I will term them no worse) are animated, laws contemned, her Majesty's will and pleasure little regarded, and the executors thereof in word and deed abused. Howbeit these overthwarts grieve me, yet, I thank God, they cannot withdraw me from doing that duty in this cause, which I am persuaded, that God himself, her Majesty, the laws, and the state of this church and commonwealth, do require of me."

An outstanding instance of Puritan sympathy among those in high station is seen in the case of Sir Nicholas

(1) An outstanding instance of Puritan sympathy among those in high station is seen in the case of Sir Nicholas and the Lady Ann Bacon. Sir Nicholas, born in 1509, was graduated B.A. from Corpus Christi College in 1526, after which he studied law at Gray's Inn. Archbishop Cranmer wrote of him that he was "of such towardness in the law, and of so good judgement touching Christ's religion, that he would be able to do God and the king right and acceptable service." During Mary's reign he lived at St. Alban's, where he had helped to found the Free Grammar School, and where he could be watched by orders of the queen who said, "he had great wit of action, and might foster the Protestant plots." When Elizabeth came to the throne, she made him Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and placed him and Cecil in supervision of church affairs. In 1562 and 1572 he spoke emphatically against superstitious practices in the church

(1) The following account of the Bacons is based on William Urwick: Nonconformity in Hertfordshire London 1854, pp. 78-96.
and deplored the lack of ministers qualified to preach and teach. In spite of the queen's opposition, he defended "Prophecying" as the finest discipline for training preachers "to handle the Word of God as it ought to be handled." When his chaplain, Robert Johnson, was suspended for nonconformity, Sir Nicholas retained him, and even presented him to a prebend in Norwich Cathedral, which he had in his gift.

Lady Ann Bacon, second wife of Sir Nicholas, and mother of Anthony and Francis, was a younger sister of Lady Margaret, Lord Burghley's talented second wife. These, and their three sisters, were "esteemed the most learned women in Europe." Urwick says that Sir Anthony Cook's five daughters and their husbands were "foremost among the illustrious Protestants of Elizabeth's reign ... a galaxy of Puritan patrons." Concerning Lady Ann, he quotes Dixon:

(1) Urwick p. 60 quotes Macaulay as writing of Sir Nicholas Bacon and Lord Burghley: "They placed themselves at the head of the Protestants of Europe, and staked all their fame and fortune on the success of their party." Such a declaration may apply to Sir Nicholas, but it certainly is a considerable exaggeration about Burghley, who was not only a man of great ability and of generally liberal mind, but also a statesman well skilled in sensing and doing the most expedient thing when confronted by a crisis. That fact helps to explain his long-enduring power, but it also removes him from any list of those who "staked all" on any party or principle. See Hume: The Great Lord Burghley London 1898, for a full account of him.

(2) His reference is W.H. Dixon: Personal Life of Lord Bacon p. 51.
"She is very pious; in the words of her son, 'a saint of God'. Not quite a Puritan herself, she feels a soft, womanish sympathy for men who live the Gospel they proclaim; brings up her sons in charity with all Protestant creeds; hears the preachers with profit; and without any air of patronage or protection towards them, speaks to her great kinsman, the lord treasurer, the word which spoken in season is quick to save."

The "word" of which Dixon writes, appears to have been a letter written in 1584, urging that the Puritans be given an opportunity to present their case impartially to the queen and the Council. For herself, she said that she had received more benefit from the sermons heard now and then in seven or eight years from Puritans, than from occasional sermons heard at Paul's Cross in the course of twenty

(1) years. It is also probable that she both sanctioned and financed the collection of Puritan documents known as "A Parte of a Register." If so, a letter, signed T.W. I.F. may be addressed to her. As an illustration of the feeling of those involved in the controversy of the time towards those of influence who helped them, the opening portion of that letter may profitably be quoted here:

(1) Urwick quotes the entire letter from Lansdowne MSS. 43 fol. 118. He considers it a major factor in prompting Burghley's protest against the 24 Articles, which we have discussed above.

(2) "A Parte of a Register", Edinburgh 1593, p. 528f.
The Copie of a Letter, with a confession of Faith, written by two faithfull servants of God, vnto an Honorable, and vertuous Ladie.

Grace and peace from God, &c.

We haue here (right Honorable) according to that smal skill which the Lorde hath giuen vs, accomplished your H. godly desire: That which we haue written, we haue written to this end, partly to testifie our readie and willing mindes vnto your good Ladiship, to whoso in many respects we acknowledge our selues very much bounde: and partly to cleare our selues of the vncharitable surmises, and slanderous reports, which haue with great vehemence been blown against vs. This our simple doing we offer vnto your Honor, most humbly (as dutie requireth) desiring you to take it in good part, and to vse the same in such sort, and to such ends and purposes, as to your Honor seemeth good. Our meaning is not by this our rude writing, to minister matter of instructi6 to your H. because we are perswaded that your Ladiship is alreadie fully instructed in the points & principles of Christian religion. Neither is it our purpose, to purge ourselves before you, as though your Honor had conceiued any suspition touching vs, that wee shoulde hold and maintain any error or heresie: for wee nothing at all doubt, yea many good an effectuall reasons lead us thereunto, that your Honor (whatsoever vnjust clamours and reportes, haue been spread abroad against vs) haue alwaies had this good opinion of vs, that we have been of sounde an sincere judgement in matters of Religion.
IV. Sir Walter Raleigh on Brownism.

When the Parliament of 1593 was considering the Conventicle Act, reducing "disloyal subjects to their due obedience", Sir Walter Raleigh spoke on 4th April, saying:

"In my conceit the Brownists are worthy to be rooted out of the commonwealth; but what danger may grow to ourselves if this law pass, it were fit to be considered. For it is to be feared that men not guilty will be included in it. And this law is hard that taketh life and sendeth into banishment, where men's intentions shall be judged by a jury, and they shall be judges what another means. But that law that is against a fact is but just; and punish the fact as severely as you will. If two or three thousand Brownists meet at the sea, at whose charge shall they be transported, or whither will you send them? I am sorry for it, I am afraid there are near twenty thousand of them in England and when they be gone, who shall maintain their wives and children?"

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(1) Hanbury I p. 34; Powicke: Henry Barrow, Separatist p. 62. Both quote D'Ewes Journals p. 516f. Hanbury says Raleigh was suspected of being "a free thinker"
V. Henry Barrow's Conversion.

The story of Barrow's conversion was related by (1) Bradford as follows:

"Walking in London one Lord's day with one of his companions, he heard a preacher very loud as they passed by the church. Upon which Mr. Barrowe said unto his consort, 'Let us go in and hear what this man saith that is thus in earnest.' 'Tush,' saith the other;' 'what! shall we go to hear a man talk?' But in he went, and sat down. And the minister was vehement in reproving sin, and sharply applied the judgements of God against the same; and, it should seem, touched him to the quick in such things as he was guilty of, so as God set it home to his soul, and began to work for his repentance and conviction thereby, for he was so stricken as he could not be quiet, until, by conference with godly men, and further hearing of the word, with diligent reading and meditation, God brought peace to his soul and conscience, after much humiliation of heart and reformation of life. So he left the Court and retired himself to a private life, some time in the country and some time in the city, giving himself to study and reading of the Scriptures and other good works very diligently; and being missed at Court by his consorts and acquaintances, it was quickly hinted abroad that Barrowe was turned Puritan."

(1) Mackennal p. 61 quotes from Waddington: Congregational Martyrs p. 66f.
VI. Excerpts from the Examination of Henry Barrow.

Barrow wrote an account of his examination by the Privy Council. He was on his knees before the members of the Council. Burghley began the examination:

"Treasurer: Why are you in prison, Barrowe?
B: I am in prison, my lord, upon the statute made for recusants.
T: Why will you not come to church?
B: My whole desire is to come to the church of God.
T: I see thou art a fantastical fellow. But why not come to our churches?
B: My lord, the causes are great and many: as
1. Because all the wicked in the land are received unto your communion.
2. You have a false and an antichristian ministry set over your church.
3. You do not worship God aright, but in an idolatrous and a superstitious manner.
   And, 4. Your church is not governed by the Testament of Christ, but by the Romish courts and canons."

There followed more discussion, including Barrow's explanation of why he believed that tithes were wrong, and that ministers should live by the free-will contributions of the church members. Then the examination turned to the question of the priesthood. Barrow's account of its

(1) Although Frere says this was after 13 March 1588, Mackennal p. 64 gives 18 June 1587 as the date.
conclusion is thus:

"As we were reasoning, the Ld. Chan. asked me if I knew not those two men (pointing to Cant. and Lond.)

B: Yes, my lord, I have cause to know them.

Lord. Chan. But what, is not this the Bishop of London?

B. I know him for no Bishop, my lord.

Lord Chanc. What is he then?

B. His name is Elmar, my lord. (The Lord pardon my fault, that I laid him not open for a wolf, a Bloody persecutor, and Apostate. But by this time the Warden's man plucked me up.)

Lord Chanc. What is that man (pointing to Cant. )?

B. The Lord gave me the spirit of boldness, so that I answered, 'He is a Monster, a miserable compound, I know not what to make him: he is neither Ecclesiastical nor Civil, even that second Beast spoken of in the Revelation.'

Lord Chanc. Where is that place? shew it.

B. So I turned to the 13th chapter and began at the 11th verse and read a little. Then I turned to 2 Thess. ii. But the beast, arose for anger, gnashing his Teeth, and said, 'will you suffer him, my lords?' So I was plucked up the Warden's man from my knees, and carried away. As I was departing, I desired the Lord Treasurer that I might have the liberty of the ayre, but had no answer; and I prayed the Lorde to blesse their honours."

(1) Taken from Mackennal pp. 64 ff. which quotes Barrow's account from Brook: Lives of the Puritans II pp. 25-38.

(2) Mackennal quotes Cooper ("Athen. Cant." II p. 153) as suggesting that Alymer was Barrow's uncle.

(3) Burghley's willingness to expose Whitgift to this attack suggests his personal distaste for the Primate's methods.
VII. A Contemporary Comment on the Hanging of Barrow and Greenwood.

An explanation of the Conventicle Act of 1593, together with a description of the popular interpretation of the hanging of Barrow and Greenwood is provided in a letter written by Thos. Philippes to Wm. Sterrell.

"A bill was preferred against the Barrowists and Brownists, making it felony to maintain any opinions against the Ecclesiastical government, which, by means of the bishops, passed the Upper House, but was found so captious by the Lower House, that it was thought that it never would have passed in any sort, and that all the Puritans would have been drawn within its compass, but by earnest labouring of those who sought to satisfy the bishop's humours, it is passed to this effect, that whoever is an obstinate recusant, refuses to come to church, and denies the Queen's power in ecclesiastical causes, or is a keeper of conventicles, being convicted, is to abjure the realm within three months, and lose all his goods and lands; if he return without licence, it shall be felony; they think that then it will not reach any man deserving favour.

"Barrowe and Mr. Goodman (sic), with others, condemned upon the statute for writing and publishing seditious books, were to have been executed last week, but as they were ready to be trussed up, they were respited; but the day after the Lower House had shewed their dislike of this bill, they were hanged early in the morning. The reprieve was through a supplication to the Lord Treasurer, that in a land where no papist was put to death for religion, theirs should not be the first blood shed who concurred about faith with what was professed in the country, and desired conference to be convinced of their errors. The Lord Treasurer spoke sharply to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was very peremptory, and also to the Bishop of Worcester, and

(1) Mackennal p. 74f. cites the letter from S.P. Dom. Eliz. ccxlv., quoting the Calendar.
wished him to speak to the Queen, but none seconded him. The executions proceeded through malice of the bishops to the Lower House, which makes them much hated by the people affected that way."
VIII. Concerning Richard Greenham of Dry Drayton.

Dexter discusses Greenham at some length, since he is convinced that the good opinion of such a man is distinctly favourable witness for Robert Browne. Dexter points to Greenham's "Apologie or Answere" (written ca. 1573) which Valdegrave included in "A Parte of A Register" in 1593. Greenham, having been commanded by the Bishop of Ely to subscribe, and to wear the vestments, replied that it was his "plaine, determinate and resolued purpose" that he "neyther can nor will, weare the apparrell, nor sub­scribe vnto it, or the communion booke." He was, it seems, a faithful and tireless worker. Dexter quotes the Harleian Manuscripts (6037:17) as relating how Greenham would preach three times on Sunday, and once a day on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, as well as catechizing the youth on Thursday. Further testimony about him is that he would be in his pulpit at daylight, in order that his farming parishioners might be able to come to church; that he kept only two beasts so that fodder due from his living might go to the poor; and that he habitually sold his straw at a low cost to the poor. Dexter also gives numerous cita­tions from "The Works of the Reverend and Faithfull Servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. Richard Greenham, Minister and

Preacher of the Word of God." These include passages showing his concern lest young men be driven by hunger "into the Ministerie, both vnseasonably and hurtfully," also his impatience with hypocrisy, his longing for reform, and his distress over the scandal of negligent pastors.

Fuller, who was capable of considerable mockery when writing of those whom he distrusted, dealt with Greenham in a spirit of sincere appreciation:

Of Dry Drayton, Fuller says, "... though often watered with Mr. Greenham's tears, and oftener with his prayers and preaching, who moistened the rich with his counsel, the poor with his charity neither produced proportionable fruitfulness."

"He always bitterly inveighed against non-residents; professing, that he wondered how such men could take any comfort in their wealth. 'For methinks,' saith he, 'they should see written on everything which they have, Pretium sanguinis, This is the price of blood. But his masterpiece was in comforting wounded consciences. For, although Heaven's hand can only set a broken heart, yet God used him herein as an instrument of good to many, who came to him with weeping eyes, and went from him with cheerful souls. The breath of his gracious counsel blew up much smoking flax into a blazing flame."

"He lived sermons ..."

Strype writes of Greenham as "a pious and good man," and quotes Holland as saying that he not only brought many godly and learned men to the ministry, but also restrained many from schism.

(1) Fuller III pp. 132ff.  
(2) Strype: Annals II p. 5f.
IX. Robert Harrison and Aylsham Free School

Robert Harrison, having graduated B.A. in 1567 and M.A. in 1572 from Corpus Christi, decided to enter teaching. He applied in July 1573 for mastership of the free School at Aylsham, being endorsed by the mayor and aldermen of Norwich. Of three candidates, he was by far the best qualified. However, he had only recently gained notoriety by objecting to the Church marriage service.

"For this person, being to be married, declined the order of the Book: and did labour that Mr. Lance-lot Thexton, the vicar, a known learned and pious man, would administer the said office of marriage to him differently from the prescript order: and in the manner of his marriage he gave offence to many."

The mayor, three aldermen, the vicar, and others all endorsed his candidacy, regarding him as "an honest, learned man." He was, moreover, declared to be penitent for the offence he had given.

The Bishop rejected the application. Many parents, he said, had protested to him against the appointment. Harrison was young and inexperienced. He had eccentricities, not to mention defects, which combined with his wilfulness to make him unfit for the post.

(1) Dexter: Congregationalism p. 68f.

(2) This account of Harrison at Aylsham was secured by combining Strype's stories in Parker II pp. 335ff, and Annals II p. 434. Cooper: Athen. Cantab." II p.177 similarly combines these and additional sources.
"He is reported to condemn the reading of profane authors to children. Then dare I boldly say, he shall never bring up good scholars." The Bishop also said that Harrison "hath been troubled with a phrensy: which sickness as it is thought incurable, so it is most dangerous to admit such a person to have rule over young ones; that besides his young years hath not power and rule over himself at all times." As for the marriage matter, the Bishop was informed that Harrison had been specifically cautioned in advance, yet persisted in making a scandal. His alleged penitence was, moreover, reported to be in fact a confirmation of his disobedience. "And being for mine own part, in respect of my place, as also for duty and discharge of my conscience, bound to have a special care of the youth of the diocese, as the imps that by God's grace may succeed us, good bringing up, and become worthy in the commonwealth; I cannot be easily persuaded to admit Mr. Harrison to any such charge over them."

In time, however, the continued urgings of bailiff and headboroughs overcame the Bishop's misgivings. He was persuaded that Harrison had been misrepresented. Therefore, in spite of a letter of warning from Archbishop Parker, he gave the appointment to Harrison.

Parker had previously written "because one of those that stood candidates for the school did not seem to approve of the established rites and ceremonies. And therefore he feared lest a person so inclined might do harm in that great town." Now he wrote again advising the Bishop to take heed how he admitted the man.

The Bishop felt that he had solved the problem by requiring Harrison to give promise and bond to four conditions of quiet behaviour.
1. That he should keep and execute the statutes of the school, in reading the authors there appointed.

2. That he should not be contentious with pastor or neighbours.

3. That he should have no evil or strange opinions, nor defend them obstinately in prophesying or any other conference.

4. That he would avoid unlawful games and vain or disordered company.

He besought Parker to let matters rest, to which the Archbishop agreed, so long as Harrison should keep his pledge. But within a month, standing godfather to the child of one Allen of Aylsham, Harrison asked that the service be variously altered.

1. He wanted thou changed in each instance to you.

2. He wanted the sign of the cross omitted.

3. He wanted the question "Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" to be answered, "We do bring this child to be baptized into the faith of Christ."

This was taken as sufficient evidence of continued contentiousness. He was declared to have forfeited his place, and was turned out. In 1576, having been before the Bishops' Court, Harrison wrote what Waldegrave calls "A pythie letter to the Bish. of Nor." Among other things, he assured the Bishop that far from his being in office through the "goodnesse of our high Prince ... the Archbishop
begate you, and the Bishop of Rome begate him, and the
Diuell begate him. So now in respect of your offices, you
see who is your grandsier, and who is your great grandsier.".

(1) "A Parte of a Register" pp. 365-370.
X. The Special Proclamation Against the Books of Browne and Harrison (1)

"By the Queene: A Proclamation against certaine seditious and scismatical Bookes and Libelles, etc.

"The Queenes most excellent Maiestie being giuen to understande that there are sent from the partes beyond the seas, sundry seditious, scismaticall, and erronious printed Bookes and libelles, tending to the deprauing of the Ecclesiastical gouernment established within this Realme, set foorth by ROBERT BROWNE and RICHARD HARRISON, fled out of the Realme as seditious persons, fearing due punishment for their sundry offences, and remaining presently in Zealande: which seuerall bookes, doe manifestly conteine in them very false, seditious, and scismatical doctrine and matter, and haue notwithstanding bene secretly solde, published, and dispersed in sundry places within this Realme, to the end to breede some scisme among her Maieties subiectes, being persons vnlearned, and vnable to discerne the errors therein conteined: Her highnesse therefore perceiving the wickednesse of these euill spirits, and the malicious disposition of lewde and euill disposed persons to be readie to violate and breake the peace of the Churche, the Realme, and the quietnesse of her people, and knowing it also to be most requisite and conuenient for her highnesse to use those meane which God hath appointed for preventing thereof, doeth will, and also straightly charge and commaunde that all maner of persons what so euer, who haue any of the sayde Bookes or any of like nature in his or their Custodie, that they and euery of them doe forthwith vpon the publishing hereof, bring in and deliuer vp the same vnto the Ordinarie of the Diocesse, or of the place where they inhabite, to the intent they may bee burned, or vterly defaced by the sayde Ordinary. And that from henceforth no person or persons whatsoever, be so hardy as to put in print or writing, sell, set foorth, receive, glue out or distribute any more of the same or such like seditious bookes or libels, as they tender her Maiesties good fauour, and will answer for the contrary at their vttormost perilis, and vpon such further paynes as the Lawe shall inflict vpon the offendours in that behalfe, as persons maintayning such seditious actions, which her

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(1) Queene Elizabeth's Proclamations 1559-1602. (Grenville Collection at British Museum.) fol. 225. Dexter also gives this full text in "Congregationalism etc." p. 75.
Maiestie myndeth to haue seuerely executed.

"Given at her Maiesties Mannor of Greenewich the last day of June, in the fiue and twentieth yeere of her highnesse Reigne. God saue the Queene."
The most complete version of Browne's Scottish sojourn is given in Calderwood's History of the Kirk of Scotland.

"Upon Thursday, the 9th Januar, an Englishman, called Robert Brown, came to Edinburgh out of Flanders. He landed at Dundie and having gotten support there, he came to St. Andrewes, where he purchased a letter of commendatioun from Mr. Andrew Melvill to Mr. James Lowsone. There came in companie with him foure or five Englishmen with their wives and familieis. They held opinioun of separatioun from all kirks where excomminication was not rigorously used against open offenders not repenting. They would not admitt witnesses in baptisme; and sindrie other opiniouns they had. This Brown was their preacher. Upon Tuesdays the 14th, he made shew, after an arrogant maner, before the sessioun of the kirk of Edinburgh, that he would mainteane, that witnesses at baptisme was not a thing indifferent, but simplie evil. Be he failed in the probation. He affirmed, as the manuscript beareth, that the soules died. He and his companie remained at the heid of the cannongate.

"Upon Tuesdays the 21st, Robert Browne the ringleader of the Brownists, in conference with some of the presbyterie, alledged that the whole discipline of Scot­land was amisse: that he and his companie were not sub­ject to it, and, therefore, he would appeale from the kirk to the magistrat. It was thought good that Mr James Lowsone and Mr John Davidstone sould gather out of his booke and their practise suche opiniouns as they sus­pected or perceaved them to erre in, and gett them ready against Moonday nixt, to pose him and his followers there upon, that thereafter the king might be informed.

"Upon Tuesdays the 28th, Robert Browne, with the rest of his complices, were called before the presbyterie of Edinburgh, and continued till the morne. He acknowledged and avowed his bookes, and other things written by

(1) Calderwood IV pp 1-3.
him. Mr James Lowsone and Mr John Davidsone were appointed to gather the erroneous articles, to be presented to the king. But they were interteaned and fostered to molest the kirk."

M'Crie's Life of Andrew Melville gives the episode as one of four instances of "an insensate and despotic government."

"In the year 1584, Robert Brown, the founder of the sect of Brownists in England, came out of the Low Countries into Scotland, with a number of his followers. Having taken up his residence in the Cannongate of Edinburgh, he began to disseminate his peculiar opinions, and to circulate writings in which all the reformed churches were stigmatized as unscriptural and antichristian societies. The court took this rigid sectary under their protection, and encouraged him, for no other conceivable reason, than his exclaiming against the ministers and calling in question their authority."

M'Crie cites Calderwood as his authority. In a footnote he adds:

"Brown published a book into which he introduced various invectives against the ministers and gov't of the church of Scotland. Dr. Bancroft did not scruple to appeal to his inflamed statements, as one of the two authorities on which he rested his attack on the presbyterian discipline."

(1) M'Crie I p. 325f.
XII. Robert Browne's Letter to Burghley, 15 April, 1590.

This letter is among the Lansdowne Manuscripts (64 - No. 34). It is also quoted (with some modification of spelling) by Strype. It is Strype's version which is given here:

"With special reverence and dutiful submission, I exhibit this treatise to your Honour: the Latin tables, and definition thereof I have before-time written to your Lordship: which, as I understand, have been shewed to some learned and reverend Fathers, the Bishops: but are either neglected, or through greater business forgotten. Nevertheless, I assure my self, and dare offer the challenge, that here in this treatise I have justly altered the arts, and the rules and terms of art, by evidence of the word: and have corrected many errors of all our Professors: yea, many falsified points of learning, both in the method and truth of the arts, and also of religion.

"Also, I am for to justify this treatise, and the exact method and truth thereof, against the multitude of philosophers, doctors, and writers heretofore. Further, I offer to prove, that the word of God doth expressly set down all necessary and general rules of the arts; and all learning: as may appear by this book. But should more appear, if examples were added, and the contrary errors more largely discovered.

"Oh! that our Universities were herein better advised and reformed! I dare say no more. But I judge that that prophesy was of God, touching Oxford and Stamford: and that, to the shame of Oxford, which then withstood and prevail'd against Stamford, suppressing it, and the truth therewith. Oh! right honourable and prudent, I speak no toy: but even in this poor treatise of me, a Stamford man, do se it partly verified: yea, I dare, by Gods help, and your Lordships favour, undertake this place or cause: that in one year scholars may well learn together those arts, which scarcely in ten

(1) Strype: Whitgift III p. 229f.
years they untowardly learn in the Universities. And that by divine wisdom and prudence they shal confute their logic: by right speech and language, disprove their grammar: by right use of proverbs and proverbial speeches, or by words, disprove their rhetoric: also their arithmetic, by the right rules of numbring. Their geometry, by better mesuring: their music, by better melody: their metaphysics, by the laws of creation, covenant, and sanctification: their ethics, oeconomies, politics, by true religion and righteousnes.

"Yet I condemn none of the arts, but onely the falseness of them. And if it were not, that I am become odious to many for the truth sake, I would not doubt, by Gods grace, to bring many thousands (to be) of my mind and judgment; and in very short time perfect them in the former studies, as is above specified. I mean, if I were authorized to read public lectures, and make profession accordingly. For, as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates and Pythagoras, made many thousand scholars; and that without any public maintenance or charge, and within very few years: so much rather the arts and points of religion more truly handled, and utterly differing from them al, I would hope, by your Lordships good countenance onely, to perform much rather the like: and that in al quietnes also: not meddling to condemne or controwl any learned man, or any kind of profession. Thus, being longer herein than I would, I cease: praying for your Honours health and eternal bliss.

"Your Honours poor orator,

"ROBERT BROWNE."
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