

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLIGHTFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXI. No. 42.

Poetry.

Endurance.

Tis bitter to endure the wrong
Which evil hands and tongues commit
The bold encroachments of the strong,
The shafts of calumny and wit,
The scornful bearing of the proud,
The sneers and laughter of the crowd.

And harder still it is to bear
The censure of the good and wise,
Who, ignorant of what you are,
Or blinded by the slanderer's lies,
Look coldly on, or pass you by
In silence, with averted eye.

But, when the friends in whom you trust
As steadfast as the mountain rock,
Fly, and are scattered like the dust,
Before misfortune's whirlwind shock,
Nor love remains to cheer your fall,
This is more terrible than all.

But, even this, and these—ay more,
Can be endured, and hope survive;
The noble spirit still may soar,
Although the body fail to thrive;
Disease and want may wear the frame,
Thank God! the soul is still the same.

Hold up your head, then, man of grief,
No longer to the tempest bend,
Or soon or late must come relief—
The coldest, darkest night, will end;
Hope in the true heart never dies!
Trust on—the day-star yet shall rise.

Conscious of purity and worth,
You may with calm assurance wait
The tardy recompense of earth;
And, e'en should justice come too late,
To soothe the spirit's homeward flight,
Still Heaven, at last, the wrong shall right.

Baptist History.

For the Christian Messenger.

A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

LETTER XXXIII.

The Troublous Period.

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

Continued.

My Young Friend,

Elizabeth could not plead ignorance respecting the sentiments of the Baptists. In the confession of Faith which Terwoort and Pieters sent to her, a revised copy of which was signed by them the day before their martyrdom, they thus plainly stated their views:—

"We believe and confess that magistrates are set and ordained of God, to punish the evil, and to protect the good; which magistracy we desire from our hearts to obey, as it is written in 1 Peter ii. 13, 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.' For he beareth not the sword in vain, Roman xiii. 4. And Paul teaches us that we should offer up for all prayers, and intercessions and giving of thanks; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires that all men should be saved, 1 Tim. ii. 1-4. He further teaches us 'to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, and to be ready to every good work,' Titus iii. 1. Therefore we pray your majesty kindly to understand aright our meaning; which is, that we do not despise the eminent, noble, and gracious queen, and her wise councils, but esteem them as worthy of all honour, to whom we desire to be obedient in all things that we may. For we confess with Paul, as above, that she is God's servant, and that if we resist this power, we resist the ordinance of God; for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.' Therefore we confess to be due unto her, and are ready to give, tribute, custom, honour, and fear, as Christ himself has taught us, saying, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' Since, therefore, she is a servant of God, we will kindly pray her majesty, that it would please her to show pity to us poor prisoners, even as our Father in heaven is pitiful,

Luke vi. 36. We likewise do not approve of those who resist the magistrates; but confess and declare with our whole heart, that we must be obedient and subject unto them, as we have here set down."—(Broadmead Records, p. 507-511. Translated from "Het Bloedig Tooneel," p. 704-706.)

But it availed them nothing. They were Baptists. The queen was told that the Baptists were incorrigible heretics, and that she would be doing God service if she put them to death. So she lighted again the flames of Smithfield.

I have referred to Sandys and Whitgift. Their writings teem with invectives against the Baptists. In his controversy with Thomas Cartwright the Puritan, Whitgift endeavoured to shew that the arguments employed by Cartwright in defence of separation from the church of England were similar to those used by the "Anabaptists," a sect which was "hated" by "all estates and orders of the realm." He collected a number of extracts from the writings of Zwingle, Calvin, Bullinger and others, and adopted them as containing true descriptions of the opinions and practices of the "hated" party, adding observations of his own to the same effect. He says, that they make contentions wheresoever they come—that the churches are disquieted by them, and magistrates contemned and despised—that "they do with as spiteful words and bitter speeches condemn the church of England as they do the papistical church"—that they count all them as wicked and reprobate which are not of their sect—that they are "great hypocrites"—that they constantly "invent new opinions, and run from error to error"—that they are "stubborn and wilful, wayward and froward, without all humanity"—that they seek "to overthrow commonwealths, and states of government"—that they "reject all authority of superiors"—that they seek "to be free from all laws, and to do what they list," and finally, that all this is "most true, and therefore no slander," (Works, i. 78-110.) No comment on these monstrosities is required. They are fair specimens of the controversial style of the age.

Doubtless, it was an unpardonable sin in the Baptists that they condemned the interference of the civil power with religion. They were remarkably clear on that subject. Whitgift unwittingly does them justice. He observes that they taught that "the civil magistrate hath no authority in ecclesiastical matters, and that he ought not to meddle in causes of religion and faith"—that "no man ought to be compelled to faith and religion"—and that "Christians ought to punish faults, not with imprisonment, not with the sword, or corporal punishment, but only with excommunication." These are scriptural truths, which the bishops aforesaid laboured to suppress, because their own nefarious proceedings were inconsistent with them.

When Terwoort and Pieters were led out to die, Gerrit van Byler and Hans van Straten were left in Newgate, uncertain as to their fate. How long they remained there is not known. The last we hear of them is that they were heavily ironed because they had endeavoured to escape by filing asunder the bars of their dungeon. So great was the severity of Elizabeth's government that the separatists of all classes were scattered about, and forced to hold their meetings in utmost privacy. The Baptists having been especially marked out for expulsion could scarcely meet at all. Consequently, but little is known of them during the remainder of this reign. There is no doubt, however, of their continued existence. One writer refers to "Anabaptist Conventicles" in London and other places. Another intimates his suspicion that there were some even in the Church of England who held their sentiments. A congregation was discovered in London in 1588, whose views and practices point them out as "Anabaptistical." Strype says, that they were accustomed to meet together on Lord's days, and listen to exhortations from the word of God;—that they dined together, collected money to pay for the food, and sent the surplus to such of their brethren as were in prison;—that they used no form of prayer;—that they refused to

regard the church of England as a true church; that they denied the authority of the queen, and of all magistrates, in religious affairs;—and that they held it unlawful to baptize children.—(Broadmead Records: Introduction, p. lxxii.) At a still later period a Baptist is mentioned as being in prison at Norwich, and in peril of death, solely on account of his religious opinions. (*Ibid.* p. lxxiii.)

James I. I need not inform you, was as bigoted and despotic as Elizabeth. In his treatment of the puritans he closely followed her example. While in Scotland he had affected great zeal for presbyterianism. When he subscribed the solemn league and covenant, in 1590, "he praised God that he was born in the time of the light of the gospel, and in such a place, as to be king of such a church, the sincerest [purest] kirk in the world." The church of Geneva, said he, "keep Pasch and Yule [Easter and Christmas]; what have they for them? They have no institution. As for our neighbour kirk of England, their service is an evil-said mass in English; they wait nothing of the mass but the liftings. I charge you, my good ministers, doctors, elders, nobles, gentlemen, and barons, to stand to your purity, and to exhort the people to do the same; and I, forsooth, as long as I brook my life, shall maintain the same." (Calderwood's History of the Church of Scotland, in Neal's Puritans, ii. 2.) But on his rising to the higher dignity of King of Great Britain, he suddenly became enamoured of episcopacy. Kingcraft, in which he thought himself an adept, harmonised better with bishops than with presbyters. Bishops seemed to be the natural allies of sovereigns. "No bishop, no king," was James's motto. He early declared himself on the episcopal side, and thus dispelled the fears which were entertained by the friends of the hierarchy, who apprehended trouble from the accession of a presbyterian king. Like all new converts, he evinced remarkable fervour of attachment, and was ready to do anything on behalf of the cause. The puritan clergy, that is, those who wished for more liberty, and desired to assimilate the government of the church to the Genevan model, asked for a hearing. The result was, the event known in history as the Hampton Court Conference. It was no Conference, however, for the king had made up his mind beforehand. His behaviour was rude and overbearing. Nine bishops, with other dignitaries, appeared in support of the Church of England, and of things as they were; Dr. Reynolds, with three other ministers, represented the puritans. Their demands were comprised in four particulars;—1. That the doctrines of the church might be preserved pure, according to God's word. 2. That good pastors might be planted in all churches, to preach in the same. 3. That the book of common prayer might be fitted to more increase of piety. 4. That church government might be sincerely ministered, according to God's word. In support of these requests, Dr. Reynolds adduced many weighty considerations, and argued with great modesty and forbearance, though often interrupted and insulted by the king. "Well, Doctor," said James, "have you anything else to offer?" "No more," Dr. R. replied. "If this," rejoined the king, "be all your party have to say, I will make them conform, or I will hurry them out of the land, or else worse," (Neal, *ut sup.* p. 19.)

The Puritans saw that there was nothing to hope for from the government, and took measures accordingly. Many crossed over to Holland. Among them were some of the Brownist persuasion, afterwards called Independants, and now, Congregationalists. Churches of that order were established at Leyden, Amsterdam, and other places. Such as could not leave their own country worshipped God in private, and kept themselves quiet, hoping, though as it were against hope, for better times. Of that class were many Baptists. Enoch Clapham, a writer of that age, speaks of them as "leaving the public assemblies, and running into woods and meadows, and meeting in bye stables, barns, and haylofts for service," (Crossby, i. 88.)

John Smyth had been a clergyman of the Church of England, and held the living of Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. On leaving that church he became a minister among the Brownists, who esteemed him so highly that bishop Hall calls him their "oracle in general." After a toilsome and perilous service of about 15 years, during which he and his friends had suffered much from Elizabethan tyranny, it was deemed necessary to abandon the field, in order to preserve life and liberty. In the year 1606 he joined a party of emigrants who settled in Amsterdam. There they united with an English church which had been formed some time before. But Mr. Smyth's connection with that church was not of long duration. He had left the church of England for the Brownists, and now more mature reflection led him to take another step. The Brownists denied that the Church of England was a true church, and therefore they re-ordained all ministers who went over to them from that church, accounting its ordinances null and void. But they did not re-baptize. This appeared to Mr. Smyth an inconsistency. He thought that if the ordination was invalid the baptism was no less so. Investigation followed, which was extended to the whole question of baptism, and issued in the conviction that believers are the only subjects of the ordinance, and that immersion is essential to it. Some of Mr. Smyth's friends shared in the conviction. There is no account extant of the manner in which they proceeded. They might have applied to the Dutch Baptists, but it is likely that their difference of opinion on some of the points which I have had occasion to advert to in a former letter prevented them from taking that step. It is most probable that Mr. Smyth received baptism from one of the brethren, and that he then administered it to the others. Their number soon increased greatly. A church was formed, of which Mr. Smyth was chosen pastor. At his death, which took place in 1611, Mr. Thomas Helwisse was appointed in his place. In the above-mentioned year, before Mr. Smyth's death, the church published a Confession of Faith, in twenty-six articles. The doctrinal part of the Confession expresses Arminian views. I will transcribe those articles which relate to the constitution of a church, and the ordinances.

"10. That the church of Christ is a company of faithful people, separated from the world by the word and spirit of God, being knit unto the Lord, and one unto another, by baptism, upon their own confession of the faith, and sins.—1 Cor. i. 2; Ephes. i. 1; 2 Cor. vi. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 13; Acts viii. 37; Mat. iii. 6.

"11. That though in respect of Christ the church be one, yet it consisteth of divers particular congregations, even so many as there shall be in the world; every of which congregation, though they be but two or three, have Christ given them, with all the means of their salvation; are the body of Christ, and a whole church; and therefore may, and ought, when they are come together, to pray, prophesy, break bread, and administer in all the holy ordinances, although as yet they have no officers, or that their officers should be in prison, or sick, or by any other means hindered from the church.—Ephes. iv. 4; Mat. xviii. 20; Romans viii. 32; 1 Cor. iii. 22; xii. 27; xiv. 23; 1 Peter iv. 10; ii. 5.

"12. That as one congregation hath Christ, so have all. And that the word of God cometh not out from any one, neither to any one congregation in particular, but unto every particular church, as it doth unto all the world. And therefore no church ought to challenge any prerogative over any other.—2 Cor. x. 7; 1 Cor. xiv. 36; Col. i. 5, 6.

"13. That every church is to receive in all their members by baptism, upon the confession of their faith and sins, wrought by the preaching of the gospel, according to the primitive institution and practice. And therefore churches constituted after any other manner, or of any other persons, are not according to Christ's testament. Mat. xxviii. 19; Acts ii. 41.

"14. That baptism, or washing with