

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. II. No. 47.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1857.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXI. No. 47.

## Poetry.

### Justification by Faith.

BY REV. BAPTIST W. NOEL.

From the ages of sorrow which fly not;  
From the curse which hate brandished its rod,  
From the doom of the dying who die not,  
From the wrath of the infinite God,  
From the foe who our infancy hated,  
And will hate us when laid in the grave  
With a malice which ne'er can be sated,  
Our Redeemer is mighty to save.

By the sorrows he welcomed for others,  
By the pain which he bore in our stead,  
By the love which is more than a brother's  
By the blood which for us he hath shed,  
He has saved from the storm which was o'er us,  
He has merited heaven for the cursed;  
There was death and destruction before us,  
There is glory and peace for the worst.

What asks He from those who, awaking  
At the flash of the tempest which lower,  
Each refuge of falsehood forsaking,  
Now trust to His goodness and power?  
Although they have nothing to offer;  
He has mercy enough to forgive;  
He frowns on the proud and the scoffing,  
But He says to the penitent "Live."

By that truth which will never deceive us,  
By the mercy which cannot forsake,  
By the kindness which never will grieve us,  
That Life let us gratefully take,  
Should others in folly despise it,  
Be it ours on His love to depend;  
When they scoff, all the more let us prize it,  
And trust Him, and love to the end.

And when nature around us so smiling,  
Seems to whisper that God is our friend,  
And the promise, each sorrow beguiling,  
Secures us support to the end,  
O then, let us bless Him who sought us  
When bound in the chain of despair,  
And by his own agony bought us,  
His bliss and his glory to share.

And when safe in that rapturous heaven,  
Our hearts overflow with delight,  
Where each sin is forever forgiven,  
Where day is not followed by night,  
When the faculty never shall perish,  
When the bright eye shall never be dim,  
It will double our blessing, to cherish  
The thought, they were given by Him.

Though, therefore, the proud may assail us  
With the doctrines of heathens and Turks,  
Though Anglican Catholics tell us  
We are justified partly by works,  
Till death from our warfare reclaims us,  
Free grace let us loudly proclaim:  
We are rescued by trusting in Jesus;  
We are saved by the blood of the Lamb.

## Baptist History.

For the Christian Messenger.

### A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

LETTER XXXII.

#### The Troublous Period.

From A. D. 1567 to A. D. 1688.

Continued.

#### MY YOUNG FRIEND,

I shall devote this letter to a narration of one of Queen Elizabeth's atrocities. It was not the only one, but it was one of the worst.

During the persecution which raged in the Netherlands under the Duke of Alva, butcher-general of the Inquisition in that country, numbers fled to other parts of the Continent, or to England, for refuge and safety. In England, at any rate, they ought to have been safe. But the demon of persecution ruled there. At London, on the third of April, 1575, a small congregation of Dutch Baptists convened in a private house, outside the city gates ("without Aldgate") was interrupted by a constable, while at worship, and twenty-five persons were taken before a magistrate, who committed them to prison, but released them after two days' confinement, on their giving bail for their appearance whenever summoned.

Information being giving to the Queen, a royal commission was issued to Sandys, bishop of London, and some others, to examine the parties and proceed accordingly. They appeared before the commissioners in

pursuance of the summons. Their confession of faith was rejected, and they were required to subscribe to four articles, condemnatory of their own principles.

"They proposed to us four questions," says one of the prisoners, "telling us to say 'yea or nay':—

"1. Whether Christ had not taken his flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary?

"We answered; He is the Son of the living God.

"2. Ought not little children to be baptized?

"We answered; Not so; we find it not written in holy scripture.

"3. May a Christian serve the office of a magistrate?

"We answered; That it did not oblige our consciences; but, as we read, we esteemed it an ordinance of God.

"4. Whether a Christian, if needs be, may not swear?

"We answered; That it also obliged not our consciences; for Christ has said, in Matthew, *Let your words be yea, yea; nay, nay.* Then we were silent.

"But the bishop said, that our misdeeds therein were so great, that we could not enjoy the favour of God. O Lord! avenge it not. He then said to us all, that we should be imprisoned in the Marshalsea."

In the Marshalsea prison (now called the "Queen's Bench") to which they were then conveyed, many efforts were made by the ministers of the Dutch church and others, to persuade them to submit and recant. "Master Joris came to us and said, If we would join the church, that is, the Dutch church, our chains should be struck off, and our bonds loosed. The bishop, he said, had given him command so to do. But we remained steadfast to the truth of Jesus Christ. He is indeed our Captain, and no other; yea, in Him is all our trust. My dear brethren, and sweet sisters, let us persevere until we conquer. The Lord will then give us to drink of the new wine. O Lord, strengthen our faith. As we have received the Lord Jesus Christ, let us go forward courageously, trusting in Him." Five of them were overpowered, and consented to join the Dutch church. They made a public recantation in St. Paul's church-yard, on the 25th of May, standing there before thousands of people, with fagots bound to their shoulders, as in Popish times. A few days after, the remainder appeared again before the Commissioners.

"We remembered the word of the Lord," says Gerrit van Byler, "When they shall lead you before Lords and princes, fear not what you shall say, for in that hour it shall be given you. So we trusted in the Lord. The questions were again proposed, and subscription demanded; but we said, That we would cleave to the word of the Lord." Upon this they were declared to be incorrigible heretics, sentenced to death, and given over to the secular arm to be punished.

Bishop Sandys was the spokesman on the occasion. The sentence accorded with his theology. In a sermon preached by him before the Parliament this passage occurs:—"Such as teach, but teach not the good and right way; such as are open and public maintainers of errors and heresy; such, in the judgment of God, are thought unworthy to live. *Let the false prophet die* [Deut. xiii. 5]. Elias and Jehu did not think themselves imbued, but rather sanctified with such blood. I have no cruel heart; blood be far from me. I mind [desire] nothing less. Yet needs must it be granted that the maintainers and teachers of errors and heresy are to be repressed in every Christian Commonwealth."—(Sermons, p. 40. Parker Society's Edition.)

Fourteen women and a youth were put on board a vessel and sent out of the country. The youth was whipped from the prison to the wharf. The remaining five were consigned to Newgate, where they were put in heavy irons, thrust into a damp and filthy dungeon, swarming with vermin, and not allowed to associate with other prisoners, lest the thieves and murderers in the jail should be corrupted by Anabaptist contamination! One of their number, Christian Kemels, sank under the inhuman treatment. He died in the dungeon, after eight days' confinement. He was "released

by death, trusting in God; his dying testimony filled us with joy."

The queen was entreated to spare them. But she resented such interference with her prerogative, and would only consent to a month's reprieve, and that in compliance with the intercession of John Fox, the martyrologist, whose truly pathetic and eloquent letter to her majesty on the subject has been often printed and generally admired. Admirable it was, in some respects. It was a gushing forth of christianized humanity, quite peculiar in that age of steel-clad religion. But good old John was still in the dark. He did not understand soul-freedom. According to him, Baptists had no right to hold and profess their opinions. They were ranked with those "fanatical sects" which "are by no means to be countenanced in a commonwealth," but ought to be suppressed by proper correction. He did not ask therefore, for their release. All he complained of was, "the sharpness of their punishment."

He would have it changed. "There are excommunications, and close imprisonment; there are bonds; there is perpetual banishment, burning of the hand, and whipping, or even slavery itself." But "to roast alive the bodies of poor wretches, that offend rather through blindness of judgment than perverseness of will, in fire and flames, raging with pitch and brimstone," he denounced as "a hard-hearted thing, and more agreeable to the practice of the Romanists than the custom of the Gospellers."

If, however, the queen would not consent to recall the sentence, he implored her to grant "a month or two, in which we may try whether the Lord will give them grace to turn from their dangerous errors; lest with the destruction of their bodies, their souls be in danger of eternal ruin." (Crosby, i. 70-73).

Fox wrote also to the prisoners, urging them to acknowledge their errors, to give up their "frantic conceptions," and telling them that they had "disturbed the church by their great scandal and offence." He sent them a copy of his letter to the queen. In their reply to him, they say:—"We are sorry that you do not understand our matter, and that you have another opinion of us than we wish, since you think that by our curiosity and obstinacy we have not only given offence to the church of God, but also provoked God himself, and frustrated our salvation. What reason you have thus to think of us, we know not; nevertheless, we can assure you, that we seek with our whole hearts to serve the one God, and Christ, in a good conscience, and to edify our neighbour, as far as in us lies. Therefore we gladly receive what the holy scripture testifies, and wish to be permitted to adhere to the plainness and simplicity of the word of God, and not to be urged farther with subtle questions, which our feeble understandings are not able to comprehend, nor by scripture to justify."

The prisoners transmitted to the queen a confession of their faith, accompanied by a "supplication," from which I copy the following extract:—"We testify before God and your majesty, that were we in our consciences able by any means to think or understand the contrary, we would with all our hearts receive and confess it; since it were a great folly in us, not to live rather in the exercise of a right faith, than to die, perhaps, in a false one. May it also please your majesty in your wisdom and innate goodness to consider, that it were not right, but hypocrisy in us to speak otherwise than with our hearts we believe, in order to escape the peril of temporal death; that it is impossible to believe otherwise than we in our consciences think; and also that it is not in our power to believe this or that, as evil-doers who do right or wrong as they please. But the true faith must be implanted in the heart of man by God; and to him we daily pray, that he would give us his Spirit, to understand his word and gospel.

"Above all, it is evident to your majesty, that we have not sought to stir up any rebellions or seditions against your majesty; but much more, have daily besought the Lord for your happy reign, and the welfare both of your soul and body. Last-

ly, we have not endeavoured to spread our faith in the land. This we could not do, for we are only unlearned trades-people, unskilled in divinity."

All was in vain. The Baptists remained firm. The queen would not relent. On the 15th of July she signed the warrant for the execution of two of them, commanding the Sheriffs of London to burn them alive in Smithfield.

A copy of the warrant is now before me. There is also before me a copy of the warrant for the burning of Archbishop Cranmer, in Queen Mary's days. These warrants are substantially alike. In fact, they are almost couched in the same language, word for word. Mary the Papist, dooming to death the Protestant, and Elizabeth the Protestant, ordering the execution of the Baptist, advance the same pretensions and adopt the same forms of speech. Both of these call their victims "heretics." Both assume to be "zealous for justice." Both are "defenders of the Catholic faith." Both declare their determination to "maintain and defend holy church, her rights and liberties." Both avow their resolve to "root out and extirpate heresies and errors."

Both assert that the heretics named in the warrants had been convicted and condemned "according to the laws and customs of the realm." Both charge the sheriffs to take their prisoners to a "public and open place," and there to "commit them to the fire," in the presence of the people, and to cause them to be "really consumed" in the said fire. Both warn the sheriffs that they fail therein at their peril. Herod and Pontius Pilate forgot their differences when they united in crucifying the Saviour. Papists and Protestants agree in murdering his followers.—(Documentary Annals, i. 201, 394).

Hendrick Terwoort and Jan Pieters were the two whom the Queen appointed to death. Terwoort was a young man, about twenty-five years of age. He was a goldsmith, and in good circumstances. He was married some eight or ten weeks before his imprisonment. Pieters was aged, poor, and nine children depended on his daily toil. His first wife had been martyred at Ghent in Flanders; his second wife was the widow of a martyr. A statement of his circumstances was laid before Sandys, in order to induce him to get permission for Pieters to leave the country, with his wife and children: but the bishop was inaccessible to pity.

On Lord's-day, the 17th of July, they were informed that the warrant for their execution had arrived. "Upon Tuesday," says Gerrit Van Byler, "a stake was set up in Smithfield, but the execution was not that day. On Wednesday, many people were gathered together to witness the death of our two friends, but it was again deferred. This was done to terrify, and draw our friends and us from the faith. But on Friday, our two friends, Hendrick Terwoort and Jan Pieters, being brought out from their prison, were led to the sacrifice. As they went forth, Jan Pieters said, 'The holy prophets, and also Christ, our Saviour, have gone this way before us, even from the beginning, from Abel until now.' A vast multitude had collected together on the occasion, but few of whom, probably, sympathized with the sufferers. Some preachers were sent to the place of execution to prevent the expression of sympathy by maligning them. One of them exclaimed, 'These men believe not on God.' "We believe," replied Pieters, "in one God, our Heavenly Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his Son." When they were bound to the stake the articles were again offered to them, and life and pardon promised, if they would subscribe. Pieters answered for them both; "You have laboured hard to drive us to you, but now, when placed at the stake, it is labour in vain." One of the preachers said in excuse, "That all such matters were determined by the Council, and that it was the queen's intention they should die." "But," rejoined Pieters, "you are the teachers of the queen, whom it behoves you to instruct better; therefore shall our blood be required at your hands." No answer could be given to this. Fire was applied, and the souls of the martyrs ascended to God. "How