

was one communicant of the Church to every 353 of the population. To-day there is one to every ninety-eight. We thank God and take courage.

BISHOP GAILOR, Coadjutor of Tennessee, very properly declined the invitation to make the address of welcome to the American Congress of Liberal Religious Societies, at Nashville, Tenn., and in a strong and courteous letter he showed he was debarred by his convictions from taking any part in the gathering. After discussing the matter in detail, he concluded:—“My liberality is limited by a dogma, viz., ‘Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh to the Father but by Him,’ (St. John xiv., 6). With those who accept this dogma, be they of whatever name or variety of opinion, I am only too glad to co-operate, but I cannot, by word or act, encourage even the suggestion that there is any other way or any other name under heaven whereby we may be saved. This may appear to some to be narrow and illiberal and dogmatic, but to me it is a matter of life and death.”

A BIT OF HISTORY—PURITAN INTOLERANCE.



WE take from the S.P.C.K. *Mission Field* for October the following statements in regard to the vaunted tolerance and Christian spirit of the early Puritans. The *Mission Field* says:

“From the ‘Prince Society,’ of Boston, U. S. A., we have received two handsome volumes, which have recently been added to their valuable publications. The new volumes, which are by the Rev. E. F. Slafter, D.D., describe the life and work of a remarkable man in the last century, whom the Society was privileged to reckon among its New England missionaries, the Rev. John Checkley. For nearly a quarter of a century Mr. Checkley was the champion of the Church of England, and resisted religious persecutions by the Congregationalist Dissenters who were in power at Boston. He was born there in 1680, and died in Providence, Rhode Island (where, since 1739, he had been Rector of King’s Church), in 1754.

It is remarkable how intolerant, and even cruel, were the non-conformists of New England, who had left the old country to enjoy religious liberty, and set up religious tyranny to support their own views. Whipping, mutilation, banishment, and death had been meted out to those who held and proclaimed a faith differing from that of those in power in the Colonies. In Mr. Checkley’s days a change had come over the methods, although the same objects were pursued.

In 1689 the first place of worship for the Church was opened in Boston, whereupon the most learned Puritan divine in New England, the Rev. Cotton Mather, D.D., preached a sermon before the “General Court” of the Colony, in which he spoke of Episcopacy and the use of prescribed forms of prayer as things “which the Land of our Fathers’ Sepulchres has been defiled with,” and added, “Could I speak with a voice as loud as the Last Trumpet, I should not fear to tell you, the God of our Fathers will blast that worldly wisdom which counts it a conveniency for us to dissemble our non-conformity to whatever vain worship has nothing but the tradition of men to warrant it.”

It is from a position of such obloquy and from almost unanimous prejudice that the great Church of the United States has struggled and risen to its present strength in the hearts and consciences of men.

In 1719 Mr. Checkley published a translation of the Epistle of St. Ignatius to the Trallians, and in the same year a pamphlet on Election and Predestination, to which he appended a translation of St. Ignatius’ Epistle to the Mag-nesi-ans. These occasioned no little hostility in Boston, but in 1721 he issued with a reprint of an argument against Deists, “A Discourse about Episcopacy.” The Bostonians upon this took other measures. The Chief Justice, before whom he was tried, had, two years before, said that he was fully persuaded “that Episcopacy is that upon which the Fifth Vial (of the Apocalypse) is poured out; and he will have hard work that shall endeavor to control that Angel.” Mr. Checkley was ordered to pay a fine of £50 to enter into recognisances in the sum of £100, with two sureties of £50 each, and to pay the costs of the prosecution. This was in 1724. Even four years later we find the Church people harassed, imprisoned, and fined for going to church. It is a strange story. We may be thankful that such times, though not very remote, seem to us to belong to a far distant past.

It was after these contentions as a layman that John Checkley received Holy Orders in London from Bishop Gibson, who ordained him in 1738. The University of Oxford hastened to confer the degree of Master of Arts upon him, and the S.P.G. appointed him a missionary at Providence in Rhode Island, and provided a stipend for him. When the news reached Providence the hearts of the people were touched with gratitude and filled with joy. They transmitted a memorial of thanks to the Society in 1739, especially rejoicing in Mr. Checkley’s appointment “than whom no man was more desired.” Although sixty years old he travelled long distances to visit outlying places in his extensive parish.”