
Read March 17, 1853.

Mr. Hepworth Dixon's very able and interesting biography of the great Quaker philanthropist, William Penn, contains the best account which has yet been published of the circumstances under which he was imprisoned in the Tower of London in the year 1668. That imprisonment was an event which exercised a most important influence upon the whole of Penn's after life. It attached him to the faith of Quakerism by the strong link of a public persecution suffered on its behalf, and the leisure which it afforded him sobered and matured his mind, and led to the production of a valuable addition to the library of practical Christianity. Up to the period of this imprisonment it seemed not impossible that under judicious treatment William Penn might have been won back to the church from which he had strayed. He had, indeed, openly avowed himself a Quaker, and had published his controversial pamphlets, entitled "Truth Exalted" and "The Guide Mistaken," but nothing had rendered his adoption of the tenets of "The Friends" too decided to be retreated from with honour. To cut off this retreat was the effect of his imprisonment as a state criminal in the Tower. It pointed him out to the world as one of the heads and leaders of a sect then generally contemned. It nailed his colours to his mast, to borrow a metaphor from the profession of his father, and bound him either to discredit himself by a public recantation under the influence of persecution, or to fight out the battle which was thus openly thrust upon him. Nor was the effect upon his co-religionists more injudicious than that upon himself. The followers of George Fox, disgraced by the wild profanities of such persons as Solomon Eccles, were popularly regarded with scorn. To single out the first man of education and station in the world who had joined their ranks, and to send him to the Tower as a state prisoner, for publishing an ill-considered and abstruse controversial pamphlet, gave importance to what had been previously in the general estimation merely contemptible; and involved the government in a dispute, in which, if it failed to produce recantation, the attempt was sure to recoil with great advantage to the public repu-
On William Penn's Imprisonment in the Tower, A.D. 1668.

...ation of both the prisoner and his sect. Viewing this imprisonment as a turning point, both in the personal history of William Penn and in the larger history of the religious community to which he attached himself, I lately received with much thankfulness from my friend and co-fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, Robert Lemon, Esq., of the State Paper Office, some valuable additional information respecting this imprisonment, and I trust it will not be displeasing to the Society of Antiquaries to listen to such an account of these new particulars as I am able to give.

In the year 1668 William Penn was in the twenty-fourth year of his age. From early youth his mind had been interested in subjects connected with religion, but it does not appear that he was ever brought into acquaintance with people who strove strictly to regulate their lives by the principles of Christianity, until about his sixteenth year. Certainly there was nothing of the kind amongst the persons who composed the household of the admiral, his father. It was in 1660, when Penn was a gentleman-commoner of Christ Church, Oxford, that he was first thrown in the way of people of exalted piety. From the character of his mind, and from what is continually taking place in similar instances, it may not unsafely be concluded that, whatever had been the distinctive creed connected with the first example of vehement religious feeling with which William Penn became intimately acquainted, he would probably have adopted it. Had he been thrown amongst the rapt and enthusiastic votaries of St. Francis or St. Dominic, his mind and affections were so entirely attuned to chime in with any lofty religious passion, that difficulties of doctrine would have been slurred over. The Church of Rome, and not the sect of Quakers, would have had the benefit of his courage and his zeal, and Pennsylvania, instead of justly priding herself upon her charter of universal freedom, might have been the humblest and the most obedient of the servants of the triple crown. But it was not the sublime ardour of a devoted monk, it was the simple piety of an obscure Quaker, which touched the heart of William Penn. In some mean quarter of the splendid Oxford, then just recovering from the effects of the civil war, Thomas Loe, "some time," says Anthony Wood,a "a laick of Oxon, but then a most noted Quaker," was accustomed to hold religious assemblies. Penn, who had hitherto distinguished himself at the university principally by his great delight "in manly sports,"b was led— it does not appear how—to attend one of these humble meetings. He went perhaps to scoff, but remained to pray. Truths which had affected him but lightly when enforced in a more stately formal manner, completely subdued him when uttered by a simple earnest teacher under circumstances probably of a little

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a Athenæ, iv. 645, ed. Bliss.

b Ibid.
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concealment and difficulty, in view of persecution, and under the consciousness of contempt. Penn's attendance at this conventicle led to his expulsion from the University. His father, a man full of the wisdom of the world, supposed that his son's conduct was a mere boyish freak, the result of the easiness of his nature and his peculiar susceptibility to external impressions. He sent him to the Continent. He placed him for the completion of his education under the celebrated Moses Amyrault at Saumur, and two years afterwards immersed him in the gaieties of Paris, and excited his imagination by an acquaintance with the wonders of nature and art to be seen in Switzerland and Italy. At the end of four years Penn returned, conspicuous for elegance and manly beauty, and to all outward appearance as little of a Quaker as could be imagined. “Mr. Pen,” says Pepys, “Sir William’s son is come from France, and come to visit my wife; a most modish person; grown, she says, a fine gentleman.” Four days afterwards the same superficial but invaluable sketcher records that the young beau had been to visit him. “I perceive,” he says, “something of learning he hath got, but a great deal, if not too much, of the vanity of the French garb, and affected manner of speech and gait. I fear all real profit he hath made of his travel will signify little.”* Mr. Pepys, with his acute perception of the follies of other people, evidently could see nothing in young Penn but a mere fop. Penn’s father, who was looking forward to a peerage as the reward of his naval services, was delighted with the success which had attended his parental management. He kept his son in town for several months, entered him as a student of Lincoln’s Inn, took him for a few weeks on board the great channel fleet, equipped against the Dutch in 1665, and finally sent him to the south of Ireland to attend to family business in that country. A mutiny in the garrison of Carrickfergus, in the suppression of which young Penn distinguished himself, gave him an incipient desire towards the profession of arms—so entirely did he seem to have forgotten his Quakerism. This warlike inclination is commemorated by the observable circumstance, that at that time he had his portrait painted in the combined armour and military costume of the day. “It is a curious fact,” as Mr. Dixon has well observed in his biography, “that the only genuine portrait of the great apostle of peace existing represents him armed and accoutred as a soldier.”

All such feelings were banished by Penn’s chancing (as we are accustomed to speak) to fall again in the way of Thomas Loe. Driven from Oxford, this devoted man had betaken himself to Ireland. He landed in Munster, and travelled on foot, “through great hardships,” from Cork to Ulster, preaching, as he went, throughout

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* Diary, August 26th and 30th, 1664.
* Ibid. 25th April, 1665.
the whole island, from south to north, in the streets of the towns and in the high
roads, wherever he could find an audience. He is described by the contemporary
Quaker memorialists, in terms of affectionate remembrance, as having "had an
excellent gift, sound and clear in the ministry, powerful in speech, sharp and quick
in his understanding, and many people flocked after him. . . . . His company was
very desirable, being pleasant and sweet in conversation; and sympathizing with
his friends in affliction so accomplished him, that he could speak a word in due
season."* Penn met with him at Cork; former impressions were instantly renewed,
and the heir-apparent to the prospective barony of Weymouth became the first-
fruits of Loe’s Irish mission. One cannot but believe that Penn would not have
returned to Quakerism so easily, if the effects of the incident at Oxford had been so
entirely eradicated as his foppery and his ambition to become a soldier seemed to
indicate. The animation and excitement of the scenes in which he had mixed might
have made him forget the solemn teaching of his spiritual guide; but it was only for
a time. The arrow had entered his heart, and under the gayest costume and the
brightest armour he had borne that about with him which, sooner or later, would
assuredly remind him of better things.

From the time of his second meeting with Thomas Loe, Penn openly avowed
himself to be a Quaker. In December, 1667, he returned to London, and Pepys
records, to his evident satisfaction, that he had heard that the recent coxcomb had
become a Quaker again, "or some very melancholy thing; that he cares for no
company, nor comes into any, which," he charitably adds, "is a pleasant thing, after
his being abroad so long."b Penn’s disappointed father viewed the result in a very
different light. With the practical shrewdness of the men of his profession, he
tried the young disciple upon one of the chief external difficulties of Quakerism—
the question of the hat. He asked him, would he take off his hat to the king:
After a time given to solitude and prayer, the young man answered in the negative.
"The indignant admiral," says Mr. Dixon, "turned him out of doors."c

Penn now devoted himself entirely to the promotion of the interests of his sect.
He published the two pamphlets to which I have already alluded; the first being a
startling and somewhat arrogant call to the examination of Quaker doctrines; d the
second an answer to a work by the Rev. Jonathan Clapham, rector of Wrampling-

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* Piety Promoted, Part I, p. 86, edit. 1759.
b Diary, 29th December, 1667.
c Dixon’s Life of Penn, p. 42.
d He assumes in this publication, which was greatly enlarged by him when in Newgate in 1671, the
attitude of a prophet, and likens himself to Moses. He styles himself on the title-page "William Penn,
whom divine love constrains in a holy contempt to trample on Egypt's glory, not fearing the king's wrath,
having beheld the majesty of him who is invisible;" an allusion to Heb. xi. 27.
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ham, in Norfolk. He also accompanied George Whitehead to a conference and
disputation, held, for the purpose of explaining the Quaker doctrines, at a chapel in
Spital Yard, of which the minister was the Rev. Thomas Vincent. It was out of
this disputation that the imprisonment of William Penn arose. In treating of it his
biographers seem to me to have fallen into two very natural mistakes. In the first
place, they have attributed too great an importance to William Penn’s share in the
disputation: they have made him the hero of the incident. This is scarcely correct.
Whitehead, an older but not a better soldier in the Quaker cause, took, as was
natural, the lead of the younger disciple; and, if Vincent is to be believed, William
Penn, although he occasionally volunteered a remark, distinctly stated, when pressed
in the course of the disputation, that “he did not come thither to dispute, but left
it to George Whitehead;”—a man, I may observe, every way competent to the task,
and an arrangement certainly, under the circumstances, the most probable. The
second mistake into which Penn’s biographers have fallen arises out of their
unacquaintance with the biography of Vincent. Not having inquired into his
previous history, nor referred, as it would seem, to his own account of this very
transaction, they take everything for granted that they find stated to the disparage-
ment of a man who opposed their hero. They speak of him as “this man,” and as
“one Thomas Vincent,” as if he were some unknown and insignificant person, and
attribute to him actions and speeches which he himself has distinctly disavowed.
In justice to a man who evidently possessed many admirable qualities, I would beg
to be allowed to say a few words about Thomas Vincent.

His father, whose name was John, was born in the west of England. He was
bred originally as a lawyer in Lincoln’s Inn; but being a man of Puritan principles,
and devoted to the study of theology, he exchanged the law for the church. This
occurred during the ecclesiastical administration of Archbishop Laud, by whom
Vincent was subjected to considerable persecution. The notice taken of him by
the archbishop was so constant, and compelled him to remove from diocese to
diocese so frequently, that of his numerous family of children it is said that no
two were born in the same county. This cannot have been literally the case, if
it be true, as we are told by Wood, who, however, in the case of a nonconformist
is not the best authority, that Thomas Vincent, who was John Vincent’s eldest son,
and Nathaniel Vincent, who was his second son, were both born at Hertford.
During the Civil War, when the Church of England was overthrown, John Vincent
was rewarded for his past sufferings with the rich living of Sedgefield, in Durham.
There he died, before the Restoration. a In the meantime, his son Thomas, born in

a Surtees, iii. 32. His appointment to Sedgefield was by the authority of the Parliament, and bore date
29th November, 1644.
1634, after spending some years at Westminster School and at the well-known free-school at Felstead, in Essex, the same in which Dr. Wallis, Isaac Barrow, and the three sons of Oliver Cromwell were educated, became, says Wood, in 1648, a student of Christ's Church, Oxford,—Penn's own college,—"by the favour of the parliamentarian visitors then and there sitting." In 1654 Vincent took his degree in arts with unusual credit. Shortly afterwards he received Presbyterian ordination, and was appointed minister of the parish of St. Mary Magdalen, Milk Street, in the city of London, being at the same time chaplain to Robert Sydney, the second Earl of Leicester of that family. On the Restoration, and the passing of the St. Bartholomew Act, Thomas Vincent was ejected from his parish, and, like many others of the displaced ministers, sought a livelihood in tuition. He was occupied as an assistant at a school in Islington, when the city was visited with the great plague, in 1665. The disease increased with sudden and fearful rapidity. Many of the city clergy died; many continued at their dangerous posts throughout the visitation, and laboured in their parishes with most exemplary devotion; but it is also true that very many forsook their flocks and fled from the infected city when the plague was approaching its greatest height. "Fears there are amongst us," to use the language of Vincent, "that within a while there will not be enough alive to bury the dead, and that the city of London will now be quite depopulated." Several of the ministers recently dispossessed of livings in the city, seeing multitudes, not only of the people at large, but even of their own late congregations, crowd so fast into the grave and eternity, "who seemed," as Vincent remarks, "to cry as they went for spiritual physicians; and perceiving the churches to be open, and pulpits to be open, and finding pamphlets flung about the streets of pulpets to be let, they judged," continues Vincent, "that the law of God and nature did now dispense with, yea command, their preaching in public places, though the law of man (it is to be supposed in ordinary cases) did forbid them to do it." Vincent, who was at this time little more than thirty years of age, not only determined to join his fellow-ministers in their resolution to preach to the dying citizens, in spite of the law, but even devoted himself to attendance upon the sick. Disregarding, as we are told, the intreaties of his friends, he returned among his old parishioners, visited them in their infected houses, stood by the beds of all who sent for him, braved dangers from which clergy, medical men, relations, nurses fled, and Sunday after Sunday joined his excluded brethren in preaching in some one of the deserted churches. Amongst the people who remained in London his preaching became so popular that it was a constant inquiry during the week where Vincent would preach on the following Sunday; and, wherever it was, multitudes flocked to hear
him. "Now," as he himself describes the very scene, "Now is there such a vast concourse of people to be found, that they [the ministers] cannot many times come near the pulpit doors for the press, but are forced to climb over the pews to them: and such a face is now to be seen in the assemblies as seldom was seen before in London—such eager looks, such open ears, such greedy attention, as if every word would be eaten which dropt from the mouths of the ministers. If you ever saw a drowning man catch at a rope, you may guess how eagerly many people did catch at the word."  

When the plague subsided, Vincent established himself in a residence at Hoxton, within the parish of Shoreditch, and such was the universal respect in which he was held, that although his brother Nathaniel was subjected, like many other people, to long imprisonments and persecutions for his non-conformity, Thomas Vincent was, by common consent, overlooked. It is said of him that he committed the whole of the New Testament and the Psalms to memory, "not knowing," as he remarked, "but that they who had taken from him his pulpit and his cushion, might demand his Bible also." In Thomas Vincent Penn evidently encountered a man of equal energy with himself, and, although some of Vincent's expressions applied to the Quakers are such as in these days of better taste and more Christian feeling would occasion him regret, it is not for the benefit of humanity that in our admiration for the character of William Penn we should consider all those who opposed him to be mere vulgar fanatics, or overlook the philanthropy and courage, joined to the sincerest piety, which were the distinguishing characteristics of Thomas Vincent.

It is not my intention to detail the history of the controversy which occasioned the disputation between Vincent and Penn, or rather between Vincent and Whitehead, with Penn as an assistant; all that I will remark upon it is, that I have not seen any modern account of it which does not require reconsideration. It involved the accuracy of the Quaker views respecting the highest and most important doctrines of our faith,—the Trinity, the atonement, and justification by faith. Upon all these points Vincent accused Penn and his friends of maintaining opinions at variance with the views of Protestants; Penn in return attacked the accuracy of the views commonly entertained. Dissatisfied with the management and results of the discussion, which was conducted with great heat on both sides, Penn immediately afterwards wrote a pamphlet, in which he professed to refute the generally received view of the three doctrines to which I have alluded. This is the pamphlet ordinarily  

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a Calamy, ii. 32.  
b God's Terrible Voice, p. 29.
known by its first title of "The Sandy Foundation shaken;" the pamphlet of which Pepys says, "I got my wife to read it to me, and I found it so well writ as I think it is too good for him ever to have writ it; and it is a serious sort of book, and not fit for everybody to read."

At the time when this book was published, the whole business of printing and publishing was regulated by a statute, which enacted that no person should presume to print any heretical, schismatical, or offensive book, or any book wherein any doctrine or opinion should be asserted which is contrary to Christian faith, or to the doctrine or discipline of the Church of England. It was also enacted that no private person should print any book unless it were first entered with the Stationers' Company, and licensed, according to the subject matter; by the Lord Chancellor or one of the chief justices, if it were a legal book; by the Secretary of State, if it were an historical book; by the Earl Marshal, if it related to heraldry; or by the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London, if to divinity. A copy of the licence was to be printed, prefixed to the book itself. The number of master printers was limited to twenty, and that of master type-founders to four; and it was provided that for the better discovering of printing in corners without license, the messengers of his Majesties chamber, by warrant under his Majesties sign manual, or under the hand of one of the Secretaries of State, or the Master and Wardens of the Company of Stationers, should have power, with a constable, to search all houses where they shall suspect books or papers to be printed, bound, or stitched, and to seize unlicensed books, with the several offenders, and take them before a justice of peace, who was authorized to commit them for trial; and in case the said searchers shall, upon their said search, find any booke or bookes, or part of booke, unlicensed, which they shall suspect to contain matters therein contrary to the doctrine or discipline of the Church of England, or against the state and government, then upon such suspicion to seize upon such book or books, or part of book or books, and to bring the same unto the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London, or to

\* The full title is "The Sandy Foundation Shaken; or, those so generally Believed and Applauded

Doctrines of

1. The impossibility of God's pardoning sinners without a plenary satisfaction, Refuted.

2. The justification of impure persons by an imputative Righteousness,

From the authority of Scripture Testimonies and Right Reason. By W. P. j. a Builder on that Foundation which cannot be moved. But to us there is but one God the Father of all things, 1 Cor. viii. 6. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. Mic. vii. 18. For I will not justify the wicked, &c. Exod. xxiii. 7. London, printed in the year 1668."

\* Diary, 12th Feb. 1668-9.

\* 14 Car. II. cap. 33.

\* 14 Car. II. c. 33, sec. 14.
one of the Secretaries of State, who shall take such further course for the suppressing thereof as to them shall seeme fit."

I think we must conclude that this statute was never rigidly enforced. Certainly we meet with many books printed during this period which do not contain any entry of a licence. Of course the omission put both author and printer at the mercy of the authorities. William Penn could never have dreamt of applying for a licence for such a book as his Sandy Foundation Shaken; himself and his printer were, therefore, obnoxious to all the penalties of this statute. They might have been taken before a justice of the peace, committed to prison, and tried for a misdemeanor. But this was not the course adopted; and here it is that Mr. Lemon's new documents come to our aid. Penn's pamphlet was not merely unlicensed, nor was it confined to a defence of the Quaker tenets: it went further. It attacked the accuracy of the ordinarily entertained views of the most solemn and distinctive of the doctrines held by the great majority of Christians. Its publication occasioned an immediate and general outcry. It was contended that the divinity of the Saviour was called in question. The book was popularly declared to be blasphemous, and upon the supposition that it was so, some investigation respecting it was instituted by the Government. The printer was found out and called in question: Penn was no man to leave him in the lurch. He instantly came forward and surrendered himself to Lord Arlington, the principal Secretary of State. After some brief examination, Lord Arlington, of his own authority, committed Penn a close prisoner to the Tower; and John Derby, the printer of his pamphlet, to the Gate House. The Secretary reported these committals to the Council, at their next meeting, and the following entries on the Council Minutes shew clearly what was done:—

At the Court at Whitehall, the 16th of December, 1668.
Present: The King's Most Excell° Ma°, &c. &c. &c.

The Right Hon°ble the Lord Arlington, His Ma° Principal Secretary of State, having this day represented to His Ma° in Council that William Penn, author of the blasphemous booke lately printed, intituled, "The Sandy Foundation shaken, &c." had rendred himselfe unto his Lordship, and that thereupon, in order to His Ma° service, he caused him to be committed to the Tower of London, and likewise that he had caused John Derby, who printed the said booke, to be sent prisoner to the Gate House; which His Ma° well approving of, did order that the said Lord Arlington be and he is hereby authorised and desired to give directions for the continuing the said Will. Penn and John Darby close prisoners in the respective places aforesaid, untill farther order.

At the Court at Whitehall, the 18th of December, 1668.

Present: The King's Most Excellent Majesty, &c. &c. &c.

Whereas William Penn hath by His Majesty's particular command, signified by the Lord Arlington, Principall Secretary of State, been committed prisoner to your custody for composing and causing to be printed a blasphemous treatise, entituled, "The Sandy Foundation shaken, &c."; and the said Lord Arlington having this day in Council acquainted His Majesty therewith, His Majesty was pleased to approve well of what by the diligence of the said Lord Arlington had been done therein, and accordingly to order that the said William Penn should remain and continue prisoner in your custody. These are therefore in His Majesty's name to charge and require you to keep and detain close prisoner within that His Majesty's Tower of London the person of the said William Penn, until His Majesty's pleasure shall be farther signifyed. Dated the 18th day of December, 1668.

(Signed) DUKE OF ORMOND. EARL OF CARBERY.

LORD CHAMBERLAIN. LORD ASHLEY.

EARLE OF SANDWICH.

MR. SECRETARY TREVOR.

To the Lieutenant of the Tower.

The biographers of Penn attribute his committal to "some then at the helm of the Church," which has been supposed to be an allusion to the Bishop of London, Dr. Humphrey Henchman, appointed to that see in 1663. His imprisonment is consequently set down as an instance of clerical intolerance. It is, of course, possible that Lord Arlington may have been urged to interfere by some clerical authority, but it will be remarked that nothing of the kind appears on the Minutes of the Council. No ecclesiastical person was present at the meeting of Council in which Penn's imprisonment was ratified, nor at the other meeting in which the warrant was signed for its continuance. Upon the Council Minutes his committal to the Tower seems to have been an unpremeditated course adopted by Lord Arlington on the spur of the moment, and consequent upon Penn's probably unexpected surrender. All that is certain is, that there was a public outcry against

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b Edward second Earl of Manchester, 1642—1671, Lord Chamberlain.
c Edward first Earl of Sandwich, 1660—1672.
d Richard Earl of Carbery, Lord President of Wales.
e Anthony first Lord Ashley, 1661—1672, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, Chancellor of the Exchequer.
f John first Lord Berkeley of Stratton, 1658—1669.
g Sir John Trevor succeeded Sir William Morice as Secretary of State on the 29th September, 1668.
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the book; that inquiry was made about it by Lord Arlington; that Penn met the inquiry by voluntarily surrendering himself; that he was thereupon at once committed to the Tower, and that his committal was not for any offence under the statute for the regulation of printers, but for composing and printing a book presumed to be blasphemous.

The terrible, and peculiarly terrible because indefinite, offence of blasphemy has at all times been punishable by the law of England. It is an offence at the common law, and up to 1668 had not been dealt with by statute. Before the days of the Long Parliament cases of presumed blasphemy were frequently handled in the Ecclesiastical Courts, and in the Star Chamber. The Presbyterian party in the Long Parliament brought discredit upon itself during its temporary ascendency by ordinances upon this subject, which it is scarcely possible to condemn too strongly. During the Protectorate the cases of Nayler, Fry, and Biddle, will be remembered with painful feelings. Under Charles II. the wishes of the King were opposed to all persecution for mere opinion, and the condition of his Court would have made anything of the kind highly offensive to public feeling. Penn's case was the first which occurred after the Restoration.

Penn's "Sandy Foundation" can only have been deemed blasphemous upon the supposition that it was blasphemy to call in question the popular notion entertained of the doctrine of the Trinity. Of scoffing or irreverence, which go to constitute our modern notion of the offence of blasphemy, there is nothing in the book. It is a weak and inconclusive production, but, with the exception of some hard words against Vincent, it is calm and argumentative; the work of a sober mind, seeking truth in reference to a sacred and deeply interesting subject. Unless it was desired to repress all inquiry in reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, by affixing to it the epithet of blasphemous, it does not appear that that word could in any proper sense be affixed to Penn's publication. At the same time it must be admitted, that, according to the popular notions and the views of the mere theological writers of that day, any doubt cast upon the doctrine of the Trinity, or any departure from the usual construction put upon the deep mysteries which that doctrine involves, was considered blasphemous, and, although the personal liberty of the writer was involved in the question, it is perfectly possible that the word may have been applied to Penn's book by Lord Arlington and the Council merely in the popular and not in any strict or legal sense.

Thomas Vincent was by no means disposed to acquiesce in Penn's account of the recent disputation, or in his views of the doctrines which had been discussed. On the publication of Penn's pamphlet Vincent instantly prepared an explanation and

refutation, entitled “The Foundation of God standeth sure.” Vincent’s pamphlet was put into the hands of Thomas Johnson, a printer. A licence seems to have been considered out of the question. Vincent argued, indeed, on that side which would be approved by the hierarchy and the government, but he was a non-conformist and out of favour. Thomas Johnson proceeded to put the work in type, and had set up half an octavo sheet, when rumour reached him that one of the King’s messengers was about to search his premises. The composed type of the unlicensed work was carried off and hidden in the cellar of one William Burden. The informant of the Council was probably employed in Johnson’s printing-office, for the hiding-place of the composed type was discovered, and a proof impression was taken from it, and laid before the Council. The Minute of the Council, which shows what course they took, runs as follows:

At the Court at Whitehall, the 30th of December, 1668.

Present: The King’s Most Excellent Majesty, &c. &c. &c.

Whereas we are informed that Thomas Johnson, printer, hath printed several pages of a pamphlet written by one Vincent, in answer to a blasphemous book, whereof William Penn was author, intituled “The Sandy Foundation shaken,” without licence or any lawful authority, which pages were found in the cellar of one William Burden; these are, therefore, to will and require you forthwith to take into your custody the bodys of the said Thomas Johnson and

““The foundation of God standeth Sure. Or, a Defence of those Fundamental and so generally believed

Doctrines of

1. The Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence,
2. The satisfaction of Christ, the second Person of the real and Glorious Trinity,
3. The Justification of the Ungodly by the imputed Righteousness of Christ,

Against the cavils of W. P. J. a Quaker, in his pamphlet, intituled, “The Sandy Foundation shaken, &c.” wherein his and the Quaker’s hideous blasphemies, Socinian and damnably-heretical opinions, are discovered and refuted; W. P.’s ignorance, weakness, falsehoods, absurd arguings, and folly, is made manifest unto all; with a call unto all such who, in the simplicity of their hearts, have been deluded by the Quakers, to come out from amongst them.

And an Exhortation to all Christians, as they desire their salvation, to beware of their damnable doctrines, and not to come near the tents of these enemies of Jesus Christ, lest they be swallowed up in their ruin.

By Thomas Vincent, some time minister of Maudlins, Milk Street, London.

1 John, v. 7.—For there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are One.

Matt. xx. 28.—The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many.

Rom. iv. 5.—To him that worketh not, but believeth in Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

London: Printed in the year 1668.”
On William Penn's Imprisonment

William Burden, and in your company bring them before this Board to answer the premises. Willing and requiring, &c., and to seize the copys of the said pamphlet, and to bring them to one of His Ma's principal Secretaries of State. Dated the 30 Dec'r, 1668.

To Thomas Widdowes, one of the Messengers, &c.

I am enabled to exhibit what I cannot doubt is a printed proof copy of the portion of Vincent's pamphlet which had been set up in type; this copy of it, probably unique, having found its way into a curious collection of tracts of that period respecting the Quakers, which is now in the possession of Mr. Lemon. It contains the title-page, and six pages of the treatise. The author is described as "Thomas Vincent, sometime minister of Maudlin's, Milk Street, London." The imprint runs—"London, printed in the year 1668."

The proceeding of the Council in this case was grounded upon the want of licence, and took a course warranted by the statute for the regulation of printers. No proceeding was instituted against Vincent—why, it is not possible to tell. Let us hope it was out of respect for his general character and his recent exertions during the plague.

The printer and concealer of Vincent's pamphlet were not long detained in custody. The next entry on the Council Minutes furnished by Mr. Lemon runs as follows:—

At the Court at Whitehall, the 8th January, 1668–9.

Present: The King's Most Excellnt Ma'y, &c. &c. &c.

Whereas Thomas Johnson, printer, and William Burden, were by warrant from this Board, of the 30th December last, committed to the custody of one of the messengers of His Ma's chamber, for printing and concealing several pages of an unlycensed pamphlett, written by one Vincent: Upon their humble petition this day read at the board, acknowledging their fault, and humbly imploring His Ma's pardon, It was ordered (His Ma'y present in Councill) that the said Thomas Johnson and William Burthen be and they are hereby discharged from their restraint; and hereof the messenger in whose custody they are, is required to take notice, and sett them at liberty accordingly.

The printer of Penn's pamphlet was not so fortunate. He remained a close prisoner until the 29th January, 1668–9, when it appears from the following minute that some little liberty was given to him.

At the Court at Whitehall, the 29th of January, 1668–9.

Upon reading the petition of Joane Derby, wife of John Derby, printer, close prisoner in the Gatehouse, praying that her husband may be set at liberty upon good and sufficient bayle, it was this day ordered that the keeper and deputy-keeper of the Gatehouse do, and they are hereby required to permit and suffer the said John Derby to enjoy such benefit and liberty of the prison as any other prisoners have (any former order for his close imprisonment notwithstanding), nevertheless they are to keep him in safe custody till he shall be discharged by order of this board.

Finally on the 7th May, 1669, that is, after an imprisonment of nearly six months, he was set at liberty.

Upon reading this day at the board the humble petition of John Darby, printer, prisoner in the Gatehouse, Westminster, praying that His Majesty would be graciously pleased to commiserate his case, and to prevent the utter ruine of his family, to grant him a discharge from his tedious imprisonment; it was thought fit, and accordingly ordered, His Majesty present in Council, that the said John Darby, giving sufficient security (whiche the clerke of His Majesty's most Honble Privy Council is to take) to act nothing prejudicial to His Majesty and his government, as also for his appearance, either at this board or before either of His Majesty's principall secretaries of state, upon summons, be, and he is hereby discharged from his imprisonment, and hereof the keeper and deputy-keeper of the Gatehouse, Westminster, and all others whom it may concern, are required to take notice, and to set him at liberty accordingly.

These proceedings against the printers, although commenced in conformity with the statute for the regulation of printers, cannot be distinguished, in their subsequent course, from the old authority exercised in the Star Chamber. The statute alluded to gave the Council no power of dealing at will with such cases. It prescribed that persons who disregarded the enacted provisions should be committed to prison by justices of peace, and be tried by a jury, in the ordinary way. Here we find the Council exercising an indefinite authority, committing, discharging, and binding over to future appearance at the Council board. This was the very authority which had been so much abused in the reign of Charles I.

Before the discharge of his printer, Vincent had published his pamphlet. It was newly set up in type, and printed without licence or printer's name, but probably with an understanding that it would not again be interfered with. Copies of it may be found in some of our principal libraries. I have been courteously allowed to examine the copy of it which is at Sion College. It gives an account of the writer's interviews and disputations with the Quakers, retorts their charges of rudeness and ill behaviour, and imputes to them a want of reverence and candour in the discussion of the solemn subjects which were in question. The fair conclusion seems to be,
On William Penn's Imprisonment

that there was much irregularity on both sides. Vincent met the assertions of the Quakers with a syllogism. The Quakers would have nothing to do with logic, "putting by thrusts and dints of argument with diverting speeches." After a time, and on their refusing to leave the chapel when Vincent dismissed his congregation, their adversaries became irritated, and although Vincent denies that there was any striking, or that any one used the words "impudent villain," both which are asserted by Penn, it is quite clear that on the one hand the Quakers behaved indiscreetly and indecorously, and, on the other, that they received too little of that courtesy which should be extended to all conscientious inquirers.

We have now disposed of all the secondary parties to this incident. It remains to consider the course taken with the principal. Penn's situation during his long confinement in the Tower was certainly most trying, especially for a young man distinguished by activity of mind, and a love of athletic sports. Committed by the exercise of a mere arbitrary authority, not to an ordinary prison, but to the Tower; kept there month after month without open examination or opportunity of defence; placed in confinement, strict indeed, and yet not so strict but that he was well informed that he and his opinions had become the common talk, that he had been stigmatised in various books published against him by Dr. John Owen, the Rev. Thomas Danson, and others, and that in fact the world out of doors was ringing with accusations against him. In his own words, he was "most egregiously slander'd, revil'd, and defam'd, by pulpit, press, and talk, terming me," he says, "a blasphemer, seducer, Socinian, denying the divinity of Christ the Saviour, and what not." If imprisonment can try the strength of principles, Penn's were certainly now in the way of being put to the test. If his Quakerism could stand this trial, it might well be deemed fixed for ever.

His conduct on this occasion was worthy of his future fame. He had received great principles into his heart, and he clung to them. In his solitary chamber he turned his thoughts upon the true uses of adversity. He looked down with Quaker severity of judgment upon that false frivolous world from which he was excluded, and upwards to those brighter realms in which he anticipated his reward. In this mood he set himself to the composition of his "No Cross no Crown," a work of value even in its first brief form, in which it is a mere defence of Quaker dogmas, and, when ultimately enlarged and written upon the broad basis of our common Christianity, one of the most popular books of its kind. Several of Penn's biographers suppose that the whole work was written in the Tower, and consequently put forth the latter part of it, which consists of a collection of testimonies

* Works, i 266.
to the vanity of the world and the moral benefits of affliction, as a marvellous exhibition of memory and acquaintance with books. This is a mistake. "No Cross no Crown" was altogether re-modelled and extended to at least three times its original size in the second edition, which was not published until 1682, thirteen years after the author's release from the Tower. Besides, the first edition, although dated by his biographers in 1668, was really dated and published in 1669, and the much smaller collection of testimonies added to that edition may very well have been compiled after its author's release. There is nothing in the book itself, nor any evidence elsewhere, to lead to the conclusion that the first edition was either wholly written or was published whilst Penn was still in the Tower.

The hindrances to Penn's literary labours in the Tower were not many. "As I saw," he says, "very few, so I saw them but seldom." He excepts two persons who were his constant visitors. The first of them, it is pleasing to know, was his stern and disappointed father. Under the influence of other troubles, which have been well explained by Mr. Dixon, Sir William's heart relented towards the son whom he had so lately discarded, and greatly to his credit the old admiral became a petitioner to the King on his son's behalf. The nature of his petition and its results are learned from the next of Mr. Lemon's papers.

The title of the first edition was "No Cross no Crown; or, several sober Reasons against Hat-honour, Titular Respects, You to a single Person, with the Apparel and Recreations of the Times: Being inconsistent with Scripture, Reason, and the Practice, as well of the best Heathens as the Holy Men and Women of all Generations; and consequently fantastick, impertinent, and sinfull. With Sixty-eight Testimonies of the most famous Persons of both former and latter Ages, for further confirmation. In Defence of the poor despised Quakers, against the Practice and objections of their Adversaries. By W. Penn, j. an humble Disciple, and patient Bearer of the Cross of Jesus.

"But Mordecai bowed not. Esth. iii. 2. Adam, where art thou? Gen. iii. 9. In like manner the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, not with brodered hair, &c. 1 Tim. ii. 9. Thy law is my meditation all the day. Psal. cxix. 97.

"Printed in the year 1669."

The ultimate title was very different, and shows the altered character of the book:—"No Cross, no Crown. A Discourse, showing the Nature and Discipline of the Holy Cross of Christ: and that the Denyal of Self, and Daily Bearing of Christ's Cross, is the alone way to the Rest and Kingdom of God. To which are added, the Living and Dying Testimonies of many Persons of Fame and Learning, both of Ancient and Modern Times, in favour of this Treatise. In Two Parts. By William Penn, Jun.

"And Jesus said unto his disciples; If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross daily, and follow me. Luke ix. 23.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, &c. 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8."

The first edition of "No Cross no Crown" is not a very uncommon book. I was allowed, with great good will, to examine a copy of it in the admirable library at the Friends' meeting-house at Houndsditch.
At the Court at Whitehall, the 31st of March, 1669.

Present: The King's Most Excellent Ma'y, &c. &c. &c.

The humble petition of Sir William Penn being this day read at the Board, setting forth that ye late faylings of his son William Penn, by his departure from ye Protestant religion, hath been and still is his very great affliction, the education which he bestowed on him being such as could have no tendency to those courses, by which he hath incurred His Ma'y's displeasure; yet forasmuch as the petitioner is not without hopes that God will in due time reclaime him, and being confident that he will act nothing to ye prejudice of His Ma'y's Government, and being informed that he hath given reasonable good satisfaction to those worthy persons who were appointed to examine him, he most humbly prayed that His Ma'y would be graciously pleased to give order for his liberty; which His Ma'y having taken into consideration, and also that the booke printed and published by the said William Penn, intituled "Sandy Foundations shaken, &c," conteyneth in it several dangerous and blasphemous heresies to ye scandall of ye Christian religion, did this day order and require the R' Reverend Father in God the Lord Bishop of London to take cognizance and to proceed to ye examination and judging of the said heretical opinions, according to such rules and formes as belong to ye Ecclesiasticall Court by the lawes of this kingdome, and in such manner as hath been formerly accustomed in like cases. And to that end it was further ordered by His Ma'y that Sir John Robinson, Kn't and Bar't, Lieuten't of ye Tower of London, be, and he is hereby required freely to permit citations and processes to be served upon the said William Penn within ye Tower of London, which shall be issued out by the Bishop of London in this cause of heresy, and also to suffer ye said William Penn in company of a keeper and sufficient guard to make his appearance in ye consistory of ye said Bishop.

Penn attributes to the bishop of London a strong feeling against him. "That which engaged him," he says, "to be warm in my persecution, was the credit some Presbyterian ministers had with him, and the mistake they improved against me of my denying the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity." Penn's biographers also set down to the bishop a rough speech, in which he expressed that he was resolved that Penn should either recant or die a prisoner. The authority for this speech is a rumour brought to Penn in the Tower by his servant. It seems to me that there is very little foundation for all this presumed hostility of the bishop of London. At any event, it is certain that when the bishop had Penn in his hands, turned over, as we see, by the King and Council to the tender mercies of the Consistory Court, he took no steps against him. By the kindness of Mr. Shephard, the registrar of the Bishop of London, whose liberality to all literary inquirers stands in honourable contrast to the opposite treatment they experience at the office of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, I am enabled to state that there is not the slightest trace on the Bishop's register of any proceedings whatever against Penn.
In the meantime an influence was growing up with Penn which ultimately procured him his release,—an influence which I am willing to attribute to the good temper and kindliness of the King himself. The great popular outcry against Penn was occasioned by the notion that he had denied the Trinity and also the divinity of the Saviour. This was, to a certain extent, a mistake. Penn, like a true Quaker, had denied the separate existence of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but he had not denied that these three are one, or that they are one divine Being. The Quaker objection turns upon the strict formal accuracy of various words used in our creeds and elsewhere, in reference to this great mystery, such as "substance," "person," "essence," "union," and so forth. To discuss these points publicly with young Penn, either in the Consistory Court or elsewhere, would have been attended with many inconveniences. The King adopted another and a far more sensible course. He sent to him in the Tower one of his own chaplains, one of the best theologians and most skilful controversialists of his day, and left Penn and this often-selected champion of orthodoxy to discuss the recondite matter between them. The clergyman alluded to was the celebrated Stillingfleet, in whom were combined, as his works testify, the varied talents of the antiquary, the metaphysician, and the divine. His "Irenicum" and "Origines sacrae" had made his name known to the world whilst he himself was still the incumbent of Sutton, in Bedfordshire, a retreat well fitted for a studious man. Sir Harbottle Grimstone drew him into more active life by giving him the appointment of preacher at the Rolls, and procuring for him the lectureship at the Temple, whilst Lord Southampton presented him to the living of St. Andrew's, Holborn. Settled in London, bishop Henchman employed his talents against various sectaries. It was he who procured Stillingfleet to write his defence of archbishop Laud's conference with Fisher; and, in all the controversies of that time, Stillingfleet was looked up to as the invincible defender of the Church. It is no slight testimony to Penn's reputation that such a man was selected to confer with him.

It is not perhaps usual, in papers read before this Society, to comment upon the moral and pictorial phases of the incidents which are brought before our notice. But in such an instance as the present it seems impossible to mention the meeting of these two celebrated men without pointing out what a striking scene it recalls. The place was probably one of those narrow cells, the walls of which are covered with inscribed memorials, as touching as they are indelible, of their former occupants. Here, throughout a tedious winter, had been found a man, young indeed in years, but prim, formal, and unfashionable in costume and appearance. His character is plainly written upon his soft and almost beautiful countenance, which evidently
betokens a large and generous heart, activity and courage the most unquestionable, and a disposition ever placid, hopeful, and cheerful. In his drear cell he occupies his lonely hours, and solaces his prison cares, not by registering his name and sorrows on his prison walls, but in the composition of a work calculated to strengthen his patience, and arm him to endurance by the loftiest of human motives.

After his imprisonment had been prolonged for many months, he is suddenly called upon to lay aside his pen, and the Bible, which probably constituted all his prison library. He rises from his work to receive an unexpected visitor. It is a man about ten years his senior, of presence almost as handsome and far more stately than his own. He is a dignified clergyman, dressed in the most approved clerical costume of the day—periwig and all. His name is familiar to everybody, and some people deem him reserved and haughty; but he is admired by Hale and Vaughan and Grimstone, the leading lawyers of the day, for the subtlety of his metaphysical intellect; he is listened to with delight by Matthew Henry for the largeness of his Christian charity; and, years before, his skill in controversy had earned for him from bishop Sanderson, himself the acutest of casuists, the epithet of "the great." In that melancholy chamber the sun may have shone on scenes more sad, but seldom on one more striking, than when these two men—so different, yet both so skilful and so honest—sat down quietly together to their first discussion.

Of the particulars of their conferences we know but little. No one can doubt that Penn received much kind and judicious advice. We may even conclude, without seeking to disparage the Quaker doctrine of the internal light, that his intellect was instructed on the points in difference by conversations with a man like Stillingfleet. He visited the Tower frequently. Penn puts him in that respect on a par with his father: "The one came," he says, "as my relation, the other, at the King's command, to endeavour my change of judgment: but, as I told him, and he told the King, that the Tower was the worst argument in the world to convince me, for, whoever was in the wrong, those who used force in religion could never be in the right; so neither the doctor's arguments," Penn continues, "nor his moving and interesting motives of the King's favour and preferment, at all prevailed; and I am glad I have the opportunity to own so publicly the great pains he took and humanity he showed, and that to his moderation, learning, and kindness I will ever hold myself obliged."*

This was written many years afterwards. Without imputing anything like deception to the writer, or supposing that Stillingfleet really induced him to abandon any

of his Quaker principles, it may well be supposed that such an adviser may have taught him how to shape his course and plead his cause to the greatest advantage; how best to explain away those assertions—ineducious I should call them at the least—which had excited against him so much popular dislike. It is clear that they discussed the subjects in dispute. Stillingfleet gave Penn some of his recent books. Penn studied them; and, after discussion and perusal, the result appeared in the immediate publication by Penn of a brief pamphlet entitled "Innocency with her open face, presented by way of Apology for the book entitled 'The Sandy Foundation Shaken.'" In this pamphlet Penn stated, "That which I am credibly informed [probably by Stillingfleet] to be the greatest reason for my imprisonment, and that noise of blasphemy which hath pierced so many ears of late, is my denying the divinity of Christ, and divesting him of his eternal godhead, which most busily hath been suggested as well to those in authority as maliciously insinuated amongst the people." He then goes on to admit and prove the divinity of the Saviour in the most ample manner, and by arguments the acuteness of some of which seems to me more like Stillingfleet than Penn. With respect to the errors charged against him in connection with the doctrine of Atonement, he distinctly relies for an answer upon Stillingfleet: "I am prevented," he writes, "by a person whose reputation is generally great amongst the Protestants of these nations;" and then he proceeds to quote from Stillingfleet's discourse upon Christ's sufferings against Crellius. On Justification he says, "Here again the same Dr. Stillingfleet comes in to my relief," and then he gives various further quotations from the same work. There follows an ample, and what would seem to readers unacquainted with verbal disputes, a very orthodox confession of his belief, and the pamphlet concludes with a vindication of himself for having written at all upon such subjects. The rude entertainment which he and his companion had met with from Vincent and his friends gave him, as he thought, a "just call" to interfere. "But, alas! how have those two or three extemporary sheets [his Sandy Foundation Shaken] been tossed, tumbled, and torn on all hands, yea, aggravated to a monstrous design, even the subversion of the Christian religion, than which there could be nothing more repugnant to my principles and purpose; wherefore how very intemperate as well as unjust have all my adversaries been in their revilings, slanders, and defamations, using the most opprobrious terms of seducer, heretic, blasphemer, deceiver, Socinian, Pelagian, Simon Magus, impiously robbing Christ of his divinity, for whom the vengeance of the great day is reserved, &c. Nor have these things been whispered, but, in one book and pulpit after another, have more or less been thundered out against me, as if some bull had lately been arrived from Rome." After some remarks upon the
alleged inconsistency of such conduct in the followers of a suffering Saviour, he concludes, speaking on behalf of his sect: “But if you are resolved severity shall take its course in this, our case can never change nor happiness abate, for no human edict can possibly deprive us of his glorious presence who is able to make the damnest prisons so many receptacles of pleasure, and whose heavenly fellowship doth unspeakably replenish our solitary souls with divine consolation; by whose holy, meek, and harmless spirit I have been taught most freely to forgive, and not less earnestly to solicit the temporal and eternal good of all my enemies. Farewell!”

The explanation of his opinions contained in his new pamphlet was probably judged to be as much as was likely to be obtained from the young would-be martyr. Stillingfleet reported favourably of the result of his conferences. The influence of Penn’s father and that of the Duke of York were exerted on his behalf. The matter was again brought before the Council, and the following paper, which is the last of those furnished me by Mr. Lemon, explains the result:

At the Court at Whitehall, the 28th of July, 1669.

Present: The King’s Most Excellent Majesty.

His Majesty being pleased this day to declare in council that he is satisfied as well by the report of Dr. Stillingfleete, who was appointed to confer with William Penn concerning some heretical and blasphemous opinions he had vented, as by what the said William Penn hath since published in print, that he is sensible of the impiety and blasphemy of his said heretical opinions, and that he doth recant and retract the same, did order, that the said William Penn be, and he is hereby released from his imprisonment in the Tower of London; whereof Sir John Robinson, Lieutenant of the Tower of London, and his Deputy there, are to take notice and to cause him to be forthwith set at liberty and delivered to his father Sir William Penn.

Penn’s imprisonment in the Tower lasted seven months and twelve days. Stillingfleet without the Tower would probably have brought him back to the Church; but that worst of arguments having been tried first, the prisoner left his cell a confirmed Quaker. In the year following Newgate was tried upon him, with no better success.

JOHN BRUCE.