

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

EXPIRING CALVINISM.

While Alexander was ravaging the East rumor after rumor reached Athens that the great conqueror was dead. And the arrival of each rumor was followed by an enthusiastic outburst of popular joy. And now and then rumors go abroad that Calvinism is dead, and the exultation of certain people is hardly less enthusiastic than was that of the Athenians of old. The latter, however, had good reason to wish the wild Macedonian marauder under the sod, but what Christian of whatever name can give a good reason for the wish that Calvinism sink into the grave?

Calvinism does not lack eulogists even among indifferentists, even among opponents. Mr. Froude asks, as with a puzzled air, "How it came to pass, that if Calvinism is, indeed, the hard and unreasonable creed which modern enlightenment declares it to be, it has possessed such singular attractions for some of the greatest men that ever lived, and how, being as we are told, fatal to morality, the first symptom of its operation has been to make the moral law the rules of life for States as well as persons? If it be a creed of intellectual servitude, how was it able to inspire and sustain the bravest efforts ever made by man to break the yoke of unjust authority? When all else has failed; when patriotism has covered its face, and human courage has broken down; when intellect has yielded with a smile or a sigh, content to philosophize in the closet, and abroad worship with the vulgar; when emotion, and sentiment, and tender, imaginative piety have become the handmaids of superstition, and have dreamt themselves into forgetfulness that there was any difference between lies and truth, the slavish form of belief, called Calvinism, has borne ever an inflexible front to illusion and mendacity, and has preferred rather to be ground to powder, like flint, than to bend before violence, or melt under enervating temptation."

Mr. Bancroft writes: "We boast of our common schools? Calvin was the father of popular education, the inventor of free schools. We are proud of the free States that fringe the Atlantic. The Pilgrims of Plymouth were Calvinists, the ships from Holland that brought the first colonists to Manhattan were filled with Calvinists. He that will not honor the memory, and respect the influence of Calvin, knows little of the origin of American liberty."

The Rev. Dr. Curry, an able and fair-minded leader in the Methodist Church, has written of the Westminster Confession that it "is the clearest and most comprehensive system of doctrine ever formed. It is not only a wonderful monument of the intellectual greatness of its framers, but also a comprehensive embodiment of nearly all the precious truths of the Gospel." "We concede to the Calvinistic churches the honor of having all along directed the best religious thinking of the country." "Some of the best fruits of the Christian life, and the noblest specimens of the Christian character, have been exhibited among those who have been, at least in theory, Calvinists."

Time was when more than one-half of France was Protestant, and those Protestants were Calvinistic Presbyterians. And these were the men that constituted the life-blood of French virtue. They were those who fought the great fight with Catharine de Medici and the Guises. Time was when the Netherlands were overrun by hordes of Spanish invaders, who, in the name of the Pope of Rome, were bent upon setting up the Inquisition, and binding hand and foot every champion of true religion and free thought. And the Dutch heroes who made sacrifices, and displayed a heroism rarely equalled and never surpassed, even breaking down the dykes, and calling in the inundating ocean to their aid, were, to a man, Calvinistic Presbyterians. Time was when Charles, Wentworth, and Laud had Ireland under the heel of despotism, and England bound hand and foot, Church and State, and lying helpless before the throne, and were directing all the energies of the realm to the subjugation of Scotland. And they who, not only successfully breast this invasion, but rolled back the tide, and raised a spirit that took off the heads of all three of those tyrants, and saved constitutional liberty for the world, were, to a man, Calvinistic Presbyterians. Why in the world, then, should any man, who loves his kind, wish the death of Calvinism?

In fact, however, there are more Calvinists in the

world to-day than ever before. Late statistics show that of the one hundred and seven millions of orthodox Protestants in the world more than thirty-four millions are Presbyterians. It is, indeed, said that among the Presbyterians there is a large leaven of non-Calvinistic view. But as this leaven is an unknown quantity, each one is at liberty to see it in such bulk as may suit his fancy. However, if there be any dilution of the Calvinism of the Southern Presbyterian Church, it has escaped our ken. As to our own church, it is certain that whenever an erratic brother comes well into view, he soon finds it convenient to repent of his errors, or withdraw to more congenial associations. Of the orthodox steadfastness of the other Presbyterian bodies in our country not so much as a whisper is heard. The same is true of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and also of that of England. How far Rationalism has penetrated into the heart of old Scotland we shall know one of these days. The ruling elders are moving, and when Scotch ruling elders set about a work, that work is very likely to be done. If there is defection in the ministry there, it will have to show itself in clear colors, and when it thus appears we shall learn whether the sons of those who could deal so grandly with the Marys, and Jameses, and Mortons, and in later days with Moderatism, have degenerated. Besides, the great Baptist Church in this country and abroad is, for the most part, soundly Calvinistic.

Inquiring at our Board of Publication as to quantity and quality of the literature our church furnishes to the people, we learned that last year we put three hundred thousand volumes into circulation, and with these volumes we sent out four and a-half millions of pages of tracts; and of our various periodicals eight millions and a-half of copies.

The character of this literature may be judged by the following. Our press has issued, in the aggregate, very nearly two millions of copies of the Shorter Catechism, and are now sending them forth by the thousand. Of the "Child's Catechism" we have issued very nearly two millions. With these have gone more than one hundred thousand copies of the "Confession of Faith;" about twenty thousand of "What is Calvinism?" about ten thousand of "Dickinson's Five Points;" about twenty thousand "Fisher's Catechisms," and nearly the same number of "Boston's Four-fold State." Respecting this last book a letter was some time since received at the Rooms of the Board, of the following purport:

"TO THE REV. THOMAS BOSTON, 1334 Chestnut St., Philadelphia:

"Dear Sir—I found some time ago a copy of your admirable work, 'The Four-fold State.' I have read it repeatedly, and have lent it to my friends till it is nearly worn out. Please let me know how much one hundred copies will cost.

"Yours, &c., * *"

Thus as the Rhone pours its pure waters into the channel side by side with those of the muddy Arve, so does our Board of Publication pour its super-cerulean tide of thought along the world's great channel, alongside of the non-religious issues of the secular press, and the demoralizing issues of the infidel and Satanic press.

On the whole, we are inclined to think that those who are to act as pall-bearers at the funeral of Calvinism are either yet to be born, or that they have before them the prospect of a protracted sojourn on this bank and shoal of time.—*Dr. Baird in Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

THE TRUE TREATMENT OF CHASTISEMENT.

The twelfth chapter of Hebrews is very specific in direction here.

We are not to despise chastisement: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord." That is to say, we are not to cherish any hardened defiance of suffering, springing from a stiff, self-will or a proud reluctance to confess that we need chastisement. We are not to have, under chastisement, any contumacious spirit. We are not to kick against God's will. We are not, in a hard way, to stand out against it. Christianity is never stoicism, it is loving submission. One said to me once, in effect, "It was wrong and cruel for God to take away my son. I will not be reconciled to it. It was very ugly, unnecessary harshness." That was meeting chastisement with a stony heart; refusing to learn its lessons; despising it. We

may not carry ourselves thus under our chastisement. Matthew Henry says, "We must take heed of being made cross by cross providences."

We are not to faint under Divine chastisement. "Nor faint when thou art rebuked of Me." Some people, when trouble comes, just despond and give up. They become like tangles of helpless sea-weed, dashed by the waves against the shore. There was an old Israelitish king, Jehoram by name, who, surrounded by all sorts of difficulty, cried out "Behold this evil is of the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer?" That was fainting under chastisement, thinking that God did not care, that prayer was useless. There was a great prophet once who had been immensely brave and had done for the Lord most vallant service; but obstacles hindered him, and, all of a sudden, he ran away and tired himself utterly out by a long flight into the wilderness, and sank down under a juniper tree and wailed weakly forth, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life." That was fainting under Divine chastisement. How good God is not to answer our fainting, despairing prayers! Elijah did not die. God swept him upward at the last in a chariot of fire, he not tasting death.

We are to be sure that every chastisement is right and wise. God makes no mistake in the measure or the kind of pain He sends us. For our earthly parents "verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; that is, as seemed good to them—but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness."

Some one lays down these five admirable rules for reproving children—"First, reprove without anger; passion destroys the moral power of rebuke. Second, reprove with consideration; take the best view of the case, not the worst. Third, let your reproof be directed to the reason and the conscience; thereby you educate the child. Fourth, reprove gently; thy gentleness hath made me great. Fifth, do not always reprove; molasses catches more flies than vinegar. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Admirable rules certainly—but then, who keeps them? In this difficult work of rearing children what bunglers we are! We chasten them as it seems good to us, and how constantly do we fall into sad mistakes! But God, in His chastisement of us, we are to be sure makes no mistake. "Should we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live?" Infinite wisdom, infinite love, infinite tenderness, appoint the pain. It is best, wisest, most right.

We are to be sure that some grand design of beatitude is coming out of our chastisement. "Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby."

"Wherefore, lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees.—*N. Y. Christian Union.*

DOUBTING CHRISTIANS.

That Christians should rejoice in the Lord always is an injunction of Scripture. That the promises which are "exceeding great and precious," and the fulness of Christ, afford ample ground of confidence is undeniable; and that many, if not the large majority, of God's people have but few and short seasons of assurance is unquestionably a fact. Why is this? The hope of many is clouded if not extinguished by some such reasoning as this: despite of all my resolutions and vigilance I have to lament the most humiliating compliances with temptation, and often feel the most violent motions of sin in my heart, more violent now than immediately after my supposed conversion. Now, if I deal fairly with my soul, how can I entertain a hope when I am thus spiritually declining, and brought into captivity to these unholy and turbulent passions? We answer:

1. The mere presence of sin in the heart and life is not evidence against the genuineness of a professed conversion. In conversion there is not an eradication of all tendency to sin. The child of God is a new creature, but not a perfect creature. The old man has received a death-blow, but is still capable of violent and convulsive efforts; and sanctification, which is a work and not an act of grace, is but the successive victories of the new man over the old man. We have no reason to think that this conflict is ever terminated this side of death. In the progress of this sanctification the motions of sin may be violent, but this is only