

saying that all intellectual religious people have either gone into so-called "liberal" Churches, or else keep up their orthodox connections while tacitly despising the orthodox creeds. But the presumption needs to be sharply challenged. Most of the cynicism shown at the alleged irrationality of faith is concerned with the doctrines of Sinfulness, Atonement and Redemption. It is urged that modern science proves mankind to have been continually progressing upwards, and that any thought of a fall is manifestly absurd. But suppose the evolutionist account of the origin and development of man is true, there must have been a period when man became conscious of right and wrong. What happened then? Man had to choose whether he would do what he recognized as right, and this is the very truth of which the Bible speaks. Further, when man had to choose between right and wrong, what did he choose? The Bible says he chose sin, and no sensible scientific man will maintain that he chose anything else. So that, according to evolution, there was a time when man did not sin, and yet, since he sins now, there must have been a fall. In the same way, modern culture of a sort rejects the Bible doctrines of Incarnation, Atonement and Redemption, but on all these, as well as on several more, such as the need and authority of revelation, the necessity of spiritual life and the reality of the supernatural, much can be said to prove the essential reasonableness of the orthodox position. Young people in particular may be well assured that intelligence, culture and sincerity are still devotedly associated with the old truths of Sin and Redemption. And if only proper attention is given to these realities they will be found to justify themselves to the intellect and prove themselves to be the only adequate provision for sinful humanity to get back to God.

"You May" —

Under this heading a writer in "The Bible To-day" has given the Scriptural warning that you may—

Give of your means, as Ananias (Acts 5:1-6); wish to die well, as Balaam (Num. 23:10); bring an offering, as Cain (Gen. 4:3); be a Gospel worker, as Demas (2 Tim. 4:10); live with God's people, as Gehazi (2 Kings 5:23-27); hear preaching gladly, as Herod (Mark 6:20); minister in the priest's office, as Nadab (Num. 3:2-4); ask for prayers, as Pharaoh (Exod. 8:8); make long prayers, as the Pharisees (Matt. 23:14); be able to prophesy, as Saul (1 Sam. 10:10); have many followers, as Theudas (Acts 5:36); have the lamp of profession, as the foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-12)—and yet, after all, be eternally lost.

"The Lord Reigneth"

The War is emphasizing aspects of truth which tended to become overlooked. One of these is, the Sovereignty of God. There are indications of the swing of the pendulum in reference to the Christian view of the Divine attributes. People are ready to rejoice in the Fatherhood of God and tend to forget His Sovereignty. They find comfort in His tender love, but they fail to realize the strong consolation that arises from a confidence in the thought of His power and might. In a recent magazine article the subject has been treated under the topic, "Has Calvinism a Future?", meaning by Calvinism, not the crude predestinarianism of the ordinary man, but that system of thought

which rests on the Biblical truth that God is Supreme and Sovereign over all, that His will is to be done, and that His kingdom must and will come. This means that God is the Omnipotent Ruler of the universe, the contemplation of Whose power is intended to lead to personal consecration. Whatever may be the defects of Calvinism, there is no doubt that it makes room for a great and wonderful view of God. It has often been said that, "when the half-gods go the gods arrive," and Calvin certainly did his utmost to banish all "half-gods" from the world of Christian Theology. Calvinism at the foundation is a plea for the Sovereignty of God, and because the hearts of people are turning in this direction at present, it seems necessary to call attention to some aspects of truth, which are only too apt to be forgotten.

The Sovereignty of God is a Christian doctrine, though it must be confessed that modern people often shrink from stern views of truth and hope to find paths of pleasantness by setting aside the conclusions of their forefathers. It is probably due to this that Calvinism makes no serious appeal to the modern mind. The "half-gods" of Pantheism and mere Humanism have taken the place of the Almighty Father, the Lord of Heaven and earth, and yet there was a time when the thought of God's Sovereignty gave men splendid courage as they went forth to their difficult tasks. They felt themselves to be within the Divine plan, and that, notwithstanding their own weakness, God's will would assuredly be realized. This is the thought of the modern poet, Clough:

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so;
That howso'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change:
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

It is, of course, true that some conclusions were arrived at which were inconsistent with the complete view of the Divine character, but as abuse never takes away use we must be careful not to go to the extreme of minimizing, even if they exaggerated the Sovereignty of God. A modern writer has well pointed out that Calvinism, in giving to the world such men as William the Silent, Coligny, John Knox, Cromwell, and many more, showed that it tended to make men brave and strong by putting iron into their souls. It is a magnificent thought that there is no such thing as chance, that the events of the world are being over-ruled for God's glory, and that since God is in His heaven all is right with the world, even though there is so much that seems to contradict this fact. Those who believe in the Sovereignty of God are sure of His Divine power. He who called worlds into being, still sustains life. One of our hymns expresses this essential truth of Calvinism, though perhaps when we sing the words we are not conscious of this:—

Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone;
He can create and He destroy.

His sovereign power, without our aid,
Made us of clay and form'd us men;
And when like wand'ring sheep we stray'd,
He brought us to His fold again.

Wide as the world is Thy command;
Vast as eternity Thy love;
Firm as a rock Thy truth must stand,
While rolling years shall cease to move.

We are also sure of the divine holiness. God's throne is built on righteousness and all holy thoughts and pure desires come from Him. Above all, we are certain of His love, for while the universe speaks of His power and the con-

science of His holiness, Calvary proclaims His love. His sovereignty makes His love sure, a love which is wholly independent of our "merits or deservings."

But Calvinism went very much further than its emphasis on the sovereignty of God; it declared the sanctity of the Divine Covenant and regarded this as the basis of all confidence. Because God had spoken, all was well, and the fact that God has established a Covenant with His people is the guarantee that their spiritual life rests not on their efforts and attainments, but on His unfailling Word. To use a fine translation of the Bishop of Durham: "Much more being reconciled, we shall be kept safe in His life." Yet much of our faith is remote from this truth. We are far too apt to speak as though the future of Christian living depended on our own efforts instead of Divine grace. But the mystery of the future life is not left for us to solve. We are safe in Christ, and He has pledged His word to keep all that the Father has given Him.

This view of the sanctity of the Covenant produces fruit in many ways. If we have come to believe that every "scrap of paper" is sacred it is due very largely to what is called Calvinism. It is impossible not to wish that some of those who have been reared outside the school of Calvin would take a more solemn view of treaty obligations. The doctrines of Scripture are intended to emphasize the obligations of honour, whatever may be the cost. Whether it be in individual or national life, there must always be the earthly counterpart of the heavenly certainty, the sanctity of the Covenant.

Once again: Calvinism is strong in its emphasis on the truth of the eternal security of believers, for, as Calvin said, they are "invincible among so many dangers." At the present time, when anxiety fills the souls of so many parents and friends, it is inspiring to remember that Christ's disciples are always safe with Him. This does not mean necessarily safe from the power of death, but it does mean safety in the hour of death, for when we regard life as part of God's plan we are enabled to look beyond the events of the passing moment. Whether we realize it or not, all things are working together for good. Christ is round about His people as a wall of fire, and their security rests with God. His plans will not miscarry. His purposes will not fail.

It is well, therefore, that from time to time we should contemplate truth from the Divine standpoint instead of the human. Modern thought in Theology has tended far too much of recent years in the direction of emphasizing human powers and possibilities, and while we would not for an instant forget the human side, it is only too possible to ignore or to set lightly by the fundamental realities of Divine grace. It is this truth that is especially associated with the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God and calls at the present moment for confidence and joy in the blessed assurance that notwithstanding everything to the contrary, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

OUR FRIENDS.

I cannot tell why there should come to me
A thought of someone miles and miles away,
In swift insistence on the memory,
Unless there be a need that I should pray.

Perhaps just then my friend has fiercest fight,
A more appalling weakness, a decay
Of courage, darkness, some lost sense of sight;
And so, in case he needs my prayer, I pray.

Friend, do the same for me if I intrude
Unmasked upon you on some crowded day.
Give me a moment's prayer as interlude;
Be very sure I need it, therefore pray.