

## Trask in the Star-Chamber, 1619.

MR. C. H. GREENE of Michigan has been fortunate enough to find a record of this trial, which he kindly communicates, and is published herewith. The original minute-books of the Star-Chamber Council sittings seem to have been deliberately destroyed in the time of the Long Parliament. But the minute of the final session on Trask's case had been copied, and attested by F. Arthur. It was endorsed:—"Junij. 19: Anno Jacobi 16: The sentence in the Starr-Chamber against Jo: Traske." After the original Latin heading to the minute, an English version has been added in brackets; as this specifies that James was James I, it must have been made after the accession of James II in 1685. The document may be seen at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, Additional Manuscript C 303, at folio 38b; the present reproduction has been carefully collated with it.

In Camera Stellata Coram Concilio ibidem decimo nono die Junij Anno decimo sexto Jacobi Regis.— (In the Star Chamber before a council on the nineteenth day of June, in the sixteenth year of the reign of King James I; i.e. A.D. 1619, June 16.)

This daie was brought to the Barr John Traske, Clarke against whome Sir Henry Yelverton Knight his Maiesties Attorney generall informed this honorable Court, Ore tenus, That the said Traske beinge a Minister and an insolent detractour of the Ecclesiasticall gouernement and haueing a fantastickall opynion of himselfe with ambicion to bee the Father of a Jewish faccion and some new opynion in Religion to seduce simple people after him did publikely professe and teach that the lawe of Moses concerneing the differences of meates forbidden the eateinge of Hoggs Flesh, Conies, etc., is at this day to bee observed and kept, and that the seaventh daie which

wee call Sater Daie is the Lordes Sabbath and ought to be kept for the sabbath at this daie, in which Jewish opynion hee confirmed as many people as hee could: and beinge convented for the same before the lord Arch-bishopp of Canterbury and other Bishoppes and Comissioners of the high Commission, they dealte favorably with him by argumentes to make him see his Errors, but hee contineweinge obstinate, hee was only imprisoned and restreyned from company that hee might not infecte others, but was not restreyned from any meates vntill November last, and then hee was only allowed the Flesh meates in his opynion supposed to bee forbidden: Notwithstandinge which mylde dealeinge (in respect of his erroneous and high offences and obstinacy against true religion and the peace of the Church and his Maiesties governement) The said Traske very insolently and presumptuously wrott a most scandalous letter to the Kinges most excellent Maiestie with his owne hand, and therein conceyveinge as hee pretended his cruell handlinge by some of the prelates termeth their proceedings against him to bee cruell and bloody turranny and oppression, And that his Maiesty should take the sword speedily out of the handes of the bloud thirstie and not give way to any proud Papall Prelate; And beinge examined what hee meante thereby, hee saith that the proceedings against him by the lord Archbishopp and other Bishoppes and Comissioners to bee bloody and to bee a cruell oppression, as first for murthinge his Children for wante of educacion and instruccion, Secondly that hee hath byn deprived of maynetenance by ordinary Meanes, And thirdly for that hee hath bene kept from the exucucion of his ministry: And the said Traske contineweinge still in his insolent and obstinate course and opinions, did, presumptuously write a second scandalous Letter to the Kinges.

maiestie not in the way of submission but in manner of a private challenge to right his pretended greivances. And therein vseth many disdaynfull phrases and scornfull detraction of the terme of hipocrisie, and thirtie two tymeas vseth the vncivill terme of Thow and Thee to the Kinges most excellent Maiestie in the said letter, and therein contineweth his impudent scandalizeinge of the lordes Bishoppes as hee did in the former lettre: And his highnes said Attorney further informeth this honorable Court that the said Traske hath heretofore and still doth tradiciously seeke and laboure to drawe and pervert his Maiesties subiectes from the Religion here established and from their obedience to his Maiesties gouernement, and to drawe Disciples after him in his Jewish opynions, All which appeareth by the said severall lettres, and by the said Traskes owne confession vnder his hand. For which high and erroneous offences and presumptuous attemptes his highnes Attorney prayed that the said Traske might receaue the sentence and Judgment of this honorable Court, wherevpon the Court takinge grave and mature deliberacion of the quallitie of the said Traskes offences, found and pronounced him guiltie of three most heynous and dangerous offences. First of an imediate detraction and scandall vpon the Kinges most Excellent Maiesty in the highest degree: Secondly of a scandall to his Maiesty by scandalizinge his Ecclesiasticall gouernement and of foule and false accusacions against the lordes Bishoppes and the high Commissioners, Thirdly of a sedicious practice and purpose to divert his Maiesties subiectes from their obedience to followe him and his Jewish opynions, which opynions the Reuerend Bishoppes and the rest of the Court nowe sittinge did vtterly confute and condemne as false and erroneous, For which seuerall and heinous offences (the Court holdinge the same worthy of very seveare and exemplary pun-

ishment), hath ordered decreed and adjudged that the said Traske bee committed to the prison of the Fleete and there to bee kept close prisoner duringe his life, that hee may not infecte others, And the Court houldinge the said Traske not a meete person to bee any longer in the Ministry, but to bee thereof digraded, hath lefte the same to the ecclesiasticall power to bee done, And then the said Traske to bee whipped from the prison of the Fleete to the Pallace of Westminster with a paper on his head inscribed with these wordes, For writinge presumptuous lettres to the Kinge, wherein hee much slandered his Maiesty, And for slanderinge the proceedinges of the lord Bishoppes in the high Commission, And for maintayneinge Jewish opynions, And then to bee sett on the Pillory and to haue one of his eares nayled to the Pillory, and after hee hath stood there some convenient tyme, to bee burnte in the forehead with the lettre J; in token that hee broached Jewish opynions, And alsoe that the said Traske shall alsoe bee whipped from the Fleete into Cheepeside with the like paper on his head and bee sett in the Pillory and haue his other Eare nayled therevnto, And lastly that the said Traske shall pay a Fyne of one Thousand poundes to his Maiesties vse.

M: Goad:

Examinatur per F. Arthur.

[Note by the Editor.]

Mr. Greene's discovery is valuable in putting right several details of Trask's early career, which had hitherto been inferred incorrectly, from later episodes in his life. His story may now be summarised from good early sources:

He was a schoolmaster from Somerset, ordained by the bishop of Salisbury, who appeared in London

during 1617, aged 34, a strenuous upholder of observing the Lord's Day in the Jewish sabbatical style. He ordained evangelists, in Wycliffe's style, and sent them out to preach. One of these, Hamlet Jackson, seems to have been the first to say that the fourth commandment was to be taken complete, and that not Sunday, but Saturday, was to be observed. After some hesitation, Trask followed. Before long, not only was Returne Hebden put in the New Prison and Israel Holly in Newgate, for this practice, but Trask was brought before the High Commission for the province of Canterbury, and imprisoned. Two tracts were written against him in 1618, both to be seen in Dublin; one at Trinity College in manuscript, "The Sabbath not to be kept on Saturday," one in Marsh's Library, by a Catholic Divine, "A briefe Refutation of John Traske's Judaical and novel Fancies." Traske appealed direct to the king against the authority of the High Commission, and was therefore heard before the Council in Star Chamber. Lancelot Andrews was president, and spoke twice on the matter; the editor found the manuscript of his speeches at Cambridge in the University Library, Ff. v. 25 (3) and Gg. i. 29 (45). They show more oburgation and knowledge of ancient heresies than acquaintance with the tenets of Trask. The first act of the drama ended with the sentence as recorded above, setting forth his views.

It is often forgotten that while both the High Commission and the Star Chamber passed very severe sentences, these were in practice mitigated. There is no reason to think Trask ever paid £1,000, and it is certain he was not imprisoned for life. He recanted next year, and in 1620 published a Treatise of Liberty from Judaism, to be seen at the Bodleian. Pagett in 1645 said incorrectly that he was sentenced to remain in the Fleet Prison for three years; this may

perhaps suggest that he was in fact released after three years.

The State Papers show that he was free on 30 July 1627, when he got into trouble again, as he had desired to attend to the place of execution, a Puritan sentenced to death. Next day the bishop of London reported that he was "an unworthy person and a Jew." The original charge was lost sight of, and attention was paid to this feature. He was examined on 9 August, when it was charged that he and his wife observed the Sabbath. The result appears from his petition on 13 June 1629, pleading that he had been suspended from his living, had confessed his fault as ordered, both in the pulpit and in print, and begging that he might be allowed again to exercise his functions. The issue of this petition is not known. It must be noted that this second trial was after the death of Andrews in 1626; even the editor of the Calendar of State Papers for 1647 blundered here, and confounded the two trials. But when in 1629 the works of Andrews were published, they contained one of the speeches of 1618 in Star Chamber, which had received new interest. Perhaps it was at this period that the copy of the 1619 trial was made, which is printed above.

A third act opens with the trial of John Etsall in the High Commission, on 21 June 1632; in his defence it was said that he justified Trask. One of the few original books of the High Commission which escaped destruction, has been published by the Camden Society, and there may be seen at length the defence of Etsall. Not a syllable in it bears on any Sabbatarian doctrine, whether relating to Saturday or to Sunday; Trask had apparently dropped the subject and had turned to other topics. And although other disputants were busy on this question from 1632 to 1636, he was wise enough to keep quiet, and was

not referred to in the debate. It is said that in 1636 he published *The True Gospel*.

But on 20 February 1635-6 the High Commission gave a commission to John Wragg to search out conventicles. As a result we read in the records of the Jacob church, published in our first volume at page 222, that John Trask was taken by Wragg at Mr. Digby's; and not yielding to Wragg's general warrant, was had to the Lord Mayor, and was committed to the Poultry Counter for ten days and then was released on bail; wanted his health, and was shortly after translated.

Edward Norice that same year published a *Discovery of his late dangerous errors*, and in 1638 issued *The New Gospel not the True Gospel*. From these sources may easily be learned his latest opinions, which were exceptional, although he apparently belonged to the Jacob-Lathrop church at the last. It should be borne in mind that there is no syllable to suggest he ever abandoned paedobaptism.

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### **Ireland and New Jersey.**

A church was founded at Cloughkeating in Lower Ormond, by one of Cromwell's officers, and existed for about two centuries. In 1740 it had above 200 members, twenty years later it entertained the Association, and again in 1774. By that time it had flourishing daughter churches in the colonies, whose story is touched by Dr. Joshua Wills in a sketch of the Pittsgrove church in Salem County.

There are legends that Thomas Patient, the Baptist preacher in Dublin cathedral, had evangelised on the Cohansey river in lower New Jersey. It is certain that in 1665, three brothers from Cloughkeating, David, John and Thomas Shepard, emigrated with Sir Robert Carr to the Fenwick Colony. When a Baptist church organised at Cohansey in 1690, they were original members. Worship was held at many centres, three of which are known to-day as Pilesgrove, Pittsgrove, Schultown. Thomas Killingworth from Norwich was the earliest leader, Robert Kelsey from Drummore began about 1740, and thirty years later saw substantial buildings in which the daughter churches carried on their work.