

doctrine of the Atonement as held in this system of theology, there cluster doctrines about law, about justice, about sin, about demerit, about the judgment to come, about heaven, about hell, that educates conscience and constitutes thereby the very best foundation on which to build a brave, serious, God-fearing, sin-hating, law-abiding nation. This was the theology which, although not so well defined in its terms as afterwards carried the martyr Church of the first centuries through its fight with imperial Rome. This was the theology that sustained Athanasias against the world, and Augustine against the Pelagians. This was the theology that awoke Europe against Papal Rome. This was the theology of the men that laid the foundation of liberty in England and of the Republic in America. The Popish countries that refused this doctrine and its corresponding doctrine—that of justification—have gone on towards anarchy and ruin as old Rome did; and the Protestant countries that by a true theology have kept in the breast of the people a “good conscience” have gone forward, and will go forward, to higher heights, unless they cast out the old theology, and with it inevitably, the good conscience, with its love of truth, its hatred of lies, and its wholesome fear of hell.

This subject of conscience we cannot better conclude than by asking our readers, before going further, to pray with us in the language of one of the old Puritan divines:—

“Thou, O Lord, that hast wonderfully planted and formed our conscience within us; that only knowest and searchest our consciences; that hast Thy chair in the heavens, and alone art able to teach our consciences and purify them; Thou which woundest and healest three thousand at one sermon; whose hand is not shortened; stretch out Thine arm and do the like in these latter times. Forgive the sins against Thee and our consciences, and the frequent checks of it and Thy Spirit. Overthrow the man of sin, that tyrant and usurper of conscience. Mollify and enlighten the obstinate consciences of Jews, Turks and Pagans. Illuminate and sanctify all Christian princes and princesses, especially our sovereign, and fill the royal treasure of her conscience full of excellent comfort; and that she may excel in conscience all other sovereigns of the earth, as she does in greatness without all comparison. Comfort the afflicted conscience, direct the doubtful and scrupulous, and remove all snares and scandals of weak consciences, which Thou hast not planted, and which Thou knowest are not for the peace of Thy Zion.”

### Living Branches.

#### THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. ROBERT SCOTT, Plympton, Canada.

Matt. 18; 1—“Who is the Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?”

How often in human life does the question here put to the Saviour, recur. There is a desire, more or less pronounced, in the breast of everyone who has any faith in God and hope of eternal life, to know not only that in that future there will be differences in res-

pect of rank and character, as there are, though measured by a very different standard, here. Nor are we prepared to say that the desire is wrong, though, in not a few cases, it may be vague as well as vain.

And it will be observed that the Saviour, in His reply, does not rebuke the disciples for entertaining such thoughts. He is prepared to answer their question; and He begins by first disabusing their minds of wrong im-