

"nourishing him up in the words of faith and of good doctrine." After a period of mental distress arising from the conviction of his sins and unworthiness, having found joy and peace through sermons preached by Daventry, Goodwin, and other ministers of that day, at the age of twenty-two he joined the Independent church under the care of Mr. J. Lathorp. This union, however, was not of long duration, for, having changed his views on the subject of baptism, he was dismissed to the Baptist church at Wapping, then under the pastoral care of Mr. J. Spilsbury. Like the former, this connexion was soon dissolved; for, by some means the controversy on communion was introduced to the church; and, after various discussions amicably conducted by the members, without any satisfactory results, Mr. Kiffin, with his brethren who approved of strict communion, withdrew and formed the church now assembling in Devonshire Square. Chosen pastor of this infant cause, he watched over it with fidelity and success more than fifty years, and till death removed him to a better world.

In the following extract from his own manuscript, the reader will learn how Kiffin obtained his wealth, which gave him considerable influence with monarchs, and statesmen, as well as in his own denomination:—"In the year 1643 I went to Holland with some small commodity which I found good profit by; but, coming home again, I was greatly pressed by the people with whom I was member to continue with them. This I complied with, and spent my time chiefly in studying the word of God; till, about the year 1645, seeing no way of subsistence, and that I was likely to be reduced to a very low condition in the world, I spoke to a young man, a member, about his going over to Holland. Though our united stock was very little, yet it pleased God to bless our endeavours, to increase it from scores to hundreds and thousands of pounds, giving me more of this world than I ever expected to enjoy."

This property made Kiffin known to the various Governments of his day, and excited the rapacious propensities of men who hated and oppressed the whole body of the Dissenters. The following curious anecdote deserves to be more generally known. Charles II., wanting money for the gratification of his lusts, condescended to ask Kiffin for the loan of £40,000; the good man apologized for not having so much at his command, but offered his majesty a present of £10,000; by which felicitous expedient the donor was accustomed to say he had saved £30,000.

The life of this excellent man abounded with heavy trials, and with remarkable interpositions of Providence. Malicious attempts were made by the creatures of Church and

State to implicate him in treasonable designs. False and perjured witnesses rose up against him; *forged letters*, full of treason, were sent to him by men who thirsted for his blood, or coveted his money—"they compassed him about like bees, but in the name of the Lord" he escaped them.

In the following language he gratefully records the goodness of God in his preservation—"I considered at this time that I had many enemies, and could not but expect hard treatment from men who envied my estate. But that God who hath given me occasion to trust in him ever since I lay upon my mother's breast, and had carried me along through many changes of my life, hath wonderfully wrought for me, and preserved me by his grace to this moment."

But the greatest trial in the life of Kiffin was the barbarous execution of his grandsons, Benjamin and William Hewling. Three thousand pounds were offered in vain for their lives. Nor is it surprising that the decree for their death was like the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not, when it is remembered that James II. was on the throne, and Jefferies on his *western campaign*. In common with hundreds of their countrymen of all ranks and of all religious denominations, the Hewlings had followed the standard of the Duke of Monmouth raised for the restoration of English liberty and the Protestant religion, which James and his adherents were attempting to destroy. For this attempt to secure the rights of conscience, and deliver the nation from thralldom, the Hewlings were executed, William at Lyme, Sept. 12, 1685, and Benjamin at Taunton, the 30th of the same month. Kiffin, then about seventy years of age, never recovered from this shock. The year following this tragical event, before the venerable servant of God had ended his days of mourning, he was summoned to court to wait upon the King, who told him he had put his name down as an alderman in the new charter. "Sire," replied Kiffin, "I am a very old man, and have withdrawn myself from all kind of business for some years past, and am incapable of doing any service in such an affair to your Majesty in the city. Besides, Sire," the old man went on, fixing his eyes stedfastly on the king, while the tears ran down his cheeks—"the death of my grandsons gave a wound to my heart which is still bleeding, and never will close but in the grave." The king was deeply struck by the manner, the freedom, and the spirit of this unexpected rebuke. A total silence ensued, while the galled countenance of James seemed to shrink from the horrid remembrance. In a minute or two, however, he recovered himself enough to say, "Mr. Kiffin, I shall find