

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES.  
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HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 1858.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXII. No. 2.

## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### LINES

ON THE DEATH OF E. ANNE FRASER, WHO DIED AT HALIFAX, 25TH SEPTEMBER, 1857, AGED 12 YEARS.

I saw her parents eyes of love,  
As fondly on her fell,  
For they knew that she must soon depart  
To go with God to dwell.  
In that bright celestial home,  
She at his altar stands;  
With a glittering crown upon her brow,  
And a harp within her hands.

Before the bud could blossom here,  
It perished on its stem,  
As it was opening to the light,  
And graced with many a gem.  
Could ye but see her robe of light,  
So free from every stain;  
Ye would not call your Anne back,  
To dwell on earth again.

Could ye but gaze upon her now,  
In those sweet Eden bowers,  
And see her infant sisters deck  
Her snow-white brow with flowers.  
One sister yet is left behind,  
(The parting hour was pain.)  
But yet she would not call her back  
To dwell with her again.

She'll miss her sitting by her side,  
And in her childhood's play;  
But the angels gently called to her,  
And beckoned her away;  
Ye'll miss her at the fireside hearth,  
And at the table too,  
But yet ye would not call her back,  
To dwell again with you.

For now she's with the sainted throng,  
From earth's cold chains set free;  
Ye'll cherish the memorials  
Of one so dear to thee;  
Ye'll miss her on the Sabbath morn,  
Where'er you stay or go;  
But yet ye would not call her back,  
To dwell again below.

Ye'll miss her at the family prayer,  
Ye'll miss her fond caress;  
Ye'll also miss the parting kiss,  
And that dear hand to press.  
Yet be not thine such grief as theirs,  
To whom no hope is given,  
But trusting in the Saviour's name,  
Ye'll meet again in heaven.

AGNES.

Halifax, N. S., 25th Dec. 1857.

## Baptist History.

For the Christian Messenger.

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

LETTER XXXV.

#### The Troublous Period.

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

Continued.

#### MY YOUNG FRIEND,

How severely the Baptists suffered in the reign of James I., may be gathered from a statement made by one of them in 1620. "Our miseries are long and lingering imprisonments for many years in divers counties of England, in which many have died and left behind them widows, and many small children; taking away our goods, and others the like, of which we can make good probation; not for any disloyalty to your majesty, nor hurt to any mortal man, our adversaries themselves being judges; but only because we dare not assent unto, and practise in the worship of God, such things as we have not faith in, because it is sin against the Most High." This passage is taken from a Tract entitled, "A most humble Supplication of many of the King's Majesty's loyal subjects, ready to testify all civil obedience, by the oath of allegiance, or otherwise, and that of conscience; who are persecuted (only for differing in Religion) contrary to divine and human testimonies" (Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, p. 190.) After an interval of several years, a parliament was about to assemble. The "Humble Supplication" was written on that occasion, and it was hoped that the patriotic men who had signified their intention to seek redress of all grievances and the

restoration of freedom would hear the complaints of persecuted christians. The treatise was probably written by the author of "Persecution judged and condemned;" but the arguments are more systematically arranged than in that work. The following are the titles of the chapters: "1. The rule of faith is the doctrine of the Holy Ghost contained in the sacred Scriptures, and not any church, council, prince, or potentate, nor any mortal man whatsoever. 2. The interpreter of this rule is the Scriptures, and the spirit of God in whomsoever. 3. The Spirit of God, to understand and interpret the Scriptures, is given to all and every particular person that fear and obey God, of what degree soever they be; and not to the wicked. 4. Those that fear and obey God, and so have the Spirit of God to search out the mind of God in the Scriptures, are commonly, and for the most part, the simple, poor, and despised, &c. 5. The learned in human learning do commonly and for the most part err, and know not the truth, but persecute it, and the professors of it; and therefore are no further to be followed than we see them agree with truth. 6. Persecution for cause of conscience is against the doctrine of Jesus Christ, King of kings. 7. Persecution for cause of conscience is against the profession and practice of famous princes. 8. Persecution for cause of conscience is condemned by the ancient and later writers, yea, by puritans and papists. 9. It is no prejudice to the commonwealth if freedom of religion were suffered, but would make it flourish. 10. Kings are not deprived of any power given them of God, when they maintain freedom for cause of conscience."

"The author of these arguments against persecutions," says Roger Williams, "as I have been informed, being committed by some then in power close prisoner to Newgate, for the witness of some truths of Jesus, and having not the use of pen and ink, wrote these arguments in milk, on sheets of paper brought him by the woman, his keeper, from a friend in London, as the stopples of his milk bottle."

"In such paper, written with milk nothing will appear; but the way of reading it by fire being known to this friend who received the papers, he transcribed and kept together the papers, although the author himself could not correct nor view what himself had written."

"It was in milk, tending to soul nourishment, even for babes and sucklings in Christ:—

"It was in milk, spiritually white, pure and innocent, like those white horses of the word of truth and meekness, and the white linen or armour of righteousness, in the army of Jesus, Rev. vi. and xix.—

"It was in milk, soft, meek, peaceable, and gentle, tending both to the peace of souls and the peace of states and kingdoms." ("Bloody Tenant of Persecution," p. 36. Hanserd Knolly's Society's edition.)

This appeal was presented in vain. The persecution continued. Nevertheless the Baptists increased. Messrs. Dod and Cleaver, two authors of the time, who published in partnership a pamphlet, in 1621, entitled, "The patrimony of Christian Children," assign as reasons for engaging in this controversy, "that those of the contrary opinion were very industrious, and took great pains to propagate their doctrine; that divers persons of good note for piety had been prevailed upon by them; that several had entreated their help and assistance; and that they had been engaged already in private debates about this matter." (Crosby, i. 141.) Another person writing in 1622, states "that they [the Baptists] separated from the church, and writ many books in defence of their principles, and had multitudes of disciples; that it was their custom to produce a great number of scriptures to prove their doctrines; that they were in appearance more holy than those of the Established Church" (Ibid. p. 139.)

It would appear, therefore, that the Baptists were an active and growing body. This is further evident from a letter addressed to the clergy by Archbishop Abbot in 1622, in which he tells them that his Majesty was "much troubled and grieved

at the heart, to hear every day of so much defection from our religion, both to popery and anabaptism, or other points of separation, in some parts of this kingdom," and that he attributed these defections, in great measure, to the "lightness, affectedness, and unprofitableness of that kind of preaching which hath been of late years too much taken up in court, university, city, and country. The usual scope of very many preachers," it is added, "is noted to be a soaring up in points of divinity, too deep for the capacity of the people, or a mustering up of much reading, or the displaying of their own wit, or an ignorant meddling with civil matters, as well in the private of several parishes and corporations, as in the public of the kingdom, or a venting of their own distastes, or a smoothing up of those idle fancies, which in this blessed time of a long peace do boil in the brains of unadvised people; or lastly, a rude or undecent railing, not against the doctrines, (which when the text shall occasion the same, is not only approved, but much commended by his royal Majesty,) but against the persons of papists and puritans. Now the people bred up with this kind of teaching, and never instructed in the catechism, and fundamental grounds of religion, are for all this airy nourishment no better than 'abrasæ tabulæ,' new table books, ready to be filled up with the manuals and catechisms of the popish priests, or the papers and pamphlets of Anabaptists, Brownists, and Puritans." (Documentary Annals, ii. 204.)

I think the king was right. The preachers of the day had not been educated, for the most part in the best school, and knew not how to engage the sympathies of the people. Puritans and Baptists were much more likely to gain the popular ear. It was said of our Lord that "the common people heard him gladly."

Charles I. succeeded his father, James I., in 1625. In religion he was a Romish Protestant. Politically he believed in the one-man system of government, regarding the people as cyphers, and lost his life by pertinaciously labouring to put it in practice. Morally, he was made up of negations; he wanted principle, sincerity, and steadfastness. The Church of England calls him a "martyr." We may call him a "martyr-maker." His reign up to the time of the assembling of the Long Parliament, was distinguished by unmitigated persecution of all dissenters from the established church, and of all who still remained in the church, but scrupled conformity to some of its ceremonies and laws. The High Commission Court, first established, as you remember, by Queen Elizabeth, to which Court was entrusted the exercise of the royal authority in things ecclesiastical, was in reality a Protestant Inquisition. It possessed absolute power to fine, imprison, and otherwise punish all alleged delinquents, and from its decisions there was no appeal. So severe were the proceedings of that tribunal, that great numbers fled the country to avoid them; some to Holland, some to New England.

The Baptists had their share in those sufferings, but the particulars have been imperfectly recorded. One case, casually mentioned in Neal's History of the Puritans, may be regarded as an index of their condition. Among the ministers whose imprisonment for religion is noticed, the name of Mr. Thomas Brewer occurs, "a Baptist preacher," whose confinement extended to fourteen years. What times were those, when a man was suffered to lie in jail fourteen years for being a "Baptist preacher!" (Neal, ii. 329.)

In the year 1633 an event occurred which requires specific notice. This was the formation of the first Particular or Calvinistic Baptist church in England. Hitherto, as I have frequently remarked, the Baptists favoured the Arminian views. William Kiffin, of whom I shall have occasion to speak at some length in a subsequent letter, gives the following account. "There was a congregation of Protestant Dissenters of the Independent persuasion in London, gathered in the year 1616, whereof Mr. Henry Jacob was the first pastor, and after him succeeded Mr. John

Lathorp, who was their minister at this time. In this society several persons, finding that the congregation kept not to their first principles of separation, and being also convinced that baptism was not to be administered to infants, but to such only as professed faith in Christ, desired that they might be dismissed from that communion, and allowed to form a distinct congregation, in such order as was most agreeable to their own sentiments. The Church, considering that they were now grown very numerous, and so more than could in these times of persecution conveniently meet together, and believing also that those persons acted from a principle of conscience, and not obstancy, agreed to allow them the liberty they desired, and that they should be constituted a distinct church; which was performed the 12th of September, 1633. And as they believed that baptism was not rightly administered to infants, so they looked upon the baptism they had received in that age as invalid; whereupon most or all of them received a new baptism. Their minister was Mr. John Spilsbury. What number they were is uncertain, because in the mentioning of the names of about twenty men and women, it is added, 'with divers others,' (Crosby, i. 148.)

As the time of enlarged freedom drew near, the tyrants increased in rage. Seventeen canons were passed by the Convocation of the clergy in the early part of 1640, the fifth of which was directed "against sectaries." Having ordered that popish recusants who refused to conform should be excommunicated, and that the civil power should be requested to aid in carrying the sentence into effect, these words were added:—"The synod decrees, that the canon above-mentioned against Baptists shall be in full force against all Anabaptists, Brownists, Separatists, and other Sectaries, as far as they are applicable," (Crosby, i. 151.)

An excommunicated person is forbidden what is called christian burial. Samuel Howe, a Baptist minister, who died in prison about this time, while under excommunication, was buried in the highway, interment in consecrated ground, so-called, being refused. Mr. Howe was a popular preacher, but uneducated, and on that account it seems, vilified by some, who were unable to distinguish between university learning and absolute ignorance; and who chose to regard those who had not received college education as disqualified for the ministerial office, notwithstanding their religious attainments, or even their profound acquaintance with scripture. In this latter respect Mr. Howe excelled most men. But in defending himself from their attacks he certainly exceeded the bounds of moderation. In a Treatise which he published, entitled, "The sufficiency of the Spirits' teaching, without human learning," he attempted to show, not only that human learning is an insufficient guide in religion, but that it is "dangerous and hurtful." The following lines appear on the title-page:—

"What How? how now? Hath How such learning found,  
To throw Arts' curious image to the ground?  
Cambridge and Oxford may their glory now  
Veil to a Cobbler, if they know but How."

Nevertheless, Mr. Howe was a good and useful man. Roger Williams has this reference to him:—"Amongst so many instances, dead and living, to the everlasting praise of Christ Jesus, and of his Holy Spirit, breathing and blessing where he listeth, I cannot but with honourable testimony remember that eminent christian witness and prophet of Christ, even that despised and yet beloved Samuel Howe, who being by calling a cobbler, and without learning, (which yet in its sphere and place he honored) who yet I say, by searching the holy scriptures, grew so excellent a textuary, or scripture-learned man, that few of those high Rabbies that scorn to mend or make a shoe, could aptly or readily, from the holy scriptures, out go him. And however (through the oppressions upon some men's consciences even in life and death, and after death, in respect of burying, as yet unthought of and unremedied,) I say,