

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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{ WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

Where is Home?

Home's not merely four square walls,
Though with pictures hung and gilded;
Home is where affection calls,
Filled with shrines the heart hath builded.
Home!—go watch the faithful dove
Sailing 'neath the heaven above us—
Home is where there's one to love!
Home is where there's one to love us!

Home's not merely roof and room,
It needeth something to endear it;
Home is where the heart can bloom,
Where there's some kind lip to cheer it;
What is home with none to meet?
None to welcome, none to greet us?
Home is sweet, and only sweet,
Where there's one we love, to meet us!

Baptist History.

For the Christian Messenger.

A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

LETTER XLVII.

The Troublous Period.

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

Continued.

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

ABRAHAM CHEARE was not a scholar, but he was one of the working, suffering men of the seventeenth century, whom the Lord honoured and blessed. He was a native of Plymouth, and was a fuller by trade. Whether he had been a minister in one of the Pædobaptist denominations, or whether his preaching abilities shewed themselves immediately after his conversion, I am not able to decide. This only is recorded, that he was invited to the pastorate of the church at Plymouth in the same year in which he was baptized, viz. 1648. Though the Baptists in that town were "a poor despised people," they were respectably numerous, the invitation to Mr. Cheare being signed by one hundred and fifty members. It is probable that many of them resided in the neighbouring villages, and that Mr. Cheare had a somewhat extensive diocese. He was a diligent and faithful overseer. After thirteen years of peaceful labour, during which many souls were converted, and a good degree of religious prosperity was enjoyed by the church, Mr. Cheare entered on his course of sufferings. In 1661 he was confined for three months in Exeter jail, for "encouraging religious assemblies." Referring to this imprisonment, in a letter written some time afterwards, he says, "Some from our neighbouring parts are sent to the place of ancient experience [the prison], where they have a stock of prayers and presence to begin upon; they begin on straw, learning to endure hardness as good soldiers. The Lord make that word good to them which often hath been, in that place, sweet to me,—Exod. xxiii. 25., Eccles. iv. 14.

The act of Uniformity was the death-knell of christian freedom. Not only the ejected ministers, but all others who refused obedience were subjected to persecution. Mr. Cheare became again an occupant of Exeter jail, and lay there three years, "enduring great inhumanities from merciless jailors," yet enjoying the consolations of religion in an eminent degree. Writing to a friend, who had known something of persecution, he says,—“I received yours of the 11th of the seventh month, and in it a testimony of teaching and supporting grace and presence continued to you abroad, which he is pleased not to deny his poor worms here, in these holes of the earth, where violence hath thrust us as in so many slaughter-houses of men; but over-ruling grace makes them as the presence-chambers of the great King, where he brings and feasts his favourites with the best things, and proclaims among them, 'Thus shall it be done to them whom the King delights to honour.' This honour have not all, that yet are saints; much less have any this mercy, who either through the fear of the formality of their unconverted souls are enforced shamefully to put

off that profession which hypocritically they did put on in a day of seeming prosperity; not but these walls, as a draw-net, do enclose bad and good; but at length a discovery is made more manifest; he chooseth in this furnace of affliction, a week in a prison giving plainer discovery of a man's spirit than a month in a church."

He was released in 1660, and returned to his work, but had scarcely entered on it when his enemies obtained an order for his perpetual banishment. He was placed on the small island of St. Nicholas, whence he had a full view of his former abode, and doubtless often gazed on it with sadness. But he was not alone. Other christian friends shared his exile. Their discomfords were many; the military guard which was constantly in attendance prevented them from engaging in religious exercises; and Mr. Cheare had the additional trial of a severe fit of sickness, which lasted nine months, and "brought him to the brink of the grave. Yet, though "cast down," he was not "destroyed." Divine comforts sustained him, and the sympathy of his brethren on the mainland was practically shewn in contributions for his support. They were not long needed. Another fit of sickness came on, under which he rapidly sunk. At even-tide it was light. His dying experience afforded a beautiful illustration of the power of the gospel. It cheered those who watched around his bed, and the published record edified many. He exchanged exile for a heavenly home, March 5, 1668.

JOHN TOMBES, B.D., was an eminently learned man. His writings in defence of believer's baptism were numerous and weighty. Educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, he was appointed to the "Catechetical Lecture" in that Hall, on the death of his tutor, when he was but twenty-one years of age, and discharged the duty to the satisfaction of all concerned. About the year 1631 he obtained the living of Leominster in Herefordshire, where he preached and laboured ten years. His zeal for "a reformation in the church, and the purging out of all human inventions in the worship of God" exposed him to the fury of anti-reformers. When the king's forces occupied Leominster Mr. Tombes was driven out of the place, and most of his property plundered. After a short stay in Bristol he repaired to London, where he preached, first in Fenchurch Street, and afterwards in the Temple church. But he had been studying the subject of baptism several years. Doubts respecting the authority of infant baptism troubled him while he held the Lectureship at Oxford. He sought satisfaction with great earnestness and diligence. The scriptures were carefully examined; the best writings on both sides were read; and frequent conferences were held with learned ministers, for which there was ample opportunity at that time, as the Assembly of Divines was then sitting. But his scruples look faster hold of him, and at length he yielded to the conviction of the nullity of infant baptism. Dismissal from his situation in the Temple followed the publication of one of his works on the subject. He then retired into the country and became minister of Bewdley, Worcestershire. There, in 1646, he was baptized, and formed a Baptist church, to which he ministered separately, still retaining the charge of the parish; but the want of sympathy between him and the people occasioned his removal, and he returned to Leominster, at which place he closed his public ministry, soon after the Restoration. I have before stated that he was appointed one of the Triers, in Cromwell's time. The terms of uniformity were too hard for him. He withdrew into private life. "Having not long before married a rich widow at Salisbury, by whom he enjoyed a good estate, he resolved to live in rest and peace in his old age."—(Crosby, i. 290.) The latter end of his life was spent in communion with the Church of England, although he refused to accept any benefice or dignity, or to occupy any public position. With singular inconsistency, as it seems to me, he still wrote against infant baptism.

Mr. Tombes, wrote fourteen treatises on

baptism. The principal one was entitled, "Antipædobaptism, or a full review of the dispute about Infant Baptism."

FRANCIS BAMPFIELD, A.M., was one of the "excellent of the earth" in those days. He received his education at Wadham College, Oxford, where he spent upwards of seven years in the pursuit of knowledge. About the year 1639 he entered into the ministry of the Church of England. The celebrated Bishop Hall ordained him. Shortly afterwards he obtained a living in Dorsetshire, and a prebendal stall in Exeter cathedral. In 1655 he removed to Sherborne, where he laboured, as in his former location, with exemplary diligence, and was greatly endeared to the people of his charge.

But he had long been dissatisfied with the National Establishment. The corruptions and abuses inherited from Rome were not to be borne with. They could not, in his opinion, be classed among "things indifferent," for they struck at the authority of the Redeemer, as sole Head of the Church, and were totally inconsistent with the spirituality of his kingdom. The enactment of the Act of Uniformity, in 1662, brought Mr. Bampfield to a decision. He took leave of his flock, and commenced preaching as a Nonconformist.

In less than a month he was committed to prison, and there, too, he preached the gospel. His imprisonments were numerous. One of them lasted eight years. He was then an inmate of Dorchester jail, where he continued his ministerial efforts, and had the happiness of forming a church. He preached in jail almost every day. As soon as he was liberated he resumed his public work by itinerating in several counties. In March, 1676, he became pastor of a Sabbatarian Baptist church meeting in Pinner's Hall, London, which had been gathered by his instrumentality. In the record of the formation of the church it is stated that "the persons who then agreed to join together in church-communion, according to the order of the gospel, under the conduct of the said Mr. Francis Bampfield as their pastor, laid their church state upon the only sure foundation, and agreed to form and regulate it by the only certain rule and measure, expressing the nature and constitution of this church in the following terms:—'We own the Lord Jesus Christ to be the one and only Lord and Lawgiver to our souls and consciences; and we own the holy scriptures of truth, as the one and only rule of faith, worship, and life, according to which we are to judge in all cases.' Accordingly, these principles were subscribed by the pastor and divers brethren on behalf of the rest."—(Ivimey, i. 470.)

This was his last station. Here he met with the usual disturbances, the congregation being often broken up by the officers of mis-called justices. In Feb. 17, 1683, while he was preaching, a constable entered and interrupted him. "I have a warrant from the Lord Mayor to disturb your meeting," said the constable. "I have a warrant from Jesus Christ to go on," replied the preacher, and was proceeding with his discourse, when he was seized, and taken, with six of his brethren, to the Lord Mayor, who fined them ten pounds each. Nevertheless, they met again in the afternoon, but were compelled to separate, on which they retired to Mr. Bampfield's residence, where he finished the exercises of the day. That day week he was apprehended once more, and committed to Newgate. At the next Quarter Sessions he and several others were placed at the bar, and the oath of allegiance tendered to them. They declined taking it, because it was understood to comprise an obligation to conform to the Church of England, to which they could not bind themselves: whereupon the Recorder passed sentence to this effect—"That they were out of the protection of the king's majesty; that all their goods and chattels were forfeited; and that they were to remain in jail during their lives, or during the king's pleasure." It was not "the king's pleasure" to release them. Death in jail was a common thing during the reigns of Charles II. and James II. Mr. Bampfield died in Newgate, Feb.

16, 1684, being in the seventieth year of his age.

He was a learned man, and a hard student. The titles of two of his works seem to indicate that he had embraced the views which were afterwards more fully developed by Mr. Hutchinson, and are so often referred to in Parnhurst's Hebrew and Greek Lexicons. The one is—"All in One; All useful sciences and profitable arts in one book of *Jehovah-Elvim*, copied out, and commented upon in created Beings, comprehended and discovered in the fulness and perfection of scripture knowledge." 1677: Folio. The other—"The House of Wisdom. The House of the Sons of the Prophets: an House of exquisite inquiry, and of deep Research; where the mind of *Jehovah-Elvim* in the Holy Scriptures of Truth, in the original words and phrases, and their proper significancy, is diligently studied, faithfully compared, and aptly put together for the further promoting and higher advancement of scripture-knowledge, of all useful Arts, and profitable Sciences, in one Book of Books, the word of Christ, copied out, and commented upon in created Beings."—1681: Folio.

HENRY D'ANVERS is best known as an author, his "Treatise on Baptism" being regarded as the most learned and complete work which at that time had been published on the subject. The full title is—"A Treatise on Baptism; wherein that of believers and that of infants is examined by the Scriptures, with the history of both out of Antiquity; making it appear that Infants' Baptism was not practised for near four hundred years after Christ; with the fabulous Traditions and erroneous Grounds upon which it was, by the Pope's Canons (with Gossips, Chrysm, Exorcism, Baptizing of Bells, and other Popish Rites) founded. And that the famous Waldensian, and old British Churches, Lollards, and Wickliffians, and other Christians witnessed against it. With the History of Christianity among the ancient Britons and Waldensians." Mr. D'Anvers had been a colonel in the parliament army, and was some time governor of Strafford. While he held that office he became a Baptist. He was very strenuous for laying on of hands after baptism. He was reputed to be a fifty monarchy man, and it appears evident that he expected the personal reign of the Redeemer upon earth. In 1675 he was apprehended and committed to the Tower, probably on suspicion of treasonable practices, which Venner's insurrection had led the government to connect with fifth monarchy principles; but as no specific charge was brought against him he was released on bail. It is stated by Crosby that he was one of the elders of a Baptist church, near Aldgate, London. When he was chosen to that office, does not appear. In the reign of James II. he united with some others in consultations and plans relative to the Duke of Monmouth's enterprise, and was so far compromised thereby that he was compelled to flee to Holland, where he died in 1686. The high esteem in which he was held by the principal Baptists of that period is shewn by a "vindication" of his work referred to above, to which were appended the names (among others) of Hansard Knollys, William Kiffin, and Thomas Delaune. The Council of the Hansard Knollys' Society intended to republish the "Treatise on Baptism," competently edited by a learned antiquarian of our Denomination; but the inadequate support given to the Society prevented the execution of the design.

Mr. D'Anvers' complicity in the Monmouth rebellion will be differently judged of according to men's politics. That James II. was a tyrant and deserved expulsion, no one now doubts; but where the obligation to entire submission ceases, and the lawfulness of resistance begins, has not yet, I believe, been decided. We who have lived all our days in sunshine are but ill qualified to criticise the behaviour of those who endured the peltings of the storm.

I have read with intense interest the "Records" of the Baptist Church at Broadmead, Bristol. For those Records we are indebted to Mr. EDWARD TORRILL, who was for eighteen years a ruling elder of