

Colonel Sir Jerome Sankey, M.P., Ph.D.

HIEROME ZANCHEY is a spelling often adopted for his name; and this invites the query whether he was connected with the Italian Hieronymus Zanchius who died at Heidelberg in 1590. But the query is unanswered; and possible early experiences at Cambridge and as proctor at Oxford, have no real bearing on his life, which was mainly spent across St. George's Channel, as may be traced largely in Dunlop's "Ireland under the Commonwealth."

He emerges in January 1645 as wounded at the capture of Nantwich. At the siege of Colchester, his dragoons performed the marvellous exploit of capturing two royalist ships. He was colonel of horse in the army that went to Ireland in 1649, and was much associated with colonel Daniel Axtell, another Baptist, who had kept order in Westminster Hall during the trial of Charles Stuart. Sankey was prominent in the relief of Passage, at the skirmish of Dundrum, and at Clonmel. He was then put in command to run down colonel John Fitzpatrick, and was able to secure the surrender of Limerick. Here he signalled himself by suggesting a mode of pacification. There were some 30,000 Irish still in arms, who were willing to go abroad, and as whole regiments to enter the service of the king of Spain: he distinctly favoured this solution. So on 12 May, 1652, articles of agreement were made and concluded; Lieutenant-general Ludlow authorised Commissary-general Reynolds, colonels John Hewson, Hierome Sankey, Daniel Axtell, Richard Lawrence, Henry Pretty, Scout-master Henry Jones, Adjutant-general William Allen, and captain John Vernon to sign such a treaty: the list shows the predominant position of Baptists in Irish affairs.

For the next few weeks Sankey was busy sweeping up the remnants, clearing King's and Queen's County, and being in special charge of the Tipperary forces. On 12 August an Act of Settlement was passed, whereby Ulster, Leinster, and Munster were divided into Precincts, each under a commander-in-chief: Sankey was put to govern Clonmel, and after a council of war at Kilkenny on 30 September to wind up the transportation of the Irish regiments, he turned to civil affairs.

Thus in January, 1653, he was put on a committee to encourage tillage, and to settle lands on such as had served the Parliament. For under authority of one of the last acts assented to by Charles, the Irish were to be sent across Shannon into Connaught, and the other three provinces were to be newly colonised from England. In April he was bidden remove the Irish from his precinct, giving them two months' notice, and not

actually displacing until English tenants were available. In June he was put on a commission to deal with the plague, and with providing for the poor. Then it was found that the Scots who had long been in Ulster were not satisfied with the new government; and he was put on a commission to transplant some of them into Leinster. In August a small Standing Committee was set up "to consider all matters referred to them by the Commissioners of the Commonwealth": as a first instalment they were to decide what was fit to be done as regards the propagation of the gospel; and as a counterpart, what inducements be offered to the Irish to abandon their religion, how priests may be removed. Correspondence survives as to his interest in English ministers brought over, and as to the details of the land settlement.

By August 1655 things had so far settled down that the University of Dublin held a grand meeting to entertain their Chancellor, the lord Henry Cromwell. The most conspicuous figure after the chancellor himself was colonel Sankey: the Proctor made a speech in order to philosophy, after which Dr. Loftus the Doctor of that Chair presented Sankey to be admitted *ad eundem gradum*—which apparently proves that Wood was right in alluding to his English university career. Next year a parliament was assembled at Westminster under the Instrument of Government, which was far-sighted enough to unite England, Scotland, and Ireland; to this Sankey was returned as M.P. for Kilkenny. This marks the inauguration of what was hoped to be domestic peace, and on 23 October the Lord Protector ordered accounts to be made up for the disbanded forces. It proved that in the seven years since the army landed in Ireland, Sankey's regiment had earned £96,657 13s. 10d., the largest sum paid.

He proved a loyal Cromwellian, upholding the settlement for the three countries, and especially backing Henry Cromwell in Ireland. In the plantation he acquired Coolmore in county Tipperary, and founded what proved to be a stable family there. So it must have been disturbing when the great Protector passed away, and his system began to crumble in England. Richard Cromwell was too weak, but Sankey backed Henry Cromwell in Ireland. In 1659 he was called to London, as yet another civil war seemed imminent, and was taken into council at Wallingford House. When Sir George Booth actually did raise troops, Sankey went back to Ireland, and brought 500 horse to Holyhead, marching them to Cheshire; where the Irish Brigade effectually put down the rising. For the next few months he was most busy: on the social side he had a controversy with Dr. Petty as to the actual survey of lands for his disbanded

soldiery; on the political he took part in proposals for a new constitution; on the military he was sent north by the party of Fleetwood and Lambert to negotiate with that most uncertain man, general Monk in Scotland. From Newcastle he was sent forward to Berwick for an interview. And there Monk carried out his crafty policy, detained Sankey, and marched his troops onward. Early in 1660 Monk formally deprived him of his command, and that ended his brief intervention in high politics.

When the Restoration was effected, he was apparently ready to acquiesce in the royalist settlement, and he did emphatically dissociate himself from Venner's rising. Back in Ireland, he found useful occupation at first; was invited to arbitrate in some Dublin affairs, joined in a project to restore a mile-long causeway in Munster. But like many other old soldiers, he found reason to think that the new government did not mean to play fair, and that little by little the soldier-settlers were to be ousted. He therefore joined in the rebellion of 1663, to begin with the capture of Dublin Castle: it was betrayed, and he fell in the rising. Thus ended a career showing what good material went to form the Baptist churches of that period.

BRIDGWATER. The first appearance of this church is in 1655, when it entertained the Western Association. The church book begins in 1689, showing forty-nine members with Toby Welles pastor. The meeting-house was built in 1692, the date being legible in 1770. In 1693 Edward Elliott came on probation, he was ordained August 1696, when there were fifty-two members. He was a disciplinarian, so that a crisis came in 1703, and he soon left for Wapping. Then Thompson heard of a pastor named Shepperd. In 1717 Dr. Edward Evans became pastor, till 1741. This was a dangerous time, for the Presbyterian minister, John Moore, junior, had an important Academy, which became a centre of Arian teaching: the Baptist church evidently felt the influence, and a generation later was known to Thompson at a distance as "General Baptist," a label decidedly misleading. A Mr. Harrison followed, then Evan Thomas, ordained 1749. About 1757 came Charles Harris, "the first Calvinist"—a great mistake, but probably the first hyper-Calvinist. He purged the church most effectively, and guarded its purity so well that when he died in 1774 he had admitted only eight members. Thomas Lewis followed, leaving in 1780 for Ireland. After another purge, Seth Morris came for two years, then went to Anglesea. George Scraggs spent five years, then turned Pedobaptist. With Benjamin Morgan from Swansea in 1791, the church emerges into clear light.