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"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN PIETY."

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Poetry.

To the Sexton.

[The following lines appeared originally in the *Detroit Tribune*. Our readers will excuse the absence of correct orthography, and the imperfect poetic measure in view of the earnestness of the writer in a humane and noble cause. We hope all concerned in church-erection will read and profit. Its philosophy is admirable.—*N. Y. Independent*.]

A APPEAL FOR ARE TO THE SEXTANT OF THE OLD BRICK MEETINGHOUSE.

By A GASPER.

O sextant of the meetinghouse, which sweeps
And dusts, or is supposed too! and makes fiers,
And lites the glass, and sometimes leave a screw loose,
In which case it smells awful,—worse than lam-pile;
And wrings the Bel and toles it when men dyes
to the grief of surviving partners, and sweeps paths;
And for the servases gits \$100 per annum,
Which them that thinks deer, let em try it;
Gettin up befor star-lite in all wethers and
Kindlin fiers when the wether is as cold
As zero, and like as not green wood for kindlers;
I wouldnt be hired to do it for no some—
But o Sextant! there be 1 kermoddity
Wich's more than gold, wich doant cost nothin,
Worth more than anything exsep the Sole of Mann!
I mean power Are, sextant, i mean power Are!
O it is plenty out o dore, so plenty it doant no
What on airth to dew with itself, but fies about
Scaterin leavs and bloin of men's hats;
in short, its jest "free as are" out dore.
But o sextant, in our church its scarce as piety,
scarce as bank bills wen agents beg for mischuns,
Wich some say is purty often (taint nothin to me,
Wat I give aint nothin to nobody) but o sextant,
a shet 500 men, wimmen and children,
Speehally the latter, up in a tite place,
Some has bad brethes, none aint 2 swete,
Some is fevery, some is sorofilus, some has bad teath,
And some haint none, and some aint over clean;
But every 1 on em brethes in & out and out and in,
Say 50 times a minit, or a 1 million and a half brethes
an our,
Now how long will a church ful of are last at that rate,
I ask you, say 15 minits, and then wats to be did?
Why then they brethe it all over agin.
And thin again, and so on, till each has took it down,
At least 10 times, and let it up again, and wats more,
The same indivible dont have the privilage
of brethen his own are, and no ones else;
Each one must take whatever comes to him.
O sextant, doant you no our lungs is bellusses,
To blo the fier of life, and keep it from
going out; and how can bellusses blo without wind,
And aint wind are? I put it to your consens.
Are is the same to us as milk to babies,
Or water is to fish, or pendlums to clox—
Or roots and airbs unto an injun Doctor,
Or little pills unto an omeopath,
* * * * *
Are is for us to brethe,
Wat signifies who preches if i cant breathe?
Wats Pol? Wats Pollus? to sinners who are ded?
Ded for want of breth? why sextant when we dye
Its only coz we can brethe no more—thats all.
And now o sextant, let me beg of you
2 let a little are into our church.
(Pewer are is sartin proper for the pews)
And do it weak days and Sundayes tew—
It aint much trouble—only make a hole
And the are will cum in of itself;
(It laves to come in where it can get warm;)
And o how it will rounse the people up
And sperrit up the preacher.

Baptist History.

For the Christian Messenger.

A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A YOUNG CHRISTIAN.

LETTER LII.

The Troublous Period.

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

Continued.

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

"Bonds and imprisonment" awaited all Baptists in New England. They met for worship as they were able, and constantly testified against infant baptism, for which they were harassed by the courts without mercy. In 1665 they ventured to form themselves into a church at Charlestown, near Boston. This church was afterwards removed into the city, and considered the First Boston Church. Its early history was one long tale of vexation and annoyance, inflicted, there is too much reason to be-

lieve, at the instigation of the ministers. Thomas Gould, the founder of the church, was ordered, with two others, after a year's imprisonment, to "depart out of the jurisdiction." This occasioned the removal of the church, for some time, to Noddle's Island, in Boston Harbour.

The Congregational clergy, by whom the magistrates were instigated, were proof against all influence or entreaty. Nothing softened them. When a number of persons, some of them men of high standing in the colony, petitioned for lenity to the Baptists, they were fined for petitioning. A letter of remonstrance from England, signed by Dr. Goodwin, Dr. Owen, Philip Nye, John Caryl, and other eminent divines, failed to produce any effect. Even the king's interference was in vain. A royal letter, "requiring that liberty of conscience should be allowed to all Protestants," and that "no good subjects should be subjected to fines and forfeitures for not agreeing in the Congregational way," was disregarded. When the Baptists, encouraged by this interposition, repaired for worship to a meeting-house which they had built, its doors were nailed up, and they were forbidden to open them, "at their peril." But they insisted on their rights, pleaded the king's authority, and at length were allowed to meet in peace.

Thomas Gould was the first pastor of the Boston church. Isaac Hull succeeded him, with whom John Russell was for a short time associated. John Emblen, who was sent for to England, became co-pastor with Mr. Hull in 1684.

I have given you full particulars respecting the churches already mentioned, on account of the interesting circumstances connected with their early history. The remaining portion of American statistics for this period may be compressed into a small space.

A second church was formed at Newport in 1656, by twenty-one persons, who seceded from the first church on account of the use of psalmody, to which they objected—the "restraints on the liberty of prophesying"—particular redemption—and the indifference shewn by the church to the laying on of hands, a practice regarded as essential by the seceders.

In 1663, the church at Swansea, Massachusetts, was constituted, by John Miles, who had just come from Swansea, Wales, with some of his brethren. The place where they ultimately settled was called after that which they had left. Meetings of the Baptists had been held there for thirteen years before, but no church had been founded. The Massachusetts government tried to strangle the church in its infancy, and actually fined all the members five pounds each for worshipping God contrary to the order established in the colony; but at last they yielded, and the church lived.

Four additional churches were organised in Rhode Island during this period, viz:—North Kingston, 1665; Seventh Day Baptists, Newport, 1671; South Kingston, 1680; Dartmouth (afterwards removed to Tiverton), 1685.

A church was formed at Kittery, Maine, in 1682, but it died in its infancy. There were two churches in Pennsylvania:—Cold Spring, founded in 1684; Pennepack, in 1688. In the same year a church was established at Middletown, New Jersey.

In 1688, the Baptist denomination in North America comprised twelve churches only. Seven were in Rhode Island, two in Massachusetts, two in Pennsylvania, and one in New Jersey. Times have greatly changed since then! There are now upwards of twelve thousand churches! The "little one" has literally "become a thousand!"

A few biographical sketches remain to be furnished. I will begin with Roger Williams.

Very little is known of the early life of this great man. It is supposed that he was a native of Wales, and that he was born in the year 1599. Sir Edward Coke, as tradition states, observed his attention at church, where he was accustomed to take notes of the sermons, and liberally took charge of his education, thinking that he

would prove in future years an able lawyer. This was a providential interposition, for Williams's parents were poor, and had it not been for Sir Edward's generosity, he would have remained in humble life all his days. Having received a good classical education he "commenced the study of the law, at the desire and under the guidance of his generous patron, who would naturally wish to train his pupil to the honourable and useful profession which he himself adorned. The providence of God may be seen in thus leading the mind of Mr. Williams to that acquaintance with the principles of law and government, which qualified him for his duties as legislator of his little colony. But he probably soon found that the study of the law was not congenial with his taste. Theology possessed more attractions to a mind and heart like his. To this divine science he directed his attention, and received episcopal orders. It is stated that he assumed, while in England, the charge of a parish; that his preaching was highly esteemed, and his private character revered."—(Knowles's Memoir, p. 24.)

But Roger Williams's mind was not formed for such subjection as the Church of England requires of its members. He understood christian freedom too well to continue under the heavy yoke of an established church. Nor did he conceal his views. He had "presented his arguments from Scripture" to Messrs. Cotton and Hooker, who afterwards followed him to New England, "why he durst not join with them in the use of Common Prayer." Whether he was driven out by violence, or whether he voluntarily withdrew from the communion of the Church of England, cannot now be ascertained. This only is certain, that he left his native country, in search of evangelical liberty, and landed at Boston on the fifth of February, 1630-1.

He had been but a few weeks in the colony when he was invited by the church at Salem to become assistant to their minister, Mr. Skelton. He complied, and laboured there for a short time, when, in consequence of the opposition of the Boston people he left for Plymouth, and preached there two years. Returning to Salem, and gladly received by the church in that place, he remained with them till his banishment.

Mr. Williams had been disappointed by the aspect of affairs in England. He found that the colonists had set up a government of a theocratic kind; that none were admitted to the exercise of civil rights unless they were members of one of their churches; and that offences against religion were punishable by the magistrate. These things he abhorred, and he testified his dislike from the very commencement of his residence. There was much jangling and dispute, and no small amount of high-handed oppression on the part of the colonial authorities. At length, sentence of banishment was passed upon Williams. It was thus expressed:—

"Whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the church at Salem, hath broached and divulged divers new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates; as also writ letters of defamation, both of the magistrates and churches here, and that before any conviction, and yet maintaineth the same without any retraction; it is therefore ordered, that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks now next ensuing, which, if he neglect to perform, it shall be lawful for the Governor and two of the magistrates to send him to some place out of this jurisdiction, not to return any more without license from the Court."

Such were the "tender mercies" of the New England puritans of those days. They had resisted the magistrate at home by refusing to obey him in things ecclesiastical, and in consequence had gone into exile:—and now they banished their ministering brother for the very offence which they had themselves been guilty of. It seemed as if their boasted love of freedom was only a love of freedom for themselves, conjoined with the assumption of power to take it away from others.

This sentence was passed Nov. 3, 1635.

Six weeks were allowed Mr. Williams for his removal. But he could not be silent. Meetings were held at his house, where he discoursed in his usual manner, much to the annoyance of the magistrates, who concluded that the only way to stop him would be to ship him off for England in a vessel then lying in the harbour. He heard of their design, and prevented its execution by flight. In the month of January, 1635-6, he left his home, and for fourteen weeks wandered about, exposed to the rigours of the season, sometimes in an open boat, sometimes in the woods, "not knowing what bread or bed did mean." At last, he pitched his tent at Seekonk, where he purchased land from the Indians, and began to build and plant. Yet even there the spirit of persecution followed him. The place was supposed to be within the colony of Plymouth, and the magistrates of that town were afraid of those of Boston. So they requested him to go further off. Again he sallied forth on pilgrimage, accompanied by some of his friends who had joined him. "As they approached the little cove, near Tockwotten, now Indian Point, they were saluted by a company of Indians with the friendly interrogation, "What cheer?" a common English phrase which they had learned from the colonists. At this spot they probably went on shore, but they did not long remain there. They passed round Indian Point and Fox Point, and proceeded up the river on the west side of the peninsula, to a spot near the mouth of the Moshassuck river. Tradition reports that Mr. Williams landed near a spring which remains till this day. At this spot the settlement of Rhode Island commenced:—

"O call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod;
They have left unstained, what there they found,
Freedom to worship God."

"To the town here founded, Mr. Williams, with his habitual piety, and in grateful remembrance of God's merciful Providence to him in his distress," gave the name of PROVIDENCE."—(Knowles, p. 102.)

Three years after, as you have already learned, Mr. Williams avowed himself a Baptist, and assisted in forming a Baptist church, of which he was the first pastor. The noble principles he had so fearlessly inculcated were adopted by the new colony, and embodied in its constitution. The first settlers in Providence signed the following covenant:—"We, whose names are here under-written, being desirous to inhabit in the town of Providence, do promise to submit ourselves, in active or passive obedience, to all such orders or agreements, as shall be made for public good of the body, in an orderly way, by the major consent of the present inhabitants, masters of families, incorporated together into a township, and such others as they shall admit into the same, *only in civil things*." When the charter was obtained, a code of laws was prepared, of which these are the closing words:—"Otherwise than thus, what is herein forbidden, all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the name of his God. AND LET THE LAMBS OF THE MOST HIGH WALK, IN THIS COLONY, WITHOUT MOLESTATION, IN THE NAME OF JEHOVAH THEIR GOD, FOR EVER AND EVER." Right noble words!

Under the influence of the peculiar views which he had embraced, Mr. Williams did not resume his connection with the church when he returned from England, but lived apart. Yet his was no idle life. He preached the gospel among the scattered settlers. He promoted, in various ways, the temporal and spiritual welfare of the Indians. He was the adviser and friend of all the inhabitants. He took an active part in the government of the colony, of which he was repeatedly chosen President. In 1651, he visited England a second time on its behalf, and obtained a confirmation of the original charter. The uniform justice and kindness with which he treated the Indians so impressed them that when, on occasion of "King Philip's war," they attacked the colony, in 1676, and "Mr. Williams took his staff and went to meet them," endeavouring to dissuade them from their enterprise, on the ground that the