

The question then returns, Who will make up the hedge, or stand in the gap? Shall the God of the church seek for those who are willing to take up the cross, and find none—none who will come forward to the work, who will turn away from the counsels of flesh and blood, who will lend no ear to the misgivings of timid friends, on the one hand, or the sneers of boastful antagonists on the other, but, in the heroism of faith, and after the example of queen Esther, resolve, We will stand in the gap, and if we perish we perish?

I am sensible that my share in this work is well nigh finished. I have endeavoured, in my poor and imperfect way, to stand by the truth of God, in evil as well as in good report; and I have never been sorry that such has been my aim. But my day of labour is far spent, the night is at hand, in which I can no longer work. All I can do is to leave testimony to the truth of the gospel as I understand it, which I do to this day. And I would say to my younger brethren, and all the friends of Christ and his cause, who feel and lament the errors and delusions of the day, God will surely visit you, bring you out of this house of bondage. "Trust in the Lord for ever." "The word of the Lord endureth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."—*From Sermon by a New England Pastor.*

#### THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—ITS POSITION AND ITS PROSPECTS.

On the 2nd of May, 1559, John Knox, who for some time before had been an exile from his native country, arrived at Leith, and commenced that work of Reformation in Scotland which has rendered his name immortal. Protestantism had previously made some progress in North Britain; but it would now have been crushed in the iron grasp of despotism, had not the appearance of its most intrepid and eloquent advocate inspired its adherents with fresh courage. The announcement—"John Knox is come," was the death-knell of Popery, and the 2nd of May, 1559, may be regarded as the birth-day of Scottish Presbyterianism.

The date of the present number of the *Missionary Herald* reminds us that we have reached the tri-centenary year of this glorious period. What is its actual position throughout the world? What are its prospects? We shall now endeavour very briefly to answer these inquiries.

Three hundred years ago Presbyterianism was barely known in Christendom. It was to be found, indeed among the Waldenses, in some small States of Switzerland and in a few other places of little note. Elsewhere it had no existence. But it had one theologian of peerless excellence; for the great Calvin was still living, and scattering his expositions of the faith and polity of the Apostolic Church all over Europe. Knox, Beza, and others of scarcely less note, were his zealous coadjutors, and the fruits of their labours soon became apparent. Their doctrine spread extensively in France; it made much progress in Germany; it penetrated to Hungary, and it established its ascendancy in Scotland and the Low Countries. In the succeeding century it acquired a footing in Ireland, and passed into North America. It has since found its way to South Africa, to India and to Australia.

The Presbyterian Church can claim the high distinction of having entered the Missionary field much earlier than any other Protestant denomination. In 1559, when Calvin was yet alive, and when Popery still maintained its ascendancy in Scotland, fourteen Missionaries were sent from Geneva to the heathens of America. It is well known that the attention of the Westminster Assembly was directed to this subject, and in their "Directory for the

Public Worship of God," the minister, before sermon, is instructed to pray for "the propagation of the Gospel and kingdom of Christ to all nations, for the conversion of the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles." About the same time the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" was established. Episcopalians have since obtained the sole management of this institution, but it owes its existence to Richard Baxter and others of similar principles. One of the holiest men that ever lived, and one of the most successful of modern Missionaries, was a Presbyterian minister, who laboured in that part of the world where the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts first commenced its operations.

The Rev. David Brainerd, whose memory will ever be cherished by all who love the truth, was ordained by the Presbytery of New York on the 11th of June, 1744, as a Missionary to the American Indians.

In the sixteenth century England was the only first-rate power which embraced the Reformation, and as it retained the ancient ecclesiastical regimen, Protestant Episcopacy thus obtained an influence which it could not have otherwise acquired. But the experience of the last three hundred years has not been favourable to the system of government by bishops and archbishops. In Sweden and Denmark, where it exists, religion is all but dead and the few men of zeal and piety who have recently appeared there are sighing for another Reformation. In England the national creed is largely leavened with the theology of Geneva, and the Calvinism which pervades the Thirty Nine Articles is the salt which has preserved the Establishment from utter corruption.

Congregationalism, a form of church government which has sprung up since the Reformation, appears to have had its day; at present it exhibits, almost everywhere, indications of decay.

Our Church was never more hearty, more vigorous or more hopeful than in this present year of 1859. Though divided into so many sections, it exhibits, to a greater extent than any other denomination, the realities of catholic unity. The various shades of Presbyterianism are much like the various shades of colour which sometimes distinguish the leaves of the same green and flourishing fruit-tree. Thus, the Established Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and other bodies in North Britain, all profess adherence to the same Westminster formularies. They are one in faith and worship, and they differ merely in some matters of ecclesiastical arrangement.

So it is with Presbyterianism in Ireland, in England, in Australia, in Canada, and to a great extent, in the United States. Presbyterianism of late has experienced a wonderful revival. In those places where heresy has been eating into its vitals, it has been shaking off the disease. Symptoms of a disposition to return to the sterling doctrine of the Synod of Dort are beginning to appear in Holland; the Established Church of Geneva is silently renouncing Unitarianism; and on the part of not a few ministers of the New School in the United States, there is said to be an inclination to adhere more firmly to the Westminster Confession. Nor is this all. The various parts of the Presbyterian Church in some countries like the bones in the valley of vision, are preparing to come together, "bone to his bone."

So it is in England, in Scotland, in Canada in the United States, and in Australia. When the Presbyterian churches all unite, and "stand up upon their feet," they will form "an exceeding great army."

One hundred years ago Presbyterianism had in considerable influence. In Ireland it was

little more than tolerated, and no one could discover from the newspapers of the period that it had any church courts.

Now the proceedings of its Assembly, its Synods, and sometimes of its Presbyteries, are prominently noticed in the public journals. For the first time in its history, it has now a college in Ireland, and in North America its educational institutions are better equipped than those of any denomination. The Theological Seminary of Princeton is, perhaps, the highest and purest school of the theology in the world. Presbyterians constitute the most influential section of the population in the Great American Republic—now the second greatest Protestant power in Christendom.

Prussia is rapidly rising in importance among the States of Europe, and some of the most sagacious and able ministers of its Church, wearied of their present mongrel system of ecclesiastical polity, are earnestly demanding the establishment of purer Presbyterianism.

Recently the Waldenses have been advanced to the rank of other citizens in the kingdom of Sardinia, and have commenced to scatter over Italy the seeds of Eternal Truth.

The motto, of the first Presbyterian minister who settled in Ireland after the Reformation was, "Do well—Doubt not." If Presbyterians act up to the noble principle embodied in these words, their Church must continue to spread until it has covered the whole earth. Let them "expect great things," and "attempt great things," and let them never forget that the holy and devoted lives of those attached to its communion must form, after all, the most substantial argument in favour of Presbyterianism. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—*Irish Pres Herald.*

#### DR. VANRENSSELAER AND AMERICAN SLAVERY.

For some time there has been a discussion in the *Presbyterian Magazine* between Rev. Dr. Vanrensselaer and Rev. Dr. Armstrong.

Rev. Dr. Vanrensselaer, in his late rejoinder to Dr. Armstrong, enumerates the following popular errors in regard to Slavery:

It is a mistake to suppose that the Slaves have not a natural desire for freedom, however erroneous may be their views of freedom. There are certain natural impulses which belong to man by the constitution of his being. No slavery can quench the aspirations for liberty. It is allied to his hope of immortality—it is the ethereal part of his nature which oppression cannot reach. It is a torch lit up in his soul by the hand of the Deity, and never meant to be extinguished by the hand of man.

It is a mistake to suppose that slaves possess no natural rights. Your remarks that slavery secures to the slaves the right to labor in a better way "than it is secured to a more elevated race of labourers in Europe, under any of the systems which prevail among the civilized nations of the Old World," will hardly be received by autocrats and despots as a plea for reviving slavery on the continent. Indeed, the new Emperor, Alexander, of Russia, is engaged at this very time, in the very great work of doing homage to Christian Civilization by emancipating all the serfs of the empire.

Another error consists in regarding the Africans as an inferior race, fit only to be slaves. Infidelity, as you are aware, has been active at the South in inducing the belief that the negro belongs to an inferior race, if not a distinct one. This doctrine is the only foundation of perpetual slavery. It is alike hostile to emancipation, and injurious to all efforts to elevate the negro to his true position, as a fellow-man