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"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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## Poetry.

### The Inquiry.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

Tell me, ye winged winds,  
That round my pathway soar,  
Do ye not know some spot  
Where mortals weep no more?  
Some lone and pleasant dell,  
Some valley to the west,  
Where, free of toil and pain,  
The weary soul may rest;  
The loud wind dwindled to a whisper low,  
And sighed for pity as is answered, "No."

Tell me, thou mighty deep,  
Whose billows round me play,  
Knowest thou some favored spot,  
Some island far away,  
Where weary man may find  
The bliss for which he sighs,  
Where sorrow never lives,  
And friendship never dies?  
The loud waves, rolling in perpetual flow,  
Stopped for a while, and sighed, to answer, "No."

And thou, serenest moon,  
That with such lovely face  
Does look upon the earth,  
Asleep in night's embrace,  
Tell me, in all thy round  
Hast thou not seen some spot  
Where miserable man  
Might find a happier lot?  
Behind a cloud the moon withdrew in woe,  
And a voice, sweet, but sad, responded, "No."

Tell me, my secret soul,  
O tell me, Hope and Faith,  
Is there no resting-place  
From sorrow, sin and death?  
Is there no happy spot  
Where mortals may be blest,  
Where grief may find a balm  
And weariness a rest?  
Faith, Hope and Love, best boons to mortals  
Given,  
Waved their bright wings, and answered, "Yes,  
in heaven."

## Baptist History.

For the Christian Messenger.

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

LETTER XXII.

#### The Reformation Period.

From A. D. 1516 to A. D. 1687.

Continued.

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

In the year 1525 many of the Baptists took refuge in the Netherlands, hoping to be able to serve God there in quietness. They might have done so, perhaps, if they could have refrained from preaching the gospel, and had forborne to propagate their distinctive tenets. But that was impossible. In the spirit of apostolic christianity they "went everywhere, preaching the word." Numbers listened, were converted, baptized, and joined the persecuted sect, at Amsterdam, Antwerp, Haarlem, and other places. Then the hand of oppression was heavy upon them. The Emperor Charles 5, to whose paternal dominions the Netherlands belonged, directed that the heretics should be treated with unsparring severity, and that the Baptists should be singled out for special manifestations of vengeance. The first martyr whose name is recorded was "Weynken Elaes" daughter, of Monickendam, a widow, who was strangled at the stake and then burned, at the Hague, Nov. 20, 1527. She went to the place of execution "cheerfully, as if she were going to a festival." Her last words were, "I cleave to God," (Martyrology, i. 40-44). In the same year Jan Walen and two others were put to death at Haarlem. "Being bound to stakes with chains, and a fire being laid around them, they were slowly roasted, till the marrow was seen to ooze from the bones of their legs. They were thus burned and roasted upwards, until death came to their release" (Ibid. p. 45).

Sicke Snyder (that is, Sicke the tailor; his proper name being Freerks) was beheaded at Leenwarden in 1531. He had received Christian baptism on confession of his faith, as a token of being a regenerate

child of God, according to the instructions of Christ, seeking thus to live and to walk in obedience to his Maker. For this he became a prisoner in bonds at Leenwarden in Friesland, and experienced much suffering from the adversaries to the truth. And since he could by no torments be brought to apostatize, he was at the same place executed by the sword, displaying great firmness, bearing testimony to the true faith, and confirming it by his death and blood. His sentence is thus recorded in the Criminal Sentence-Book of the Court of Friesland:— Sicke Freerks, on this 20th March, 1531, is condemned by the Court to be executed with the sword: his body shall be laid on the wheel, and his head set upon a stake, because he has been re-baptized, and perseveres in that baptism" (Ibid. p. 136).

In 1532, three were burned at the Hague. They were "fastened with chains to stakes, and a great fire having been made around them, they were roasted till they expired." At Amsterdam, "nine men were taken out of their beds by night, upon suspicion of ana-baptism, hurried away to the Hague, and after they had been imprisoned a fortnight, were there beheaded by order of the emperor. Their bodies were buried, but their heads put into a herring barrel and sent to Amsterdam, where they were set upon stakes" (Ibid. p. 133, 134). By edicts published in the following year all persons were forbidden to harbour Baptist preachers in Holland; and obstinate Baptists, that is, those who refused to recant, were doomed to suffer the utmost penalty of the law. In obedience to these edicts the work of cruelty went on.

The persecution was so fierce in Germany and Switzerland that there seemed to be no safety but in emigration. In the year 1530 many thousands of Baptists, inhabitants of the Tyrol, Switzerland, Austria, Styria, and Bavaria, emigrated under the leadership of Jacob Hutter, and settled in Moravia. They bought farms, erected places of worship, and enjoyed for a time great prosperity, spiritually and temporally. Many other exiles joined them, so that their numbers were continually increased. But in 1555 Ferdinand, King of Bohemia, ordered their expulsion, and sent a military force to carry the order into effect. Their property was seized, and all the indulgence they could obtain was liberty to carry away their moveables. They withdrew into the forests and there lived as they could, worshipped God, and possessed their souls in patience. Hutter exhorted and comforted them. "Be ye thankful unto God," he said, "that ye are counted worthy to suffer persecutions and cruel exile for his name. These are the rewards of the elect in the prison-house of this world; the proofs of your heavenly Father's approbation. Thus did his people Israel suffer in Egypt, in the desert, and in Babylon. Thus have apostles and all the followers of the Lamb, some in prisons, in exile, and in persecutions, some in torments, in sufferings, and in martyrdoms, enjoyed the favour of their Lord, and have passed the more quickly to the paradise above." Sadness be far from you; put aside all grief and sorrow, reflect how great the rewards awaiting you for the afflictions ye now endure."

Jacob Hutter's letter to the Marshal of Moravia, written in the name of the brethren, is worthy of an imperishable record. I will copy it entire, that you may see what manner of men the Baptists of the sixteenth century were.

"We brethren—who love God and his word, the true witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ, banished from many countries for the name of God and for the cause of divine truth, and have hither come to the land Moravia, having assembled together and abode under your jurisdiction, through the favour and protection of the Most High God, to whom alone be praise, honour, and laud for ever, we beg you to know, honoured ruler of Moravia, that your officers have come unto us, and have delivered your message and command, as indeed is well known to you. Already have we given a verbal answer, and now we reply

in writing: viz, that we have forsaken the world, an unholy life, and all iniquity. We believe in Almighty God, and in his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who will protect us henceforth and for ever in every peril, and to whom we have devoted our entire selves, our life, and all that we possess, to keep his commandments, and to forsake all unrighteousness and sin. Therefore we are persecuted and despised by the whole world, and robbed of all our property, as was done aforetime to the holy prophets, and even to Christ himself. By King Ferdinand, the prince of darkness, that cruel tyrant and enemy of divine truth and righteousness, many of our brethren have been slaughtered and put to death without mercy, our property seized, our fields and homes laid waste, ourselves driven into exile, and most fearfully persecuted.

"After these things we came into Moravia, and here for some time have dwelt in quietness and tranquility, under thy protection. We have injured no one, we have occupied ourselves in heavy toil, which all men can testify. Notwithstanding, with thy permission, we are driven by force from our possessions and our homes. We are now in the desert, in woods, and under the open canopy of heaven; but this we patiently endure, and praise God that we are counted worthy to suffer for his name. Yet for your sakes we grieve that you should thus wickedly deal with the children of God. The righteous are called to suffer; but alas! woe, woe to all those who without reason persecute us for the cause of divine truth, and inflict upon us so many and so great injuries, and drive us from them as dogs and brute beasts. Their destruction, punishments, and condemnation draw near, and will come upon them in terror and dismay, both in this life, and that which is to come. For God will require at their hands the innocent blood which they have shed, and will terribly vindicate his saints according to the words of the prophets.

"And now that you have with violence bidden us forthwith to depart into exile, let this be our answer. We know not any place where we may securely live; nor can we any longer dare here to remain for hunger and fear. If we turn to the territories of this or that sovereign, everywhere we find an enemy. If we go forward, we fall into the jaws of tyrants and robbers, like sheep before the ravening wolf and the raging lion. With us are many widows, and babes in their cradles, whose parents that most cruel tyrant and enemy of divine righteousness, Ferdinand, gave to the slaughter, and whose property he seized. These widows, and orphans, and sick children, committed to our charge by God, and whom the Almighty hath commanded us to feed, to clothe, to cherish, and to supply all their needs, who cannot journey with us, nor, unless otherwise provided for, can long live, these, we dare not abandon. We may not overthrow God's law to observe man's law, although it cost gold, and body, and life. On their account we cannot depart; but rather than they should suffer injury we will endure any extremity, even to the shedding of our blood. Besides, here we have houses and farms, the property that we have gained by the sweat of our brow, which in the sight of God and men are our just possession: to sell them we need time and delay. Of this property we have urgent need in order to support our wives, widows, orphans, and children, of whom we have a great number, lest they die of hunger. Now we lie in the broad forest, and if God will, without hurt. Let but our own be restored to us, and we will live as we have hitherto done, in peace and tranquillity. We desire to molest no one, nor to prejudice our foes, not even Ferdinand the King. Our manner of life, our customs and conversation, are known everywhere to all. Rather than wrong any man of a single penny, we would suffer the loss of a hundred gulden, [worth twenty pence sterling each] and sooner than strike our enemy with the hand, much less with sword, or spear, or halbert, as the world does, we would die

and surrender life. We carry no weapon, neither spear nor gun, as is clear as the open day; and they who say that we have gone forth by thousands to fight, they lie; and impiously traduce us to our rulers. We complain of this injury before God and man, and grieve that the number of the virtuous is so small. We would that all the world were as we are, and that we would bring and convert all men to the same belief; then should all war and unrighteousness have an end.

"We answer further: that if driven from this land there remains no refuge for us, unless God shall show us some special place whither to flee. We cannot go. This land, and all that therein is, belongeth to the God of heaven: and if we were to give a promise to depart, perhaps we should not be able to keep it; for we are in the hand of God, who does with us what he will. By him we were brought hither, and peradventure he would have us here and not elsewhere to dwell, to try our faith and our constancy by persecutions and adversity. But if it should appear to be his will that we depart hence, since we are persecuted and driven away, then will we even without your command, not tardily but with alacrity, go whither God shall send us. Day and night we pray unto him that he will guide our steps to the place where he would have us dwell. We cannot and dare not withstand his holy will; nor is it possible for you, however much you may strive. Grant us but a brief space; peradventure our Heavenly Father will make known to us his will, whether we are here to remain, or whether we must go. If this be done, you shall see that no difficulty, however great it may be, shall deter us from the faith.

"Woe, Woe! unto you, O ye Moravian rulers, who have sworn to that cruel tyrant and enemy of God's truth, Ferdinand, to drive away his pious and faithful servants. Woe! we say unto you, who fear more that frail and mortal man than the living, omnipotent, and eternal God, and chase from you, suddenly and inhumanly, the children of God, the afflicted widow, the desolate orphans, and scatter them abroad. Not with impunity will ye do this; your oaths will not excuse you, or afford you any subterfuge. The same punishment and torments that Pilate endured will overtake you, who, unwilling to crucify the Lord, yet from fear of Caesar adjudged him to death. God, by the mouth of the prophet, proclaims that he will fearfully and terribly avenge the shedding of innocent blood, and will not pass by such as fear not to pollute and contaminate their hands therewith. Therefore great slaughter, much misery and anguish, sorrow and adversity, yea, everlasting groaning, pain, and torment, are daily appointed you. The Most High will lift his hand against you, now and eternally. This we announce to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; for verily it will not tarry, and shortly ye shall see that we have told you nothing but the truth of God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are witnesses against you, and against all who set at nought his commandments. We beseech you to forsake iniquity, and to turn to the living God with weeping and lamentation, that you may escape all these woes.

"We earnestly entreat you, submissively and with prayers, that you take in good part all these our words. For we testify and speak what we know, and have learnt to be true in the sight of God. We speak from a pure mind filled with the love of God, and from that true christian affection which we follow after before God and men. Farewell" (Ibid. p. 149-153).

The oppressor was melted for once. The order was recalled, and the Baptists enjoyed peace and freedom for some time longer.

Wherever the Reformation prevailed, Baptist sentiments sprung up with it. So it was in England. In 1528, seven Dutch Baptists were detected and imprisoned; two of them were burned. In 1534, when Henry 8. assumed the headship of the English Church, he issued two proclamations against heretics. The first referred