

WESTMINSTER THEOLOGY.

BY REV. THOMAS CROSSKEY, D.D.

(Continued from page 231.)

BUT when Calvinism, in the course of time, began to be modified in its structure, it was never so debased as Arminianism became, and its most serious modifications took place, not under Presbyterian, but non-Presbyterian influences. We ought to say Westminster theology rather than Calvinism, for Calvinism on the Continent had a less homogeneous, effective, and successful reign than it had among the Anglo-American peoples. Schaff says: "The Anglo-American race has retained the doctrinal substance of the old catholic and evangelical Christianity, while the Churches of the Continent have been shaken to the base by Rationalism." But the Calvinism of Great Britain never underwent much modification, at least under Presbyterian influences. Scotland has been, perhaps, the most homogeneous of all in its theology, as well as Wales. In England there was a difference in the Calvinism of Owen and Baxter, as well as in the ultra-Calvinism of John Gill and the moderate Calvinism of Andrew Fuller among Baptists. The Calvinism of Ridgley, the Independent, was of the Owen type, but soon made way for modifications among the divines of his denomination, which are represented, transitionally, by Doddridge and Watts of one period, Payne and Jenkin at a latter time, and such "moderate Calvinists" of our own day as Dr. Stoughton describes by that term. Calvinism has been reprinted in the Church of England in a variety of forms, but these have not been essentially much apart. There is no evidence for the statement of the Spectator that the Calvinism of the Low Church Evangelicals has undergone any modification within the last fifty years different from that which has breathed a warmer spirit into Calvinism everywhere else. In America, Calvinism underwent its most extensive modification in New England at the hand of the Independents. The great names here are Jonathan Edwards, Emmons, Bellamy, Smalley, Dwight, Hopkins and Woods. The revival of Calvinistic theology took place under Edwards, at the time of its decline on the Continent of Europe, and it took a slightly modified shape from his transcendent genius. Then Emmons, in an attempt to extricate Antinomianism, Arminianism and Universalism, tried to establish a new Calvinism, under a double tendency, involving at once an affiliation with the older Calvinism and with the subsequent forms of New England Divinity; but he only led to the reaction of the New Haven School, represented by Nathaniel Taylor, which, in its turn, prepared the way for Unitarianism. It was through the influence of the New England Independents that the Calvinism of the American Presbyterian Church was divided into two schools, but there is no evidence that new-schoolism had assumed an Arminian form. It was substantially the old familiar Arminianism of France, which by and by gave way to the Calvinism of the Westminster Standards, taken in their fair historic interpretation, and in due time brought about the reunion of the two schools in one General Assembly sixteen years ago.

But whatever may have been the modifications of Calvinism in Britain or America, it has, unlike other systems, riveted everywhere to its original type. So it has been especially in America. The union of 1869 could not have been accomplished on any other basis. This is all the more significant at a time when the new theology, represented by the *Andover Review*, shows a still wider departure on the part of the Independents from the old Calvinism of Dwight, Woods, and Griffin. In Scotland, Calvinism, in its modern revival, has undergone no change of structure, for the "Moderatism" of the last century did not attempt to modify it. It merely displaced it for the time. But if Calvinism disappeared by lapse in a certain section of the Church of Scotland, it was still vital among the Seceders. The same observation applies to Calvinism in the Irish and English Presbyterian Churches. It is now of the old Westminster type. It stands upon the old foundations. It speaks with a single voice to-day in both countries. It is possible there may be a visible relaxation of the old Calvinism in the Church of Scotland, as represented by the writers of *Scotch Sermons*, and by the influence of a few Broad Church divines, but we believe the Established Church to be sound as a whole, and there is nothing to justify us in believing that the other Churches have any sympathy with the broader tendencies of our time.

We must be permitted a few remarks in closing upon the question, How is it that Westminster theology has so visibly lost ground in modern times? Why is Calvinism repudiated in name even in quarters where its essential principles are recognized? Universally accepted in the sixteenth century by Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican, it is now practically confined to the Presbyterian Churches, to a considerable section of Baptists, but only to a fragmentary section of the Episcopalians and Independents, while it is utterly abortive to unevangelical bodies and to the whole literary class. One reason is to be found, we believe, in the strongly humanitarian tendency of modern thought as a whole. Man has become the supreme centre of interest rather than God, alike to science, philosophy, literature and theology. Agnosticism sees and knows nothing higher than man. Positivism believes in an ideal of glorified humanity, and its so-called religion is but a trick of devout nomenclature—a piece of the cast-off robes of Catholicism, in which it delights to array itself, to the astonishment of all sane minds. Science is properly limited in its researches to the interests of man in a large sense, and knows nothing of a spiritual order. Philosophy has become increasingly physiological. Biology is the new science of our day. But religion itself is now viewed by the Churches more from the standpoint of man than from the standpoint of God more from the consideration of what tends to man's benefit, to man's dignity, to man's place in the universe, than from a consideration of God's glory. In a word, it starts from man as the grand centre and judge of everything in heaven and earth, actual and possible, in relation to him. It says virtually, not that man exists for God's glory, but that God exists for man's sake. The first and last word of the Westminster theology is spoken in the well-known words "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." We see a difference in the structure of theologies. The Lutherans, who have either rejected or modified Calvinism, proceed upon the analytic method in theology, which begins with anthropology or the discussion of human wants, while Calvinists pursue the synthetic method, which begins with God. The growth of the mystical theology in our day has likewise had a distinctly humanitarian tendency, weakening the faith of men in Calvinism.

(To be continued.)

Our Story.

BARBARA STREET.

A FAMILY STORY OF TO-DAY. BY THE AUTHOR OF "OUR NEIL," "A PAILOER'S DAUGHTER," ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

BUT the idea, mere fancy though it was, recalled him to himself, and caused him to make a strenuous effort to throw off the species of enchantment that was stealing his senses from him. He raised his eyes boldly, and Grace, who was looking at him, had the instant reflection, "What singular eyes he has!" But she did not interpret further the bitterness which was concentrated in them at the moment, and which had caused her reflection.

"Yes," said Denston, "it is about your sister. You are aware that she is much with Georgina, my sister."

How cold a tone he employed! Grace did not feel herself drawn to him. She felt she did not understand him—so cold, so matter-of-fact was he now, when a moment ago he had appeared so moved. He was singular, contradictory, hard. She waited for more. He rose abruptly and stood on the hearthrug, looking down.

"It is a difficult and an unpleasant subject," he resumed. "You will think it a strange position for a brother to take, yet as I am the only person who can take it, it has appeared to me right that I should do so."

He hesitated again. He found it strangely difficult, now that he was here, to speak. He had promised himself to have it all said promptly, in the most forcible way, and to enlist Grace's most active sympathies and co-operation. He had looked forward as to a great pleasure to thus settling up relations between them, to forming a bond which most necessarily connect them with each other; but it was all turning to dust and ashes in his mouth; already he felt that the interview was a failure, that there was some intangible, impassable barrier between them. Grace was still silent; she was experiencing surprise, even to the extent of bewilderment. It was not of love, then, in any degree or form, that he was going to speak. She was relieved, but still anxious.

"Has it ever struck you," asked Denston at length, raising his eyes, "that your sister's intimacy with mine has been hurtful to her, or disadvantageous in any way?"

Grace breathed more freely, feeling that she had somehow got solid ground under her at last. She addressed him with her usual frankness.

"I will not say," she said, "that I have not wished matters otherwise. Hester makes an idol of your sister, and I have feared disappointment for her."

She was too loyal to say what might have been said with truth—that she believed Hester's relations with her own family had been injured by it.

"Well," said Denston, "at the risk of appearing in your eyes a treacherous brother, I must tell you how it has struck me. I have seen a great deal into matters since my illness, and I am convinced that my sister is making a slave of yours. She is taking advantage of your sister's attachment to her to make demands upon her which the girl herself is beginning to feel overstrained. My sister is not a woman to whose generosity it is safe to trust; she has had an unhappy experience, and it has made her as exacting as only the unhappy can be. Now, I thought you perhaps, if aware of the state of the case, might set things right by influencing your sister, and strengthening her to break through her habits of submission to my sister's will."

Grace was now listening with all her ears. Denston had warmed to his work, having now forgotten himself, and returned to his habitual concern for Hester's welfare.

"Oh," said Grace, after a pause, "how I wish Hester were not so reserved!"

"You consider her reserved? She has always appeared to me singularly incapable of hiding her feelings. My idea was that you had not had my opportunities of observing them; and she is, I was aware, too loyal and noble hearted voluntarily to expose my sister."

Grace was struck with amazement, which speedily turned to dismay, by this speech. Hester not reserved! Then was she only reserved at home, and expansive towards the rest of the world? Either it was so, or that towards this man she had not guarded herself—she had allowed him to break down the fence.

"Oh, Hester! Hester!" cried Grace, in her heart, with a yearning reproach.

She looked up at Mr. Denston, who, unconscious of the wound he had given, awaited a reply.

"I thank you very much indeed," she said, "for your frankness. I think it extremely good of you. You may be sure that I will do what I can, but I am afraid what I can do will be small."

"Do not say that," replied Denston, with a faint smile. "Your influence will be great if you believe in it."

Grace shook her head mournfully.

"Allow me to believe in it," continued Denston, "for mine has been ineffectual both with my sister and yours, and I am loth to give the matter up. Your sister should be a noble woman, but she will be only half-developed if Georgina continues to dominate her. There is a great deal of nobleness in the very exaggeration of her devotion. She needs only a little guiding. You will not, I hope, consider me presuming. I feel myself a lifetime older than she, and I have a certain sense of responsibility in the matter."

"Have you, then, spoken to Hester herself on the subject?" asked Grace, full of quickened anxiety.

"Yes," was all Denston's reply. He advanced to take leave. He had said all he intended to say, he had done what he could to effect his purpose; already Hester and her interests were fading from his mind. They had been as a talisman to keep off the turbulent emotions which had assailed him on his entrance there. With alarm he recognized the trouble returning to his spirits, which had in the course of the conversation become steadfast as usual. He could only feel, "I must go." Grace recognized the recurrence of emotion, and referred it to the more vivid image of Hester, which would be called up by her question. He was going. How little she knew of his feelings! He was leaving her in the midst of guess work. Better so, perhaps; yet oh, if she only knew! One remark she hazarded as she shook hands—

"Hester ought to be very grateful to you."

"Oh, no," said he, with a smile, but one full of embarrassment, as it seemed to Grace, "I am interested in her."

He was gone, and Grace was left to review the position.

As for Denston, he went to seek solitude, to face the commotion he had raised within himself, to abuse and condemn his weakness, to wrestle with the despair that for the first time threatened to master him, and finally to make a mighty resolve that he would never again place himself in the way of temptation. For Denston knew and practised, after all, some philosophy of the right kind. He knew that true strength lies in avoiding the temptation that threatens to overcome us, as true courage often lies in avoiding danger. In that hour he had proved himself a weaker man than he had held himself to be, but, though he despised himself, therefore we shall not despise him. We may even hope that the discovery of his weakness brought him nearer to the Divine strength which is withheld from the proud and given to the humble, and so was but a step upward in the course in which he had just set his feet. And we may even think more highly of the strength of will which brought him at once to the point of relinquishing those schemes of indulgence but so lately and so ardently conceived than we should have done of that which he had proposed to exercise in carrying them through triumphantly.

Grace, meanwhile, sat till the dusk gathered round her, and the clock striking eight recalled her to the facts that she had forgotten Kitty and that the others would soon be home. The interview had by no means removed her perplexities. It had gone, indeed, in the direction of confirming her fears, but it had not changed fear to certainty, and therefore had not removed the difficulties in the way of action. Mr. Denston's interest in Hester, the trouble he had taken for her sake, the sacrifice of brotherly loyalty that he had made, the emotion he had at some points betrayed, all pointed clearly to an attachment real and deep, but which, not having been confessed, must not be taken for granted. And Hester? Had she gathered anything of her feelings? It seemed only too significant an indication that her unapproachably reserved sister had so contradicted her character towards this man. This fact, added to the recollection of Hester's attitude during the discussion the other evening, brought something like conviction to her own mind; yet that Hester herself was conscious of her feelings seemed at least doubtful. In the face of these well-founded suppositions, which yet could not be treated as admitted facts, was there anything for her, Grace, to do? One thing was palpably clear, and had been ever since she reached home the other morning, and that was that Hester must be enlightened concerning her father, if with her mother's consent, so much the better, if not, then without it. She had also promised Mr. Denston that she would use her influence with Hester on the subject of her intimacy with his sister; that promise must be kept, though the subject was dwarfed to insignificance in her eyes by the side of the more momentous one of Hester's relations towards herself. Did that involve letting Hester know of Denston's interference in her case? Probably, and that again would perhaps involve the discovery to Hester of her own feelings. But that might be safer for her than ignorance. In such labyrinths of conjecture and reasoning did Grace's mind travel to and fro that evening. Before bed-time she had formed the resolve to speak to her sister that very night, and, with a beating heart, but a steadfast mind, she decided, without consulting her mother, to make demands upon her which the girl herself is beginning to feel overstrained. My sister is not a woman to whose generosity it is safe to trust; she has had an unhappy experience, and it has made her as exacting as only the unhappy can be. Now, I thought you perhaps, if aware of the state of the case, might set things right by influencing your sister, and strengthening her to break through her habits of submission to my sister's will."

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(To be continued.)

Sabbath School Work.

LESSON HELPS.

THIRD QUARTER.

GENTILES SEEKING JESUS.

LESSON VI., August 8th, John xii. 20-36; memo- rize verses 23-25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.—John xii. 32. TIME.—Tuesday, April 4, A.D. 30. Two days after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, probably in the Gentile court of the temple.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Matt. xxi. 12 to xxiii. 39; Mark xi. 12 to xii. 44, Luke xix. 45 to xxi. 4. INTRODUCTORY.—After the triumphal entry, our last lesson, Jesus returns to Bethany for the night. Monday morning he goes again to the temple, cleanses it from those who have desecrated it by merchandise, and again goes back to Bethany for the night. Tuesday morning he returns to the temple, and has a very busy day, in the midst of which occurs the lesson for to-day.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—20. *Greeks that came up to worship: proselytes, who adopted part of the Jewish religion.* 21. *See Jesus:* In a private interview, like Nicodemus, 23. *The hour that the Son of Man should be glorified:* by his death and resurrection. His crucifixion and atonement were necessary to his work of saving men, and causing the kingdom of heaven to come, which was his glory. 25. *He that loveth his life, etc.:* he that makes the things of this world first will lose them. 27. *What shall I say:* read the next sentence as a question. Shall I say *Father, save me from this hour?* the hour of his death agony. No, for his whole mission had been preparing for this hour. 28. *I have glorified it:* by all he had done for the Christ, in sending him to the earth, in the power of working miracles, etc. 31. *Now is the judgment of this world:* the hour that determines the conflict between good and evil, and by which evil is condemned to overthrow. 32. *Lifted from the earth:* on the cross. *Will draw all men:* attract all. His atonement on the cross is the attracting power by which the world will be drawn to God.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The intervening history.—The desire to see Jesus.—The hour of Christ's glorifying, etc.—Loving our life, and hating it.—Ver. 27.—The judgment of the world.—The attractions of the cross.—The objections of the people.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did Jesus go on Sunday evening after his triumphal entry? (Matt. xxi. 17.) What did he do the next day? (Mark xi. 12-19.) What did he do on Tuesday? When and where did the events of this lesson take place? SUBJECT: JESUS GLORIFIED.

I. BY THE ACCESSION OF GENTILES (vs. 20-22).—Who came to see Jesus? How far had they gone in the true religion? To whom did they apply? Could they not see Jesus anywhere without asking permission? What did they want? Was this the beginning of the calling of the Gentiles to Christ's kingdom?

Why did not Philip go direct to Jesus? Was the interview granted? Was what follows spoken to these Greeks or the disciples?

II. BY HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS (vs. 23-26).—What did Jesus say to them? What hour had come? How was Jesus glorified by his death on the cross? How had the people tried to glorify him? (See last lesson.) Could they understand how he could die on the cross and yet be glorified? (v. 34) By what illustration did he explain his meaning?

What is meant by "loving life" and "hating life" in v. 25? What would be the results of these two courses? What is it to follow Jesus? How will his followers be rewarded? What comforts and help in the fact that we shall be with Jesus? (Rom. viii. 17, John iii. 2.)

III. BY A VOICE FROM HEAVEN (vs. 27-30).—What troubled Jesus? What two prayers were suggested to him? Which one did he make his own? Why was this difficult? How were these words confirmed? How had God glorified Jesus? What opinions did the people have about this voice?

IV. BY THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE CROSS (vs. 31-36).—How had the judgment of the world come? What is meant by the "prince of this world" being cast out? What was it to "be lifted up"? What would be the effect? What is there in "Christ crucified" to draw men to him? What warning did Jesus give the people? How was it applicable to them? How to us?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. Every one should desire to see Jesus as he is, divine, holy, a saviour, a helper, the truth, ready to forgive, full of love.

II. This life must be subordinate to religion, and right, and duty, in order to make the most of life.

III. The way to serve Christ is to follow his example and his precepts.

IV. Even in the best of men there are severe conflicts of the soul.

V. The victory is in seeking first the kingdom and glory of the Father.

VI. "Christ crucified" attracts the whole world by the heroism, love, duty, danger of sin, forgiveness from God, hope of heaven, revealed by the cross.

VII. The power of the Church and of the teacher is in proportion to their experience and teaching of a crucified and risen Redeemer.

VIII. Now is the accepted time.

REVIEW EXERCISE.—(For the whole school in concert).—6. Who sought to see Jesus? Ans. Certain Greeks who had accepted the Jewish worship. 7. What did Jesus teach them? Ans. That he must die in order to attain his glory as the Saviour and King of the world. 8. How did he apply this to his disciples? (Repeat v. 25) 9. How were his sayings confirmed? Ans. By a voice from heaven. What did he say about the power of his cross? (Repeat v. 34).—Peloubet.

A GOOD EXAMPLE.—The Rev. James Pringle, for many years the Father of the Newcastle Presbytery, not only taught his people sound doctrine, but urged them to embody in their practice. A marriage breakfast over, he would "take the books," and at the close of the exercise say to the bride, "Now, it is your duty to place the family Bible and psalm-books upon the table, every morning and evening, and encourage your husband to imitate the example I have now set before him."