

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

### CYPRUS AND THE "OLD DISCIPLE."

This island, which has again been brought prominently before the public by the treaty between England and Turkey, through the diplomacy of Lord Beaconsfield, has associated with it more than ordinary interest.

It is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean, and next to Sicily in importance. It is about 140 miles in length, and varies in breadth from fifty to five miles. From its numerous headlands and promontories, it was called *Kerastis*, or *the Horned*, and from its exuberant fertility, *Macaria*, or *the Blessed*. Its proximity to Asia Minor, Phœnicia and Egypt, and its numerous havens, made it a general rendezvous for merchants.

Cyprus was originally peopled by Phœnicia. Amasis I., King of Egypt, subdued the whole island. In the time of Herodotus the population consisted of Athenians, Arcadians, Phœnicians and Ethiopians. Under the Persians and Macedonians the whole island was divided into nine petty sovereignties. After the death of Alexander the Great it fell to the share of Ptolemy, the son of Lagos. It was brought under the Roman dominion by Cato. Under the Emperor Augustus it was at first an imperial province, and afterwards, with Gallia Narbonensis, made over to the Senate. When the empire was divided, it fell to the share of the Byzantine Emperors. Richard I., of England, conquered it in 1191, and gave it to Guy Lusignan, by whose family it was retained for nearly three centuries. In 1473 the republic of Venice obtained possession of it; but in 1571 it was taken by Selim II., and ever since has been under the dominion of the Turks. The majority of the population belong to the Greek Church, and the Archbishop resides at Leikosia.

There is little doubt that this island is referred to in such passages of the Old Testament as Ezek. xxvii. 6. The first notice of it in the New Testament is in Acts iv. 36, where it is spoken of as the native place of Barnabas. In Acts xi. 19, 20, it appears prominently in connection with the earliest spreading of Christianity, first as receiving an impulse among its Jewish population from the persecution which drove the disciples from Jerusalem, at the death of Stephen, and then as furnishing disciples who reached the Gospel to Gentiles at Antioch. Thus when Paul was sent with Barnabas from Antioch on his first missionary journey, Cyprus was the first scene of their labors (Acts xiii. 4-13). Again, when Paul and Barnabas separated and took different routes, the latter went to his native island, taking with him his relative Mark, who had also been there on the previous occasion (Acts xv. 39). Another Christian of Cyprus, Mnason, called "an old disciple," and, therefore, probably, an early convert, is mentioned (Acts xxi. 16). Mnason was one of the hosts of the apostle Paul. He was a Cyprian by birth, but an inhabitant of Jerusalem, like Josias and Barnabas. If we interpret strictly the phrase rendered "old disciple," we must suppose him to be one of the rapidly diminishing nucleus who, thirty years or more before, had seen Christ in the flesh, and had been drawn to Him by His own words.

"An old disciple!" How suggestive the words! The very fact of Mnason being thus designated, affords proof of the truth of the Christian religion. Had it been a system of imposture, it might have had its disciples, indeed, like many others of a recent date which have not failed to seduce the unwary; but it would have had no "old disciple." The imposture would have been detected and abandoned; but it is the glory of Christianity that its evidences are more deeply felt, and its importance more fully realized, as we draw nearer to an eternal world.

"An old disciple!" The life of such an one attests the reality of vital godliness, while it sheds a lustre upon the profession of the Gospel. If, when a man is told, in his first approach to Christ, that he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Him, encounter a host of enemies, maintain a perpetual warfare, relinquish the world, and abstain from fleshly lusts, how would he find sufficient fortitude and strength to sustain him amidst such a host of difficulties and trials, if he had no spiritual resources, no treasure in heaven, no communion with the Saviour?

"An old disciple!" Such a character is full of dignity and honor. "The hoary head is a crown of glory

if it be found in the way of righteousness." The aged saint who, like the skillful mariner, has conducted the vessel through a long and perilous voyage without making shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, is entitled to double honor, both for the success of his enterprise, and the rich and valuable cargo which he has brought from afar.

Behold the *beauty that may dwell in an obscure life!* There is nothing to be said about this old man of Cyprus but that he loved and followed Christ his days. And is not that record enough? It is a blessed thing to live forever in the world's memory, with only that one word attached to his name. What Mnason could do, he did. It was not his vocation to go into the regions beyond, like Paul; to guide the church, like James; to put his remembrances of his Master in a book, like Matthew; to die for Jesus, like Stephen. But he could open his house for Paul and his company, and so take his part in the work. The men in the rear, who guard the camp and keep the communications open, may deserve honors, and medals, and prize-money, as much as their comrades who led the charge that cut through the enemy's line and scattered their ranks. It does not matter so far as the real spiritual worth of the act is concerned what we do, but only why we do it. All deeds are the same which are done from the same motive and with the same devotion, and He who judges not by outward actions, but by the springs from which they come, will bracket together as equals, at last, many who were widely separated here in the form of their service and the apparent magnitude of their work.—*Presbyterian Journal*.

### THE REFORMATION AT GENEVA.—INCIDENTS OF ITS EARLY HISTORY.

One evening in the month of August, 1536, a diligence stopped at Geneva, and a young man of humble mein alighted from it with the intention of resting for a single night only, being on his way to Strasbourg. He was about twenty-seven years of age, slender and frail looking, with a pale face, thin black beard, and feeble but sweet voice. Although he looked somewhat singular and striking, to a casual observer there was nothing attractive about him, nor anything especially to command respect. However, young and sickly as he was, from conscientious notions he had relinquished a good curacy in France and had already gained renown from his learned studies. Recently he had given the Protestants great joy by addressing in their name, but omitting his own, an able and eloquent paper to the King of France, Francis I., in defence of their faith. Such were the characteristics of this man that no one could converse with him a long time without being astonished at his great knowledge, his clear and strong power of reasoning, his profound discourse and marvellous memory. If one undertook to resist him in argument he was soon reduced to silence and compelled in surprise to say, "Behold our master! Whatever he undertakes he will accomplish." But naturally timid, he little thought to seek notoriety, influence or authority. A recluse from taste and inclination, fond of study and repose, he desired only to labor tranquilly, leaving to others the ambition to excel in public debates, at sessions and in the pulpit. With him this was a pronounced taste and fixed purpose.

Now it happened that some one, having recognized this traveller, informed Farel of his arrival, and the latter, thanking God, hastened to him and conjured him to remain and assist him in his charge. The stranger haughtily refused, wishing to devote himself to his studies and repose; and he was inflexible to all supplications. Thinking of the work of the Lord, so pressing and at the same time so retarded, and seeing with indignation such a laborer refuse his aid, Farel, with a burning heart and eye of fire summoned him in a commanding tone not to harden himself against the voice of God. "You quit his work," said he, "to consult your ease and study in peace. Well, may your repose be accursed, and it will be, and your studies also, since these things separate you from Jesus Christ and his vineyard—you whom at this hour God calls by the words of my mouth." The stranger, filled with surprise, was constrained to believe that it was indeed the order of the Almighty that he thus heard, and as he afterwards related, "It seemed as though God from heaven had arrested me with a violent stroke of his hand." He obeyed, and settled in Geneva, consenting not yet to become a pastor, but to give instruction as a professor of theology, commencing his lessons in St. Peter's.

On the 5th of September following, the Secretary of the Common Council, after the session, made the following record:

"Master Wm. Farel has set forth that these lectures, which *this Frenchman* has commenced at St. Peter's, are necessary; he therefore begs that we advise his retention and provide for his support. Whereupon it is so ordered."

"This Frenchman" was John Calvin.

"Geneva then," continues our historian, "knew not his name; now there is no danger that it will ever be forgotten. In a short time he was the professor, the legislator, the guide and the glory of Geneva; the successor of Zwinglius in Switzerland, the equal of Luther in the world. The reformed of France, Italy, Holland, Scotland and Spain recognized him as their chief and called themselves Calvinists."

It would make my synopsis too long were I to give many of the incidents in the life of Calvin; and I may venture to hasten to a close, since the history of his time in Geneva is more familiar to the general reader, no doubt, than is that of the reformers who preceded him in that canton. Suffice it to say that he struggled continually, now against the priests and then against the liberals, who were opposed to restraint, either Catholic or Protestant, and there was no period for many years when there was not more or less of disorder in that city. Our historian frankly admits that Calvin was tyrannical and committed some great wrongs; but he excuses him in view of the times in which he lived and the evils and difficulties with which he had to contend. In 1538 the liberals got the upper hand, and by order of Council both Calvin and Farel, with Coraull their colleague, were banished. Calvin retired to Strasbourg, but in a few years was recalled and continued his work in Geneva until his death, on the 27th of May, 1564, at the age of fifty-five. Farel, twenty years his senior, followed him to the tomb eighteen months later. Viret labored many years at Lausanne, returning afterward to Geneva, whence he went to Montpellier, Lyons, and other cities to preach. Sometimes imprisoned, once murderously stabbed in the back by a priest, and once, as we have seen, nearly losing his life from poisoning, always on this account feeble in health, he died at Orthez in the sixtieth year of his age. Froment lived to a good old age, but several years before his death laid off his ministerial robes to engage in other pursuits.

Theodore de Beza, a fine scholar and of mild disposition, was Calvin's young friend and assistant in the latter part of his life, and continued his work in Geneva and France for forty-one years after Calvin's decease. These great reformers and their coadjutors of the Protestant faith were instrumental, under Divine Providence, in completely regenerating Geneva, and their influence is perpetual. Here, in this old city of Geneva, their names will never be forgotten; and so long as the cathedral of St. Peter's stands, it will be an object of the greatest interest to voyagers from all parts of the world, as one of the principal places of Protestant worship here from the time of the Reformation to the present day.—*Hon. Horatio King, in Christian at Work*.

### SILENT WORKERS.

In the realm of spiritual operations as well as in the natural, the silent forces are the most effective. Not by fire, earthquake, or tempest are seeds fertilized, plants nourished, or harvests matured. No man sees or hears the movements of that tide of life which is ever flowing through the animated world. The sunlight comes in noiseless waves, and the dew shapes its crystal spheres without a sound. The splendor of the morning and the glory of the sunset hour are produced without any conspicuous effort. Silent forces have prepared them all.

The history of the Christian Church is two-fold—external and internal. The one gives accounts of controversies, strifes, nay even tremendous and desolating wars incited by fanaticism, and carried on with semi-demoniac passions. It tells, too, of the achievements of mailed champions, and the superb benefactions of great leaders, aiming in their way to establish the kingdom of God. Their wrath has often eventuated in praise, and the pursuit of personal honor has been overruled for the advantage of the truth of the sacred Word. Still, it must be remembered that the internal history of the Church, though never to be fully written or read, contains, so far as it goes, an inventory of those forces which have wrought such