

Samuel Richardson

1602-1658

Samuel Richardson is essentially known only as an author; as no memorials exist of his private life, and his works afford but scanty materials to supply their place. According to the best information available, his date of birth was about 1602 and his death occurred sometime in 1658. It is reported that he was from the Northamptonshire region of England; a county located in the southern part of the East Midlands, about 75 miles northwest of London. One source mentioned that he appears to have been "a substantial London tradesman and was certainly one of the shrewdest and most influential of the Baptist leaders in London." From his writings we can easily observe that Richardson was a Firm Advocate for the Cause of Religious Liberty; a Loyal Supporter of the Government of Oliver Cromwell, and the Parliamentary Cause; and above all an Exalter of Christ Alone & fervent Setter Forth of Christ's Glory & Preeminence in Salvation. He most definitely was a formative leader of the early English Particular Baptists, and one of the twelve signers of the 1644; and slightly revised 1646 London Confession of Faith. In fact; as one studies these two Confessions, Richardson's influence seems predominant, and one cannot but wonder; in light of his own writings, the precise wording of the Confession itself; {especially the 1646 Confession;} and closely comparing its contents to the writings of Kiffin & Spilsbury, {to whom, most often the Confession is ascribed;} if he was not indeed the chief compiler of these articles; if not the immediate author himself?

The signers of the 1644 Confession were: William Kiffin, Thomas Patient, John Spilsbury, George Tipping, Samuel Richardson, Thomas Skippard, Thomas Munday, Thomas Gunne, John Mabbatt, John Webb, Thomas Killcop, Paul Hobson, Thomas Goare, Joseph Phelpes and Edward Heath. These were demonstrably some of the major Particular Baptist leaders of the period. Notable names added to the 1646 Confession were: Benjamin Coxe and Hanserd Knollys.

A fascinating entry from the Journal of the House of Commons, dated January 29th, 1645/46, tells us that Richardson and Benjamin Coxe were summoned before the Civil Authorities to give an account of this {1644} Confession. The Journal entry is as follows: "Resolved, &c., that the Serjeant do apprehend Benjamin Coxe and Samuel Richardson, the Parties that delivered a Pamphlet at the Door to the Members of this House, intituled, A Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations or Churches of Christ in London, which are commonly, but unjustly, called Anabaptists; and do take Bail of them, to appear, from time to time, at the Committee for plundered Ministers; {the Committee for Plundered Ministers were loyalists to the Presbyterian Cause, essentially Presbyterian henchmen, appointed by the Long Parliament, in 1643, to suppress and persecute any who would deviate from their form of Papal hierarchy;} and that it be referred to the Committee of plundered Ministers, to examine the Book, and the Parties, whose Names are subscribed; to send for the Licenser and Printer; and state the Business to the House with all Speed; and that the Committee of plundered Ministers shall have Power to advise with such of the Assembly of Divines, as they shall think fit to send for upon this Business. Ordered, &c., that the Masters and Wardens of the Company of Stationers do forthwith take diligent Care to suppress a Pamphlet, intituled, A Confession of Faith of Seven Congregations or Churches of Christ in London, which are commonly, but unjustly, called Anabaptists. Ordered, &c., that the Serjeant at Arms do immediately send some of his Servants to seize and suppress the said Books. Ordered, &c., that the Parties that delivered the said Pamphlet at the Door be called in; and demanded, by what Order and Authority the said Pamphlet was published; and who licensed it. Samuel Richardson and Benjamin Coxe were accordingly called in; and, being demanded, who printed the said Pamphlet, said, one Simonds; and that he got it licensed; and Richardson said, that the Printer told him, that Mr. Downeham licensed it; that this was a Second Edition; that they had Meetings every First Day of the Week; that there were Seven Congregations of them English, and One French; and that the Subscribers were two of every Congregation."

In the 1647 work by Richardson, entitled, *Justification by Christ Alone*; there is recommendation/preface to the work by William Kiffin, which ends in the following statement: "Beloved, these are the last times wherein it behooves you to beg with much earnestness, strength from the Lord that He may put straight steps to your feet so that you may walk to His praise, exalting Him alone as your life and glory. This was the main end of the Author presenting these few lines to your consideration. Wherefore, read it carefully and noble Berean - like, try all things, and hold fast that which is good. It shall be his desire, who desires nothing more in this world than your growth in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and your walking as the children of the light, that the God of all grace may cause all grace to abound in you to His own glory; So prays he; that is yours in the Lord, in all services of duty and love. William Kiffin." Note in particular Kiffin's remarks as to that which he felt was pre-dominant in these writings; namely, the exaltation of Christ "alone as your life and glory;" a principle which our author never departed from.

Though nothing exists by way of a memoir, we learn from some passages gleaned from his "Divine Contemplations" book, that prior to 1640; whilst under a black cloud of spiritual bewilderment, Richardson was brought by the effectual in-working of the Spirit to an acknowledgement of the true gospel, in seeing that his salvation was accomplished by Christ on the Cross; for he says that, "about twelve years ago, {written in 1649,} in the viewing of my defects in prayer, earnestness, &c., I had prayed and concluded that if I had the Spirit of God, I should not have so prayed as I did; then I concluded that I had been fourteen years or more mistaken; afterwards I resolved that if God had intended me good, he would have manifested it to me before this time, then was I as fully satisfied as ever I was satisfied of anything in the world, that I should never be saved; I thought my condition was very miserable; but in this extremity I apprehended no remedy in this condition, till an interpreter, {very possibly the printed sermons of Tobias Crisp, whose writings he valued,} one of a thousand, did by the truth convince me, that I did believe, and should be saved; and I was forced to confess that he that did desire to believe, did believe; yet I was not fully settled until I did see that my salvation was effected by Christ on the Cross, &c."

Also; referring to a time when his understanding was still darkened; that is, prior to the Lord granting him true repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth of the Gospel; he recalls how that he had once been "wrapped up and sunk in Arminianism," darkness; and so says that he would have "so continued, but the Lord in mercy pulled me out. Oh how sweet {says he} should that love be to us, which keeps us from these errors, or brings us out of them; and the Lord will in his time be full Redemption to all his." {Saint's Desire} Again; a few years later he says, "we did walk in the way of works for salvation, till God did hedge up our way with thorns; for our works were those thorns which did pierce us and wound us at the heart, and instead of saving us they killed us; these thorns did so prick us, that we were not able to go any further in that way, for God opened our eyes that we saw nothing but death in them, then we ceased to work for life and salvation." {Divine Contemplations}

Early in 1645 Richardson defended the Baptist position in his book entitled, "Some Brief Considerations on Doctor Featley; his book, entitled, the Dipper Dipt." Daniel Featley {1582-1645} was a leading Calvinist Disputant of the 1620's; and a translator of the King James Version of the Bible; who fell into difficulties with Parliament due to his loyalty to Charles I in the 1640s, and therefore imprisoned towards the end of his life. It was in prison where he came into contact with the Baptist minister Henry Denne, {himself imprisoned at the time for preaching against infant baptism,} and upon their release Denne {seemingly hurt by the sharp tone of Featley's attack} challenged Featley to a public disputation on the subject; and soon drew up his own reply, in his book entitled, "Antichrist Unmasked."

Richardson's book soon followed; and without any introduction he went straight on the attack with the following seven propositions: I. Dr. Featley; his secret and heinous accusing the honorable Parliament. II. That he is guilty of greater errors, than to go into the water to be dipt. III. His false Accusations against the Anabaptists, examined and answered. IV. How in a Disputation he discovered his subtilty and pride. V. That he justifies dipping in rivers to be a lawful manner of baptizing. VI. Some Reasons alleged against Infants being baptized. A question proposed to consideration, that it if

be an error to be baptized again, whether the punishment, some would have inflicted upon them, and some have suffered, be not too great? VII. How many sorts of Anabaptists he saith there are, and what they hold.

Regarding these 'greater' errors from his 2nd propositions, he names, amongst others, the following: "Doctor Featley holds these errors, viz., that Archbishops, &c., are not Antichristian, {pg.32;} and that the Ceremonies of the Church of England are not Idolatrous nor Antichristian, {pg.32;} and that baptism is a means of salvation, {pg.40;} ... and furthermore also the Doctor saith, that Christ is the Son of God, not only in respect of His temporal generation, but also in respect of his eternal generation, {pg.3;} and that the Spirit is said to proceed from the Father, because he proceeds from the Father originally; and that the Spirit hath a dependence from both, {pg.23;} but if Christ, as He was God had a beginning, he could not be God. How can Christ, as He is God, be the Son of God in respect of His eternal generation any more than the Father is His Son by eternal generation? Secondly, if the Spirit of God be God, {as He is} equal with the Father and the Son, all Three infinite, without beginning, each having the whole Divine Essence and yet there is but One Essence; how can the Spirit proceed from the Father originally, any more than the Father from the Spirit? And how can the Spirit of God have any more dependence upon the Father and the Son, than they have upon Him, seeing whatsoever is infinite can have no dependence upon anything? Therefore the Doctor's words contain in them the nature of blasphemy; and to define how One can be Three, and Three but One, and always so remains, is above the reach of any man. I may say to him as Luke 6:41,42."

This last assertion is of particular interest, for herein we detect a statement which also was the basis of a revision of the 1644 London Confession. The 1644 Confession regarding the Being of God, and more specifically the Godhead; {Father, Son & Holy Spirit;} reads: "In this Godhead, there is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; being every one of them one and the same God; and therefore not divided, but distinguished one from another by their several properties; the Father being from Himself, the Son of the Father from everlasting, the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son." Note the careful revision and re-wording of the 1646 Confession which reads: "In this Divine and Infinite Being, there is the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; each having the whole divine essence, yet the essence undivided; all infinite, without any beginning, therefore but one God, who is not to be divided in nature and being, but distinguished by several peculiar relative properties."

Notice that the revised 1646 Confession was careful to stay to the wording of Scripture; or rather say no more than the Scriptures positively affirmed; and for this reason they eliminated the Papal concept {which was blindly embraced by their Protestant cohorts} of what is called the Eternal Generation of the Son of God; to some a heretical affirmation that sets forth that Christ's Supreme Godhead is a derivative Godhead; that it is not original, absolute, self-existent, independent and eternal; and such a denial of his self-existence is {according to some} a subtle denial that he exists at all; that is, as an absolute, eternal, independent and self-existent God. {Is Jesus Christ the eternal God or not?} The same is true of God the Holy Spirit, both God the Holy Spirit and God the Word being self-existent in their One Divine Nature. Likewise there is no mention made of the concept of three distinct persons in the Godhead; an almost universal phrase found in all 'Protestant' Confessions, which {again, according to some,} unscriptural and irreconcilable concept destroys the Unity and Absolute Oneness of God; for three divine persons, would be three divine individuals, and what would that be but three gods? This is speculating on the mode of God's existence further than he has seen fit to reveal in his Word. Whilst God has declared Himself as Father, Word and Holy Ghost, Three, and that whilst He is thus Three, He is absolutely ONE; which Divine Declaration is to be received, and with it, as made, faith rests satisfied.

Between 1647 & 1649 Richardson's heart was engaged in setting forth a definitive declaration of gospel truth; and published {in 1647} his doctrinal tract entitled "Justification by Christ Alone;" which in essence was a reply to objections made against his earlier work entitled "The Saint's Desire;" made by one Mr. Huet & Holmes. {Apparently Nathaniel Holmes - 1599-1678, who was an English Independent theologian and preacher.} In this important work, Richardson argues against the concept that any aspect of eternal salvation, be it legal or vital, is by external means. Richardson wrote to

affirm "that we are justified by Christ alone and not by our believing," and to set forth "the true place of faith in salvation as an evidence of interest in Christ but not a joint-partner with Christ." To the potential objection some would make to his position; namely, that "God has decreed the means as well as the end, and faith is one of the means," Richardson says, "we grant God has decreed the end and the means, and whatsoever God has decreed shall unavoidably come to pass. But we deny that faith is any means of our Redemption, Justification, or Salvation. Nothing but the Lord Jesus Christ is the means of our salvation. There are means that are necessary to the revealing and enjoying the comfort of it, as the Holy Spirit and ministers to reveal it and faith to receive it; also, there be fruits and effects of the love of God, as faith, love, and obedience to Christ...yet these are no means of our salvation."

Regarding the vital issue of a sinner's justification before God; Richardson says, "some place justification to be only in the conscience. But we place it only in Christ where it is, and to whom it belongs. Justification consists in taking away of sin. None but Christ can do that. Justification and acceptation are one. For without justification there is no acceptation; and seeing that we are accepted in Christ, we are justified in Him. If our justification be a spiritual blessing, {as it is,} then it is in Christ where all spiritual blessings are, "Blessed be God, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ." {Eph.1:3} Where our redemption and righteousness are, there is our justification. Righteousness and justification are one. This we have not in ourselves but in Christ, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." {I Cor.1:30} "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." {Col.1:14} Our justification is a part of our completeness. Therefore, where we are complete there we are justified. But we are not complete in ourselves, but in Him. {Col.2:10} If all things on which depends our happiness were accomplished, {Jn.19:28,} then was our justification also. For without that no man could be saved."

In reference to the important distinction between ascribing our justification to an act of faith, as opposed to Christ alone; he makes this observation, "men please themselves with a conceit that they do not dishonor Jesus Christ in ascribing their justification to faith, because faith is a grace of Christ, and so from Christ. But, by the same reason, we may ascribe our justification to love, patience, temperance, goodness, etc., because they are from Christ and fruits of the same spirit faith is. {Gal.5:22} And may we not also by the same reason ascribe our justification to all our spiritual performances such as prayers, tears, and all our good works, because the power by which we do these is from Christ? "For without me," Christ says, "ye can do nothing." {Jn.15:5} Oh all ye sons and daughters of the Most High, lift up your voice, and cry, No inherent holiness to justification, as well as no works of the Law; for whatsoever is in us, and acted by us, and passes through us, is defiled by us, as "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." {Isa.64:6} "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." etc. {Tit.3:5-9} "Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." {Is.45:24-25} Christ is our Righteousness; "in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." {Jer.23:6} "I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." {Ps.71:16} "My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long." {Ps.71:24} No other righteousness can be compared to this!"

In 1648 Thomas Killcop {Particular Baptist & Millenarian; who signed the 1644 & 1646 London Confession,} attempted to refute Richardson's "Justification by Christ Alone" in his work entitled "Ancient & Durable Gospel," which was a millenarian work that oddly maintained that the redemption of the elect was not accomplished by Christ alone on the cross, but would occur at his Second Coming, at which time, according to Killcop, the Jews would be restored to Palestine; and Christ's Kingdom established on the earth.

Though this attack was met with only a brief rebuttal on the part of Richardson, {who asserted that such an attack "deserved no answer;" and that Killcop's book was but a labyrinth of

contradictions, and thus needed no answer to throw it down, as it would fall alone,} we can only imagine how painful such a departure from clear Scriptural ground must have been to these who just a few years previous rejoiced together in the following affirmation of their mutual faith in Christ, in accord with their Confession of 1646, in stating that, "Jesus Christ by his death did purchase salvation for the elect that God gave unto him; these only have interest in him, and fellowship with him, for whom He makes intercession to His Father in the behalf of, and unto them alone doth God by his Spirit apply this redemption, as also the free gift of eternal life is given to them, and none else." So likewise, "those that have union with Christ, are justified from all their sins by the blood of Christ; which justification is a gracious and full acquittance of a guilty sinner from all sin, by God, through the satisfaction that Christ hath made by His death for all their sins. And this applied through faith." The Confession concludes with this declaration: "We know but in part, and that we are ignorant of many things which we desire and seek to know; and if any shall do us that friendly part to show us from the Word of God that we see not, we shall have cause to be thankful to God and them. But if any man shall impose upon us anything that we see not to be commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, we should, in his strength, rather embrace all reproaches and tortures of men, to be stripped of all outward comforts, and if it were possible, to die a thousand deaths, rather than to do anything against the least tittle of the truth of God, or against the light of our own consciences." Such deviation from sacred truth necessitated separation from evil; and so Richardson asserts that "concerning the doubt which does arise in many concerning communion, whether we may have communion in the ordinance of the supper with such as hold contrary to this truth so much contended for, I answer to the question, whether we may walk in communion with those that deny this doctrine. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" {Amos 3:3} The saints cannot walk together warrantably and so not comfortably without these two things. A oneness of faith in the principles or doctrine of Christ, known, owned, and declared. Love to the truth and to each other so as to desire to walk together. For my part, I would not join to that church who denied any foundation truth and this is one!"

Like Tobias Crisp before him; whose sermons he sought to vindicate in his well-written tract entitled, "In Defense of Crisp;" the foul blur of Antinomianism was hurled upon him, by those who mingled Law & Gospel; but like those who were accused of Antinomian tendencies before him, Richardson was ever careful to maintain good works and obedience to all Gospel precepts; but never in order to obtain any aspect of salvation, but as flowing spontaneously from a heart overcome with love to Christ. He says, in his book entitled "Saints Desire;" that "by nature we are prone to desire liberty, and abuse it; we need to be exhorted that we use not our liberty as an occasion to the flesh, to sloth and ease, &c. {Gal.5:13} Liberty to sin is no liberty, but the greatest bondage that can be to have a free heart to serve God, and the lets outwardly removed is sweet liberty to enjoy God, is liberty to be set free by Christ from sin, Satan, hell, is to be freed indeed; and though we have nothing to do to be saved, we have something to do for his glory, which is to be our meat and drink, therefore let no difficulty hinder thee in serving thy Lord, say not it is impossible, consider, Luke 1:6 & II Pet.3:14. Press after perfection, the nearer the better, watch and pray to prevent sin, to do good; make it thy business to keep Christ's commands."

His coming to the aid of Doctor Crisp, who could not answer his critics, {Crisp died of small-pox in 1643, at the early age of 42,} was according to Richardson out of pure necessity. He says, "neither do I know that I take any pleasure in writing against any, no further than I think myself bound in conscience to witness to the truth, and then especially when others omit it. Mr. Gere's book {Stephen Gere "Doctrine of the Antinomians," published in 1644} against Dr. Crisp has been published above four years, and no answer given to it by any. Neither have I heard that any other hath given any answer to the other foul Treatises. The most of them have been published several years. O ye that love the truth! Is it a small matter to you for Christ to be dishonored, and his truth condemned? Do ye not regard what violence is offered to the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice? If yea, why are ye so silent as if there were none to answer?"

In 1649 Richardson brought forth another work entitled "Divine Consolations; a fountain of life and comfort. Declaring that the Elect were justified from the punishment of sin by Christ, when he was

upon the Cross; and the objections against it are answered. And that Christ alone is our life, happiness, peace, strength, comfort, joy, and all perfection." This work was dedicated to Oliver Cromwell, Thomas Fairfax, Henry Ireton & Major-General Thomas Harrison, all most loyal supporters of the Parliamentary Cause; of whom he says, "God hath made you special Instruments in saving this nation from ruin and destruction; he hath honoured you with his protection, presence and blessing, even to admiration...the saints love you; England fareth the better for you; the children unborn shall praise you, and bless God for you; and though there be them that revile you, yet the memorial of your names shall be forever precious." Needless to say, Richardson was a loyal supporter of the Protectorate.

From the Preface to this work we soon detect that which stirred our author in an earnest vindication of the Gospel of Christ. "Holy and beloved in the Lord; Behold I present to your view Christ crucified, which is the sum and substance of the Gospel; the Priesthood of Christ, and the sufficiency of his Sacrifice to save, is the main thing I contend for against the Papists, who say, Christ's sacrifice is not sufficient without their sacrifice. Charity saves, says one; without good works, no salvation, says another. A third says that Christ's sacrifice is not sufficient for our Salvation without believing, that believing saves, and that without believing, we cannot be saved. Ye see, they all urge a necessity of something for salvation besides Christ's Sacrifice, without which something, they say, we cannot be saved, so that they deny the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice to save, and so deny that Christ does save. For those he saves, he saves by his sacrifice. Also if Christ and something else saves us, Christ saves us not. For he is no Saviour if he be but a part of a Saviour; therefore, in adding something to Christ's sacrifice, they deny the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice so that their opinions are dishonorable to Christ. Therefore, as we tender the honor of Jesus Christ, we are to hate and abhor them, being enemies to the Cross of Christ, and therefore abominable. If we consider how generally these are received and scarcely contradicted by any, thus believing, and Christ and believing together saves us; sure it should greatly stir us up, and provoke us to contend for the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, though our contending should cost us our lives. There is no truth more honorable to Christ, nor of greater concernment to his glory, and our salvation, than this is. Take away anything of the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, and our salvation is destroyed. What a dishonor were it to God to send Christ to save us, and yet for him not to save, and not to be sufficient to save. There is no opinion in the world, that my soul doth more abhor, nor against which I would more freely lay down my life for than this. This Treatise tends to exalt Christ alone."

From a second preface in the same book; we read, "Christ and him crucified is the best and most desirable object that can be presented unto your view. What can be better or more desirable. This is our happiness and glory and our chiefest joy. Joy sweet, satisfying, unmixed, pure, spiritual, glorious, full, and eternal. There is no sweetness like to this of Christ's dying for my sins. His suffering for us the whole punishment of sin so that God will not impute sin to that soul for whom Christ died. Therefore, we are forever freed from the punishment of sin. The more we know this truth, the more sweet is Christ to us and the more fixed on Christ our hearts will be, the more we love and obey him and contend for the truth once delivered to the Saints. This subject is love, the best love, which is most sweet and full of divine consolation. In the view thereof, I trust you shall find some sweetness. And if you had not enjoyed this sweetness, you could not have sent it forth so naturally, fully and sweetly to me as you have done. I have great cause to be thankful to you, and God for you. Your love to me has caused me to dedicate this small Treatise to you as a testimony of my hearty thankfulness to you for your love. The Lord bless you and keep you from all evil. So he prays that remains; Your much obliged, Samuel Richardson." {Divine Consolations, 1649}

Richardson was no friend to the Presbyterians, who sought by their Westminster Standards to impose their form of 'holy law' upon all England. To him the Westminster Assembly was comprised of "the men that have often deluded us, and thrust upon us error for truth; and so have deceived us and yourselves." In his work "Necessity of Toleration," 1647, he speaks of the Presbyterians in no kind terms, for he tells us, "for the matter of things they impose upon us, we find it not so written in the Word of God, therefore we slight it; for we are resolved not to presume above what is written in the

Holy Scriptures, and therefore we cannot submit to you, nor to your faith. Also, you have not studied a religion for us out of the Word of God, but have borrowed us one out of Scotland, and as some say; as wicked king Ahaz brought a pattern of the altar from Damascus to Jerusalem, which is unjustifiable by the Word of God...so that we had as good be under the Pope, as under your Presbyterian check." Further on he warns us, "Mr. Presbyter, your principles are large and dangerous, for who can tell what you will judge tolerable? Such as cannot dance after your pipe, and rule in your way, you judge heretics, and they must appear before your dreadful tribunal, to receive your reproof, which is sharp and terrible, and strikes at our liberties, estates and lives. Your care is to destroy, which is contrary to the Word of the Lord, which saith, they shall not kill nor hurt in my holy hill. Is your Church of this holy hill, seeing it is so corporal?" For know this, that "it is not in the power of man to suppress errors. If you can, first, so speak to the blind and open the eyes of our understanding, as to expel the darkness that is in them; secondly, if you can command the heart and reform it; thirdly, if you can hinder and destroy the vain imaginations of men's hearts and hinder Satan's suggestions of errors, and men's speaking each to each other; if you can place light in the soul, for there is no light until God gives light, and until God speak all is nothing; if you can give the Holy Spirit to men to direct to reform them, for until the Spirit comes there is no Reformation to purpose; then are you able to suppress errors. If you cannot do these things, give place to him that can and will do these things in his time; and, in the meantime, will so order all errors to his own glory, and the good of his elect. As for the Reformation that some men cry up to suppress errors, what is it but, first, a sinful Reformation, in that it forces men to sin even against their own knowledge and conscience, for many men before they will suffer death, or be undone, will say and do anything. Secondly, it is a foolish Reformation, in going the wrong way to work, in offering to reform the outside first; whereas God, when he reforms, begins within, at the heart, because if that be not first reformed, it is no spiritual Reformation, but a carnal and hypocritical one, as the Pharisees made clean the outside and remained filthy within. Thirdly, it is a carnal Reformation, and therefore it is attended with carnal instruments, prison and swords, &c.; whereas Christ's kingdom is spiritual, and all that belongs unto it. Fourthly, it is a cruel Reformation that hath more destruction than edification in it. It is a terrible Reformation, there waiteth on it confiscation of goods, fines, imprisonment, banishment, death with fire and sword. Is there no better cure of the pain of the head than beating out one's brains? Lastly, it is a deceitful Reformation, in that it makes men to appear to be sheep, when they are wolves; also, in that under the notion of suppressing errors, it suppresses the Truth, and stops the passage of the Gospel, which, instead of running, cannot go by reason of it."

Several of his subsequent writings were devoted to the defense of the Parliamentary Cause, and of the Government of Oliver Cromwell. In his pamphlet entitled "An Answer to London Ministers, &c., 1649;" he says, "because, therefore, you have saved our lives, and more, have not esteemed your own lives too much for us, but often have offered them up for us, we resolve to live and die with you." In the light of these words, we find it somewhat ironic that Richardson died the same year as Cromwell.

In the following passage, from a book that he published in 1656, entitled "Plain Dealing," we have his estimate of the services Cromwell had rendered to his country, and of his personal qualities as a man and governor. "His Highness aimeth at the general good of the nation, and just liberty of every man. He is also a godly man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil; though he is, nor no man else, without human frailty. He is faithful to the saints, and to these nations in whatsoever he hath undertaken from the beginning of the wars. He hath owned the poor despised people of God, and advanced many of them to a better way and means of living. He hath been an advocate for the Christians, and hath done them much good in writing, speaking, pleading for their liberty in the Long Parliament, and fighting for their liberty. He, with others, hath hazarded his life, estate and family; and since he hath refused great offers of wealth, and worldly glory for the sake and welfare of the people of God, God hath given him more than ordinary wisdom, strength, courage, and valour. God hath been always with him, and given him great successes. He is fitted to bear burdens, and to endure all opposition and contradictions that may stand with public safety. He is a terror to his

enemies; he hath a large heart, spirit, and principle, that will hold all that fear the Lord, though of different opinions and practices in religion, and seek their welfare. It is the honour of princes to pity the miserable, to relieve the oppressed, and the wrongs of the poor; he is humble and despiseth not any because poor, and is ready to hear and help them. He is a merciful man, full of pity and bounty to the poor. A liberal heart is more precious than heaven or earth. He gives in money to maimed soldiers, widows and orphans, and poor families, a thousand pound a week to supply their wants; he is not a lover of money, which is a singular and extraordinary thing. He will give, and not hoard up money as some do. I am persuaded that there is not a better friend to these nations and people of God among men, and that there is not any man so unjustly censured and abused as he is. And some that now find fault with him may live to see and confess that what I have herein written is truth, and when he is gathered to his fathers, shall weep for want of him."

Richardson's care for the poor, and concern for social reform is evident from his 1653 pamphlet, "The Cause of the Poor Pleaded;" in which he lamented that Papists were more charitable than Protestants, called for an increase in charitable giving and jobs for the unemployed, and praised Cromwell's liberality to the poor.

Most of Richardson's writings are saturated by an ardent attachment to complete liberty of conscience. In his "Necessity of Toleration," 1647, he states, "it is God's way to have religion free, and only to flow from an inward principle of faith and love; neither would God be worshipped of unwilling worshippers. It is his prerogative only to force religion, by working faith in men's hearts; for though religion be natural, true religion is supernatural, and proceeds from the Spirit of God." With such views of the government, and the governor, Richardson would look with regret upon the wild and visionary attempts of the Fifth Monarchists, and other radical extremists to overthrow the government of Cromwell. Among these were many who were his brethren in the faith, but who openly and strongly expressed their disapprobation of the Protectorate, and sought its dissolution.

Richardson's last known work was, "A Discourse of the Torments of Hell, with many infallible Proofs," &c., 1658; in which he repudiated the doctrine of eternal and perpetual punishment; and whilst the subject matter may have brought him into disfavor with some; we herein also find that those sacred principles of Gospel Truth for which he so vehemently contended for in the early 1640's remained intact, and his heart fixated on the pre-eminent glory of Christ in the salvation of his elect. He says, "carnal hearts of men taketh offence at everything, except the Law of Works, a doing to be saved; for the Doctrine of Election, God's Free Grace and Salvation only and alone by Christ, without Works, {Rom.4:6,} is charged with being one of the greatest Doctrines of liberty to sin that ever was, and is by the ignorant made a stumbling-block and rock of offence; and a cause of carelessness in many." Regarding his views on the Sovereign Dominion of God we extract this lengthy quotation, "the Doctrine of the Protestant Ministers is charged, not only to be a Doctrine of liberty to sin, but a blasphemous Doctrine; for they say, that to teach that the fall and sin of man was decreed is to make God the Author of evil; for many of the Protestant Writers say that the sin of man was determined of God...God willed and decreed his glory and man's happiness; therefore he willed and decreed the means to it; for the end and moving cause of his willing sin to be, is for his glory, which cause it was necessary for sin to be. If sin had not been, how should the goodness of God in giving man eternal life in glory appeared, his love in sending Christ to die? If there had not been sin, there had been no need of Christ's coming, nor of his death and righteousness. Most of the great works of God in this world and that to come, have dependence or reference to sin. How should we have lived by Faith, exercised the fruits of the Spirit, or have any happiness or glory in the world to come, if it had not been for Christ; and Christ had not been, if there had been no sin. He that willeth the end, willeth those things that are necessarily referred to that end; taking away sin was decreed before the world, therefore the being of sin was decreed. Christ's death was determined before the world - the Saints were chosen to life before the world; and choice hath reference to the fall, therefore the fall of Adam was decreed. If the will of man had been the first and chief cause of the being of sin, then the will of man should be the cause of God's will, and so man shall be the original cause of the salvation of himself, and so much the cause of it, that without his will it could not have been; and so the determination of God what to

do, shall not be from himself, but from the will of man, which is contrary to "the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." {Eph.1:11} If man should will sin before God willed it, then shall the will of God depend and wait upon the will of man; as if God should say, 'If man will sin, then I will determine his salvation;' and if God should first will to send Christ to save man, and leave it to man's will and power whether he shall fall or no, then it was possible for man to stand, and so to frustrate the decree of God; for if man had not sinned, God's decree of sending Christ had been made void and of none effect. Mr. Perkins' saith, "God decreed the fall of Adam; if the fall was decreed, if man had power to stand, then he had power to frustrate God's decree, which no wise man will affirm;" and then that saying that Adam had power to keep the Law, is without truth. {Ezek.18:2-4} God willeth all things well; he sinneth not, nor can sin, because he is under no Law." He concludes, "it is strange to consider men are so set upon the Popish principle to be saved for their works, that they count all profane that cross their way; some have burned the Bible; and Doctor Crisp's book of Salvation by Christ Alone. In like manner, Mr. John Archer's book, {late of All Hallows', Lombard Street, published 1645, entitled: "Comfort to Believers, against their Sins and Sorrow,"} was burnt by the Hangman; and the same spirit is alive to burn this also; for I expect no better from such as are not taught of God; they condemn those things they know not, and think they do God service, when they persecute the truth and professors of it." And so it is, even to this day!

It is uncertain as to how or when our beloved brother actually died, but as his writings came to an end in 1658, most believe that he was taken by Christ, only shortly thereafter.

Following is a list of Mr. Richardson's Writings

1. News from Heaven of a Treaty of Peace. Or, a cordial for a fainting heart. Wherein is manifested, that Jesus Christ, and all that is his, is freely offered to all who see a need of him, &c. 1643.
2. The Life of Faith, in Justification, in Glorification, in Sanctification, in Infirmities, in Times Past, in all Ordinances, &c., 1643.
3. Some Brief Considerations on Dr. Featley his book, entitled The Dipper Dipt; wherein in some measure is discovered his many great and false accusations of divers persons, commonly called Anabaptists, &c. 1645.
4. The Saint's Desire; or a Cordial for a Fainting Soul, 1647
5. Fifty Questions propounded to the Assembly, to answer by the Scriptures whether Corporal Punishment may be inflicted upon such as hold different Opinions on Religion, 1647.
5. Justification by Christ alone, a Fountain of Life and Comfort. Declaring that the whole work of man's salvation was accomplished by Jesus Christ upon the cross, &c., 1647.
6. The Necessity of Toleration in Matters of Religion, 1647.
7. An Answer to the London Ministers' Letter from them to His Excellency and his Counsel of War; as also an Answer to John Gere's Book, &c., 1649.
8. The Cause of the Poor Pleaded, 1653.
9. An Apology for the present Government and Governor, with an Answer to several Objections against them, and 20 Queries propounded for those who are unsatisfied to consider. 1654.

10. Plain Dealing, or the Unveiling of the Opposers of the Present Government and Governors, in answer of several Things affirmed by Mr. Vavasor Powell, &c., 1656.

11. A Discourse of the Torments of Hell, with many infallible Proofs, &c., 1658.