

THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

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I.

THOMAS AQUINAS AND LEO XIII.

AS an ecclesiastical diplomat, Leo XIII will no doubt take high rank among the popes of modern times. He had no power to marshal armies and to set in motion crusades against refractory dissenters, as did Innocent III, nor did he exercise the function of fulmination against princes. And yet his moral influence throughout the bounds of all western Christendom has been notably great. He has elevated the papacy to a position of world-wide influence such as it has not had since the Reformation. Not before in their history have the different portions of Protestantism had so kindly a feeling toward a pope. For the moment room has been made even for a feeling of toleration for the papacy itself. Both feelings are due to the impression made by the virtues of Leo's private character. This impression was enhanced by the exceptional mental vigor Leo displayed into a high age and the youthful interest he manifested to the very end in current events, and which has seldom, if ever, been equaled in recent times. This personal sympathy of Protestants, strange to say, has been accorded to Leo in spite of his sweeping condemnations of Protestantism. His encyclicals* have denounced the Reformation, with its novel doctrines, as having produced "sudden tumults and most audacious revolts, especially in Germany." Its so-called philosophy is made the mother of unnumbered pests, such as communism, socialism and nihilism. The ultimate fruit of the Lutheran revolt is the ruin of morals.† In one of his very first encyclicals the evan-

* June 29, 1881; August 1, 1897, etc.

† *Ruinam morum ultimam maturavit*, *Encyclical*, August 1, 1897.

V.

THE STORY OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBY- TERIAN CHURCH.

THE Cumberland Presbyterian Church was brought into being in the train of the great revival in Kentucky and Tennessee in 1797. This was attended, like the revivals under the preaching of Wesley and Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, with a great deal of excitement. There were outcries and faintings and bodily agitations, often spoken of as the "jerks." Some felt strongly opposed to the movement as lacking sobriety; and when the need of teachers, exhorters and preachers became imperative, and men were licensed who lacked the qualifications which the Book of Government of the Church declared highly important, and who, in some instances, were unwilling to express unqualified acceptance of the Confession of Faith, the opposition became more pronounced. The Synod of Kentucky interposed with their authority, and the matter came before the General Assembly by way of correspondence. The General Assembly, in their letter to those who felt aggrieved by the action of the Synod, acknowledged that a liberal education, though highly important and useful, was not absolutely essential; but at the same time called attention to the explicit language of the Standards of the Church, and suggested that when, as under existing circumstances, the field is too extensive, catechists may be employed as assistants, who should be prudent and sound men, subject to frequent inspection, and with duties carefully defined. They added that if these catechists were found to possess uncommon talents, to be diligent in study, and to promise usefulness, they might in time purchase to themselves a good degree, and be admitted in regular course to the holy ministry.

Those who constituted what may be called the "revival party" claimed that this advice of the General Assembly accorded entirely with their views and practice. Some of the men licensed and afterward ordained had made considerable attainments in learning, and some had not. Some of the many catechists employed undoubtedly disappointed the expectations of those who sent them forth; but it is claimed that not one of those whom the revival party

licensed to preach "left a reputation tarnished by heresy, apostasy or defection from the Church and service of the Lord Jesus." It is further claimed that all of the men who took part in setting up the Cumberland Church held thorough education in the highest esteem.

There is what appears to be excellent evidence to the effect that the revival was granted in answer to the fasting and the prayers of the people of God, and that the genuine fruits of the Spirit appeared; but much strife and folly appeared with it. The Rev. David Rice, who prepared the letter which brought the case of the Cumberland brethren before the General Assembly, says: "That we had a revival of the spirit and power of Christianity among us, I did, do, and ever shall, believe . . . but we sadly mismanaged it; we have dashed it down and broken it to pieces." No formal appeal was brought before the General Assembly against the action of the Synod of Kentucky in silencing the men irregularly licensed; but that body had sent a letter to the Synod of Kentucky in 1807, in which the zeal and decision of the Synod in embarrassing circumstances were fully recognized; but, under the impression that some of their proceedings were of "at least questionable regularity," they advised a serious review of their action. This review was made by Synod, but with the result that, after spending three days in deliberation, they reaffirmed all of their decisions. When their explanations came before the Assembly of 1809, the result was that the proceedings of Synod were sustained without a dissenting voice, and the thanks of the Church were tendered to them for the firmness and zeal with which they had acted. The issue of all the discussions in the matter was the setting up of a separate organization which assumed the name of the "Cumberland Presbyterian Church."

It must be said for this body that from the beginning they always protested that they appreciated the importance of a full education for the ministry; only insisting that, in emergencies, men of zeal and piety should be unhesitatingly employed until men better educated could be sent to take their places. They have spent much time and taken great pains to provide educational facilities for their candidates. The action of their General Assembly of 1903 was, in part, as follows: "True Christian education of the youth of our Church, and of young men aspiring to the Gospel ministry among us, is, of all others, the question that settles our status among other denominations, as well as that which fixes our future as to the measure of our success or failure. An educated ministry means an educated Church, and an educated Church,

other things being equal, means success, and success means more success. . . . The Church's crying need is for strong, well-disciplined leaders. In view of this our hearts are made sad when we discover in the Report of the Board of Education that the number of probationers for the ministry who pursue their educational courses until they graduate from our colleges and theological seminaries is so small, and continually decreasing, that the time is upon us when the Church must give its best and most prayerful thought to this most serious of all the problems confronting it at the present day. Think of it! Only ten probationers in the Senior classes of all our colleges, and the same number in the Junior classes; thus giving no promise of immediate improvement in this direction."

It must further be said that in the various negotiations which the Cumberland Church have carried on with other Presbyterian bodies they have never proposed a lowering of the standard of ministerial education. On the other hand, it seems to be plain that the doctrinal attitude of the new organization proved in every case the insuperable obstacle.

DOCTRINAL ATTITUDE OF THE FOUNDERS.

As to the doctrinal attitude of the founders of the Cumberland Church, we find them complaining that the doctrine of the divine sovereignty and the divine decrees, as stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, necessarily involved the idea of "fatality"; and this is what they seem to have commonly emphasized as the sum of their objections. But their historian, Dr. McDonold, tells us that the fathers preached a "general atonement" and the operation of the Holy Spirit on all men; by which he seems to mean, as the statement is elsewhere explained, that the Holy Spirit is given with the same intent to every man, and that Christ died in the same sense for all men. He further says for himself that "modern thought" (as though that were a determining element in ascertaining the truth) "shrinks away from the idea that a man may not repent and be saved who is not one of the elect."

The first step taken for a revision of the Confession was in October, 1813, when the Cumberland Synod appointed a Committee of four persons to prepare a Confession, Catechism and Discipline. "This Committee simply read over the Westminster Confession item by item, changing or expunging such expressions as did not suit them." The following may serve as specimens of the omissions: In Chapter III, "Of God's Eternal Decree," sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 are omitted, and sections 1 and 2 are remodeled. Chap. V,

sec. 4, expounding the relation of the providence of God to the sinful acts of angels and of men, is omitted. In Chap. 7, sec. 3, the words "and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe" are omitted. In Chap. VIII, sec. 1, in the clause "It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus," the words "in His eternal purpose" are omitted. In Chap. X, sec. 1, the words "hath predestinated unto life" disappear; and the words "to bring" is put in the place of the phrase "effectually to call by His Word and Spirit."

These instances will give an idea of the spirit of the changes made, and let us understand in general what the doctrinal attitude of the Cumberland fathers really was.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOUTHERN CHURCH.

Negotiations were opened with the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church in 1867. The Southern Church appointed their Committee "to ascertain how far the way is prepared for an organic union between the two bodies upon the basis of the Westminster Standards." The Chairman of the Committee was the Rev. J. A. Stedman. This Committee, meeting by itself, prepared a paper in which propositions looking toward union were formulated. In this document they state that the causes of separation, in a time of high excitement, were: (a) A belief on the part of the Cumberland party that "fatality" is taught in the Confession under the terms of election and reprobation; and (b) that the discipline of the Church is too rigid in its requirements as to the literary qualifications in all candidates for ordination. They expressed the opinion that, under present circumstances, the Cumberland Church were at one with the Southern Church as to literary qualifications for the ministry; and, as to the first point, it was admitted that there are probably some phrases liable to misconstruction, but that now the Cumberland brethren see that they were not intended to teach fatalism, and, when fairly interpreted, do not teach it; while, on the other hand, many other passages assert the free agency of the creature and the contingency of second causes. It seemed then that no insuperable obstacle existed to union on the basis of the old Standards as held by the fathers of the Cumberland brethren and the fathers of the Southern Presbyterians: the same liberty of construction being allowed as was accorded in the union of the Old and New School bodies in the South. The following proposition was submitted to the Cumberland brethren for their considera-

tion: *A.* All ministers in regular standing in either Church to be enrolled in the united Church. *B.* All Presbyteries entitled to representation in either Church to be given the same representation in the united Assembly: this Assembly assuming the duty of consolidating and arranging Presbyteries and Synods. *C.* All funds and Church property, schools, colleges, theological seminaries, and all missionary operations of the two Churches to be under the control of the General Assembly. On the other hand, the Committee of the Cumberland Church, meeting by itself, made the following propositions: *A.* To surrender their name. *B.* To surrender their Standards on the subject of Ministerial Education, and to adopt those of the Southern Church, or such as may be mutually acceptable. *C.* To accept the Standards of the Southern Church on all points where a difference may exist in the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Directory of Worship, or mutually acceptable modifications of the same; but asking, as a condition precedent to these concessions, that the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of the Cumberland Church be adopted in place of the Confession and the Catechisms of the Southern Church. In case these propositions should not prove acceptable, they agreed to accept the Confession of the Southern Church and the Catechisms, provided they were modified substantially in accordance with a paper presented with their proposals.

The contents of the paper were summarily as follows: Chap. III, sec. 1, "God did from all eternity adopt the whole plan of His creation and providence, with a full knowledge of all the events which would transpire therein, including the sins of men and angels. These events he determined to bring to pass by His own direct and absolute agency, or to permit them to come to pass in view of the results which His bounding and overruling providence would bring out of the whole plan." Sec. 2. "According to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, He did from all eternity elect to salvation all true believers in Jesus Christ. This election was perfectly definite as to the persons elected and also as to their number; and God did, in like manner, reprobate to eternal perdition all that finally reject Jesus Christ, and this reprobation was also definite as to persons and number." Sec. 3. "Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory out of mere grace and love, all to the praise of His glorious grace." Sec. 4. (This section, relating to the fore-

ordination of means, agrees with the like section of the Westminster Confession save the omission of the last sentence: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only.") Sec. 5. (This section is probably meant to be the same with the corresponding section in the Westminster Confession, only the word "effectual" is omitted before the word "vocation." It relates to the care which should be exercised in handling the doctrine of predestination.)

A modification of Chap. V, sec. 4, is proposed as follows: "The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in His providence that it extendeth itself, not only to those acts which God absolutely decrees, but also to those which he permits, joining with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing them in a manifold dispensation to His own holy ends." (Compare the text of the Westminster Confession: "and that not by a bare permission, . . . yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature and not from God.")

Chap. VIII, sec. 8, is made to read: "Although Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, according to the Scriptures, yet the benefits of this death are savingly applied only to those who are chosen unto life through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; but to all those thus chosen these benefits are so applied as to insure their eternal salvation." (Compare the Westminster Confession: "To all those for whom Christ has purchased redemption He doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same.")

The tenth chapter of the Cumberland Confession was offered in place of the corresponding chapter of the Westminster Confession on Effectual Calling. It was proposed that Chap. XVII of the Confession, Of the Perseverance of the Saints, should be changed in section 2, and in place of the words: "This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election," the following should be substituted: "This perseverance of the saints depends, not upon their own ability or merit," etc.

Finally it was proposed to modify the Catechisms so as to make them correspond with the changes suggested for the Confession.*

These propositions were duly considered by the Committee of

* The Committee proposed still another alternative:—"We will consent to a new compilation upon the basis of the Westminster Standards, which shall exclude all phraseology and modes of expression which can be plausibly construed to favor the idea of fatality or necessity."

the Southern Church, and, as a result of their deliberation, they framed the following reply: "We would say that there are some of the changes proposed, which are merely of a verbal nature, which we think we are warranted in saying that our Church would accept; but there are other changes proposed which are so fundamental in their character that we would not be able to act upon them without further instructions from the General Assembly of our Church."

The Rev. James A. Lyon, D.D., of Columbus, Miss., a member of the Committee of the Southern Church, being unable to attend the meetings, expressed his views in a letter. In this letter he called attention to the fact that, in case of union, the numerical preponderance would probably be with the Cumberland brethren. As to doctrine, he assumed that no basis could be considered except the unaltered Confession of Faith. As to government and discipline, both Churches were nominally the same, but in practice they sometimes widely disagreed. As to qualifications for the ministry, he believed that there existed a material difference. Here was the original cause of separation. Here was an apparently insuperable obstacle to union. At the largest calculation, probably not more than one in five of their ministers came up to the standard of the Southern Church. To receive these men *en masse* into union would be to place the numerical power of the Church in their hands. This would be to make what is now the exception to ministerial qualifications the rule. Suppose that there should be an agreement that in future the requirements of the Southern Church should be insisted upon? Still in practice would this be done? *Could* it be done? Could a Presbytery composed of men educated only in English literature pass upon the qualifications of men in Latin, Greek and Hebrew? A union under existing conditions would lower the standard and weaken the prestige of the Church as an educated denomination; and that at a time when we should be taking a step forward instead of backward.

The Southern General Assembly, upon receiving the report of their Committee, unanimously adopted a minute to the effect that "they were compelled, in view of the terms for effecting any organic union suggested by the Committee of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, to declare that, regarding the present period as one very unfavorable for making changes in our Standards of faith and practice, it is more especially so for effecting changes so materially modifying the system of doctrine which has for centuries been the distinguishing peculiarity and the eminent glory of the Presbyterian Churches both of Europe and the United States."

THE CUMBERLAND CHURCH AND THE ALLIANCE.

In the correspondence which was carried on with respect to the proposed admission of the Cumberland brethren to membership in the Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Cumberland General Assembly explained that they adopted the Confession of Faith modified in the following particulars: 1. There are no eternal reprobates; 2. Jesus died, not for a part only, but for all men, and in the same sense; 3. All infants dying in infancy are saved; 4. The Holy Spirit operates on all the world—on all for whom Christ died—in such a manner as to render all men responsible and inexcusable (“as coextensively as Christ made atonement” is the phrase elsewhere used). See *Minutes of the Cum. Gen. Ass.*, 1882, p. 19.

Before the Alliance held their meeting in Belfast, 1884, the Cumberland Church had completed their revision of the Confession, and there was a spirited debate at that meeting on the question of their admission; some taking the ground that the Calvinistic elements had been largely eliminated by the revision. The Committee on Reception of Churches presented a report, which was adopted, in substance as follows: Whereas the Cumberland Church has adopted the Constitution of the Alliance; whereas it was one of the Churches invited to assist in the formation of the Alliance in 1875; whereas it has now, as on previous occasions, made application for admission, and sent delegates; and whereas the responsibility of deciding whether they shall join the Alliance properly rests with the Churches themselves, it is recommended that the Alliance grant admission to the Cumberland Church: it being understood that this action is taken without approving the revision of the Confession which they have made.

THE REVISION OF 1883.

The revision of 1883 made practically a new Confession for the Cumberland Church. The text is much abbreviated and the old tone is to a large extent modified in the process of remaking. An idea of the governing principle can be gotten by noticing the change in the *ordo salutis*. Thus in the old Confession we have Effectual Calling, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification. In the Cumberland document we have Divine Influence, Justification, Regeneration, Adoption, Sanctification.

Some specimens of the doctrinal statements may be instructive: “Decrees of God—God, for the manifestation of His glory and

goodness . . . freely and unchangeably ordained or determined what He Himself would do, what He would require His intelligent creatures to do, and what should be the rewards, respectively, of the obedient and the disobedient."

"Divine Influence—God the Father, having set forth His Son, Jesus Christ, as a propitiation for the sins of the world, does most graciously vouchsafe a manifestation of the Holy Spirit with the same intent to every man." "The Holy Spirit, operating through the written Word, and through such other means as God in His wisdom may choose, or directly, without means, so moves upon the hearts of men as to enlighten, reprove and convince them of sin, of their lost estate, and of their need of salvation; and, by so doing, inclines them to come to Christ. This call of the Holy Spirit is purely of God's free grace alone, and not because of human merit, and is antecedent to all desire, purpose and intention on the part of the sinner to come to Christ; so that, while it is possible for all to be saved with it, none can be saved without it." "This call is not irresistible, but is effectually in those only who, in penitence and faith, freely surrender themselves wholly to Christ. . . ." "While there is no merit in faith, yet it is the condition of salvation. It is not of the nature of good works, from which it must be distinguished."

"A state of sinless perfection is not authorized(!) by the Scriptures, and is a dogma of dangerous tendencies."

Upon the completion of this work the Committee of the Cumberland Church addressed a letter to the Evangelical Union (Arminian) of Scotland, in which they say that their leading thought was to eliminate from the Confession its great central doctrine of universal foreordination and its legitimate consequences, unconditional election, limited atonement and divine influence correspondingly circumscribed. These doctrines are described under the figure of "an ulcerous cancer" which required excision. Again, in the use of another figure, the necessity for a complete rewriting was explained by the remark that there was evil at the fountain, and "all the streams, however minute, were more or less poisoned." The Evangelical Union replied to this communication, congratulating the Cumberland Church upon the completion of their work, which they unhesitatingly pronounce a great improvement upon the old Confession, not erring on the score of too great minuteness, but resembling the body of heaven in its clearness. They indicate particular delight in observing "with what thoroughness Westminsterism has been eliminated by the revising Committee."

CONFERENCE WITH THE NORTHERN CHURCH.

In 1873 a Committee of the Northern Church, consisting of H. A. Nelson, Joseph T. Smith and Charles A. Dickey, met in conference with a Committee of the Cumberland Church, consisting of Richard Beard, J. B. Mitchell, A. J. Baird and A. B. Mitchell. The Committee of the Northern Church proposed union on the basis of the Confession of Faith. The Committee of the Cumberland Church proposed: 1. That each Confession should remain unaltered, and of equal authority as standards of evangelical doctrine; and that, in licensing or ordaining candidates for the ministry, Presbyteries should allow them to subscribe to the one which, on the whole, they preferred; 2. That the Form of Government and the Book of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church should be considered the Standards of the united Church; 3. That the united Church should be known under the name of the "Presbyterian Church of the United States of America."

The General Assembly of the Cumberland Church received the report of their Committee and declared a continuance of negotiations inexpedient.

DOCTRINAL ATTITUDE BRIEFLY STATED.

A. With respect to the DECREES OF GOD, the element of certainty is largely eliminated. God simply determines what He Himself will do, what He will require His creatures to do, and what He will do in the contingency of obedience or disobedience.

B. ELECTION is on the foresight of repentance and faith.

C. THE OBJECT OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST is not, as in our Confession, to make salvation possible for all men and certain for the elect; but Christ is represented as having died for all men, *and in the same sense*.

D. The distinction between COMMON GRACE and EFFECTUAL CALLING is obliterated; and the Holy Spirit is said to be given with the same intent to every man.

E. CONVERSION is described after the Arminian manner; the regeneration of the sinner being accomplished by human efficiency, stimulated to action by a divine influence enjoyed by the subject thereof in common with all men.

Dr. Shedd (*Hist. of Christian Doc.*, Vol. II, p. 496) says: "The controversy between the Arminians and Calvinists turned chiefly upon three Calvinistic points, viz., the absolute decree of election; the irresistibleness of special grace; and the limitation, in the divine

intention, of the merit of Christ's death to the elect. 1. The Arminians held that the decree of election is . . . dependent upon the divine foreknowledge that grace will be rightly used in the instance of the elect. The Dort Canons maintain that the electing decree secures the right use of grace itself, as well as bestows grace. 2. The Arminians held that the atonement of Christ is intended for all men alike and indiscriminately. . . . The reason why the atonement does not save all men alike and indiscriminately lies in the fact that the will of the finally lost sinner defeats the divine intention. There is no such degree of grace as is irresistible to the sinful will. . . . The Dort Synod held that the Holy Spirit possesses a power that is irresistible, in the sense that it can subdue the obstinacy of any human will, however opposed to God. . . . There is therefore no defeat of the divine intention, and the atonement saves all for whom it was intended. 3. The Arminians held that grace is necessary in order to salvation, but that regenerating grace may be both resisted and lost. The Dort Synod . . . held that regenerating, as distinct from common, grace is able to subdue all opposition of the sinful will, and therefore cannot be resisted, in the sense of being defeated or overcome, and therefore cannot be lost." To our mind it seems clear that the Cumberland Church reconstructed the Confession upon distinctly Arminian lines, and their Committee, not unnaturally, promptly sought and enjoyed the hearty sympathy and congratulations of their Arminian brethren in Scotland, as we have narrated above. Under these circumstances students of the history of the Cumberland Church felt some degree of surprise when the Chairman of the Committee on Coöperation and Union of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and the Chairman of the Committee on Fraternity and Union of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church put their signatures to the following announcement: "While slight doctrinal and other differences were thought to exist by some members of the Committees, a thoughtful and prayerful consideration of these supposed barriers has so far either removed these obstacles, or so nearly shown them not actually to exist, that we entertain the confident hope that within a very few years reunion may be accomplished in a manner wholly creditable to both Churches and honoring to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

We compare with this statement the warning uttered by Dr. McDonold, the historian of the Cumberland Church, to the effect that there are two false ideas which ought never to deceive his people, nor his Presbyterian brethren: one is the hope on the part

of the latter that his people will sometime adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith unchanged; the other is the belief among Cumberland Presbyterians that Presbyterians are ready to adopt their doctrinal platform.

Are we to understand that the Cumberland brethren have, nevertheless, now reached the conclusion, by a study of the Declaratory Statement and the two new chapters and the revised sections of the Confession, that the Presbyterian Church has come over to their doctrinal platform? Would not that mean that, in respect to the three principal points at issue between Arminians and Calvinists, we have come over to the Arminian position?

If this is the case, we cannot help wondering whether the Presbyteries which voted for the revision of our Standards realized that they "were so materially modifying the system of doctrine which has for centuries been the distinguishing peculiarity and the eminent glory of the Presbyterian Churches both of Europe and the United States."

EDWARD B. HODGE.

NOTE.—The above was written without any knowledge of the "Plan of Reunion," the "Concurrent Declarations," and the "Recommendations" which are to be presented to the two Assemblies next May. These papers, now given to the public, make the careful study of the whole subject a matter of immediate and pressing duty. Possibly the story of the Cumberland Church outlined in these pages may be helpful to those who seek conscientiously to discharge this duty.

E. B. H.