

Chained together as if they were felons, the venerable Peden among the number, these sixty holy men were made a spectacle throughout the streets of Edinburgh, were compelled to walk in this state to Leith, and there were placed on board ship for London, from thence to be conveyed to Virginia. Ruthless times were these, and heartless work was this; but God did not forsake the sufferers. Christ feels His children's trials as if they were His own, and is ever near them to do them good. As they were thus being publicly exposed, the eyes of many of them being ever and anon turned to Mr. Peden, to whom they durst not speak, 'the prophet,' at the risk of his life, shouted with a loud voice to his companions in bonds. 'Fear not, brethren, the ship is not yet built which will take us either to Virginia or any other plantation.' This prediction was received by a hoarse laugh by the jailors and guard who were conducting the prisoners to the quay, yet it went to the heart of those whom they commanded, and to the letter it was afterwards realized.

Scarcely had the vessel into which they were placed got into Leith Roads, when a report became prevalent, causing great uneasiness and alarm among the prisoners, that there were on board thumbkins and other instruments of torture, which were to be daily used to keep them in subordination. When this rumour reached Mr. Peden, he immediately went on deck, to assure his fellow passengers. He said, 'Brethren why are you so discouraged? You need not fear, there will be neither thumbkins nor bootkins used here. Lift up your hearts, for the day of your redemption draweth near. When we are at London we shall all be set at liberty.'

More than once the opportunity occurred when they might have seized the ship and escaped, but they would do nothing without Mr. Peden's advice. 'Let alone,' was his decisive reply to them, 'for the Lord will set us at liberty in a way more conducive to His own glory and our safety.' The voyage was a long one, there being scarcely a breath of wind for days. The master of the ship was now longing to reach his destination. At the close of a fortnight from the time they left Leith they landed at London. Only too glad to get rid of them, they were at once taken to the skipper who was to convey them to Virginia. They were represented to him as being a gang of thieves and robbers; but he being a good man and finding that they were Christians banished because of their love of truth, solemnly declared that no authority in the world would either induce or compel him to go to sea with them. In this state of things, when the one captain would not receive them and the other found it beyond his means to retain them, they were all set at liberty, as Mr. Peden had foretold.

What were they now to do to sustain themselves? An event like this could not occur without exciting considerable attention. Ascertaining who they were, the Nonconformists of London shewed them no little kindness. Mr. Peden was especially welcomed by the brethren. Among others, the Lord Shaftesbury of that day, happily represented by a no less noble Lord Shaftesbury of this day, who was always ready to assist the Presbyterians and do good to all good men, rejoiced in the opportunity of befriending 'the prophet.' Indeed, as the prisoners returned homeward, there was scarcely a town or a village through which they passed where they did not find some holy men and women, who, sympathizing with them in all their sufferings, and one with them to a large extent in their views, were not ready to succour them, and to bid them 'God speed on their way.'

For between four and five years Mr. Peden remained in England. His labours were numerous, both in the metropolis and throughout many of the counties. Concealed indeed from public announcement most of these services were, and all of them unostentatious; but that great day can only reveal how many souls he comforted, how many waverers he established in the faith, how many poor, perishing sinners he was instrumental in leading to 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.' No human calculation is capable of reckoning the extent of good which one holy man of God, accompanied by the Spirit of Divine grace, may accomplish, preaching as an evangelist, from place to place, even during a very short period.—*Peden the Prophet, by Dr Brown, Cheltenham.*