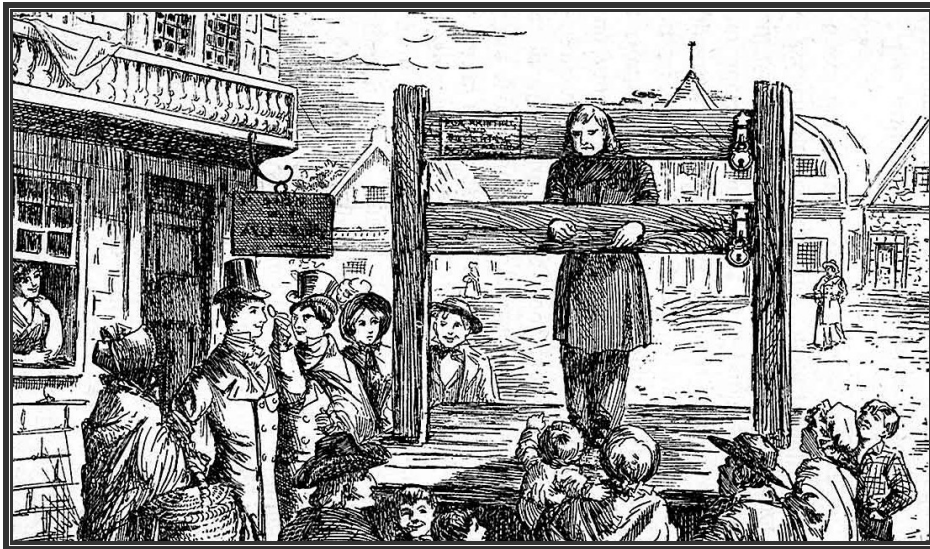


## Benjamin Keach and a Book that has Disappeared



Who is the poor man in the picture? His name is Pastor Benjamin Keach and he has been put in the pillory as a punishment. In those days wrong-doers were put in this wooden frame so that they could not get away. People would laugh at them and throw rotten fruit at them. But Pastor Keach has done nothing wrong. Can you see that no one is throwing anything at Pastor Keach? They know he is a good man and has done no harm.

It was hard for Christians in Pastor Keach's day. Those who would not go to the Church of England were called dis-sen-ters. It was against the law for dissenters to meet. If they met to worship God they were fined. Sometimes they were sent to prison. There were laws against dissenters teaching their children too. That is why Pastor Keach got into trouble. He had written a book for children, *The Child's Instructor, or a New and Easy Primer*.

All the while he was on the pillory Mr Keach kept talking. He explained he had done nothing wrong and he told the people about Jesus Christ. The jailer was cross but the people listened. A Church of England minister tried to say bad things about Pastor Keach. The people would not have it for they knew that he really was a bad man himself. Instead they shouted at the minister, "Do you remember when we pulled you drunk out of the ditch?" Then they laughed at him.

All the copies of Pastor Keach's book for children were collected by the officials and burnt. None of them were left.

Pastor Benjamin Keach was one of the best known baptist ministers of his day. He liked his people to sing hymns. It those days people did not sing hymns in church services in England. Every time you sing a hymn you should be thankful to God for Benjamin Keach.

Benjamin Keach had to study on his own. Dissenters were not allowed to go to college. He prayed and read God's word until he knew it very well. In that way he could preach with power and lead his people in hard times. Pastor Keach first came to know the Saviour in a little chapel in Winslow in Buck-ing-ham-shire. He preached his first sermon there too. This chapel still stands today and you can still go and see it.

In 1668 Benjamin Keach was called to be a pastor in London. Here he stayed for the rest of his life. No copies are left today of the little book that got him put in the pillory but we still have many of his other books for grown-ups. I would love to have seen what was in it wouldn't you?