

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 1858.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXII. No. 14.

NEW SERIES.
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Poetry.

"A little while."

"What is this that he saith, a little while."—JOHN xvi. 18.

Oh for the peace that floweth as a river,
Making life's desert places bloom and smile!
Oh for the faith to grasp heaven's bright "for ever,"
Amid the shadows of earth's "little while."

"A little while," for patient vigil-keeping,
To face the storm, to wrestle with the strong;
"A little while," to sow the seed with weeping;
Then bind the sheaves, and sing the harvest song.

"A little while," to wear the robe of sadness;
To toil, with weary step, through miry ways;
Then to pour forth the fragrant oil of gladness,
And clasp the girdle round the robe of praise!

"A little while," midst shadow and illusion,
To strive, by faith, love's mysteries to spell;
Then read each dark enigma's bright solution,
Then hail sight's verdict, "He doeth all things well."

"A little while," the earthen pitcher taking
To wayside brooks, from far off fountains fed;
Then the cool lip its thirst for ever slaking
Beside the fulness of the Fountain-head.

"A little while," to keep the oil from failing,
"A little while," faith's flickering lamp to trim;
And then, the Bridegroom's coming footsteps hailing,
To haste to meet him with the bridal hymn.

And He who is himself the gift and giver
The future glory and the present smile,
With the bright promise of the glad "for ever"
Will light the shadows of the "little while."
—*Sunday at Home.*

Baptist History.

For the Christian Messenger.

A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

LETTER XLII.

The Troublesome Period.

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

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

You have already learned from the history of the Broadmead church that the persecution raged furiously in the latter years of the reign of Charles II. It seemed to be the settled policy of the court to crush the Nonconformists. Informers fattened on them. Judges and magistrates encouraged the informers, and were in their turn urged to greater diligence and zeal in their infamous career by the clergy, even by bishops. Some of the Nonconformists were cited to the spiritual courts, and excommunicated, which was tantamount to ruin, as an excommunicated person was out of the protection of the law. Others were prosecuted for attending conventicles or for not going to church, and their property was seized for the payment of fines. So numerous were these cases that in the small town of Uxbridge and its neighbourhood (fifteen miles from London) "two hundred warrants of distress were issued." The ministers, particularly, were hunted down like wild beasts. Many of them were under the necessity of selling their household furniture and books in order to provide food for their starving families. It has been estimated that property to the amount of two millions sterling in value was filched from the Nonconformists during the reigns of Charles II. and James II.

The prisons were crammed, and great numbers died in confinement—as really put to death—murdered—as if they had been hanged or shot. I will select one instance.

Thomas Delaune was a native of Ireland. His parents were Roman Catholics. The gentleman on whose estate they lived noticing in young Delaune an aptness for study sent him to a friary at Kilcrash, about seven miles from Cork, for education. Having remained there nine years he obtained a situation at Kingsale, as clerk to a Mr. Bampfield, who was largely engaged in the pilchard fishery. Mr. Bampfield's efforts were blessed to his conversion from popery and sin. After some years he found it necessary to leave Ireland, his religious zeal having excited persecution. He settled

ultimately in London, as a schoolmaster, and was well known as a pious, learned, and exemplary man. He enjoyed the friendship of Benjamin Keach, William Kiffin, and other Baptist ministers, by whom he was much esteemed.

Dr. Benjamin Calamy, one of the royal chaplains, published a sermon, entitled, "A scrupulous Conscience." He challenged the Nonconformists to a discussion of the points at issue between the church of England and themselves, and invited them to propose their doubts and difficulties, that the truth might be ascertained. Mr. Delaune accepted the challenge and wrote his "Plea for the Nonconformists," in which the subject is handled with consummate ability. "The Book," says DeFoe, "is perfect in itself. Never author left behind him a more finished piece; and I believe the dispute is entirely ended. If any man ask what we can say, why the dissenters differ from the Church of England, and what they can plead for—I can recommend no better reply than this. Let them answer, in short, Thomas Delaune, and desire the querist to read the book." Before the work was finished at press it was seized by a king's messenger, and its author lodged in jail. He was first "committed to Wood Street Compter, and lodged among the common-side prisoners, where he had a hard bench for his bed, and two bricks for his pillows." Thence he was removed to Newgate, and placed among the felons, whose "horrid company," as he wrote to Dr. Calamy, gave him "a perfect representation of that horrid place which you describe when you mention hell." He was afterwards allowed to associate with prisoners of a better sort. Before his trial he appealed to Dr. Calamy for friendly interference on his behalf. The doctor, as he reminded him, had invited discussion, and in writing the book he had but responded to his challenge. But instead of the treatment which one scholar ought to expect from another, he was cast into prison. He "would fain be convinced by something more like divinity than Newgate." "I had some thoughts," he said in another communication, "that you would have performed the office of a divine, in visiting me in my place of confinement; either to argue me out of my doubts, which your promised scripture and reason, not a *mittimus* or *Newgate*, could easily do. To the former I can yield. To the latter it seems I must. This is a severe kind of logic, and will probably dispute me out of this world." But Dr. Calamy was deaf to his appeal, and ungenerous enough to abstain from exercising any influence on behalf of his opponent.

Mr. Delaune was tried at the Old Bailey in January, 1684, for "a certain, false, seditious, and scandalous libel" against the King and the book of Common Prayer." He entreated that the question might be thoroughly and fairly examined. "I desire," he said, "that the entire paragraphs may be read, from which the crimes charged against me are inferred. If fragments only be produced, from which no perfect sense can be deduced, I shall be unfairly dealt with. The coherence of sense in a continued discourse, not scraps and broken pieces of sentences, can demonstrate the scope of an argument. If what I have written be true, it is no crime, unless truth be made a crime. If false, let Dr. Calamy or any of the guides of your church confute me (as he promised in his sermon aforesaid) by good scripture and good reason; then will I submit. If the latter method be not taken, I must repeat it, 'tis very hard, my lord, 'tis very hard."

No doubt it was "hard, very hard." But Jeffreys was on the bench! A verdict of "guilty" was recorded, and the sentence ran thus:—"Thomas Delaune fined a hundred marks, and to be kept prisoner, &c., and to find good security for his good behaviour for one whole year afterwards; and that the said books and seditious libels by him published shall be burnt with fire before the Royal Exchange, London."

That sentence consigned him to a slow and painful martyrdom. I quote DeFoe again, who wrote a recommendatory preface to the seventeenth edition of the "Plea":—

"The expensive prosecution, depriving him of his livelihood, which was a grammar school, and long imprisonment, had made him not only unable to pay his fine, but unable to subsist himself and his family.

He continued in close confinement in the prison of Newgate about fifteen months, and suffered there great hardships by extreme poverty, being so entirely reduced by this disaster, that he had no subsistence but what was contributed by such friends as came to visit him.

His behaviour in this distress was like the greatness of mind he discovered at his trial. And the same spirit which appears in his writings appeared in his conversation, and supported him with invincible patience under the greatest extremities. But long confinement and distresses of various kinds at last conquered him. He had a wife and two small children, all with him in the prison, for they had no subsistence elsewhere. The closeness and inconveniences of the place first affected them, and all three, by lingering sorrow and sickness, died in the prison. At last, worn out with trouble, and hopeless of relief, and too much abandoned by those who should have taken some other care of him, this excellent person sunk under the burden and died there also. I cannot refrain saying, such a champion, of such a cause, deserved better usage. And it was very hard, such a man, such a christian, such a scholar, and on such an occasion, should starve in a dungeon; and that the whole body of dissenters in England, whose cause he died for defending, should not raise him £66 13s. 4d. to save his life."

"Had I been a minister," said John Sharp, pastor of the Baptist Church at Frome, Somersetshire, soon after the Revolution of 1688, "I would have taken a horse, and rode till my skin was off, but I would have got the money to pay his fine."

"I am sorry to say," DeFoe observes, "he is one of near eight thousand Protestant Dissenters that perished in prison in the days of that merciful prince, King Charles II., and that merely for dissenting from the church in points which they could give such reasons for as this 'Plea' assigns; and for no other cause were stifled, I had almost said, murdered, in goals, for their religion."

Soon after the accession of James II. the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion broke out, and involved great numbers in ruin. Some Baptists were compromised in it. That was not to be wondered at. James II. was a papist and a tyrant. He was known to be a cold-hearted, blood-thirsty man. It was not believed that the liberties of England would be safe in his keeping. Besides this, some of the insurgents regarded Monmouth as the legitimate son of Charles II., and therefore the right heir to the throne; while others deemed it better to overlook the stain of his birth and thus secure a Protestant succession than to expose the kingdom to the misrule of a popish despot. Had the enterprise succeeded they would have been applauded as patriots; by its defeat their names were handed down to posterity as traitors. Numbers of them suffered the vengeance of the law. The brutal judge, Jeffreys, presided at the trials, and hurried off his victims to the gibbet by the shortest process, and with all the glee of a practised butcher.

The fate of two young men excited unusual commiseration. Benjamin and Thomas Hewling were grandsons of William Kiffin, whose daughter their father had married. The father having died, Mr. Kiffin took charge of the family, and assisted the surviving parent in giving them an excellent education and training. William was at a seminary in Holland when the Duke of Monmouth planned his ill-fated expedition. He accompanied the Duke to England. Benjamin, "conversing with those that were under great dissatisfaction, seeing popery encouraged and religion and liberty like to be invaded, did furnish himself with arms, and went to the said Duke." After the disastrous battle of Sedgemoor, the two brothers attempted to escape by sea, but were driven back by contrary winds and compelled to land and surrender themselves

prisoners. After a short confinement in Exeter jail they were conveyed to London, where they were lodged in Newgate, and remained there three weeks, when they were sent back into the West for trial.

Their grandfather laboured hard to save them. Every thing was venal in those days. "It being given out," says Mr. Kiffin, "that the king would make only a few who had been taken examples, and would leave the rest to his officers, to compound for their lives; I attempted, with my daughter, their mother, to treat with a great man, agreeing to give him three thousand pounds if he would obtain their deliverance. But the face of things was soon altered, so that nothing but severity could be expected. Indeed, we missed the right door, for the Lord Chief Justice [Jeffreys] finding that agreements were made with others, and so little attention paid to himself, was the more provoked to use all manner of cruelty to the poor prisoners; so that few escaped, and amongst the rest those two young men were executed."—(Life of Kiffin, p. 63).

Their sister was indefatigable in her endeavours on their behalf. When all other means had failed, she determined to present a petition to the king. "For this purpose she was introduced by Lord Churchill, afterwards the celebrated Duke of Marlborough. While they waited in the ante-chamber for admittance, standing near the chimney-piece, Lord Churchill assured her of his most hearty wishes of success to her petition. 'But, madam,' said he, 'I dare not flatter you with any such hopes, for that marble is as capable of feeling compassion as the king's heart.'"—(Ibid., p. 64).

So it proved. The king's heart was hard as adamant. The Hewlings were executed: William, at Lyme, Sept. 12, 1685; Benjamin, at Taunton, on the 30th of the same month. How they spent the last few days of their lives, and how they died, has been admirably told by their sister, of whose narrative I will give you a brief abstract. But as it would protract this letter to an inconvenient length, I must request you to wait another fortnight.

Yours truly,

From my Study, MENDO,
March 27, 1858.

Letter from Rev. R. R. Crawley.
HENTHADAH, BRITISH BURMAH,
November 10th, 1857.

My dear Dr. Tupper,—Your letter of June 10th, 1847, has been received. In compliance with the directions it contains, I have the pleasure to inform you that two men of marked piety and intelligence, and supported from the fund contributed by Churches in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, are now actively employed in the good work of preaching among their countrymen the "unsearchable riches of Christ." Their names are Ko Ong Ban, and Mung Shong, both baptized by myself. The former is stationed at Saing Dan—a considerable village up the river, and the centre of a district containing many large and populous villages and towns—the latter is with me at Henthadah at present. It may be interesting to you to know something about the history of these two brethren:—Ko Ong Ban, aged about sixty, has been a christian for more than thirty years, and is a living witness of the efficacy of tracts and portions of Scripture alone to awaken, and with the aid of the Spirit, convert the soul of man. He received some tracts from Dr. Judson, who stopped at his village on his way to Ava. The seed fell upon good ground. Long dissatisfied with idolatry, and the silly fables of the Bedajut—he felt that the atonement of Jesus Christ just suited his case—just met his wants—and from that to the present time he has continued a faithful believer in the Lord Jesus. A timid man—dwelling in the midst of idolaters—with but one other who had "like precious faith" for a companion, from year to year, for a third of a century past, his light has been increasing, and now he declares boldly, though not without having to endure much contumely and reproach,—the way of salvation to all, to the proud bigot in yellow robes, and to the humblest inquirer after truth. Mung Shong has been converted since our