

A HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS **By Thomas Armitage**

THE AMERICAN BAPTISTS

XI. BAPTISTS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

As time is the only reliable interpreter of prophecy, so history best traces the hand of God in preparing men for great events. It was impossible for the Baptists of the colonies to understand why they endured so much for their principles and secured so little in return, from the settlement of New England to the time of the Revolution. The Declaration of Independence was made July 4th, 1776, and the nation's struggle for liberty lasted about seven years. As nearly as we can get at the figures, there were but 97 Baptist Churches in all the colonies in 1770, and many of these were so very small, that one pastor, where they had pastors, supplied several of them lying many miles apart and preached to them only at long intervals of time, while others were dependent entirely on occasional visits from itinerant preachers. There was a large increase of Churches during the war, although many Churches were scattered, but in 1784 our total membership in the thirteen colonies was only about 35,000, although one hundred and fortyfive years had passed since the Church at Providence was constituted, and one hundred and nineteen years since the Church at Boston was gathered. Where they had houses of worship they were of the commonest character, and the most of their ministers received no salary. So common was it for the Churches to content themselves with one sermon a month, that these came to be known as 'Thirty-day Baptists,' and so ignorant or mean, or both, were many of them, that they thought it the absolute duty of their pastors to support themselves by a profession, by farming, or some other form of manual labor, and then prove their Apostolic calling by preaching for nothing. This class of Baptists took the greatest possible comfort in the thought that while the 'starved gentry' of the Standing Order peeled them by taxation, their pastors were strangers to 'filthy lucre.'

Under these conditions our ministry could not be eminent for learning. When Manning established his preparatory school at Warren, he and Hezekiah Smith, who had studied with him at Princeton, together with Jeremiah Condy and Edward Upham, graduates of Harvard, were the only liberally educated Baptist pastors in New England. Some who subsequently became known as scholars had studied with Isaac Eaton, at Hopewell. In addition to the above named, Dr. Guild mentions Samuel Jones and a number more who were students at that academy, and also in that opened at Lower Dublin in 1776. Several years later, William E. Williams, one of the first graduates of Rhode Island College, was added to the list of the educated, and opened an academy at Wrentham, Mass. Things existed much after the same order in the Middle and Southern Colonies, for down to that time the chief education of our ministry had consisted in that moral strength and fortitude which hardship and severity inspire. God, who foresaw the times which were to try men's souls, was clearly educating one class of his people to meet the high destiny for

which only scourging, bonds and imprisonments can discipline men. Brown University had begun its work, and the Denomination was feeling after its future; but for the then present necessity, what our ministry lacked in the work of the schools, when compared with their Congregational brethren, was marked by a like disparity in favor of the Baptists in consecration to the saving of men. Their doctrine, that none but the regenerate should enter the Church of Christ, inspired that effort to bring men to repentance which could not spring from faith in birthright membership. The social and political forces combined against them only contributed to maintain their zeal and devotion. To falter in maintaining the truth was to be crushed out of existence.

Besides, nothing but aggressive work could keep them alive to their peculiar views of religious liberty. Others were moved to resist the aggressions of Britain, simply on the ground that they were the victims of political oppression. This the Baptists felt also, but their circumstances impelled them to seek a higher order of liberty than that sought by their fellow-citizens.

Whatever oppressions England inflicted upon the colonies she seldom deprived them of their religious liberties, but from the first left them to manage these alone. Excepting in Virginia, the colonies, and not the mother government, laid the heavy yoke of religious oppression upon the Baptist neck. On several occasions they had appealed to the crown and their religious grievances had been redressed, as against their colonial oppressors. Hence, in the Revolution they were to fight a double battle; one with their political enemies on the other side of the sea, and the other with their religious tyrants on this side. The colonies were not about to begin a revolution for religious liberty; that they had; but the Baptists demanded both, and this accounts for the desperation with which they threw themselves into the struggle, so that we have no record of so much as one thorough Baptist tory.

Down to the Revolution, all the colonies, with the exception of Rhode Island, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, had a Church established either by law or custom as the rightful controller of the spiritual interests of the people, and those of Massachusetts and Virginia, were peculiarly intolerant. In these the influence of the Baptists, as the champions of religious equality, was especially felt, as they resisted the legislative, judicial and executive departments combined. They were emboldened in this resistance from the fact that they took and held a footing despite this combination against them, and by piece-meal wrenched from their foes the recognition of their rights. In 1753 a law was passed in Massachusetts exempting Baptists from taxation to support the Standing Order, on condition that they confessed and proved themselves 'Anabaptists,' by certificates from three such Churches. Meetings were called in Boston, Medfield and Bellingham, to devise methods of relief from this offensive act. John Proctor, a public-school teacher of Boston, and one of the original members of the Second Baptist Church there, was appointed to carry the case to England. He also drew up a remonstrance to the Legislature claiming that, under the charter of William and Mary, the Baptists had as good, ample and extensive a right to think and act for themselves in matters of

a religious nature as any other Christians. This action somewhat lightened the execution without lessening the severity of the laws, for the last statute, passed in 1771, simply relieved the Baptist tax-payer from the necessity of presenting a certificate from three other Churches to prove him an 'Anabaptist.' The moral effect of many of the able documents drawn up by the Warren Association, Isaac Backus, and others, against these unrighteous laws, was very great on the thinking portion of the community, which compelled moderation when banishment and whipping became impossible. Virginia Baptists wrung some similar ameliorations from their Legislature which led them to throw themselves with all their hearts into the Revolutionary struggle, for they knew that if they secured full political independence religious freedom must necessarily follow.

It would furnish a splendid chapter in American Baptist History to sketch the honor-roll of the great fathers whom God was raising up from the first quarter of the eighteenth century to serve in the last, and who were to become the leaders in their contest for perfect religious emancipation. In addition to many others who had fought the first battles, he raised up a special host who were to push this conflict to its close, from Isaac Backus to John Leland; the man who saw the last vestige of religious oppression wiped off the statute-book of Massachusetts, in 1834. She. was the first of all the colonies to begin, and the last of all the States to end religious intolerance.

We have seen that ISAAC BACKUS, the Baptist historian, was born in Connecticut, January 9th, 1724, so that dying as late as November 20th, 1806, he lived through all the stages of the Revolution and saw his brethren as well as his country free. When the Warren Association appointed a committee to seek redress of grievances for the Baptists, and appointed first Hezekiah Smith, and then Rev. John Davis, their agent to the Court of Great Britain, Dr. Backus was exerting himself to the utmost in this direction. In the admirable biography of Backus by Dr. Hovey we have a graphic picture of the enthusiasm with which he threw himself into the work of changing the legislation from which his own Church at Middleborough had suffered so much, as well as his brethren elsewhere, he had been schooled in suffering for conscience' sake.

His mother, Elizabeth Tracy Backus, was a descendant from the Winslow family, and became a devout Christian three years before Isaac was born; she was of a very strong character, and brought up her son in the love and fear of God. With many others she became a Separatist at Norwich, and when left a widow refused to pay the State-Church tax, for conscience' sake. On the night of October 15th, 1752, when she was ill, and seated before the fire wrapped in thick clothing to induce perspiration, the officers came, and as she says in a letter to her son, dated November 4th, 1752, 'Took me away to prison, about nine o'clock, in a dark, rainy night. Brothers Hill and Sabins were brought there the next night. We lay in prison thirteen days, and were then set at liberty, by what means I know not.' Her son Samuel lay in prison twenty days for the same crime. She evinced the essence of heroism, the genuine spirit of a confessor. The officer thought that she would yield

when sick of a fever, and pay her rates rather than be cast into a doleful jail on a chill, stormy night in mid-October. Yet, hear her soul triumph, for she says:

'Oh! the condescension of heaven! Though I was bound when cast into this furnace, yet I was loosed and found Jesus in the midst of a furnace with me. Oh, then I could give up my name, estate, family, life and health freely to God. Now the prison looked like a palace to me. I could bless God for all the laughs and scoffs made at me. Oh, the love that flowed out to all mankind; then I could forgive as I would desire to be forgiven, and love my neighbor as myself. Deacon Griswold was put in prison the 8th of October, and yesterday old Brother Grover, and [they] are in pursuit of others, all which calls for humiliation. This Church has appointed the 13th of November to be spent in prayer and fasting on that account. I do remember my love to you and your wife and the dear children of God with you, begging your prayers for us in such a day of trial. We are all in tolerable health, expecting to see you. These are from your loving mother, ELIZABETH BACKUS.'

The spirit of the mother was cherished by her son to the close of his life.

The high esteem in which he is held is evinced in a private letter to Dr. Guild from Hon. George Bancroft, the historian, dated at Newport, R.I., September 25th, 1885, in which he writes: 'I look always to a Baptist historian for the ingenuousness, clear discernment, and determined accuracy which form the glory of their great historian Backus.'

SAMUEL STILLMAS, D.D., who was born in Philadelphia February 27th, 1737, and died March 12th, 1807, was another great Baptist leader during the Revolutionary period. At the age of eleven he removed with his parents to South Carolina, where he enjoyed the tuition of Mr. Hind, a classical tutor of renown. When still a youth, he was converted under the labors of Mr. Hart, by whom he was baptized and with whom he studied theology. In 1758, when he was but twenty-one years of age, he began to preach on James Island, near Charleston. Ill health compelled him to spend two years at Bordentown, N.J., when he was invited to become assistant to Rev. Mr. Bound, in the Second Church, Boston, where he spent about a year; and January 9th, 1765, he became pastor of the First Church, Boston, which he served until his death, a period of forty-two years. The distinguishing traits of his character were purity of heart, and fidelity to his convictions. He was brilliant, and sought the highest intellectual attainments, but instinctively eschewed all literary pomp and display, particularly that academical donnishness of style which many scholastic notables affect. And yet, because of his extreme taste in manners, dress and bearing, clownish folk, whose vulgarity was an annoyance to him and an offense, were ever ready to assail him, even with censoriousness. Like Dr. Baldwin, he was dignified in his bearing, observing all those points of decorum which distinguished the careful pastor of New England in former days. Elias Smith, an eccentric minister of Boston, who caused his brethren considerable trouble, complains of Drs. Stillman and Baldwin for insisting that he should dress more becomingly, and for enforcing proper order in connection with his induction into the pastoral office. Dr. Cornell

says, in his 'Recollections of Ye Olden Time,' that when Smith was settled as pastor over the Baptist Church at Woburn, in 1789, they required him to be 'installed.' This he denounced as a 'new-fangled ceremony,' but they insisted and he submitted. However, he took his revenge in saying:

'Our popery was performed in the Congregational meeting-house, and it was a high day within. We made something of a splendid appearance as it respected the ignorant. We had two doctors of divinity, one or two A. M.'s, and we all wore bands. When we came out of the council chamber and walked in procession to the meeting-house, we looked as much like the cardinals coming out of the conclave after electing a pope, as our practice was like them. Dr. [Hezekiah] Smith said to me after Installation: "I advise you to wear a band on Lord's days." This was a piece of foppery I always hated, and when I walked over with it on I then thought I acted with it as a pig does when he is first yoked, and almost struck it with my knees for fear I should hit it. I should not have worn it that day but that Dr. Stillman, who was as fond of foppery as a little girl is of fine baby rags, brought one and put it on me.'

[Note: Though we don't know anything about Elias Smith except what Dr. Armitage tells us, we would tend to agree with old Smith's warnings, at least on the issue at hand. The love for titles and special garments and ceremony are not according to the New Testament pattern and are definitely a step toward ecclesiastical apostasy. D.W. Cloud]

But, Elias Smith's crotchets to the contrary, Samuel Stillman was as noble a man and as holy a patriot as ever trod American soil. He read the signs of the times with a true eye, and stood in his lot to breast the Revolutionary storm as long as it was possible. He was ever delicate in health, but earnest and fearless. He was deeply stirred by the outrages inflicted upon the Baptists of Massachusetts, and especially upon those of Ashfield, and signed a powerful petition, of which he was evidently the author, to the General Court for redress. That body had already taken the ground politically 'that no taxation can be equitable where such restraint is laid upon the taxed as takes from him the liberty of giving his own money freely.' With the skill of a statesman Dr. Stillman seized this concession and used it thus: 'This being true, permit us to ask: With what equity is our property taken from us, not only without our consent, but violently, contrary to our will, and for such purposes as we cannot, in faithfulness to that stewardship with which God hath intrusted us, favor?' He, therefore, asked a repeal of their unjust laws, damages for the losses of the Baptists, and their perpetual exemption from all State Church rates thereafter. In 1766, ten years before the Declaration, he denounced the Stamp Act from his pulpit; again sustained the Colonial cause in a sermon on the general election, 1770, and did not leave his post till the British troops occupied Boston, in 1775. Then his Church was scattered and for a short time he retired to Philadelphia, but in 1776 he returned; gathered his flock anew, and kept his Church open all through the war, when nearly all others were closed at times.

His eloquence was easy, sympathetic, warm and cheerful; it was inspired with the freshness of a June morning, and it fascinated his hearers. He was nervous, kind, pure, healthful and welcome to all; his motions were all grace, his voice was as cheerful as the truth that he told, his eye was full of light, and altogether he was the pulpit orator of New England. The late William Williams pronounced him 'probably the most eloquent and most universally beloved clergyman that Boston has ever seen.' Nor would he on any account swerve from the radical principles of the Gospel. The elite of Boston crowded his place of worship. Dr. Pierce, late of Brookline, said that many a time he had walked from Dorchester when a boy, to get standing room in Stillman's meeting-house. And, commonly, John Adams, John Hancock, General Knox and other dignitaries delighted to mingle with the throng and listen to his expositions of depravity, sovereignty, retribution and redemption. On one occasion his denunciation of sin was so scathing and awful that a refined gentleman on leaving the house remarked: 'The doctor makes us all out a set of rascals, but he does it so gracefully and eloquently that I am not disposed to find fault.'

The forty years which he spent in Boston covered the great discussion of all that led to the war, the war itself, the birth of a new nation, and the adoption of the new Federal Constitution, together with the Presidency of Washington, Adams and Jefferson; he was a very decided Federalist in his political views. But all this time he was a leader in the councils of his brethren; and in their determined efforts to secure the sacred rights for which they suffered he never failed them.

Withal, he was everything that a Church could ask in a pastor; diligent, tender-hearted and spotless in his sanctity. His ministry brought many to the Lord, marked revivals of religion crowned his efforts, and he was the happiest of mortals in answering the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' His Church loved him with a peculiar reverence. Dr. Neale, one of his immortal successors, says of him:

'No pastor, before or since, was ever more beloved by his Church. His popularity was uninterrupted, and greater if possible in his old age than in his youth. A few individuals who sat under his ministry, and who were quite young when he was an old man, still survive and are present with us today. They never weary of talking about him, and even now speak of this as Dr. Stillman's Church. They looked at the venerable pastor not only with the profoundest respect, but with the observant eye of childhood. They noticed and remembered everything in his external appearance, his wig and gown and bands, his horse and carriage, and negro man, Jephtha; how he walked, how he talked, how he baptized; the peculiar manner in which he begun his prayers: "O thou Father of mercies and God of all grace."'

He oft expressed the wish that he might not outlive his influence, and God honored his desire.

His last sermon was on the ascension of Christ, and two weeks after, he died of paralysis, his last words being: 'God's government is infinitely perfect.' Dr. Baldwin

preached his funeral sermon from 2 Tim. 4:7,8, and Dr. Pierce says: 'I have a distinct recollection of the funeral. All the members of the society appeared with badges of mourning, the women with black bonnets and handkerchiefs. If the pastor had been removed in the bloom of youth his people could not have been more deeply affected.'

JAMES MANNING, D.D., may be mentioned next in chronological order, as a Baptist leader at the time of the Revolution. He was born at Elizabeth, N. J., October 22d, 1738, and died July 29th, 1791, so that in 1776 he was in the prime of his days. Under His influence, the Rhode Island College had come to be an established fact, the Warren Association had become a powerful body, and his influence throughout New England was very great. The exactions of the crown upon the Colonies had become so onerous in 1774 that they determined to meet in a common Congress for the purposes of calm deliberation and resistance, if necessary, but to defend their rights under any circumstances. The delegates met in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, September 5th, 1774. At the meeting of the Warren Association, held at Medfield, September 14th, they resolved to address this first Continental Congress not only upon the political wrongs inflicted on the Colonies but upon their own privations, in that they were denied their rights as men to the free worship of God, and they sent Isaac Backus to present their case. He reached Philadelphia, October 8th, and on the 12th of that month the Philadelphia Association appointed a large committee to co-operate with the agent of the Warren Association. After consulting with a number of leading Quakers, they determined to seek a conference with the Massachusetts delegates rather than to address the Congress as such. Such a meeting having been arranged, they went to Carpenter's Hall, where they met Samuel and John Adams, Thomas Gushing and Robert Treat Paine, from Massachusetts; James Kenzie, of New Jersey; Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward, of Rhode Island; Joseph Galloway and Thomas Mifflin, of Pennsylvania, and several other members of Congress; with many members of the Society of Friends, as Joseph Fox, Israel and James Pemberton, who sympathized with the suffering Baptists. Dr. Manning opened the case in behalf of his brethren in a brief but eloquent address, and then submitted a memorial which they had adopted. Dr. Guild says of this paper, that it 'should be written in letters of gold and preserved in lasting remembrance.'

The first sentence couches the full Baptist doctrine in these ringing words: 'It has been said by a celebrated writer in politics, that but two things are worth contending for--Religion and Liberty. For the latter we are at present nobly exerting ourselves through all this extensive continent; and surely no one whose bosom feels the patriotic glow in behalf of civil liberty can remain torpid to the more ennobling flame of RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.' They go on to declare that the inalienable rights of conscience rank too high to be subjected to fallible legislators, as that dignity belongs to God alone. Men may legislate hypocritical consciences into existence, but cannot decree their fellow-men Christians. They had come to the free soil of Pennsylvania, to plead for that inestimable blessing which every lover of mankind should desire. They then described the sufferings of their brethren in

Massachusetts, amongst those who had fled from oppression because they scorned domination over conscience, and yet had become ignoble oppressors themselves. They claimed their right to the free exercise of their religion under the charter, and referred to some ameliorations which had been granted to them in Massachusetts, but showed that these were a hollow mockery. For example, in 1728 their persons were exempted from the religious tax, but not their property, if they did not live within five miles of a Baptist meeting-house; yet, in 1729, thirty persons, many of them Baptists, were confined in Bristol jail. In 1729, 1733, 1734, and 1747, under pretense of exempting their property from this tax, they had been subjected not only to all sorts of annoyances but to much severe suffering, until these systematic wrongs culminated in the outrages which robbed the Baptists at Ashfield, and sold their burying-grounds to build a Congregational meetinghouse; and they closed their appeal by pointing out the limits of human legislation, the just tenure of property, and the holy principles of Christianity, with the declaration that they were faithful citizens to all civil compacts; and hence, as Christians, they had a right to stand side by side with other Christians in the use of their consciences in religion.

This conference lasted four hours, and the Massachusetts delegation, having a hard case, tried to explain away the alleged facts as best they could, but exhibited much ill temper at the bare relation of these stinging facts. John Adams betrayed great weakness in this direction. He says that having been informed by Governors Hopkins and Ward, that President Manning and Mr. Backus wished to meet them on 'a little business,' they went to Carpenter's Hall, and there:

'To my great surprise found the hall almost full of people, and a great number of Quakers seated at the long table with their broad brimmed beavers on their heads. We were invited to seats among them, and informed that they had received complaints from some Anabaptists and some Friends in Massachusetts, against certain laws of that province restrictive of the liberty of conscience, and some instances were mentioned in the General Court, and in the courts of justice, in which Friends and Baptists had been grievously oppressed. I know not how my colleagues felt, but I own I was greatly surprised and somewhat indignant, being, like my friend Chase, of a temper naturally quick and warm, at seeing our State and her delegates thus summoned before a self-created tribunal, which was neither legal nor constitutional. Isaac Pemberton, a Quaker of large property and more intrigue, began to speak, and said that Congress was here endeavoring to form a union of the Colonies; but there were difficulties in the way, and none of more importance than liberty of conscience. The laws of New England, and particularly of Massachusetts, were inconsistent with it, for they not only compelled men to pay to the building of churches and the support of ministers, but to go to some known religious assembly on first days, etc., and that he and his friends were desirous of engaging us to assure them that our State would repeal all those laws, and place things as they were in Pennsylvania.'

He then goes on to call the simple Quaker 'this artful Jesuit,' and to accuse him of attempting to break up the Congress by drawing off Pennsylvania; and then he put

in this flimsy plea, which none but an 'indignant' man would have submitted when he was representing a great people in deliberation, concerning the surest way to break their fetters. He says that this was the substance of his own remarks:

'That the people of Massachusetts were as religious and conscientious as the people of Pennsylvania, that their conscience dictated to them that it was their duty to preserve these laws, and, therefore, the very liberty of conscience which Mr. Pemberton invoked would demand indulgence for the tender consciences of the people of Massachusetts, and allow them to preserve their laws. . . . They might as well turn the heavenly bodies out of their annual and diurnal courses as the people of Massachusetts at the present day from their meeting-house and Sunday laws. Pemberton made no reply but this: "O! sir, pray don't urge liberty of conscience in favor of such laws!" . . . Old Isaac Pemberton was quite rude, and his rudeness was resented.'

Clearly it was; but not much to the honor of John Adams, by his own showing. The Baptists had less objection to the Congregationalists taxing themselves to support their own ministers for conscience sake, if their consciences were 'tender' on that subject, than they had to that tenderness of Massachusetts conscience' which compelled Baptists to support the Congregational ministry and their own too. This distinction seems to have been the rudeness in which Isaac Pemberton indulged and which Adams 'resented,' but just how 'indignant' Adams would have been if Lord North had insisted that the tender conscience of England compelled her to enforce her laws in Massachusetts does not appear. Probably he would have been more 'indignant' still.

Every kind of misrepresentation went abroad concerning this conference, and in high quarters the Baptists were accused of trying to prevent the Colonies from uniting against Britain, the effect of which was to throw stigma on them as the enemies of their country, and it is even said that Backus, their unflinching agent, was threatened with the gallows.

This slander they refuted in various documents, but the answer which silenced all such empty clamor was the hearty unanimity with which the whole body threw themselves into the support of the war when independence of Britain was proclaimed. Another strange episode of hatred revealed itself in this desperate struggle. When they could obtain no justice here, they appealed for help to their own brethren in London, and Dr. Stennett appeared with a plea for them before his majesty's Commissioners for Trade and Plantations. He begged their lordships to induce the king: 'To disallow an act passed in the Province of Massachusetts Bay in June, 1767, by which the Antipedo-Baptists and Quakers are compelled to pay to the support of a minister of a different persuasion. Their lordships thereupon read and considered the said act, and it was ordered that a draught of a representation to His Majesty should be prepared, proposing that it may be disallowed.' On July 31, 1771, the King held a council, and 'His Majesty taking the same into consideration was pleased with the advice of his Privy Council to declare his

disallowance of the said act, and to order that the said act be and it is hereby disallowed and rejected. Whereof the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, or Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's said Province of Massachusetts Bay, for the time being, and all others whom it may concern, are to take notice and govern themselves accordingly.'

The loyalty of the baptists to the American cause was so clearly evinced, their appeals for equal rights were so well-balanced and reasonable, and their unyielding struggles for liberty were so open and manly, that at last they began to be felt and respected in public affairs. Schooled in conscience and scourged to unconquerable resistance to tyranny, they were driven to the use of every honorable incentive; like wise men, they organized for a long and severe contest; with Backus, Manning and Stillman at their head, and made their first attacks upon the strongholds of political Puritanism. Their powerful committee at Boston addressed a most statesmanlike document to the Congress of Massachusetts, which met at Cambridge, November 22d, 1774, in which they once more submitted their case. John Hancock, the president, presented the paper, and asked whether or not it should be read. The intolerants cried with one accord, 'No, no.' But a more considerate member rising said: 'This is very extraordinary, that we should pay no regard to a denomination who, in the place where he lived, were as good members of society as any, and were equally engaged with others in the defense of their civil liberties.' He moved that it be read, and the motion was adopted. After the reading the general disposition was to throw it out unacted upon. By that time Mr. Adams began to feel uneasy, and, rising to his feet, said that he apprehended if it were thrown out it might cause a division amongst the provinces, and he moved its reference to a committee. On consideration the Congress sent this soft and civil answer:

'IN PROVINCIAL CONGRESS', CAMBRIDGE, .December 9, 1774. 'On reading the memorial of the Rev. Isaac Backus, agent to the Baptist Churches in this government:

'Resolved, That the establishment of civil and religious liberty to each denomination in the province is the sincere wish of this Congress; but being by no means vested with powers of civil government, whereby they can redress the grievances of any person whatever, they therefore recommend to the Baptist Churches that when a General Assembly shall be convened in this colony they lay the real grievances of said Churches before the same, when and where this petition will most certainly meet with all that attention due to the memorial of a denomination of Christians so well disposed to the public weal of their country.

'By order of the Congress. JOHN HANCOCK, President. BENJAMIN LINCOLN, Secretary. A true extract from the minutes.'

The moral effect of this action on the public mind was very great, for it advised the Baptists what course to take in the matter of their 'real grievances,' and when the Assembly met, in October, 1775, a new and strong paper was sent for its

consideration. Upon its presentation Major Hawley declared to the body that without doubt the Baptists had been injuriously treated, and the memorial was committed to seven members for deliberate consideration. Dr. Asaph Fletcher, a Baptist, was on that committee, and after long debate it recommended redress of Baptist grievances. This caused great commotion in the House, and the memorial, with those who sent it, was severely attacked. Major Hawley defended both, and told the Assembly 'that the established religion of this colony was not worth a groat, and wished it might fall to the ground,' as Dr. Fletcher writes. After long discussion it ordered that Dr. Fletcher 'have liberty to bring in a bill for the redress of such grievances as he apprehends the Baptists labor under.' When this was passed, Mr. Gerry moved that the Baptists withdraw their memorial, for he was offended with the plain and sound manner in which it had put their wrongs on record. Hawley opposed this motion, wishing the paper to be put on file, for it was worthy; 'and he hoped it would be there till it had eaten out the present establishment.' Fletcher brought in a bill, which was read but never acted upon.

Dr. Manning was sent by the General Assembly of Rhode Island to the Continental Congress, 1786, where he served as their representative, with great honor to himself and his constituents, his voice and pen being ever ready to treat the great subjects under consideration with marked skill. He had great influence with the people of New England, and especially in Massachusetts and Rhode Island; which was felt in the most wholesome manner when the adoption of the Federal Constitution was stirringly opposed, for he cast his entire weight in its favor when it was in danger of rejection. He was far in advance of his times, both as a Baptist and an American. Broad, disinterested and self-sacrificing, his memory cannot be too sacredly cherished. He was manly and engaging in his address, spontaneous and forceful in his eloquence, symmetrical and powerful in body and mind, and, better than all besides, he was true to his holy convictions and his redeeming Lord. Another grand but very different Baptist leader of these days was:

JOHN LELAND, born May 14th, 1754, at Grafton, Mass.; died January 14th, 1841. No three great men could differ more widely than Stillman, Manning and Leland. They were all wise in council and mighty in execution, but they worked in various departments of patriotic activity and readied different classes. Leland's convictions were as clear and deep as they well could be, but his tastes and habits, as well as his early training, all ran in other channels than these of his compeers. They were drilled in classic thought and expression; his associations had been with the pure, robust and sturdy plebeians of his youth. His powers were rare and natural; theirs were molded by culture. They were polished, measured, graceful; he followed the instincts of motherwit, quick adaptation and eccentric eloquence. They readied the grave, the conservative and thoughtful; he moved the athletic masses. They did more to begin the Baptist struggle under the Federalism of the East; he lived to finish the triumph in the radical democracy of the South. It is, therefore, wonderful to see how exactly God adapted them to their fields and made them true yokefellows in the same holy cause.

Leland was baptized by Noah Alden, of Bellingham, Mass., in 1774, only two years before the war, and after the most intense soul-agonies on account of his sins and exposure to the second death. A year afterwards he took his first journey to New Jersey and Virginia. In 1776 he united with the Baptist Church at Mount Poney, in Culpeper County, and for a time was its pastor until he removed to Orange County. He spent much of his time in traveling at large and preaching the Gospel, spending about fifteen years of his ministry in Virginia, where he baptized about 700 persons on their faith in Christ. Dr. Semple said that he was probably the most popular preacher who ever resided in Virginia. The late Dr. Cone loved to describe him as he heard him preach; in his own inimitable manner he would give the tones of his voice, his fertile genius in times of strait, his astonishing memory, especially of Scripture, and his vivacity and wit in handling an antagonist, expressed in home thrusts and cogent logic. And, withal, he always spoke of Leland's awful solemnity in addressing the Throne of Grace, and in enforcing the claims of God's justice, truth and benevolence. There was little of the sensational about him, but a tender unction often moved the crowds that followed him and led them without resistance to the atoning Lamb.

He had many struggles of mind as to the most successful way of addressing sinners and of leading them to repentance, he was a Calvinist, but would not be bound by the methods of Gill; neither did Wesley or Andrew Fuller suit him; and for practical purposes he thought that two grains of Arminianism with three of Calvinism made a good proportion in preaching. He says that one time he was preaching when his soul got 'into the trade winds,' and when the Spirit of the Lord fell upon him he paid no attention either to Gill or Fuller, and five of his hearers confessed Christ.

He was one of the bravest and most successful advocates of civil and religious liberty, and did a noble work with the Virginia Baptists in that direction. He believed that God had called him to a special mission to stand by his brethren in his adopted State; so that we find him side by side with Harris, Ford, Williams, Waller and others on every occasion where an inch of ground could be gained, he entered the State too late to suffer by persecution as a prisoner, but he was there in the thickest of the legal fight. To use his own words: 'The dragon roared with hideous peals, but was not red; the beast appeared formidable, but was not scarlet colored,' [meaning that no blood was shed] and his Virginia chronicles show that he was right.

Scarcely was the first shot fired at Lexington, when every Baptist on the continent sprung to his feet and hailed its echo as the pledge of deliverance, as well from domestic as foreign oppressors. They were amongst the 'first to suffer and to sacrifice, and then their enemies were mean enough to charge them with ingratitude to the king who had interposed for their help in Massachusetts. But nothing moved them from their steadfastness; hence, wherever the British standard was triumphant, their pastors were obliged to flee from their flocks, their meetinghouses were destroyed, and they were hated of all men. In common with all Whigs they were traitors to the crown, and the State Churches in New England

and Virginia rendered it hard for them as fellow-patriots to fight comfortably at their side, because they set at naught religious exactions which these regarded in force, inflexible as laws of Media and Persia. It required plain, honest men, of Leland's will and nerve, to meet this state of things, and he never flinched, nor did his Virginia brethren.

They organized their resistance as a denomination, and in May, 1775, sixty Churches met at the Dover Church, when their representatives resolved to address the Convention which Virginia had called to consider the state of the country. The address of the Baptists is spread upon the Journal of this political body. It states that they were alarmed at the oppressions which hung over America, and had determined that war should be made with Great Britain, that many of their brethren had enlisted as soldiers, and many more were ready to do so, and that they would encourage their young ministers to serve as chaplains in the army which should resist Great Britain. Also, they declared that 'Toleration by the civil government is not sufficient; that no State religions establishment ought to exist; that all religions denominations ought to stand upon the same footing; and that to all alike the protection of the government should be extended, securing to them the peaceable enjoyment of their own religious principles and modes of worship.'

These positions they argued and fortified at length, and they sent this memorial to the Convention by a Committee composed of Jeremiah Walker, John Williams and George Roberts. This Convention instructed the Virginia delegates in Congress to declare American independence on May 15th, 1776. Our brethren were wise in their generation; their deputation succeeding in enlisting Jefferson, Madison, and Patrick Henry, in their cause of full religious freedom. Dr. Hawks, in his 'History of the Episcopal Church in Virginia.,' says: 'The Baptists were not slow in discovering the advantageous position in which the political troubles of the country had placed them. Their numerical strength was such as to make it important to both sides to secure their influence; they knew this, and therefore determined to turn the circumstances to their profit as a sect. Persecution had taught them not to love the establishment, and now they saw before them a reasonable prospect of overturning it entirely. In their Association they had calmly discussed the matter, and resolved on their course; in this course they were consistent to the end.'

The bitterest persecutions which they had endured ran through the twelve years between 1763 and 1775, and they gained their full freedom only point by point and inch by inch; as is evident from the fact that all which the Convention could be induced to do, under the lead of the three great statesmen named, was to return a complimentary answer to the Baptists, and to pass an order that the ministers of other denominations should be placed on the same footing as chaplains of the Virginian army with those of the Episcopal Church. But this was really the first step gained toward equality by our Baptist brethren. A second, and much more important one, was taken in 1776, when under the same influences the Virginia Declaration of Rights was adopted, June 12th, the XVIth Article of which lays the Baptist principle of soul-liberty as the corner-stone of Virginia's government. This

was followed, by a general petition, that all sects should be exempted from legal taxes for the support of any one particular Church, and on October 7th, 1776, the State salaries of the Episcopal clergy were suspended. Jefferson says that: The first Republican Legislature which met in 1776 was crowded with petitions to abolish this spiritual tyranny. These brought on the severest contest in which I was ever engaged,' and he adds that the measure to suspend this and certain other old laws touching the established Church was carried only after 'Desperate contests' in the Committee of the whole house, 'almost daily from the 11th of October to the 5th of December.' It was not until 1779 that these salaries paid by legal taxation were abolished forever.

During the struggle to abolish the State religion there arose a fear in the minds of many devout people, that Christianity itself might fall, or be so far impaired as to endanger the safety of the State, which is founded on true morality and religion. Even Patrick Henry felt some alarm here, champion as he was for religious liberty. He looked upon the success of the Republican movement, and rightly, as depending upon the virtue of the people, without which it must miserably fail. He saw that the influence of the war would be corrupting, that the country was threatened with the destructive ideas of France, and the religious teachers of the country were so poorly supported that he was alarmed, for he had never seen the working of the voluntary system on a large scale. In common, therefore, with many others, he caught the idea that the State authorities should regulate religion by imposing a tax on all its citizens, leaving each person at liberty to appropriate his tax to the support of his own Church. This measure seemed healthful to and was supported by nearly all Christian denominations in Virginia except the Baptists, who refused to be taxed by the State even for the support of their own Churches. They took this ground on principle, namely: That the State had no jurisdiction in the matter, as the question of religion was left amongst His inalienable rights in the hands of every man, subject to his choice, and that Christianity needed no State support by compulsory measures; therefore, it was an abuse and a usurpation of power over the citizen for the State to touch the subject at all.

They said in their remonstrance: 'Who does not see that the same authority which can establish Christianity in exclusion of all other religions may establish, with the same ease, any particular sect of Christians, in exclusion of all other sects?' They argued that an established Church destroys all equality before the law, in the matter of religion, as it imposes burdens on some and exempts others. They insisted that the liberties of man and the prosperity of the Commonwealth required Virginia to renounce all interference in the religion of her citizens, in consequence of their resistance the Assessment Bill was defeated, and Dr. Hawks writes: 'The Baptists were the principal promoters of this work, and, in truth, aided more than any other denomination in its accomplishment.'

A volume would be necessary for a full detail of the service which the Baptists rendered to their country, in her civic and military departments, during the Revolutionary War. A few individual cases may serve to illustrate the general

interest which they took in the issue. In Virginia, Capt. M'Clanahan, a minister of Culpeper County, raised a military company of Baptists, with whom he served on the field both as captain and chaplain. Howe says that the Legislature had invited the formation of such companies 'under officers of their own principles.' Semple tells us that Rev. David Barrow took his musket and did good service for his country in the conflict, winning great honor for himself also.

Dr. Cone states that his grandfather, Col. Joab Houghton, while attending worship in the Baptist meeting-house at Hopewell, N. J., met a messenger out of breath with the news of the defeat at Lexington. He kept silence till the services were closed, then in the open lot before the sanctuary detailed to the congregation:

'The story of the cowardly murder at Lexington by the royal troops, the heroic vengeance following hard upon it, the retreat of Percy, and the gathering of the children of the Pilgrims around the beleaguered city of Boston. Then pausing, and looking over the silent crowd, he said slowly: "Men of New Jersey, the red coats are murdering our brethren in New England. Who follows me to Boston?" Every man in that audience stepped out into line and answered, "I!" There was not a coward nor a traitor in old Hopewell meeting-house that day.'

Col. Houghton continued in the army to the close of the war and fought valiantly. At one time a band of marauding Hessians had entered a New Jersey house at Moore's Mill, to plunder it, having stacked their arms at the door. He seized their arms and made their leader and a dozen men his prisoners, almost in sight of the British army. He was a member of the Hopewell Baptist Church, and died in 1795.

General Scriven, of Georgia, the grandson of Rev. William Scriven, was a brave soldier. After Savannah fell into the hands of the British forces, the officer in command ordered him to give up Sunbury also, and received the answer: 'Come and take it.' Afterwards he was slaughtered in an ambush of British and Tories at Laurel Hill. Colonel Mills, who commanded 1,000 riflemen with great skill at the battle of Long Island, was a deacon in the First Baptist Church, Philadelphia. Although captured with Generals Sullivan and Sterling, he was made a Brigadier-General for his valor. Colonel Loxley, who commanded the artillery at the battle of Germantown, of whom it was said, 'he was always foremost when great guns were in question,' was a member of the same Church.

John Brown, of Providence, R.I., brother to Nicholas, and a firm Baptist, owned twenty vessels liable to destruction by the enemy. In 1772, when the British war vessel Gaspee entered Narraganset Bay, to enforce British revenue customs, she ran aground, whereupon Brown sent eight boats, armed by sixty-four men, under the command of Abraham Whipple, one of his shipmasters, to destroy her. On opening fire Lieutenant Duddington was wounded, the rest of the officers and crew left, and the Gaspee was blown up. It has been said that 'this was the first British blood shed in the War of Independence.'

We have another great patriot in the person of John Hart, who was a representative of New Jersey in the Continental Congress, and signed the Declaration of Independence. On the 23d of October, 1770, he had taken a leading part in passing the following resolution in the New Jersey Assembly: 'That no further provision be made for the supply of His Majesty's troops stationed in this colony.' This resolution startled the people, and the Governor threatened the Assembly so seriously that it annulled this action and voted \$500 for the use of the army. Hart stood firm, voted against reconsideration, and in April, 1771, sustained the resolution, which was passed the second time. He was elected Speaker of the New Jersey Assembly after that State had declared itself free, and he was limited as an arrant traitor. The Legislature was obliged to flee from place to place, its members hiding themselves as best they could, and Governor Parker says that when Hart returned to visit his home he found it deserted; 'the health of his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, impaired by the cares of a large family and the alarm created by the near approach of the Hessians, had given way, and she died in the absence of her husband. His children had fled, and were concealed in various places in the mountains. His crops had been consumed by the enemy, and his stock driven away. He was compelled to fly to save his life, and for weeks he was a fugitive, limited from house to house, wandering through the forests and sleeping in caves.' When Washington crossed the Delaware, in the snow and hail and rain of that immortal night, December 25th, 1776, and found himself and his little band of heroes safe in Trenton the next morning, honest John Hart came forth from his hiding place, convened the Legislature for January 22d, 1777, and held his fidelity till his death, full of years and honors. He executed a deed to the Baptist Church at Hopewell, in 1771, giving the land on which their meeting-house is built, and led in the erection of the building where he and his family worshiped God. On July 4th, 1865, the State of New Jersey erected a beautiful monument, of Quincy granite, over his bones at Hopewell. He is represented as being tall and very prepossessing in person, very kind in his disposition, and he made a great favorite of his negro servant, Jack. Jack committed larceny on some of his master's goods in his absence, and many wished Hart to punish him; but he said that, as he had confided all his movables to Jack's care, he must let the offense pass as a breach of trust. When he was secreted in the Sourland Mountains, in 1776, he rested where he could in the day-time, and slept at night in an out-house, with his companion, the family dog. A marginal note on the journal of the Legislature for 1779, and the probate of his will, show that he died in that year; the first of these being May 11th, and the last May 23d. These few instances show the general tone of American patriotism amongst the American Baptists, for their ranks were almost unbroken on this subject. Judge Curwen was an ardent Tory; he mentions 926 persons of note who sympathized with the British, and a still more numerous array of Tories exiled by Colonial law; but, so far as is known, there is not the name of one Baptist on the list. Most of the officials of Rhode Island and about two fifths of her people were Baptists. In 1764 she formed a Committee of Correspondence, whose design it was to secure the co-operation of the other Colonies in maintaining their liberties.

This chapter may well close with a brief notice of SEVERAL BAPTIST MINISTERS WHO SERVED AS CHAPLAINS, for out of twenty-one whose names are now known, six of them, or nearly one third of the number, were our own brethren, who rendered marked service, some of them being of national reputation and influence. Mention may be made of: HEZEKIAH SMITH, D.D., of Haverhill, Mass. He entered the army in 1776, and so noted did he become as a patriot that he not only attracted the notice of Washington, but became his personal friend, corresponded freely with him after the war, and was visited by him at Haverhill in 1789. Smith set an example of bravery to the soldiers in battle, as well as of devotion to their country and purity of character. His recently published journal throws considerable light upon the movements of Gates in foiling Burgoyne's attempt to join Clinton, and on his overthrow at Stillwater and Saratoga. We have already spoken of

REV. JOHN GANO, who was a patriot of the best order, as well as a noble pastor. He began his services in the army in Clinton's New York Brigade, and was indefatigable in animating his regiment at the battle of Chancellorsville. The army was in something of a panic, and with cool courage he took his post in what seemed a forlorn hope. Many were abandoning their guns and flying without firing a shot, so that a mere handful were holding their ground when he sprang to the front. He states that he knew his station in time of action to be with the surgeons, and he half apologizes for his daring, saying: 'In this battle I somehow got to the front of the regiment, yet I durst not quit my place for fear of dampening the spirits of the soldiers or bringing on myself an imputation of cowardice.' he was at Fort Montgomery when it was taken by storm, but knew nothing of fear. Webb, Warren, Hall and Washington were all his personal friends.

An interesting incident in his chaplaincy is related by Ruttenbeer, in His 'History of Newburg.' News was received that hostilities had ceased and that the preliminary articles of peace were settled; and on April 19th, 1783, Washington proclaimed peace from the 'New Building,' and called on the chaplains with the several brigades to render thanks to God. Both banks of the Hudson were lined by the patriot hosts, with drum and fife, burnished arms and floating banners. At high noon thirteen guns from Fort Putnam awoke the echoes of the Highlands, and the army fired a volley. At that moment the hosts of freedom bowed before God in prayer, after which a hymn of thanksgiving; floated from all voices to the Eternal throne. This building was not Washington's headquarters, but was a large room for public assemblies, sometimes called the 'Temple,' located in New Windsor, between Newburg and West Point. Thatcher says in his 'Journal' that when this touching scene occurred the proclamation made from the steps was followed by three huzzas, then prayer was offered to the Almighty Ruler of the world by Rev. JOHN GANO, and an anthem was performed by voices and instruments. After these services the army returned to quarters and spent the day in suitable festivities. Then, at sundown, the signal gun of Fort Putnam called the soldiers to arms and another volley of joy rang all along the line. This was three times repeated, cannon discharges followed with the flashing of thousands of fire-arms, and the beacons from the hill-tops, no longer 'harbingers of danger,' lighted up the gloom and rolled

on the tidings of peace through New England and shed their radiance on the blood-stained field of Lexington. Every patriotic Christian heart in the nation joined in the thanksgiving to which this patriot Baptist pastor gave expression in the presence of his immortal Commander-in-chief.

REV. DAVID JONES, born in Delaware, May 12th, 1736, was another eminent Baptist chaplain, he had been a student at the Hopewell Academy for three years, pastor at Freehold, N. J., and missionary to the Shawnee and Delaware Indians. At the outbreak of the war, however, he was pastor at Great Valley, Chester County, Pa. he was a bold and original thinker, and had highly offended many Tories in New Jersey by the free utterance of his Whig sentiments. The Continental Congress appointed a day of fasting and prayer in 1775, when he preached a powerful sermon in defense of the war to Colonel Dewee's regiment, which exerted a powerful influence on the public mind when printed. He became Chaplain to Colonel St. Clair's regiment in 1776, and greatly aroused the patriotism of the soldiers in a sermon just before the conflict at Ticonderoga. He served also under Gates and Wayne, and was so heroic that General Howe offered a reward for his capture, and one or more plots were laid to secure him, but failed. He preached to the army at Valley Forge, when the news came that France had recognized American independence. It seems to have been his custom to preach as often as possible before going into battle, and he remained in the army until the surrender of Cornwallis, at Yorktown. When Wayne was sent against the Indians, in 1794-96, he accompanied him as chaplain, and again in the same capacity he went through the war with Britain in 1812, under Generals Brown and Wilkinson. He was the father of Horatio Gates Jones, D.D., and grandfather of the present Hon. Horatio Gates Jones, of Philadelphia.

REV. WILLIAM VANHORN was another Baptist chaplain of note. His education had been committed to Dr. Samuel Jones, of Lower Dublin, Pa., and for thirteen years he was pastor of the Church at Southampton, in that State. His life in the army appears to have been marked by consistency, piety and industry, rather than by stirring acts of enterprise and daring. For twentyone years he was pastor of the Church at Scotch Plains, N. J., where he closed his useful life greatly beloved by his flock.

REV. CHARGES THOMPSON ranked equally with his fellow-chaplains as a man of culture and vigor. He was born in New Jersey in 1748, and was the valedictorian of the first class which graduated from Rhode Island College under the Presidency of Dr. Manning, numbering seven, in 1769; he also succeeded the doctor as pastor at Warren. There he baptized Dr. William Williams, one of his classmates, who afterwards established the Academy at Wrentham. In 1778 the meeting-house and parsonage at Warren were burned by the British and Hessian troops, and Thompson entered the American army as chaplain, where he served for three years. He was a thorough scholar and a finished gentleman, winning great distinction in the army. This exposed him to the special hatred of the enemy, who made him a prisoner of

war and kept him on a guard-ship at Newport. He served many years as pastor at Swansea, and died of consumption in 1803.

The last, and in some respects the most noted of our chaplains, was WILLIAM ROGERS, D.D. He was born in Rhode Island in 1751, and graduated in the same class with Thompson. He was the first student received at that college, entering at the age of fourteen, and on the day of his graduation delivered an oration on benevolence. In 1773 he became pastor of the First Baptist Church at Philadelphia, and had been there three years when Pennsylvania raised her quota of soldiers for that province; he was first appointed chaplain, and afterwards Brigade Chaplain in the Continental Army. In 1778 he accompanied General Sullivan in his expedition against the Six Nations, at the head of 3,000 troops gathered at Wyoming. They marched north to Tioga Point, then on the frontier. His eminent ability and refined manners placed him on relations of intimate friendship with General Washington, and made him an ornament in our Churches. For years he served as Professor of English and Oratory in the College of Philadelphia and in the University of Pennsylvania. In battle, in camp, in hospitals or in the pulpit and the professor's chair he was alike at home, and a blessing to all around him.