

THE ORIGIN OF THE MUGGLETONIANS.

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My object in writing this paper is to furnish an authentic sketch of the Origin of the Muggletonians, a people so obscure that I may even call them unknown. Say to ninety-nine persons out of a hundred that So-and-so is a Unitarian, and you immediately suggest doubts more or less unfavourable to the salvation of So-and-so's soul. But say, instead, that So-and-so is a Muggletonian, and you raise no theological idea whatever; you simply excite a natural amusement that any one can be found who is odd enough to identify himself with so uncommon a name. Some time ago I had occasion to examine some papers at the Public Record Office connected with this subject, and on mentioning to one of the officials the purpose of my search, "Muggletonians!" said he, "I thought the leading authority was 'Pickwick'!"*

Indeed the name has served the turn of wits, from the period of the Restoration downwards. I might refer to Tom Brown's droll and scandalous invention of the marriage of Dr. Titus Oates to one Mrs. Margaret Wells, a Muggletonian widow;† I might quote Allan Ramsay's good-humoured

* "Muggleton is an ancient and loyal borough, mingling a zealous advocacy of Christian principles with a devoted attachment to commercial rights." — *Post-humous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, chap. vii.

† "Since the saviour of the nation has join'd his saving faculty with a damning talent (for you are to understand his lady is a *Muggletonian*, and those people pretend to have the power of damnation), we may now expect to see a motly race of half-saviours and half-damners." — *The Widow's Wedding: or a true Account of Dr. Oates' Marriage with a Muggletonian Widow in Bread-*

rhymes, in which, giving a "short swatch" of his creed, he thus proclaims himself—

"Well then, I'm nowther Whig nor Tory,
Nor credit give to Purgatory:
* * * * *
Nor Asgillite, nor Bess Clarksonian,
Nor Mountaineer, nor Muggletonian;" *

and, at a later date, I might mention that singular piece of scurrilous versification, in the shape of an anonymous lampoon upon Whitfield, which owes half its raciness to the fact that it professes to proceed from a Muggletonian pen.†

Nor have more serious authors been kinder to the memory of the founders of this out-of-the-way sect, and the principles they professed. Even well informed persons are in the habit of mixing up Muggletonians and Fifth Monarchy Men, ‡ as if the two were identical. When we find so genial and so acute a critic as Robert Alfred Vaughan § sanctioning a

street, London, August the 18th, 1693. In a Letter to a Gentleman in the Country. Tom Brown's Works, 9th edition, 1760, vol. iv, pp. 142-6. A curious plate, accompanying this edition, represents the Devil in one corner, engaged in tying the knot.

* *Vide* Epistle to Mr. James Arbuckle of Belfast, January, 1719; in the Glasgow Edition of Ramsay's *Poems*, 1770, pp. 149-153. In a note, p. 152, we find, "Mugletonian: a kind of quakers, so called from one Mugleton. See Leslie's snake in the grass."

† The following is the full title-page of this unseemly production:—

The Amourous Humours, and Audacious Adventures, of one WH+++++D.
By a Muggletonian.

"Jew, Turk and Christian differ but in CREED;
In ways of wickedness they're all agreed:
None upwards clear the Road; they part and cavil:
And all jog on, unerring, to the Devil."—*Lansd.*

London; printed for the Author, and sold by M. Watson, next the King's Arms Tavern, Chancery Lane; at the corner of Cock Court, facing the Old Bailey, Ludgate Hill, and at the Pamphlet Shops of London and Westminster. [Price 6d.] N. D. 8vo, pp. 29.

‡ See Letter, by J. H. D [ixon], *Inquirer*, 3rd Jan., 1863.

§ "The Muggletonians, Fifth Monarchy Men, and Ranters of those days were the exceptional mire and dirt cast up by the vexed times, but assuredly not the

similar confusion, we need not wonder that writers less precise fall into the mistake. Lord Macaulay, as a matter of course, avoids this error; but the one sentence in which he deigns to address himself to our subject is full of contemptuous unfairness. It runs thus: "A mad tailor, named Lodowick Muggleton, wandered from pothouse to pothouse, tipping ale, and denouncing eternal torments against all those who refused to believe, on his testimony, that the Supreme Being was only six feet high, and that the sun was just four miles from the earth."*

No one seems to have taken in hand to write the life of the man here alluded to, if we except the unknown author of a malicious pamphlet, brought out in 1677, on the occasion of Muggleton's being placed in the pillory.† This piece has evidently been made use of by the compiler of the brief notice of Muggleton in Chambers' "*Book of Days*."‡ It is, however, quite untrustworthy.

More recently Mr. Hain Friswell has included a paper on Lodowick Muggleton in his "*Readings from Rare Books*." This paper is of little or no value. Misled by the absence of the name from the Census returns of 1851, it speaks of the Muggletonians as being by this time extinct.§ They are, I believe, about as numerous now as ever they were;

representatives of English mysticism."—*Hours with the Mystics*, 1856, vol. ii., p. 255.

* *History of England*, 1848, vol. i., p. 164.

† *A modest Account of the wicked Life of that grand Impostor, Lodowick Muggleton: Wherein are related all the remarkable Actions he did, and all the strange Accidents that have befallen him, ever since his first Coming to London, to this Twenty-fifth of January, 1676. Also a Particular of those Reasons which first drew him to these damnable Principles: With several pleasant Stories concerning him, proving his Commission to be but counterfeit, and himself a Cheat, from divers Expressions which have fallen from his own Mouth. Licensed according to Order. Printed at London, for B. H., in 1676 [1677], 4to, pp. 6. Reprinted, Harleian Miscellany, 1744, vol. i., p. 593.*

‡ *Book of Days*, 1864, Vol. i., p. 362. The date (March 12) under which this notice appears, is an error.

§ *Varia; Readings from Rare Books*, 1866, pp. 241, 250.

and the writings of their recognised founders, which are constantly kept in print, are neither scarce nor dear, but may be had without any difficulty, on applying to the proper quarter.*

The rise of the Muggletonians is a very significant fact of that general surging up of the undercurrents of English religious life, which characterised the middle of the seventeenth century. The abnormal forms of English religion at that date have for the most part been sketched by our Church historians in a style both faint and loose, without firmness of outline, and without love for the work. Casual readers are certainly not aware what great and what varied forces of zeal and of activity were at work two hundred years ago, among what we may term the outlandish sects. People who took up Mr. Hepworth Dixon's recent volumes on "New America" were both startled and shocked at the multiplicity and strangeness of the religious communities which he describes as existing now in full vigour across the Atlantic, contemporaneously with our ripest civilisation. But exactly the same phenomena are apparent to the student of men and manners who will visit the obscure corners and travel on the by-paths of the religious history of the Commonwealth. I do not know that England contained then a community of Polygamists, or that America contains now a community of Muggletonians; but if these be exceptions, they are about the only exceptions to the completeness of the parallel. Outside the more orderly Churches, whose history is tolerably well known,—the Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists,—a host of minor sectaries sprang up and flourished before or about the year 1650. Of these some went by a name derived from the founder of their school, as the Brownists, the Bidellians, the Behmenists, the

* Mr. William Cates, 4, Gloucester Cottages, Loughborough Park, Brixton, S.. will supply any of them to purchasers.

Coppinists, the Salmonists, the Traskites, the Tryonists. Others were designated by their cardinal doctrine, as the Sabbatarians, or Seventh-Day Baptists; the Millennarians, or Fifth Monarchy Men; the Virgin Life People. Some chose their own distinctive title, as the Seekers or Waiters, the Family of Love, the Philadelphians. Others, again, such as the Dippers, the Ranters, the Shakers, the Heavenly Father Men, bore a nickname imposed by the ever ready wit of the populace. Some of these were rather *Societies* than *Sects*; and, like the early Methodists or the early Swedenborgians, went to church or conventicle at the usual hours of worship, and met for their own purposes at other times. But the tendency of Commonwealth freedom was to sectarianise these societies; just as afterwards the tendency of Restoration uniformity was to extinguish them.

To this motley assemblage of Sects, George Fox added, in the year 1649, the Society of Friends, soon to become better known by the soubriquet of "Quaker," due to the harsh humour of Mr. Gervas Bennet, justice of the peace at Derby, whom George Fox, under examination before him in 1650, had bid "Tremble at the word of the Lord!"* Not long after, in 1652, John Reeve and Lodowicke Muggleton came forward with a new doctrine, and the uncouth term Muggletonian began to be pronounced.† It is not, like the word Quaker, considered a nickname, ‡ unless perhaps by younger members of the present body; and the substitutes for it, such as "Believers in the Third Record," or "Believers in the Commission of the Spirit," are too longwinded and

* *History of the People called Quakers*, by William Sewell, 2nd edition, 1725. p. 25.

† The first recorded use of the word I have found is in an abusive speech by Chief Justice Rainsford, at the Old Bailey, 17th January, 1677. "You see he has got a set of them, and makes them call themselves Muggletonians, after his cursed name."—*True Account of the Trial and Sufferings of Lodowick Muggleton*, by [Nathaniel] Powell, edition of 1808, p. 6.

‡ See Letter, by William Ridsdale, *Inquirer*, 21st March, 1863.

inexpressive for general adoption, even by Muggletonians themselves.

One circumstance which leads us to class together Quakers and Muggletonians is the remarkable fate which has made them almost the only representatives, in modern times, of that abnormal religious life of England, which produced so many singular phenomena in the heart of the seventeenth century. Not that all those sects, of which I have enumerated some, have quite faded out, so as to "leave not a rack behind." Some have developed beyond their first incipient stages. Some have been absorbed in stronger and more consistent bodies. Some have sobered down into good Christian common sense. The Seventh Day Baptists can yet show you the ghost of a Saturday congregation in the East of London; and in America are said to thrive. Plenty of orthodox persons may be found, I believe, at this day, who hold the distinctive doctrine of the Millennaries, that Christ will soon come to reign on earth for the space of a thousand years; though the old fury, which was occasionally roused in the Fifth Monarchy Men, has never inspired their modern representatives. Still, for practical purposes, the wellknown and everywhere respected Society of Friends, and the extremely obscure body of Muggletonians may be treated as the sole survivors of the commonwealth sects. Seekers, like pious John Saltmarsh, have left behind them no successors; Ranters, like John Robins, or the misguided and poetical Abiezer Coppe, have passed from human ken; Behmenists, like Humphrey Blunden or Durand Hotham, or that learned and reverend visionary Dr. John Pordage, and Philadelphians, after the fashion of Jane Lead and Dr. Francis Lee, we look for in vain to-day; but George Fox and Lodowicke Muggleton still find zealous and trusting disciples.*

* Of Churches and Sects, or Societies, in England, Alexander Ross, in his

Another circumstance, of more moment, causes us to name these two names together. They are the intellectual opposites of each other. The mutual repulsion of the schools of thought which they severally represented, contributed not a little to define each. The opponents of both made much of the points of apparent similarity between them. Charles Leslie, the Nonjuror,* and that apostate Quaker with the savoury name, Francis Bugg,† sought to discredit the claims of Fox, by holding up Muggleton to him as a mirror in which he might see his own face reflected. On the other hand, the adherents of each made matters of life and death, of salvation or damnation, out of the points of dissimilarity which separated them.

In their day, it is true, it would scarce have been possible for a man to cleave to the one, without in some measure despising the other. Contemplating them at the distance of two hundred years, I can please myself with the indulgence of a liking which is broad enough to take in the two. At least I know I love George Fox, while I cherish a sneaking kindness for Lodowicke Muggleton, and stand somewhat in awe of them both. No greater contrast of character can well be imagined than exists between these rival founders of sects. Muggleton is arrogant, dogmatic, and perfectly free from enthusiasm; George Fox, gentle and persuasive, but with an underglow of fiery flame which leaps forth sometimes, and burns up all before it. Muggleton is shrewd in

Πανορθοία, or a View of All Religions in the World, etc., 1653, mentions sixteen. George Fox enumerates fifteen sects, with which he had held reasonings in 1661 (*Journal*, edition of 1852, Vol. i. p. 395). And in the *Post-Boy robb'd of his Mail, etc.*, second edition, 1706, pp. 422-432, there is a description (by John Dnnton?) of the tenets of twenty-four English Sects and Churches as existing in 1692.

* *The Snake in the Grass, or Satan transformed into an Angel of Light*, [by Charles Leslie,] 1696, pp. lxxv.-lxxviii., 9-10, etc. See also the second part of the *Defence of the Snake in the Grass*, Leslie, Theolog. Works, 1721, vol. 2, p. 357, for a curious comparison of the two men as to their personal appearance.

† *The Pilgrim's Progress from Quakerism to Christianity*, by Fr. Bugg, second edition, 1700, pp. 17-20.

his knowledge of men and of business, and far from disdain-
ing the enjoyment of a full meal, a glass of ale, and a pipe
of tobacco; * George Fox, in worldly matters unversed, is a
child for simplicity, spare and abstemious by choice in his
diet and ways. † Both are resolute and honourable men.
No greater contrast of faith can easily be thought of than
theirs. For while Muggleton comes before us declaring that
God lives in regal state "above the stars," and interferes not
with things below; while he believes religiously that prayer
is a mark of weakness, a remnant of the corrupt nature,
and that outward worship of any kind is a folly and a
mistake; George Fox, on the other hand, is a man who dwells
with God as an ever-present Spirit, who prays as no man had
ever prayed before, ‡ and institutes that most impressive and
spiritual of all Church-worships, the silent meeting of
Friends.

Yet, to come to points of coincidence, both these men were
bold enough to assert that a new era in religion had begun,
the era of the Spirit; that forms were of no value, ordina-
tions and consecrations null and void; the life the evidence
of the truth; and salvation the effect of a spiritual principle—
a *seed*, as they both called it—quickenèd invisibly by God,
in entire independence of outward professions and creeds.
These opinions, and the like, were indeed part of a common
stock of notions floating, as it were, in the air; and
appropriated by each rising sect after its own fashion, as

* See *Acts of the Witnesses of the Spirit*, 2nd edition, 1764, p. 50. v. 12, p. 57, v. 11; *Spiritual Epistles*, 2nd edition, 1820, p. 497; Penn's *New Witnesses proved Old Heretics*, 1672, p. 38. This last not very friendly account was evidently in Lord Macaulay's mind when he penned the sentence already quoted; but Macaulay, as is his wont, adds a strong colour of his own. None of his contemporaries charge Muggleton with insobriety.

† See *Journal of G. Fox*, *ut supra*, vol. i., p. 50, and Penn's *Preface*, p. 35 "Civil beyond all breeding in his behaviour; very temperate, eating little and sleeping less, though a bulky person."

‡ "The most awful, living reverent frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his in prayer." So writes the placid and lawyerlike Penn. *Preface*, p. 32.

indications of its revolt against the tyranny of established Churches and the dead level of traditionary creeds. So too, the refusal to bear arms, and the objection to take oaths, were points of conscience not peculiar at that day to the Quakers and Muggletonians, but shared by them with many seekers after truth, who attained no permanent organisation, and have left scarce any traces of their influence on our religious history.

These things they held in common, and these things might possibly have drawn them together, had not a powerful influence kept them apart. The England of that day was not ignorant either of the name or of the charm of a German thinker, by whose mystical philosophy Muggleton, for a moment captivated, was quickly and permanently repelled. This was Jacob Boehme, or (if I may still use that old English corruption of his name, by which he was known to Sparrow and Elliston, to William Law and Francis Okely) JACOB BEHMEN.*

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, there dwelt in the small town of Görlitz a hardworking respectable mechanic; a man of no learning, of no striking presence, with a bright gray eye, and a bent, worn frame; who lived harmless and retired with his wife and his four sons, and made and mended shoes for a livelihood; but who had imaginations beyond his craft, who saw deep into the mysteries of things, whose heart swelled within him till it threatened to burst the harness and trappings of orthodoxies, and sects, and schools. For a time the fire smouldered in his thought and did not break forth; for a long while the vision and the insight remained undisclosed to the world;

* Jacob Boehme was born in 1575, and died in 1624. His surname is also given in German writings as Boehm and Boehmen; and in its English form appears as Beem, Beme, Behme, Behemen, Bemon, Beamon, Bemond, Demand, Behmont, etc.

but, going into the fields one morning at daybreak (ten years after the first luminous revelation had dazzled and startled him), the radiance of a more than earthly glory met and overpowered his soul; and with slow and quivering words, with rude and uncouth turns of phrase, he sat down at length to write. "*Morgen Röthe im Aufgang*" (Morning Red in the Orient)* was his first book. A more strange and subtle series of books than those which this humble cobbler of shoes produced in the dozen of years which intervened between 1612 and his death in 1624, never perhaps flowed from mortal pen. These were books, whose object was to set forth the utter worthlessness of books; arguments which were to expose the fallacy of blind human reason; treatises in which a devout communicant and hearer of sermons would refine away the sacraments into mere acts of the inward life, would countenance no preacher but the Holy Ghost, and would assert that by salvation, or the soul's health, is meant the effect of no dogma, and the result of no purchase, but only the felt presence of Christ living in human souls.

This shoemaker of Görlitz, little as he is known and read by us at the present day, has had many English followers, admirers, interpreters; but upon one Englishman his spiritual mantle seems unconsciously to have fallen. The year which saw Behmen die, witnessed the birth of Fox; as if Providence were willing to provide immediately a successor to the spirit which was passing away. Both sprang from the people, both were shoemakers by trade, both were of singularly innocent and guileless character, both had visions and revelations in early youth and in maturer age, both had laid open to them, in addition to the

* Called afterwards *Aurora*, at the suggestion of his friend Dr. Balthasar Walter. Behmen himself published nothing, except the *Way to Christ*, in 1622; but his writings were copied and circulated in manuscript. The history of their appearance in print after his death is curious.

deep things of the spiritual life of man, the mysteries and occult qualities of nature, the virtues of plants, metals, minerals;* in short, from both the veil of the world was lifted, and they saw in man, in the universe, and in the Bible, things which not only the holy and the wise but even the angels desire to look into; and in the fruit of this knowledge both wrote, not as they themselves were minded, but as the unerring Spirit moved. There are passages in the Journal of George Fox which read exactly like passages from the Letters of Jacob Behmen; and though, in the case of Fox himself, it is clear that the resemblance is due not to any reading, but to a real community of spiritual gifts, yet the early Quakers, as we know from various sources, pondered and cherished Behmen's writings. The Quaker spirit and the spirit of Behmen were one,† and against that spirit Muggleton warred with all his heart.‡ How he came to do so, we shall better understand when we have traced the course of his early history, which is best read in his own quaint, racy, and picturesque account. In transferring the narrative from the "*Acts of the Witnesses of the Spirit*" to these pages, I shall take the liberty of condensing, and occasionally of transposing, and shall be able to add from other sources some illustrative matter.

LUDOWICKE MUGGLETON, then, was born in Walnut Tree Yard, off Bishopsgate Street, London, at the end of July,

* This is often forgotten in regard to Fox; but see his *Journal, ut supra*, vol. i., p. 66. "I was at a stand in my mind whether I should practise phisic for the good of mankind, seeing the nature and virtues of things were so opened to me by the Lord."

† See the *Looking Glass for George Fox*, 2nd edition, 1756, p. 10. "Jacob Behmont's books were the chief books that the Quakers bought, for there is the principle or foundation of their religion; for they cannot go beyond that, but there they build. This I know by William Smith's letters to me; and you George Fox are far below William Smith in the knowledge of Jacob Behmont's writings."

‡ "I did wear ribbons on purpose that I might not be taken or thought to be a Quaker, for I do hate the Quakers' principles." *Spiritual Epistles, ut supra*, p. 242.

1609.* The family to which he belonged had its ancestral home at Wilbarston, near Market Harborough; indeed the original stock of the Muggletons exists there still, and must have been native to Wilbarston for upwards of three centuries. "Our forefathers," he writes, in 1678, to his cousin, Roger Muggleton of Wilbarston, "were all plain men, yet downright honest men; men of no great repute in the world, nor of base report, as ever I could hear." His father, John Muggleton, was a smith and "farrier, or horse doctor, ... in great respect with the Post Master in King James' time." Of three children born to him by Mary his wife, "I," says Lodowicke, "was the youngest, and my mother loved me. But after my mother died, † I being but young [only three years old] my father took another wife; so I ... was exposed to live with strangers in the country, at a distance from all my kindred. I was a stranger to my father's house after my mother was dead. ‡

"When I was grown to fifteen or sixteen years of age, I was put apprentice to one John Quick, a tailor ... a quiet, peaceable man, not cruel to servants, which liked [pleased] me very well, for my nature was always against cruelty, I could never endure it neither in myself nor in others. ... I took my trade well, and pleased my master better than any of his other servants ... hating drunkenness and lust in

* The Register of Christenings at St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, for 1609, contains this entry, "Lodowicke the sonne of Jobue Muggleton bapt. ye 30 of Julye." His Christian name is usually spelled Lodowick; sometimes, by a misprint, Lodwick; or, through ignorance, Ludovick. He himself seems always to have signed Lodowicke. Perhaps it was a family surname. The burial of a John Lodowicke appears in the Register of St. Botolph's in 1612.

† The Register of Burials at St. Botolph's for 1612 contains the entry:—" [Aged] 35, Marye ~~daughter~~ Muggletone burye ye 30 of June."

‡ In J. Payne Collier's *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn, Shakespeare Society Publications*, 1841, pp. 133-135, there are two letters addressed to Alleyn by Stephen Gosson, Rector of St. Botolph's (author of the *Schoole of Abuse*) which refer to the admission, in October, 1616, of John Muggleton, a poor person, upon the point of threescore years, to Alleyn's Hospital (God's Gift College, at Dulwich), and his removal therefrom for some unexplained cause in August, 1617.

the time of my youth. When my time of service was pretty far expired, I heard great talk amongst the vulgar ... of a people called Puritans; some of these Puritans came to talk with my master, though he was no religious man. ... Methought I had a love for those people called Puritans, and ... liked in myself their discourse upon the Scriptures, and pleading for a holy keeping of the Sabbath-day, which my master did not do, nor I his servant. ... In that great sickness after King James died, I was smitten with the Plague,* but I recovered quickly, and have not had half a day's sickness since. ... I never bestowed sixpence in physic in my life. ... My time of service grew near out, and my nature had a great desire to be rich in this world, that I might no more be servant to any man; and I thought the trade of a tailor would not gain much riches, I having little to begin with.† So I went to work in a broker's shop in Houndsditch, who made clothes to sell, and did lend money upon pawns ... a kind of distracted, hare-brained man, his name was Richardson. The broker's wife had one daughter, and after I had been there awhile, the mother seeing that I ... knew how to manage, ... was willing to give her daughter to me to wife; and I loved the maid well. ... So the maid and I were made sure by promise ... and I was resolved to have the maid to wife, and to keep a broker's shop, and to lend money upon pawns, and grow rich as others did. ... But in the twenty-second year of my life, not being quite out of my apprenticeship ... I went to work as a journeyman ... with William Reeve, John Reeve's brother. He was a very zealous Puritan at that time, and many of that religion ... disputed with me about the lawfulness of

* It began at the end of March, was at its height in the middle of June, and lasted till November, 1625; it swept away 35,417 persons.

† He says, in his *Answer to William Penn*, 2nd edition, 1751-3, p. 129. "I never received sixpence portion of my father," and speaks of having had to assist his father instead of to receive from him.

lending money upon pawns, because they pleaded it was usury and extortion. ... I used all the arguments of reason I could for it, because I had a great desire to be rich, and ... I was engaged to this maid, and her mother would not let me have her to wife except I would keep a broker's shop and lend money. ... But these Puritan people ... pressed the Scriptures hard upon me; which exceedingly perplexed my mind, reasoning in myself that if I did lend money upon usury and extortion I should be damned; and if I would not, then I should not have the maid to wife. So that the love of the maid, and the fear of the loss of my soul did struggle within me. ... After much struggling in my mind I came to this resolution, that rather than I would lose my soul I would lose the maid. ... Thus I forsook the world and a wife. ... She is yet alive, and is worth seven hundred pounds a year." *

His account of the "working of his thoughts" at this time is exceedingly curious and full. In due course he became "earnest in the Puritan religion and practice ... was well versed ... in the letter of the Scriptures, had a good gift of prayer, and was very strong in disputes." "Neither did I hear any preach in those days but the Puritan ministers, whose hair was cut short; for if a man with long hair had gone into the pulpit to preach, I would have gone out of the church again, though he might preach better than the other." Long after his entire change of opinion, he bears testimony to the strength of Puritan principles; "there is no better faith in the world to this day (1677) in the generality of professors of religion." But in spite of all his zeal, he trembled every day under the dread of hell, and "for fear God had made him a reprobate before he was born." †

His domestic life scarcely seems to have contributed to

* *Acts of the Witnesses, ut supra*, pp. 6-11.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 11-15.

the healthier action of his mind. He married twice during this his Puritan stage, each time to "a virgin of about nineteen."* Of his wife Sarah (whom he married about 1635, and who died in 1638 or 1639) we know nothing, except that she was the mother of the two daughters who survived him; but of his second wife, Mary, (whom he married in 1642 and who died in 1648) he tells us in one of his letters, that she "was a comely woman to see to, yet of a melancholy, dropsical nature and humour," given to much melancholy and discontent of mind, especially "if things did not go well in this world, as no man can assure his wife all things shall always." When her only surviving child, a scrofulous boy, died in 1653, "I was glad," says he, "(though I used means to help him, but all in vain) knowing that all the children I had by her did partake of her melancholy and dropsical nature."†

The outbreak of the civil war proved a crisis in his religious history. "The Puritans," he says, "were all for the Parliament, and most of my society and acquaintance in religion did fall away from that way we did use, and declined in love one towards another, and every one got a new judgment, and new acquaintance, and a new discipline. Some of them turned to Presbytery ... some turned Independents ... others fell to be Ranters, and some fell to be mere Atheists. Our Puritan people were so divided and scattered in our religion that I knew not which to take to, or which to cleave to. I was altogether at a loss. All the zeal we formerly had was quite worn out, and join with any of these new disciplines I could not, except I would play the hypocrite for a livelihood, which my heart always hated. ... So I gave over

* *Acts of the Witnesses, ut supra*, p. 15.

+ *Spiritual Epistles, ut supra*, p. 414, in a letter addressed to Mrs. Hampson, dated 11 June, 1674.

all public prayer, and hearing and discourse about religion, and lived an honest and just natural life; and I found more peace here than in all my religion. . . I considered that innocency of heart and a just, upright spirit was good in itself, if there was no God to reward it; and that unrighteousness and lust was wickedness in itself if there were no God to punish it ... and if there were anything, either of happiness or misery after death, I left it to God ... to do what He would with me. But I was in good hope at that time that there was nothing after death.”* This lasted till he was about forty years old, viz., to the year 1650.

In this year London was rife with the intelligence of several “Prophets and Prophetesses, that were about the streets, and declared the Day of the Lord, and many other wonderful things, as from the Lord.” Chief among these enthusiasts were two men, by the magnitude of whose pretensions Muggleton was evidently impressed, and whose names figure often in his and his coadjutor’s writings as the types of all spiritual usurpation. These were John Robins and Thomas Tany.

JOHN ROBINS is a fair specimen of the wildest of the Ranter tribe. He was identified by his followers with God Almighty, was known in popular parlance as the “Ranters’ god” and the “Shakers’ god,” and though, under examination, he denied the blasphemy, † it is clear that in private he was far from discouraging it, but allowed a species of divine worship to be addressed to him. ‡ His follower, Thomas Tidford, did not scruple to affirm “that John Robins was

* *Acts of the Witnesses, ut supra*, p. 16, and again p. 19.

† See *The Declaration of John Robins, the False Prophet, otherwise called the Shakers’ God, etc.*, London, 1651, 4to, pp. 6.

‡ See, in addition to Muggleton’s personal testimony, *Ranters of Both Sexes, wherein John Robins doth declare himself to be the Great God of Heaven, etc.* by John Taylor, London, 1651, 4to, pp. 6. Also *A List of some of the Grand Blasphemers and Blasphemies, which was given in to the Committee for Religion*, London, 1654, broad sheet.

God the Father, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ;” and in accordance with this empty deification, Joan (or Mary) Robins, his wife, indulged a similar fancy to that which, within the last hundred years, filled the disordered imaginations of Ann Lee and Joanna Southcott. In addition to a fluent utterance and a vast knowledge of the Scriptures, Robins possessed, according to the belief of his followers, the faculty of working many marvels. He even claimed the power of raising men from the dead, and had actually raised up thus, according to his own statement, that same Cain that killed Abel, Benjamin, the son of Jacob, the prophet Jeremiah, that same Judas that betrayed Christ, and now they were all redeemed to be happy. “I have had nine or ten of them at my house at a time,” says Muggleton, “of those that were said to be raised from the dead. For I do not speak this from a hearsay from others, but from a perfect knowledge which I have seen and heard from themselves.”* He put forth a wild scheme for gathering, out of England and elsewhere, an hundred and forty-four thousand men and women, whom he and Joshua Garment, his right hand man, his Moses, would lead to Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives, there to make them happy. He would divide again for them the Red Sea, and they should cross the gulf dryshod. He would feed them with manna from heaven ; and, as a preparation for this celestial food, he trained his followers to live on nothing more substantial than “windy things, apples and other fruit,” (a diet under which several of them starved) and to drink nothing but water. As for ale, that was prohibited, “because it is not of God’s making.”† These were but a few of his extravagances.

With this outrageous fanatic and his followers Muggleton was for a time in close intimacy ; not that he ever joined

* *Acts of the Witnesses, ut supra*, pp. 20-21.

† *Declaration, ut supra*, p. 5.

them, but, as he says, "I was quiet and still, and heard what was said and done, and spake against nothing that was said or done."*

THOMAS TANY was an enthusiast of a somewhat similar stamp, though it does not appear that he ever reached the summit of Robins' claims. In Robins there was more of method, in Tany more of madness. Originally he had been settled in business as a goldsmith, in the Strand; but the distractions of the times, and the fascination of Jacob Behmen's books had evidently turned his head, and he came before the public in a new character. In a "Proclamation" which he published on the 25th April, 1650, dated "from the Three Golden Lions, without Temple Bar," he says, "I am a Jew of the tribe of Reuben; but unknown to me till the Lord spake unto me by voice; whose voice I heard, but saw no appearance, and He changed my name from Thomas to *Theaurau John*,† since the 23rd of November, 1649." Under this strange appellation he wrote several books, which were issued by the wellknown publisher of mystical works, Giles Calvert, at the Black Spread Eagle, at the West end of Paul's. In these books all the peculiarities which perplex the students of Behmen are so ridiculously exaggerated, as to render the pages of Tany little better than sublime nonsense. His writing stutters and stammers just as, we are told, did his tongue. He is a Behmen gone mad, yet with bright flashes of intelligence gleaming out now and then from beneath the load of ashes and rubbish.‡ Besides his pan-

* *Acts of the Witnesses, ut supra*, p. 22.

† Hence Reeve and Muggleton invariably refer to him as *John Tany*. His surname, which appears as Tany in the *Proclamation*, and in the *List of Grand Blasphemers*, 1654, *ut supra*, is also spelled by himself Tanni, Tanniour, Taniah, and Totni, and by others, Tane, Tanee, Tauny, Tannye, Taney, Tauney, and Tawney. Evidently it is the French *tané* (now *tanné*), our *tawny*.

‡ I am acquainted with two of these books; his *Theousori Apokolipikal, or God's Light declared in Mysteries*, etc., London, 1651, 4to, pp. 78, with Preface,

theistic writings, his head was full of schemes for the restoration of the Jews. He, too, was to conduct a mixed multitude to the Promised Land, and, as the Lord's High Priest, was to enact again the Law of Moses; therefore he circumcised himself according to that Law.* His mission was to follow John Robins with bow and spear. As the lineal descendant of "Charles of Castille, who was son-in-law unto Charles the Great," he claimed the throne of France, nay, the thrones of seven nations. Like John Robins, he came for a season within the clutches of the law. He suffered six months' imprisonment in Newgate, and this probably lost him his business. He changed his residence from the Strand to the City, and at length left London altogether, and went to live at Eltham. He was accused of openly burning the Bible at Lambeth, calling it the "Great Idol of England." Among those who took pity upon him was Dr. Pordage, the wellknown Behmenist and Philadelphian, at whose house he was now and then entertained for a week or a fortnight at a time. †

It is clear that the pantheism which lay at the basis of the fanaticism of both Robins and Tany had caught hold, for a time, of Muggleton's mind. The perusal of Jacob Behmen's works strengthened it in him. Many years afterwards he thus wrote concerning Behmen: "His philosophical light was above all men that doth profess religion, until this Commission of the Spirit came forth; which hath brought Jacob Bemon's light and many other high lights down very

and his *Disputive Challenge to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge*, 8vo, pp. 8, N. D. His first work was a treatise entitled *Aurora in Tranlagorum*, etc., London, 1651, 4to, pp. 60, and Introduction. Nothing but an actual facsimile would give any idea of the oddness of his title pages. For a summary of his heresies, see Ross, *Pantheism*, *ut supra*, pp. 377-379.

* *Acts of the Witnesses*, *ut supra*, p. 20.

† See Christopher Fowler's *Dæmonium Meridianum*, etc., 4to, London, 1655, part i., pp. 53, 60.

low within these ten years.”* Once more he fell into a deep melancholy, from which he was at length delivered by just that same experience of inward revelation which formed the turning point in the religious lives of Behmen and Fox. He is able to give a precise date to the commencement of this inward revelation, even to the exact hour of the day. The windows of heaven were opened to him. He says, “I was in the Paradise of heaven, within man upon earth; neither could I desire any better heaven.”† He took down the Scriptures, which he had laid aside some years before, and found they were now all plain to his understanding; he wondered no longer at any of the rapturous expressions of prophets or apostles. A single touch more, a slight kindling of enthusiasm, and he might have become a Behmenist or a Quaker. But it is observable that all the while this state lasted he was never moved either to write, as Behmen, or to preach, as Fox. He was so well satisfied and happy that he was resolved now to be quiet and still, and to get as good a living as he could in this world, knowing that all things would be well with him hereafter. “But when I thought to be most secure and most private, in a little time after it made me the most public; I not thinking that this revelation was a preparation for God to choose me to be a Commissioner of the Spirit, to declare the mystery of the true God, and the interpretation of the Scriptures ... whereby I was made the most public man in the world in spiritual things.”‡

This revelation continued with him from April, 1651, to January, 1652. “And in the same year John Reeve came often to my house.” Compared with his cousin Lodowicke, who was the real builder up of the Muggletonian faith, from

* *Spiritual Epistles, ut supra*, pp. 45, 46. The letter is addressed to his friend Mrs. Ellen Sudbury, and bears date 28 Nov. 1661.

† *Acts of the Witnesses, ut supra*, p. 32.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

whom it rightly takes its name, John Reeve, its prime source, holds but a shadowy place.

JOHN REEVE was a Wiltshire man, of a family which had fallen to decay. His father, Walter Reeve, gentleman, is described as "clerk to a deputy of Ireland," an office which I do not understand. His two sons, William and John, were both apprenticed in London to the tailor's trade; and John, who was born in 1608, was already out of his apprenticeship when Lodowicke Muggleton became acquainted with him. As to the precise connection between their families, which made the two men cousins, I have no information.*

Reeve's early religious history, I dare say, ran parallel with that of his cousin. Like Muggleton, he was a man of no learning, "no Latin scholar"; nor was he even a great reader, as Muggleton claims to have been.† Like his brother William, he doubtless began by being a Puritan; he was certainly, like that same brother, afterwards bitten by the Ranter spirit. William Reeve, we know, lost himself entirely in this direction, became a mere sot, and lived on the charity of others. During the Ranter stage of his experience John Reeve became, under the guidance of John Robins, a Universalist. "John Robins' knowledge and language overpowered John Reeve," as Muggleton testifies.‡

John Reeve emerges from obscurity at the period of Muggleton's illumination, and we find him constantly at his cousin's house in Great Trinity Lane, extremely earnest to have the same revelation as Muggleton had. "His desires were so great that he was troublesome unto me; for I could not follow my business quietly for his asking me questions. If I went out of one room into another, he would follow me,

* In *Acts of the Witnesses*, *ut supra*, p. 45, it is said of the husband of one Dorcas Boose, "He was some kin by marriage to John Reeve and me both."

† *Divine Looking Glass*, 3rd edition, 1719, preface; *Whole Book of Revelation*, 3rd edition, 1808, p. v.

‡ *Acts of the Witnesses*, *ut supra*, p. 39.

to talk to me ; so that I was weary of his company. Yet I was loath to tell him so, because I knew he did it out of innocency of his heart, and love to the things which I spoke."* However, one morning, about the middle of January, 1652, Reeve came in with a very joyful voice, exclaiming, "Cousin Lodowicke ! Now I know what revelation of Scripture is as well as thee !" The cousins conversed, and compared their experiences. The result, in Reeve's case, was as full and glad a sense of peace as had already taken possession of the soul of Muggleton. He gives utterance to his feelings in language which is a mere echo of his cousin's words. "Cousin Lodowicke ! Now I am satisfied in my mind, and know what revelation is ; I am resolved now to meddle no more with religion, nor go forth after any upon that account [referring to his having gone after John Robins on that account], but to get as good a livelihood as I can in this world, and let God alone with what shall be hereafter." "Thus," adds Muggleton, "when he thought to be most quiet, and not to meddle with any about religion — and so did I also then — a little while after we were made the greatest meddlers in religion of all men in the world, because our faces were against all men's religion in the world, of what sect or opinion soever, as will appear hereafter by our writings and speakings. John Reeve nor I little thought, at that time, that this revelation we had given us did prepare us for a greater Work than for the peace of our own minds ; but it proved that God prepared us for a Commission, and that he did intend to chose us two to be his last Prophets and Witnesses of the Spirit, as will be seen." †

This "little while after" was but the space of two weeks.

* *Acts of the Witnesses, ut supra*, p. 36.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

For the account of what took place at the close of that period, I must abridge John Reeve's own testimony, as given in the "*Transcendant Spiritual Treatise.*" On the 3rd of February, 1652,* "the Lord Jesus, the only wise God, whose glorious person is resident above or beyond the stars, ... by voice of words spake unto me, John Reeve, saying, 'I have given thee understanding of my mind in the Scriptures, above all men in the world.' The next words the Lord spake unto me were these, 'Look into thy own body, there shalt thou see the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of hell.' ... Again ... 'I have chosen thee my last messenger for a great Work unto this bloody, unbelieving world; and I have given thee Lodowicke Muggleton to be thy mouth.' ... Again, 'I have put the two-edged sword of my Spirit into thy mouth, that who[m]ever I pronounce blessed through thy mouth is blessed to eternity, and who[m]ever I pronounce cursed through thy mouth is cursed to eternity.' When I heard these words, my spirit desired the Lord that I might not be His dreadful messenger. For indeed I thought upon the delivery of so sad an unexpected message unto men, I should immediately have been torn to pieces. Again the Lord spake ... 'If thou dost not obey my voice, and go wherever I send thee to deliver my message, thy body shall be thy hell, and thy spirit shall be the devil that shall torment thee to eternity.' Then, for a moment, I saw this hell within me; which caused me to answer the Lord these words, saying, 'Lord, I will go wherever thou sendest me, only be with me.' These were the Lord's words spoken unto me the first morning, and my answer

* As this event is invariably referred to by Muggletonian authorities as taking place in 1651, it is necessary to observe that Reeve and Muggleton used the ecclesiastical mode of reckoning, which was commonly employed in London, and which began the year on the 25th March (see *Spiritual Epistles*, *ut supra*, p. 492). Hence the date of the commission may be variously given as 1651, old style, or 165 $\frac{1}{4}$, or 1652, which is our modern reckoning. The same correction is needed for many of the dates in Muggleton's correspondence, etc.

unto my God ; I being as perfectly awaked when He spake unto me, the Lord is my witness, as I was at the writing hereof." *

That morning, when, as usual, John Reeve ran to his cousin's house, "I asked him," says Muggleton, "what was the matter ; for he looked like one that had risen out of the grave (he being a fresh coloured man the day before) ; and the tears ran down his cheeks apace. So he told me the same words as are written in his first book, and said unto me that God had given him a Commission ; and that He had given Lodowicke Muggleton to be his mouth ; and said at the same time was brought to his mind that saying that Aaron was given to be Moses' mouth. What *my* message was, he could not tell ; 'but,' said he, 'if God do not speak unto me the next morning, I will come no more at thee.' Which I was in good hopes he would not, for I was willing to be quiet." †

Next morning, however, came a message (again "by voide of words,") bidding Reeve and Muggleton go together and deliver an admonition to "John" Tany ; which they did, with some unction. Tany disregarded the admonition ; whereupon Reeve, in obedience to his Commission, wrote the sentence of eternal damnation against him. Poor Tany soon after employed his distracted wits in making tents for the twelve tribes. At length he built a little boat to carry him to Jerusalem, wherein trusting himself to sail across to Holland, in company with one Captain James, for the purpose of gathering the Jews there, the frail vessel was wrecked, and he and his companion were drowned. "So all his power came to nothing." ‡

On the third morning came, in the same way, a message

* *A Transcendant Spiritual Treatise, etc.*, edition of 1756, pp. 4-5.

† *Acts of the Witnesses, ut supra*, p. 41.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-45.

of still more peremptory character to be delivered to John Robins, at that time a prisoner in New Bridewell. Without even that chance of a respite which is implied in a premonitory warning, John Robins was enrolled among the damned. "That body of thine, which was thy heaven, must be thy hell; and that proud spirit of thine, which said [it] was God, must be thy devil; the one shall be as fire and the other as brimstone burning together to all eternity. This is the message of the Lord unto thee." Robins, on hearing the curse uttered, "pulled his hands off the grates, and said, 'It is finished; the Lord's will be done.' These were all the words he spake." Two months after this he wrote a letter of recantation, addressed to Lord General Cromwell, and so obtained his release from prison. "He said, afterwards he should come forth with a greater power; but he never came forth more with any power at all to his dying day." †

The two men, against whom the curse of God was thus pronounced, were regarded by Reeve and Muggleton as typical of the upstart errors of the time in matters of religion. Tany was the representative of the Ranters' and Quakers' principles. Robins was the representative of all false Christs, false prophets and prophetesses, of whom there were many in that day; he was the Antichrist, or Man of Sin, mentioned in Scripture; there should come none after him with such high and delusive claims, to the world's end. The sentence passed on these men, and the consequent fall of their power, cleared the way for the Commission of the Spirit, and hence is very frequently referred to in the writings of the pair of cousins.

Reeve and Muggleton now came forward in their character as Prophets. Building upon an obscure intimation in the eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse, they proclaimed them-

† *Acts of the Witnesses, ut supra*, pp. 47-48.

selves the two Witnesses of the Spirit, the Lord's Last Messengers, the Commissionated Forerunners of the visible appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only true God. Their office was twofold; first, as declarators of life and death eternal to individuals; and secondly, as expositors of a new system of faith and religion to mankind.

On carefully looking through their works, I find the names of forty-six persons who were individually assured (either by word or by letter) of their eternal blessedness, and of one hundred and three, who were similarly assured of their eternal misery. Both lists are very curious. The white list begins with the names of Muggleton's own children, Sarah and Elizabeth, and a boy not named, who were blessed by John Reeve on the eventful morning of the 3rd February, 1652; it ends in 1691 with the name of Sarah Delamaine, daughter of Alexander Delamaine the elder, to whose care is due the accumulation and transcription of that large and valuable collection of Reeve and Muggleton's correspondence, afterwards published as "*A Volume of Spiritual Epistles.*" In the black list, which goes no further than 1677, occur the names of the principal men among the early Quakers, *e. g.*, Fox, Whitehead, Penn, Penington; indeed more than half of those on the condemned list are Quakers.

The names recorded do not nearly cover the whole number of those who received the Muggletonian sentence, either at the hands of the Prophets themselves or of their immediate followers. This was not a sentence given at random. Reeve and Muggleton did not affirm that they had arbitrary power to bless or curse whom they would; but if any one committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, which sin the Scripture makes unpardonable, and which they believed to consist in denying the validity of any Commission sent by God, then the Prophet had authority to declare, and was bound to

declare that person eternally lost. "Whoever," write the Two Witnesses, in the second year of their Commission, "is left, great or small, to speak evil of this Commission which God hath put unto us, by calling it blasphemy, delusion, a devil, or lie; in so doing they have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and must perish, soul and body, from the presence of our God, elect men and angels to all eternity; for God hath chosen us two only, and hath put the two-edged sword of the Spirit into our mouths as beforesaid, that whom we are *made to pronounce* blessed, are blessed to eternity, and whom we are *made to pronounce* cursed, are cursed to eternity."* By the application of this plain principle the exercise of so tremendous an authority is carefully distinguished from caprice. It rather vindicates for itself the character of a *lex talionis*, or tooth-for-tooth principle; and it is true that no language could well be stronger than that which, in the testimonies of Josiah Coale, William Penn, and many other Friends, was hurled against Muggleton.† "As for your saying," he writes to Richard Farnworth, "that I have reviled, cursed, and damned the beloved people of God, meaning you Quakers; to that I say, I never did curse any of them till such time as they did judge or despise my commission first; for I never do judge first."‡ However forbearant the Prophet may have been before passing his sentence of damnation, he certainly rejoiced in it, when given, with a stout robust appetite, worthy of Tertullian. "Whitehead said he did hear one that I had damned say, that I had said I was as glad I had given judgment and sentence of damnation upon him as if one had given me forty shillings. This I did

* *Spiritual Epistles, ut supra*, p. 5.

† *E. g.*, "Muggleton, and his obstinate brats, shall howl in the lake that burns with brimstone and fire for ever and evermore."—Penn's *New Witnesses, ut supra*, p. 42.

‡ *Neck of the Quakers Broken*, 2nd edition, 1756, p. 67.

acknowledge to be true."* "Oh how happy," he bursts forth, in a letter to Colonel Robert Phaire, "are we that shall sup with the great God, *i. e.*, in the assurance we have that God hath ordained wicked persecuting kings, and high captains, and judges, and mighty men more than the sand of the sea shore which cannot be numbered, to be damned to eternity. These I know shall be cast into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone to all eternity; and we, the fowls of heaven, shall eat or feed upon the miseries of these mighty men, as in a supper with the great God." †

As a set off against this full-blooded rapture of vengeance inspired by the sense of personal wrong, let it be remembered that it never was any part of the Muggletonian faith that none but Muggletonians can be saved. It is true that the Doctrine of the Third Commission is the touchstone of a man's spiritual condition, so that none who wilfully and knowingly reject it can be saved, and none who truly embrace it can be lost; but the real cause of salvation or of damnation lies far deeper than any intellectual act. There is a radical difference of race between the saved and the damned.

The religious philosophy of Reeve and Muggleton hinges on their cardinal doctrine of the Two Seeds, which give rise to two distinct races of beings whose attributes have come to be blended in human kind. At the root of their faith are Two Prime Mysteries; the mystery of God becoming flesh, and the mystery of the Devil becoming flesh. In Eve the Devil, a fallen Angel, once the noblest of that race whose nature is pure Reason, dissolved himself into seed; melted himself down, so as to lose personality; and Cain was born, a man-devil. Cain and his descendants are the Devil made flesh; a totally distinct race from Abel, and his brethren

* *Spiritual Epistles, ut supra*, p. 241. Omitted in *Acts of the Witnesses*, p. 117.

† *A Stream from the Tree of Life, etc.*, 1758, p. 28. See also much more to the same purpose, *Spiritual Epistles*, pp. 560-561.

and their descendants, who, through Adam, inherit the pure life of God: for "the soul of Adam was of the very nature of the spirit of God." When the sons of God intermarried with the daughters of men, for the first time these two races mingled, and a mixed brood has been the result ever since. Every man is a kind of hybrid; and according as he has in him more of the seed of God, or of the seed of the Devil, is life or damnation his portion hereafter, "Damnation would be impossible," says Reeve, "if all sprang from one root."*

These two seeds, or "two sparks of fire," in man, as they may be called, † are readily distinguished by the instructed eye, as Reason and Faith. Reason is the seed or nature of the Devil; Faith the seed or nature of God. Reason is a searching, curious, speculative, hungering, supplicating impulse, ever feeding on mere notions and imaginations, except where, as in the case of the Angels, it is allowed to feed on the overflowings of the wisdom of God; Faith is a calm, peaceful, assured and blissful principle, which may or may not, according to a man's opportunities, be accompanied and strengthened by right opinions on matters of religion. ‡

There is thus no Devil except the persons of the damned. Similarly, there is no God but the person of the man Christ Jesus. For in the Virgin, God, who from all eternity was a spiritual being in the shape of a man, dissolved himself into seed, (every spiritual being is capable of this dissolution into seed,) and thus did not simply become incarnate, but was literally converted into the flesh of Jesus. Hence God died when Christ died. So completely were the attributes of

* *Divine Looking Glass, ut supra*, p. 11.

† *Joyful News from Heaven, etc.*, 2nd edition, 1751-3, p. 13.

‡ " Could we eliminate only

This vile hungering impulse, this demon within us of craving,
Life were beatitude, living a perfect divine satisfaction."

—A. H. Clough, *Amours de Voyage*, canto iii.

Godhead in abeyance, while Jesus lived on earth, that Moses and Elias (with whom Enoch is sometimes associated) remained above as representatives of God, "trustees," as an early Muggletonian puts it, of the divine power.* By them was John the Baptist commissioned; to them Christ prayed; through them was the universe governed.

Accordingly the references to God's personality are of the most precise and physical kind, exceeding even the rigid Scripturalism of John Milton,† or the refined realism of Swedenborg. Indeed I know not where to find a parallel to the Muggletonian boldness on this subject, unless in the quarter from which the following rude lines come:—

The God that others worship is not the God for me;
 He has no parts nor body, and cannot hear nor see;
 But I've a God that reigns above —
 A God of power, and of love—
 A God of revelation—Oh, that's the God for me!
 Oh, that's the God for me!
 Oh, that's the God for me!

"A Church without a Prophet is not the Church for me,
 It has no head to lead it; in it I would not be:
 But I've a Church not made by man,
 Cut from the mountain without hand;
 A Church with gifts and blessings—Oh, that's the Church for me.
 Oh, that's," etc.‡

On grounds of social order Muggletonians would sternly repudiate the smallest sympathy with Latter Day Saints; but this only makes the coincidence all the more remarkable.

The main items of Muggletonian faith are summed up

* "He spake the decree, and left the virtue of his word in the hands of trustees in the heavens above."—*The Harmony of the Three Commissions, or None but Christ*, by Thomas Tomkinson, 2nd edition, Deal, 1822, p. 109.

† *De Doctrinā Christianā*, lib. i., cap. 2, published 1825.

‡ *Sacred Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 12th edition, Liverpool, 1863, p. 349.

in what are called the Six Principles, an expansion of the Two Prime Mysteries. We may condense them thus :

1. There is no God but the glorified man Christ Jesus.
2. There is no Devil but the unclean Reason of men.
3. Heaven is an infinite abode of light, above and beyond the stars.
4. The place of Hell will be this earth, when sun and moon and stars are extinguished.
5. Angels are the only beings of pure Reason.
6. The soul dies with the body, and will be raised with it.

While thus they gave to many doctrines an aspect which will strike most educated minds as being strangely crass and crude, — an aspect which will forcibly recal to the student of Church history many characteristics of the Bogomilian heresy, as it appeared in Bulgaria during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, — it is nevertheless certain that the Muggletonians were in advance of the religious world of their day in some other points.

In particular, they advocated the most absolute toleration and liberty of opinion; did space permit, some noble passages might be quoted from their writings in assertion and defence of the lawfulness of free speech and action in matters of conscience and religion. Nor with the Muggletonians did liberty mean licence. Their system is pervaded throughout by a truly English common sense and love of law and order. It exhibits, on its intellectual side, a strong recoil from the unenglish mysticism of Behmen; and in its sound, sober, ethical character it establishes a solid protest against the equally unenglish laxity and extravagance into which Ranters and Familists, and even Quakers, sometimes insensibly glided, and sometimes avowedly fell.

What strikes one more perhaps than anything else, in examining this system, is its singular union of opinions which

seem diametrically opposed to each other. It is one of the most purely spiritual, and at the same time one of the most rigidly dogmatic faiths on record. It deals largely with the most mysterious parts of nature and theology; yet it is always matter-of-fact, and eager to get rid of superstitions. Its followers contend with the utmost fervour for the use and virtue of the Spirit of the Scripture, in contradistinction to the nullity of the bare letter; yet to this day they believe and maintain, on the authority of the letter of Scripture, that the sun rolls round the earth in a day's journey, and that the whole Newtonian system of Astronomy is a series of wanton blunders. An unfriendly critic of the Muggletonian faith might complain that there is a stupid and almost wooden reality about its doctrines; but no one, I imagine, could come soul to soul with John Reeve and not confess the purity and tenderness of mind which may dwell in its piety.

In this slight sketch I have by no means exhausted the details of the Muggletonian system, or entered upon the history of the Muggletonian Sect. I have simply attempted to fulfil the promise of giving some account of the circumstances which led to its origination. The literature and philosophy of the Muggletonians may be thought perhaps to deserve further enquiry and study; and I may take a future opportunity of presenting to the members of the Literary and Philosophical Society the result of enlarged investigations into the writings and fortunes of this singular people.

There are many interesting personages connected with them besides the two founders of the faith. Laurence Claxton, who began life as a Clergyman of the Church of England, Thomas Tomkinson, the Staffordshire yeoman, John Saddington, and James Birch, the leader of the Birchites, are worth, at least, a passing notice.

At present I will anticipate what I may recur to here-

after, only by recording that John Reeve died, after long sickness, in 1658. "Frances," said he to one of the three sisters who watched at his bedside, "close up mine eyes, lest mine enemies say, I died a staring prophet."

Lodowicke Muggleton, a man of harder mould, lived longer, and weathered many storms. Not till his eighty-ninth year was he gathered to his fathers, on the 14th March, 1698.

His tomb in Bethlehem New Churchyard is said to have once borne the following inscription; but the tomb and the grave-yard in which it stood have long since been swept away, and a railway station now rises, in the heart of London, close to where his bones were laid :

"Whilst mausoleums and large inscriptions give
 Might, splendour; and past death make potents live;
 It is enough briefly to write thy name:
 Succeeding times by that shall read thy fame.
 Thy deeds, thy Acts around the globe resound;
 No foreign soil where MUGGLETON'S not found."