

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### CALVINISM TO THE RESCUE.

MR. EDITOR,—In the September number of the "Homiletic Monthly," the readers were treated to a sermon on "Swearing and Cursing," by Charles H. Hall, D.D., Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, which well deserves some public consideration. Speaking of cursing he says:—"I am sorry to find a striking example of what I mean in the Psalms of David, but the 109th of the Psalter certainly leaves common minds far in the rear in concentrated rage. There are some left in the Church, even in this late day, who try to find in it a sublimer inspiration, and while they abjure it for their private uses, do not incline to yield it as other than very holy in the lips of the original speaker. We leave it in common with the infirmities of patriarchs, and the usages of the Israelites in the matters of divorce, as things which God winked at because of their ignorance." This is but one instance of the shallow and profane Arminianism, which is stalking abroad throughout the land. Such teaching can only be classed with the multifarious attacks made upon the Scriptures, and if listened to would surely undermine the faith of believers.

1st. Dr. Hall mentioned divorce as one of the usages to be placed side by side with David's cursings. I suppose polygamy would be one of the infirmities of the patriarchs to be placed in the same list. All will acknowledge that, in some forms or other, the imprecations heaped upon the wicked are very numerous in the Psalms, will Dr. Hall please point us to one passage in all the Psalms where divorce or polygamy are recognized in the utterances of the inspired Psalmist? Such omission alone must throw an air of doubt, to any reflecting mind, upon the unwarranted hypothesis. That divorce and polygamy were infirmities of old, no one will doubt, and we are well pleased that the inspired historians have given us a true and faithful account of the lives of the patriarchs—not only their virtues, but also their infirmities and sins and the way in which those sins were punished. David's polygamy for instance was the bane of his life, and at the root of the sins and sorrows of his family. But the Psalms are not an inspired historical narrative, they are the outpourings of the representative of David's greater Son, and as such they stand or fall together; and if these towering mountains of imprecation and revenge towards the utterly impenitent fall, in their overthrow they must inevitably lay the whole fabric of Revelation in ruins.

2nd. The practice of divorce amongst the Jews was referred to by Christ, but only to be condemned by him, but how does it happen that in the New Testament the denunciations of the Old Testament are quoted with approval and as being a supreme authority? Take for example Rom. xi. 7-11, especially: "Let their table become a snare, and a trap," etc., etc. Paul sees the same condemnation of hardened sinners in his day, as David saw by revelation in his time. Notice again with what a wounded heart Paul in Acts xxviii. addressed the unbelieving Jews in Rome, quoting the terrible words of Isaiah in their hearing. No Christian to-day wants these fearful utterances for any personal use, but they do help him to understand the state of the world as it was, and still is; and without the light of which the recognition of these truths afford, it is impossible to understand the ways of the Lord and the method of His government, or to enter into harmony with His will and workings.

3rd. It is spiritual blindness in part at least, when good men fail or refuse to recognize by the light of Scripture a hardened impenitent race always present and always opposed to the truth. The race begins with Cain who was "of that wicked one." (1 John iii. 12) They spread out into the ungodly world who were drowned, and for whose judgment according to Jude, God sent ten thousand of his saints. Pharaoh appears as a notable example, and the Canaanites and other nations whose cup of iniquity was full. Who again but such are these men of Belial continually cropping out in the history of Israel always concocting or enacting some fresh villainy? Their character and doom are wonderfully portrayed in the Psalms, and we have here delineated the scorn with which they will be treated by all the saints, when they stand revealed before them in judgment. Isaiah and the prophets made frequent mention of those whose hearts were hardened, and whose eyes were closed, etc. Ac-

cording to Christ, Judas was a devil, and he designates certain Jews who were of their father the devil. (John viii. 44.) Paul discovered a child of the devil. (Acts xiii. 10.) In fact the tares which are the children of the wicked one are ever in the field. (Matt. xiii. 38) There is a race all through the epistles and in Rev. xii. 15, who are "without," not in the Church or the heavenly Jerusalem, "dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, and murderers," etc. But in a short article one cannot hope to notice all the references to a truth which is so thoroughly imbedded in the whole Scriptures. Such is the actual state of the case according to God's Word, and we may or may not enquire into the causes at work behind the facts. There is no doubt but all such hardened sinners will be held responsible for their own wretched state of guilt and unbelief. That the blood of Christ is sufficient for their sin, no one doubts; but that Christ even intended to make these monuments of His mercy, no one will allow. They are not only tolerated but treated with infinite compassion all their days both by Christ and His people.

4th. We are to understand that all the appliances of the Gospel will never reach or save this wicked seed, whom as yet we know not. The Gospel is to be sincerely and urgently offered them, even as to others, but recognizing their presence in the world, the saints who are the bearers of Divine mercy to men, sanction and consent to the penalties of civil government. This view gives the only scriptural and stable foundation for civil government. The Arminian who believes all men to be salvageable by the appliances he possesses should in all consistency use only moral efforts. The arm of the civil law represents God's justice directed not against the erring saints, but against the hardened criminal, to restrain him or to cut him off if necessary from the face of the earth. Paul says "He is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Such is the civil magistrate and his function, and therein we still have an exhibition of David's spirit in his imprecatory Psalms. David was head both of Church and State, and so could sing both of mercy and judgment. These functions are now divided, and while it is left for the Church to proclaim mercy, it is equally the place of the State to proclaim judgment.

5th. It is nothing new for Presbyterians to be told that the Psalms of David are Messianic, and if some of these Psalms enable us to see the Judge upon His throne, and to understand the privileges of His judgment even as carried out in this life, should we not greatly rejoice in the messages he has given.

Bristol, Que.

M. H. S.

### THE ELDERSHIP.

MR. EDITOR,—In the article which appeared in your columns lately reviewing Principal MacVicar's opening lecture in the Montreal College, there occurs the following remark:—"What we need is an efficient body of ruling elders; and if we cannot get men competent to rule, how can we get men competent to both rule and teach?" If the writer means exactly what he says, then he arraigns, at least by implication, the whole body of ruling elders in our Church on the ground of incompetency and inefficiency. Surely this is a very bold and sweeping charge. Even if we suppose him to be speaking only in general terms his language, though not that of direct assertion, is quite unjustifiable and insulting to those of whom he treats. That in a body of church officers numbering so many hundreds a considerable number should be found who are incompetent and inefficient is perhaps not wonderful. Are there no incompetent and inefficient ministers in the Church? And yet who would bring a railing accusation against the whole ministry as a body? It may safely be affirmed that, after all necessary deductions are made, the elders of our Church are a body of men of whose spiritual, moral, and intellectual attainments we have no just right to be ashamed.

Were some of the sister churches in possession of such an agency, we can fancy that, instead of hedging them around with ecclesiastical limitations, they would eagerly engage them in the service of the church, both in working and speaking for the Master. To stigmatize the elders as being generally incompetent and inefficient, is an unwise and unworthy reflection not only on the elders, but also on the membership of the church by whom they were carefully and deliberately chosen for those very qualities of which they are here alleged to be destitute. Some of our ministers, and those not the least able and successful in their sacred calling, do

not find the great difficulty of "Presbyter" in getting their elders to do their "legitimate work." In point of fact, it will usually be found that when a minister puts himself into right relations with the elders, and faithfully endeavours to engage them in useful service, his difficulties will be found to vanish. But if, as is sometimes the case, he pursues a different course, and either practically ignores or antagonizes them, is it any wonder if he finds himself isolated and in difficulties? "But," says "Presbyter," "instead of doing their legitimate work, they are exhorted to preach." No one, I presume, contends for the position that all our ruling elders should preach, not even that they are all, or a majority of them competent to do so. Many, however, do contend against the unscriptural assumption that they may never, under any circumstances, perform the office of a public teacher in the Church; an assumption at variance not only with Scripture but with at least the occasional practice of our own Church. Leaving the charge of incompetency and inefficiency, and the fear of encroachment in the matter of preaching, let me advert for a moment to the neglect and unwillingness of elders to perform their "legitimate work." And here it may be freely and regretfully admitted, and by none more so than by elders themselves, there is too much ground for complaint. Would that it were otherwise. Not all the blame, however, should rest at the door of the eldership. Much of it is owing to the perplexing uncertainty and contradiction of the Church's teaching as to the position and privileges of the elders, and the duties expected of them. Some authorities tell us that teaching and ruling elders are both presbyters, having different duties but the same office. Others deny this and assert that there is only one class of elders, that of the teaching elders or ministers, relegating the ruling elders to the position of mere lay delegates in the Church courts, and of an inferior order even in their own department. Several years ago, the question was raised in your columns:—"What is the elder's position in the Church? Is he a spiritual office bearer, or only a lay representative?" Surely it would tend greatly to the Church's interests and advancement to have this vexed question more clearly and more definitely answered. Hitherto we have had only conflicting opinions, or timid evasions of the difficulties connected with the subject. But it is a question which will have to be fairly met and understood in some way or other in the near future. It is one which has obtained a good deal of attention lately in other branches of the Presbyterian Church, and was thought not unworthy a place in the deliberations of the General Council in 1880. VINDEX.

### CONVERTED PRIEST'S HOME.

MR. EDITOR,—Please accept the assurance of my gratitude for the insertion of my recantation in the columns of your interesting journal, and allow me to address a few words to your readers on the Converted Priest's Home inaugurated by Mr. Chiniquy here. As it is my privilege to have been an inmate for more than three months of that institution I think it is my duty to say a word concerning it.

Who is so blind to-day, as to ignore the superhuman, and alas too successful efforts of Rome to repair in England and the United States the losses she has suffered in France and Italy? She has more than doubled her numbers and influence in Great Britain and in this Republic these last thirty years. Her progress is so rapid, that she boasts she will rule it very soon. Here are the words of one of her most remarkable priests, Father Hecker, himself a convert from Protestantism: "If the Catholic Church shall increase for the next thirty years, as it has for the thirty years past, in 1900 Rome will have a majority and be bound to take this country and keep it. There is, ere long, to be a State religion in this country, and that State religion is to be Roman Catholic." To this prophesy which comes from Rome, the present Archbishop of St. Louis adds: "If Catholics ever gain an immense majority in this country, religious freedom is at an end. So our enemies say; so we believe."

It is then evident that there is a dark cloud on the horizon for this American Continent. There are tears, blood, and desolation, for there is a civil war in that cloud. The Protestants, though in the minority, will not see their dearly bought liberties trampled under the foot of the Pope without a desperate struggle. But there is a very easy and simple way to prevent that storm. It is to convert the Roman Catholics, and