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Calvin

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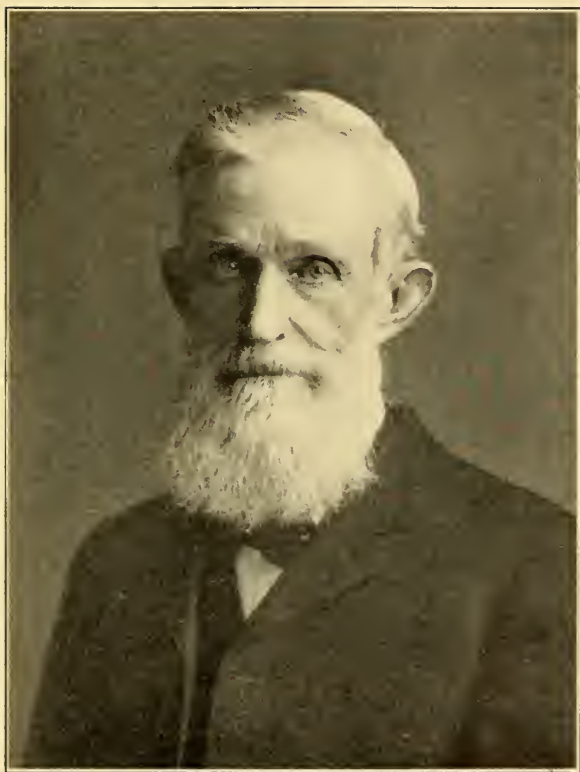
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JOHN CALVIN

*Hanan Portrait,*



REV. SAM'L A. KING, D. D.,  
Austin, Texas.

## HOW FAR HAS ORIGINAL CALVINISM BEEN MODIFIED BY TIME?

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REV SAMUEL A. KING, D. D. LL. D.,  
*Austin Theological Seminary.*

This year of grace, 1909, is being made notable by celebrations of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Calvin.

In this session of our Assembly one of the most elaborate of these is being conducted, and not only the members of the body but also great audiences of interested listeners have been edified and delighted by addresses in which the history, the personality, and the work of the great Genevan reformer have been presented by chosen speakers from our own and other lands.

The all but world-wide celebration of this anniversary bears eloquent witness to the greatness and the worthiness of a man whose figure was tall enough to cast his shadow across the space of four eventful centuries, whose influence is recognized in the world to-day, and will be potent in directing the currents of human thought and the movements of men through all coming time until the great consummation, when it shall be announced in a ransomed earth and a rejoicing heaven that the Kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

In this our celebration the subject assigned to me is one that does not give occasion for an attractive and popular address; mine is rather a prosaic task which re-

quires the statement, and to some extent the discussion of doctrinal tenets and systems—those things which many have chosen to designate as the “dry bones of theology.”

I have been asked to discuss the question, “How far has Original Calvinism Been Modified by Time?”

It is fitting to observe, at the outset, that “Calvinism” did not originate at the period of the Reformation, nor with Calvin, the greatest theologian of the Reformation. It is well known that the specific doctrines which constitute the essence of the system denominated “Calvinism” were elaborately set forth by Augustine, born A. D. 353, more than eleven hundred years before the birth of Calvin, and the system usually styled Calvinistic, is by many, and notably by Dr. Charles Hodge, almost uniformly spoken of as the Augustinian doctrine. Neither did this system originate with the illustrious bishop of Hippo. Every distinctive doctrine of Calvinism is set forth in the inspired writings of Paul, especially in the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians. And these were not new doctrines when propounded by the great apostle of the Gentiles. The catchy cry in our times, “Back to Christ,” in most cases is an expression of the thought that by going back to the personal teachings of our Lord an escape can be had from the “hard doctrines” of Paul. But when recourse is had to the words of Christ it will be found that the same doctrines concerning God’s sovereignty, man’s depravity, and efficacious grace, are as plainly taught by Christ Himself in Matt. xi., Luke iv., and John vi., xvii., as in any of the writings of Paul. This much for what is really “Original Calvinism.”

To define the phrase in its popular and present day use, it has been suggested by a distinguished theologian

that original Calvinism may mean either "the Calvinism of John Calvin himself, as outlined in his *Institutes*; or as contained in the broad consensus of the Reformed Confessions; or the common teaching of the doctors of the "Great Age."

In trying to deal with this subject, I shall consider as "original" the Calvinism of the *Institutes*, and undertake to show that there are "modifications" of two classes.

(1) Those in which there have been advances made in the way of fuller statement, or more precise expression of some of the doctrines, in the Reformed Confessions than is found in the *Institutes*; and

(2) Proposed "Modifications" in which there has been a departure from some of the doctrines, or such a weakening of them as to seriously affect their soundness as part of the system.

Taking up in order the subjects thus outlined, it is well known that the *Institutes* contain a complete system of theology. We find in them all the "departments" which are commonly styled theology proper, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. In regard to some of these the views of Calvin and of Calvinists are virtually in harmony with those held by the great body of evangelical Christians. It is only in some of these departments that we find the doctrines which are essentially and distinctively "Calvinism."

And here I quote a passage from Principal Cunningham, which is pertinent and suggestive: He says: "The more we have studied these subjects the more have we become convinced that the one fundamental principle of Calvinism—that, the admission of which constitutes the

real line of demarcation between Calvinists and Anti-Calvinists is, the doctrine of predestination in the more limited sense of the word, or of election, as descriptive of the substance of Scripture with regard to what God has decreed, or proposed from eternity to do, and does or effects in time, for the salvation of those who are saved; and that every man ought to be held by others, and ought to acknowledge himself to be a Calvinist, who believes that God from eternity chose some men—certain persons of the human race—absolutely and unconditionally to salvation through Christ, and that He accomplishes this, or executes this decree in time by effecting and securing the salvation of these men in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant of Grace.”

(1) In treating of the “Modifications” of the first class, I would place: *First*, the Sub-lapsarian doctrine of the decrees, as it has developed and formulated since the time of Calvin.

Dr. B. B. Warfield (in New Schaff-Herzog Enc.) names three “varieties of Calvinism,” namely, “Supra-lapsarianism, Infra-lapsarianism, and Postredemptionism, all of which take their start from a fundamental agreement in the principles which govern the system. The difference between these various tendencies of thought within the limits of the system turns on the place given by each to the doctrine of election, in the logical ordering of the ‘decrees of God.’”

Accepting this classification as correct it may be explained, in brief, that the Supra-lapsarian holds that God elected some and rejected others out of *uncreated* men; that the decree of election preceded (in the order of thought) the decree to create and to permit the fall. The Infra (or Sub) lapsarian holds that out of the mass of



men regarded as *created* and *fallen*, God chose some to salvation; while the Postredemptionist holds that out of the race of men regarded as *created*, *fallen* and *redeemed*, God chose those to whom the universal redemption should be applied.

In this connection the term redemption is employed in the narrower sense of the "impetration of the redemption by Christ."

The extreme Supra-lapsarian scheme implies that God created some men to be saved and others to be "vessels of wrath"—that in the order of thought election and reprobation precede the purpose to create and to permit the fall. This "hard doctrine" is thought by many to be Calvinism, pure and simple, and much of the prejudice against our doctrine is due to this mis-apprehension. The fact is, it was never held by any considerable number of Calvinists. There are no Supra-lapsarian confessions, and while some do not distinctly pronounce against either there is no reformed creed that can be quoted as in favor of Supra-lapsarianism. At the present day it would not be unsafe to say that not one in a hundred of Calvinists is a Supra-lapsarian.

The Sub-lapsarian view is that out of the mass of men, all fallen, guilty, depraved, God chose a great number to be saved through the redeeming work of Christ and the effectual application of its benefits by the Holy Spirit. Dr. Warfield says: "Not only does no confession close the door to Infra-lapsarianism, but a considerable number explicitly teach Infra-lapsarianism, which thus emerges as the typical form of Calvinism."

I have counted this as one of the "modifications" of the Calvinism of the *Institutes* for the reason that it is a disputed question as to which of the two views was

held by Calvin himself. I think it fair to conclude that neither Supra nor Sub-lapsarian can claim him or confidently appeal to the *Institutes*. The question had not been raised in his day. His great task was to uphold the doctrine of God's sovereign election of such as are saved, unconditioned by foresight of faith, or good works, or anything in the creature. Hence, with this great thought uppermost in his mind it is not strange that he employed language that could be construed by Supra-lapsarians as favoring their extreme view, while in other cases his words can be plausibly pleaded by those who hold the view now prevalent. Doctrines are more fully apprehended and clearly stated as the result of controversy, and in the fires of controversy waged since Calvin's day have been forged the more exact formulas in which the Sub-lapsarian doctrine and others of the system are now set forth.

In strictly systematic theology the subject just discussed belongs to the department of soteriology, but it is intimately related to an important feature of anthropology, namely, the probation in Adam, the fall, and the effects of Adam's first sin on his posterity.

If the decree of election contemplates men as fallen, as being in "an estate of sin and misery," it is an important inquiry as to how they came into this hapless condition. This estate, in all its elements, is accounted for by the doctrines of the Federal theology. Hence I hold that:

(2) The *Second* of the Modifications of the original Calvinism of the *Institutes* is the view known as the "Federal Scheme" according to which we "sinned in Adam and fell with him," as being not simply the natural but Federal head of the race.

This doctrine, elaborated by Cocceius, born ninety-four years after Calvin, was wrought into the system of theology of the Westminster Assembly, and has been ably expounded by such men as Turretin, and Witsius on the Continent; Chalmers and Cunningham in Scotland; and by the two Hodges, Breckinridge, Thornwell, and Dabney in America.

Dr. A. A. Hodge says: "In Holland, England and Scotland, Calvinism has been *modified* in form by the Federal Scheme, introduced by Cocceius and the Westminster divines."

Dr. Shedd says that "Turretin marks the transition from the *elder* to *later* Calvinism—from the theory of the Adamic Union to the Adamic representation.

I think it manifest that in this Federal Scheme we have a modification of the theology of Calvin, a fuller and clearer view of our relation to Adam, and of the ground of our condemnation as having "sinned in him and fallen with him" as our covenant representative.

I think that Calvin came near to this, but did not clearly perceive and grasp it.

Why should we wonder that he did not see all the truth? He himself modestly said: "God hath never favored His servants with so great a benefit that they were all endued with full and perfect knowledge in everything." The wonder is that he had so much more full and perfect knowledge than any other of his age!

Dr. Thornwell, a great admirer, in his analysis of Calvin's *Institutes*, says: "Federal representation was not seized as it should be, but rather a mystic realism in place of it."

We find some germs of the doctrine in the *Institutes*, but that is all. In Book II., Chapter I., on the "Fall of

Adam the Cause of the Curse on all Mankind, and the Doctrine of Original Sin," he defines this last as "an hereditary pravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all the parts of the soul, rendering us obnoxious to the divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scripture calls the works of the flesh." In the same chapter he says, "Our ruin must be imputed to the corruption of our nature."

Again he says: "When it is said that the sin of Adam renders us obnoxious to the divine judgment, it is not to be understood as if we, though innocent, were undeservedly loaded with the guilt of his sin, but because we are all subject to a curse in consequence of his transgression, he is therefore said to have involved us in guilt. Nevertheless we derive from him not only the punishment, but also the pollution to which the punishment is justly due."

In Section 7, he says: "The Lord deposited with Adam the ornaments He chose to confer on the human nature, and therefore when he lost the favors he had received he lost them not only for himself but for us all." Later he says, "These ornaments were given, not to one man only, but to the whole human nature." Here, and especially in the last two quotations, we find the germs of the Federal connection, but they are obscured by that predominant idea of the realistic union with Adam which Dr. Thornwell calls a "mystic realism."

Calvin lays the principal stress on the corruption of the nature. He finds here a ground sufficient for the guilt and the punishment in which men are involved. He does not clearly grasp the truth that the sinfulness of our estate consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, and (as the result of that) the want of original righteousness and the corruption of the whole nature.

The "present truth" which Calvin was zealous to maintain, as against the contentions of his great opponent Pighius, as well as others, was the transmission and universal prevalence of a depraved moral nature; to this he gave special prominence and not to the imputation of Adam's sin which was not then a matter of controversy.

The doctrine of the "immediate imputation" of Adam's sin was not clearly articulated in the time of the reformers. It was brought out later in the discussion of the "Mediate Imputation" theory of Placeus. When the Westminster Confession was written the distinction between immediate and mediate had not emerged, as it did a little later. The statement of doctrine in the Confession, Chapter VI., is not so definite as in the answers to questions 16 and 18 of the Shorter Catechism. In the latter the guilt of Adam's sin is the first element in the sinfulness of our lost estate. Following this (and as a penal consequence of this), are the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of the whole nature. It logically follows that guilt is the cause of depravity—depravity the consequence of guilt.

The fact noted above, that the catechism states more clearly the doctrine of imputation than does the confession may perhaps be accounted for by the fact, to which Principal Cunningham calls attention, that a year intervened between the completion of the Confession and that of the Catechisms. In that time the Westminster divines may have become familiar with the discussions on the Continent over the placean theory of "Mediate Imputation," and hence were led to make a more precise statement in the Catechisms. If this were the case it is another instance in which the formulated statement of

a doctrine is modified into a more perfect form as a result of the closer examination 'brought about by controversy.

In this matter of our relation to Adam and the consequences resulting therefrom we have seen how the "Federal Scheme" enables us to deal with all the facts. This scheme, as found in the Scriptures and wrought into the Westminster Confession, enables us to clearly grasp and arrange into system all the facts and doctrines concerning the ruin in Adam and the redemption in Christ. Two great covenants, the first, that of works; the second, of grace, like the two pillars of Jachin and Boaz, stands at the door of the Temple of Truth, and through these we must pass in order to learn what we are to believe concerning anthropology and soteriology.

The development of Federal theology, and its articulate confessional statement, may be justly esteemed as the most important "modification" of "Original Calvinism" since the days of Calvin.

(3) The *Third* modification, of the first class, we may consider as having been developed in Scotland. This old land is the "Mother Country" of modern Presbyterianism. There have been sharp and protracted controversies regarding doctrine waged by Scottish theologians, and there have resulted therefrom some modifications in the matter and form of particular doctrines of the Calvinistic system.

In the limits I must observe I cannot undertake to treat of these in detail, even were I sufficiently informed to do the subject justice. I shall avail myself of some information furnished by Dr. James Orr, whom we have been privileged to have with us on this occasion, and who has favored us with an able and appreciated address.

In a magazine article in which he had specially in view to give some notes on the doctrinal position of the United Presbyterian Church, he outlines the various controversies that have been waged over doctrinal issues.

He says, "Our controversies move uniformly around two poles—the assertion of the sovereign grace of God in salvation, on one hand (including election to eternal life and the special bearing of the atonement of Christ on the saving of His own); and the assertion of the fullness and freeness of the proclamation of the gospel to sinners, on the other, on the ground of the deed of gift or grant of Christ to mankind—sinners, as such (a universal as well as a special aspect in Christ's atonement). The former side of doctrine comes from the general Calvinistic strain of the Westminster theology; the latter strives to a broader conception of the gospel than the Westminster Standards contain, and ultimately reaches it in the statements of our Declaratory Act of 1879." He adds, "It may be thought by some that the older and more distinctive note in our theology has been altogether left behind. That, we believe, is a mistake. Divested of the forms, and minute, and sometimes hair-splitting, distinctions in which our fathers invested it, the doctrine of sovereign grace in the calling, regeneration, and final salvation of a sinner—moving back, as this must do, on an eternal counsel of God in which it was embraced—is not to be got rid of, or expunged from our theology without serious impoverishment and harm. But even brighter than this in the testimony of our church shines its witness to the full, free, and unrestricted character of Christ's salvation, as based on the all-sufficiency of His atoning sacrifice, and the will of God gifting Him to mankind."

I will only note Dr. Orr's outline of the various stages of the controversy without attempting to embody his luminous statement of particulars under each head.

He says, "The course which controversy has followed as between these two poles of doctrine may be thus indicated:

(1) There was a struggle for the recognition of the freeness of the gospel message as based on the gift of men universally—to "mankind-sinners as such," as the phrase was.

(2) The next stage shows the other pole in the ascendant in the act against Arminian Errors, the object of which was to assert the special suretyship and relation of Christ in His death to His own people—that is to those whom God has given Him, and who are actually saved by His atonement.

(3) The third period is that of attempted adjustment of these two sides, with, again, a special prominence to the universal relation of Christ's work to mankind. This is the period of atonement controversies in the secession church, ending in the separation from the church of the Rev. James Morrison and his sympathizers (1841-3) and in the vindication of Drs. Balmer and Brown.

(4) The last stage is that of the definite triumph of the larger and more Scriptural view in the assertion (from which the church had hitherto held back), in the Declaratory Act of 1879, of the love of God to all mankind, His gift of His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and the free offer of salvation to men without distinction on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice. This may, as the article affirms, be in consistency with the church's earlier teaching, but the



truth had certainly (especially as regards the love) never been so fully or unambiguously expressed. The Act contains other adjustments, helping to bring the statements of the creed into fuller harmony with the living faith of the church."

It may be here remarked that controversies in our country have followed much the same lines as those indicated above, and the results have not been widely different. Our ministers, who accept the old Standards without any revision or Declaratory Statement, feel no hesitancy in extending "the free offer of salvation to men without distinction on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice," and they feel that they can do this "in consistency with the church's earlier teachings," and in harmony with "the living faith of the church" and of the greatest among Calvinistic theologians.

In years past there were protracted controversies concerning "limited atonement" and "general atonement," but the most staunch advocates of the first were ready to avow that Christ's sacrifice furnished the basis for a universal offer of salvation; while zealous champions of the second were free to admit that in the divine purpose are effectually called. Many of the differences were more verbal than essential. Each party looked too exclusively on *one* side of the shield.

Proceeding now to consider the second class of "modifications"—those which *modify* "original Calvinism," we will notice:

(1) *First*, the views advanced by the French theologians of the Saumur School.

I quote again from Dr. Warfield: "The first important modification of the Calvinistic system which has retained a position within its limits was made in the

middle of the seventeenth century by the professors of the French School at Saumur, and is hence called Salmurianism of Amyraldism, or hypothetical universalism." Dr. Warfield has elsewhere remarked that "It is odd that all the modifications of Calvinism—if we include Pajon's views—had their expression at Saumur."

Two of the most noted professors of this school were Placeus and Amyraut. We have already taken note of the Placean theory of Mediate Imputation. Amyraut propounded the theory denominated "Hypothetical Universalism." The leading features of his scheme were that the motive impelling God to redeem men was benevolence, or love to men in general—that He sent His Son to make the salvation of all men possible—that salvation is offered to all men *if* they believe on Christ, and that all men have natural ability to repent and believe—but this ability is counteracted by a moral inability—and that out of the mass of depraved but redeemed men God determined to give efficacious, saving grace, to a certain number of the human race. The advocates of this view belong to the class of post-redemptionists.

Dr. Charles Hodge says of this scheme that, "It was designed to take a middle ground between Augustinianism and Arminianism, but that it is liable to the objections which press on both systems."

He also says that "this theory soon passed away as far as the Reformed Churches in Europe were concerned. Its advocates either returned to the old doctrine, or passed on to the more advanced system of the Arminians. In this country it has been reviewed and extensively adopted."

Dr. Hodge forcibly sets forth the objections to the scheme. Dr. Dabney suggests as a chief objection that

“It represents Christ as not purchasing for His people the grace of effectual calling, by which they are persuaded and enabled to embrace redemption, whereas Scripture represents that this gift, along with all other graces of redemption, is given us in Christ, having been purchased for His people by Him.” Dr. Warfield says, “This modification received the condemnation of the contemporary reformed world.”

I am treating somewhat at length this Saumurian view of redemption for the reason that “in this country it has been revived and extensively adopted,” and that nearly “all the modifications of Calvinism find their expression at Saumur.” It has been wrought into the New England and the Cumberland theology, which will later claim out attention.

In this, as in most unsound systems of doctrine, its chief dangerous tendency lies in the element of truth it contains. No system that is totally erroneous is to be feared. In this scheme God’s universal benevolence is emphasized, and also the fact that the atoning sacrifice of Christ is sufficient for all the world. Now, God’s general benevolence is not questioned by any, and neither Calvin nor any later Calvinist has doubted or denied that the merit of Christ’s sacrifice is sufficient for all men, or that the offers of the gospel are to be made to every man. But according to the system under review, while all men are made salvable by the atoning death of Christ, it does not *make certain* the salvation of any. Calvinists of the strictest sect, like Dr. Shedd and Dr. Dabney, hold that Christ’s satisfaction is unlimited in its sufficiency, but that its efficacious application is limited to those who are the subjects of “particular redemption.” Dr. Dabney well says that “Had God elected all sinners

there would have been no necessity to make Christ's atoning sacrifice essentially different. Remember, the limitation is precisely in the decree, and no where else. The vagueness and ambiguity of the term atonement has very much complicated the debate. This word is used sometimes for satisfaction for guilt, sometimes for the reconciliation ensuing therefrom, until men on both sides have forgotten the distinction. The one is cause; the other, effect. The only New Testament sense the word atonement has is that of *reconciliation*. But *expiation* is another idea. Expiation, in itself considered, has no more relation to one man's sin than another. As it is applied in effectual calling, it becomes personal, and receives a limitation. But in itself, limitation is irrelevant to it. Hence, when men use the word atonement, as they often do, in the sense of expiation, the phrases "limited atonement," "particular atonement" have no meaning. Redemption is limited, *i. e.*, to true believers, and is particular. Expiation is not limited."

To the same effect Dr. Shedd says: "*Atonement* must be distinguished from *redemption*. The latter term includes the *application* of the atonement. It is the term 'redemption,' not 'atonement,' which is found in those statements that speak of the work of Christ as limited by the decree of election." "The use of the term redemption is attended with less ambiguity than that of atonement, and it is the term most commonly employed in controversial theology. Atonement is unlimited, and redemption is limited."

These quotations are from the works of great "masters in Israel" who held and taught the Calvinism of the Reformed Confessions. The views they expressed are held in our Presbyterian Church to-day. We do not



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believe, with those who have adopted or absorbed the Saumur theory, that Christ, by His expiatory death, merely made all men salvable, and that He had no special purpose to have any in particular. While we believe that His expiation is sufficient for all, it is efficient for the reconciliation (the at-one-ment) of the people given to Him, who, being the object of God's "everlasting love" have therefore with "loving-kindness" been drawn by efficacious grace to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to all men in the Gospel.

Thorough Calvinists, while gladly proclaiming that "whosoever will may come, and take of the water of life freely" do fully accept the doctrine that "the Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him." He not only makes their salvation possible, but "He *saves* His people from their sins"—not only from the penalty, but from the pollution and the power of sin.

(2) The *Second* modification of this class is found in what is styled the New England Theology.

This name is given to theological tenets that have been widely accepted and given shape to the doctrinal views of many Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the United States.

The name is derived from the fact that the men who promulgated these tenets were New England divines.

"The term must be used in a sense sufficiently wide and vague to include different types of doctrine historically associated with various individual divines,

and with the Andover, New Haven, and East Windsor (now Hartford) Schools." Many distinguished names are found among the advocates of this theology, among them, Edwards, Bellamy and Hopkins, "the great triumvirate," and in recent times, Leonard Woods, Lyman Beecher, Albert Barnes, N. W. Taylor and Edwards A. Park.

The principal tenets of this type of theology may be summarized as follows:

All the acts of God, even those which seem to be the sternest, are forms of infinite benevolence, and are reducible to a choice of the greatest and highest good of universal being. God is a sovereign, that is, He does what He chooses to do because His choice is infinite benevolence, securing the greatest and highest well-being of the universe.

Holiness and sin are not passive states, but they are acts of the will. They are free acts and imply that the agent's power to render obedience, and avoid disobedience to the moral law, is commensurate with his obligation to render the one and to avoid the other. Man's sinfulness is a consequence of Adam's apostasy. The sin of Adam is not literally "imputed" to us. We are not punished for it, although, on account of it, we suffer evils which represent God's abhorrence of sin, and signify His determination to inflict the legal penalty on those who persist in committing it. We, however, do not suffer a legal penalty for any sin which does not consist in our free choice.

"The term 'original sin' is not a favorite one with the New England theologians. It is entirely disapproved by one class of them, and is variously defined by other classes." As to the Atonement: the suffer-

ings, and especially the death of Christ, were sacrificial; were not the penalty of law, but were equivalent to it; were representative of it, and substituted for it. The demands of the law were not satisfied by it, but the honor of the law was promoted by it as much as by the infliction of the legal penalty on the elect. The distributive justice of God was not satisfied by it, but His general justice was satisfied perfectly.

The atonement was designed for the welfare of all men; to make the salvation of all men possible; to remove all the obstacles which the honor of the law and distributive justice presented against the non-elect, as well as the elect. The atonement is useful on men's account, and in order to furnish new motives to holiness, but it is necessary on God's account to enable Him, as a consistent Ruler, to pardon any, even the smallest sin, and therefore to bestow on sinners any, even the smallest favor.

As to man's natural ability: Not without the *common* influence, but without the *supernatural* influence of God, a man has, in the proper sense of the word, the power to repent of his sin; but it is infallibly certain that he never will use this power in repenting. His natural ability does not lessen his dependence on the special interposition of the Holy Spirit for any, even the smallest degree of holiness.

It will be readily seen that this system is a "modification" of the Calvinism of the Reformed Confessions.

According to these views God did not "*for His own glory* fore-ordain whatsoever comes to pass," but had supreme regard to the "well-being of the universe." "This is the greatest happiness" theory.



In its Anthropology there is a decided slant towards Pelagianism; a denial of the sinfulness of states as well as of acts—a virtual acceptance of the dictum that “all sin consists in sinning,” or in personal, voluntary transgression, and obligation is limited by ability.

The imputation of the guilt of Adam’s sin is discarded, and it is fairly implied that the “consequences” of his fall come upon his posterity rather as calamities than as penal inflictions visited on us because we sinned in him and fell with him.

In this scheme the atonement is not strictly vicarious—Christ’s death did not “fully satisfy the justice of His Father,” nor “pay the debt we owe.” We have rather the indefinite universalism of Amyraut, the “moral influence” theory of Abelard, and the “governmental theory” of Grotius. In the doctrine of the atonement “the life is in the blood,” and the old, old story “satisfies our longings” because Christ “bore our sins in His own body on the tree,” and hath “redeemed us to God by His blood.”

(3.) The *Third* modification to be noted is in the Cumberland Presbyterian theology. This is invested with special interest because of the recent union of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church with the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and the doctrinal basis on which it was effected.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church began its existence in A. D. 1810, with a single presbytery. A synod consisting of three presbyteries was formed in 1813, and a general assembly in 1829. A Confession of Faith was adopted by the synod in 1814, and this was revised and adopted by the general assembly in

1883. This Confession, as said by Dr. M. B. DeWitt, is "a modification of the Westminster Confession." It was an attempt, as in the case of the Saumur School, to find a middle ground between Calvinism and Arminianism—to introduce a "Medium Theology." That it did "modify" the old Confession is easily discovered by reference to the teachings concerning the Decrees of God, the Covenant of Grace, the work of Christ, the Mediator, Divine Influence (substituted for Effectual Calling), Repentance, Faith, and Regeneration.

While this was a Presbyterian Church, it was not Calvinistic, as is evidenced not only by its Confession, but also by the testimony of competent men within and without its fold. Dr. A. B. Miller, a distinguished Cumberland Presbyterian minister, wrote: "Nothing that can be said negatively of the doctrinal system of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is more true or more characteristic of it than that it is un-Calvinistic." Again he says: "The Confession, as adopted in 1829, and still more fully as revised in 1883, is in irreconcilable antagonism to the obvious and historic sense of the Westminster Confession." Dr. W. H. Roberts, in 1889, in a carefully prepared paper, said of the Cumberlanders: "Presbyterians in government they are, but Calvinists in doctrine they are not." In the same paper he designates them as a "distinctly Arminian body," and that "Cumberland revision led inevitably to Arminianism."

Dr. F. R. Beattie said of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church that "It modified the doctrine of the Confession in regard to predestination, so as to become virtually Arminian; while it retains a Presbyterian polity. It is really an Arminian Presbyterian Church."

Dr. B. B. Warfield, in his able discussion of the revision of the Confession, A. D. 1903, speaks of the historically Cumberland view as "the distinctive Arminian view"; and in reference to the "Supplemental Report" of the Cumberland committee he says: "Whatever else this document leaves obscure, or does its best to obscure, this at least it makes clear: that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is Arminian to the core—that is to say, so far as it is represented by this representative document."

These testimonies as to the unCalvinistic character of the Cumberland Presbyterian Confession are of special interest in view of history that has been made since 1903. Up to that time, in large sections of our country, as in the State in which it has been my lot to labor in the ministry for more than fifty years, the Cumberland and our "old Presbyterian" Churches existed side by side. They, and we, recognized the fact that we did not hold the same beliefs—that our churches were separated by distinct doctrinal lines, marked out in our respective Confessions of Faith. Yet we worked, and preached, and prayed together in Christian fellowship, "agreeing to disagree" in the points which separated us, and "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." But we are now confronted with a changed condition. In the year 1903 the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., adopted a revision of the Confession together with a Declaratory Statement, and two additional chapters. The large and able committee which prepared these, acted under the instruction that "the revision should in no way impair the integrity of the system of doctrine set forth in the Confession, and taught in the Holy Scriptures."

I am one of those who believe that the committee kept within the bounds assigned. While I must say, in candor, that I do not think the revision was needed or helpful, yet I agree with those who have contended that it did not materially "impair the integrity of the system of doctrine set forth in the Confession."

But later developments have given special interest to this revision. In the year of its adoption, 1903, negotiations were set on foot looking to a union of the U. S. A. Church with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. After full consideration, and observance of all the required preliminaries, the union was effected on a basis mutually agreed upon, and in 1906 the two assemblies formally announced the consummation.

This union was effected on "the doctrinal basis of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., as revised in 1903, and of its other doctrinal and ecclesiastical standards," with acknowledgment of the Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

A series of Concurrent Resolutions were also adopted, in the first of which it was declared that "in adopting the Confession, as revised in 1903, it is mutually recognized that such agreement now exists between the systems of doctrine contained in the Confessions of the two churches as to warrant this union—a union honoring alike to both." It was also recognized that liberty of belief exists by virtue of the Declaratory Statement, which is part of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and which states that the ordination vows of ministers, elders, and deacons requires the reception and adoption of the Confession only as containing the system of

doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. This liberty is specifically secured by the Declaratory Statement as to Chap. III, and Chap. X, Sec. 3, of the Confession. It was also recognized that the doctrinal deliverance contained in the Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith, adopted by the General Assembly, U. S. A., in 1902, reveals a doctrinal agreement favorable to reunion."

In a final deliverance by the assembly in 1906, after reciting the language concerning liberty of subscription, it is asserted that "inasmuch as the two assemblies meeting in 1904 did declare that there was then a sufficient agreement in the systems of doctrine contained in the Confessions of the two churches to warrant the union of the churches, therefore the change of doctrinal Standards resulting from the union involves no change of belief on the part of any who were ministers, ruling elders, or deacons in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church."

I have adduced this record because in treating the subject assigned me I have felt obligated to note the historical facts recited. I feel that it is a delicate task to deal with these matters of such recent date, and in which the parties are contemporary and fellow-laborers with ourselves. The facts involved are these:

(a) The Cumberland Confession, in the judgment of men who accept it and of others, is not Calvinistic.

(b.) The revision by the U. S. A. Presbyterian Church, it was claimed, did not impair the integrity of their system of doctrine;

(c.) Yet, that church and the Cumberland concurred in a declaration that between the two churches such agreement *now* exists as to warrant a union.

(d.) When the union had been effected the Assembly declared that it involved no change of belief on the part of Cumberland Presbyterian ministers, elders, and deacons, and this implies, of course, the liberty to teach and preach the doctrines of the Cumberland Presbyterian Confession, as heretofore.

We are now confronted by this condition: A great number of ministers and churches have been suddenly transformed from Cumberland Presbyterians to U. S. A. Presbyterians; adopting the Westminster Confession, but at liberty to hold and disseminate the teachings of the Confession to which they had formerly subscribed.

It is not my purpose or desire to criticize unkindly the action of the U. S. A. Presbyterian Church in receiving those other brethren into their fold on the basis on which the union was effected, or to discuss the concessions they found themselves willing to make. They had a right to judge of the propriety of the course they thought it best to pursue, and to put their estimate on the Cumberland Standards and to judge of their conformity to their own.

Yet I feel warranted in saying that in my humble judgment, in this recent transaction with the accompanying deliverances, there is one of the most serious and far-reaching modifications of the Calvinistic system of doctrine of which history takes account.

For the people, and the ministry, and the splendid work of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., we of the Southern Church have no feeling other than fraternal and cordial esteem. It is a great body of Presbyterians, the largest in the world. Among its trusted leaders there are many men whom we delight to honor.

Dr. Patton and Dr. Warfield are great defenders of the faith, and we count their names worthy to be "writ large" in the same column with those of our own illustrious Thornwell and our colossal Dabney. On this occasion another of their distinguished men, Dr. H. C. Minton, has been one of our guests of honor, and he has favored us with an address which in its grasp of a great theme, displayed the hand of a master; in language and style it was as elegant as Macaulay's, and in delivery superbly eloquent. It is worthy of an honored place among the classic gems of Calvinistic literature.

In speaking of the course pursued by the great Church in which these honored brethren are standard bearers, if I have "nothing extenuated" in the recital of historic facts, I am unconscious of having "set down aught in malice."

And now, Moderator, and brethren, I thank you for the patient attention you have given to this long address. I can only plead in apology for its length that the subject assigned me was exceeding large. It is no light requirement to trace the course of theological thought through a period of four hundred years. At last, my task, however imperfectly, is done.

This Assembly, notable by reason of the Calvin celebration, is nearing its closing session. I trust that we may go hence with hearts inspired by a larger reverence for the great man whose character and work have been kept before us during these busy sessions, and that we will hold with a grip that knows no weakening, the System of doctrine contained in that old Confession which, in these days of change, our Church retains without a revision of its statements or

modification of its articles of faith. In no spirit of vain-glory we may assert the claim that this Confessional System of doctrine best agrees with the teachings of Scripture, the dictates of reason, the testimony of consciousness, and the facts of history. It solves more questions, it involves fewer difficulties it gives more solid ground for faith and hope, and it more exalts and glorifies God, than any doctrine which contradicts it. It is the doctrine emblazoned on the banner that has been borne in the forefront of God's Sacramental host in the days of the Church's most glorious history; it has ever strengthened the missionary and sustained the martyr; it has made strong the hands of God's battling heroes and inspired with hope the hearts of His suffering saints.

This doctrinal banner will be the rallying center for an ever-increasing number of the soldiers of the cross, and the song of which it has been the sentiment, will be sung, although mid toils and tears, until the song and the singers become a part of the worship and the worshippers when the host of the redeemed shall, with the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, sing:

Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!