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## Contributors and Correspondents

[For the Presbyterian.]

### HISTORY OF THOMAS AQUINAS.

BY T. T. J.

As his active life was now over, it might be well to glance over what he had accomplished during his short but brilliant career. To give an extensive account of all that his herculean mind had achieved, would swell this brief history of his life into an immense volume, with but little to interest and still less to profit the many who may read this paper. However, a few remarks on this subject may not be out of place.

What his mind had grasped, his tongue proclaimed, and his pen recorded it truly wonderful. His genius was gifted, his erudition immense, and his thinking acute and profound. His piety was deep and genuine, and his preaching exceedingly popular. He declared that a preacher of the Divine Word should be well instructed in the Holy Scriptures, and admitted that very few of the clergy made themselves acquainted with them. This very fact, he said, proved the necessity of mendicant friars and others, itinerating, and having entrusted to them the duties of preaching and pastoral work. He always took the greatest pains to preach in a plain and simple style in the Italian language, and to abstain whilst preaching from all matters which would tend to the edification of the common people, by whom he was listened to with the greatest interest and reverence.

Here lies the power of preaching as it gushes forth warm and fresh from blood-bought and love-kindled hearts, Thomas was a great admirer and firm disciple of Augustine, but the mystical ideas drawn from the writings of Aristotle gave a vagueness to many of his most laboured efforts.

Seventeen folio volumes are required to contain what he has written. A great deal of this is philosophical investigations, mystical and unreal, so that Fontenelle has remarked:—"In another age, and under other circumstances, Thomas Aquinas would have been a Descartes." He wrote numerous treatises in which one can see the acuteness of his mind displayed, and some of that bigoted polemical spirit which swayed the church during his day.

Besides these, he wrote voluminous observations on various books of the Old and New Testaments, and numerous investigations into many theological, metaphysical, and moral questions which agitated the thinking mind of his time.

The most important of his writings, however, are his Commentaries on Aristotle's Logic, and the Summa Theologie. The latter is the most momentous of them all. Much valuable information can be eliminated from the mass of speculative matter in which the work abounds. Theologians have used many of its subtle distinctions, and ingenious arguments on different occasions to defend their own peculiar doctrines. In this way, if in no other, it has been important in giving the precise controversial sense of theological terms.

Its three divisions are briefly these:—*First*, Natural; *second*, Moral; and *third*, Sacramental.

All these works were studied at the time they were written, with great interest and care, but now they are only in possession of a few who seldom care to read them. The practical benefits that have been derived from them are not of great importance, either as respects the present welfare or future prospects of mankind; whereas, much harm has been done by the speculative vagaries and subtle theories which are so skillfully interwoven with the good and true. But to return to his history.

It would seem as if he had a presentiment of his death about this time, for he not only gave up his lectures, but laid aside all his studies and literary labors on the sixth of December, 1273, and neither dictated nor wrote from that date until a few days before his death. He looked upon contemplation as the supreme end, and the highest good for the spiritual nature of man to be engaged in. Either to contemplate God as mediately revealed through the works of creation and providence, or immediately by the intuitive ideas we have of God within us, and this exercise of the soul he now enjoyed when not interrupted by secular or ecclesiastical affairs.

But disease was making rapid inroads upon his massive frame, and, although his physical endowments had originally been excellent, his constitution seems gradually to have been broken down by over study, as well as the non-observance of those rules of health which are so necessary for one of sedentary habits.

While the religious world of all ages cannot but regret that one so young and so gifted should have so soon succumbed before the rude blast of life, it is there not some degree of blame attached to him, and those like him, who have paid no attention to their health, but have planted along with the seeds of knowledge the germs of future disease, which will render their lives full of suffering and less successful, or will cut them off whilst their heads are still crowned with the glory of youth?

It so happened, about this time, that both civil and religious troubles were beginning to engage the attention of the church. Pope Gregory X., as soon as he was consecrated to the papal chair, appointed the fourteenth general council to be held at Lyons, on the first day of May, 1274, for the purpose of discussing the establishment of the papal power once more in the East; the best way of uniting the Latin and Greek Churches, and of repelling the Saracens, who were continually invading the frontiers of the empire.

In the meantime he sent a letter to Thomas asking him to be present, and prepared to defend the doctrines of the

Romish Church against those of the Grecian, for a troublous time was expected, since both the ambassadors of the Emperor—Michael Palologus, and the prelates of the Greek Church—would be there. Though far from being well, Thomas felt it to be his duty to attend, and began his journey from Naples to Rome about the end of January, 1274, but never reached his destination. He took Father Reynolds, of Piperno, his confessor, with him, because his absent-mindedness had increased to such an extent that he oftentimes neglected the most common physical rules of life, and needed the constant presence of some friend to remind and assist him.

On his way he called to see his niece, Francisca of Aquino, and Countess of Ocean, but while there his disorder increased in an alarming degree, attended with the loss of his appetite.

Recovering, however, after a few days, he once more proceeded on his journey to Rome, but the fever again returned, so that he was obliged to seek shelter and rest in Fossa Nuova, the famous abbey of the Cistercians in Terraona.

The site of this abbey was formerly the *Appli Forum*, mentioned in Acts xxviii. 16, where the Apostle Paul once sought rest and refreshment on his way to Rome, and where Thomas now sought the same with medical skill to restore his shattered frame. When he entered the cloister of the abbot, he repeated these beautiful and appropriate words:—"This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it," (Ps. cxxxii. 14). He never lived to leave it.

There is a supposition that he was poisoned by an anathema of his sovereign, Charles of Sicily, founded, no doubt, on the renunciation he made of public affairs, and the rejection of the pension given him by that monarch.

Of this, however, we have no trustworthy evidence.

For a month Thomas lay ill in that apartment, attended by the monks with the tenderest and most assiduous care, and oftentimes he astonished them by his patient, humble, and devout spirit in the midst of so much suffering. As he saw his end approaching, he prepared for its coming, and his longings for death increased in proportion as he felt the realization of all his desires was at hand. He was continually sighing for that glorious day to dawn upon his enraptured soul when he would enter into the joy of his Lord. "Then shall I truly live, when I shall be quite filled with you alone and your love; now I am a burden to myself, because I am not entirely full of you." While thus lying on his death-bed, he was requested by the monks to dictate to them an exposition of the Songs of Solomon, which he did with his dying strength; and, having accomplished it, he begged them to leave him alone with his God during the few precious moments he had to live.

He made a full confession of all his past life to his intimate friend and confessor, Father Reynolds, and said shortly before his death that "he thanked God for having prevented him by His grace, always conducting him as it were, by His hand and preserving him from any known sin that would destroy charity in his soul," adding that he was indebted purely to God's mercy for his preservation from any sin he might have committed.

Growing weaker, he was heard to exclaim:—"Soon, soon will the God of all comfort complete His mercies in me, and fill all my desires. I shall shortly be satisfied in Him, and drink of the torrents of His delights; be inebriated from the abundance of His house, and in Him, who is the source of life, I shall behold the true light."

Looking around him, he saw his friends deeply affected, and seeking to comfort them, he said:—"Death is my gain and joy."

His confessor said that he had hoped to see him at the council of Lyons, victorious over the Greek schismatics, and elevated to some honourable position in the church wherein he might be of great profit and do signal service for the church. Thomas replied:—"I have begged of God as the greatest favor to die a simple religious man, and now I thank Him for it. It is a greater benefit than He has granted to many of His holy servants, that He is pleased to call me out of this world so early to enter into His joy. Wherefore grieve not for me who are overwhelmed with joy."

After he had thanked all the monks for their kindness and care, one of them asked him how he might lead a faithful life to the glory of God's grace.

The words of his answer were the last he addressed to man:—"Be assured that he who shall always walk faithfully in His presence, always ready to give Him an account of his actions, shall never be separated from Him by consenting to sin."

After this he lived in communion with his God till his happy release, and early on the morning of the seventh of March, 1274, breathed his last in the fiftieth year of his age.

"I would not live away; no welcome the tomb, Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom; There, sweet be my rest, till He bid me arise, To nail Him in triumph descending the skies. Who, who would live away? away from his God, Away from your heaven, that blessed abode, Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains, And the moon of glory eternally reigns. Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet, Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet; While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll, And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."  
—Muhlenberg.

The statistics of the Calvinistic Methodist denomination for the past year, presented at the General Assembly at Swansea, show an increase of five thousand one hundred and sixty-seven in the number of communicants during the year, and of £8,100 in the amount of the collections.

## IMPORTANT MINISTERIAL CONVENTION.

### REPORT OF THE SPEECHES.

Knoxville, 1st Sept., 1876—which day and place a meeting of Presbyterian Ministers was held in response to the following "CALL FOR A CONVENTION."

"To all whom it may concern."

DEAR BRETHREN,—The undersigned make the following declarations:—

1st. That a well paid Minister is indispensable to the life and progress of the Church.

2nd. That ministers receiving only six hundred dollars per annum as stipend, in these days, and in the Presbyterian Church, is an ill-paid ministry.

3rd. That for the sake of the Church, and for the sake of themselves, it is time that the sufferers should confer on the subject of the best method to remove the evil from which they are suffering.

In view of the truths contained in the above declaration, the undersigned hereby invite all ministers of "The Presbyterian Church in Canada," whose stipend is \$600 per annum and under, with or without manse, to form themselves into a Convention, to consider the best method to secure an increase of their annual stipends. Convention to meet at Knoxville, on the 1st September, 1876.

We are your obedient servants, T. UNDERWOOD, P. LACKAY, J. LOCKMAN.

The Rev. Mr. Underwood, whose name was first signed to the call, was appointed Chairman, and Mr. Lackay, Secretary.

The meeting heartily sustained the action of those who had called the Convention.

On the question being raised, it was eventually agreed to conduct the business with open doors; but that reporters be requested to withhold from publication such statements of modes and methods adopted "to make ends meet," as might be unpleasant to the feelings of sensitive wives and daughters.

It was further agreed that the law usual in Conventions—limiting the speakers to one address on each motion—be not enforced.

The Committee appointed for the purpose reported, that between 180 and 200 ministers were qualified to sit and deliberate in the Convention.

At this stage, the Chairman announced that the Convention was prepared to proceed to business.

Mr. Sharpe,—Proposed that there should be a general "strike" for a higher salary. He thought the congregations would not close the doors. He held that it was owing to inconsiderateness on the part of many congregations that salaries were so low and that the adoption of the plan proposed would lead to reflection. If some congregations should say "Well, you can go," what then would become of the poor ministers and their families? For every evil there is some remedy. Mr. Sharpe's remedy is that of H. Greely's, under similar circumstances, "Go to the West,"—"Go to the Free Grant Lands of Manitoba."

Mr. Hope,—Thought that it would be a fearful responsibility to take away the Gospel from any now enjoying it, and undoubtedly that would be the effect of Mr. Sharpe's proposition, if it should be adopted by this Convention. They who care for preaching least are they who need it most. More faithful meetings with the people is needed. Fruit will come by and by—not in one day perhaps; for one sowing and another reapeth. All that we can do then is to suffer on. We can still keep body and soul together—not much is needed for that. As a general rule, health is good. Luxuries we are the better without. Domesticities we can dispense with, so long as we have healthy and willing wives and daughters.

Mr. Lockman,—With the proposition for a general strike I cannot coincide. It might be found that we had struck our heads against a post. Faith and patience are very good, but we have exercised these long already. We may have ourselves to blame for our present low salaries. But I believe it would be still worse with some of us if we were to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" on the subject of ministerial support. In some localities reproach falls upon us when we advocate the schemes of the Church; much more will it be so when we speak on behalf of ourselves. The schemes of the Church we must, and can, and do, advocate. The most important scheme is our Home Mission scheme. If contributions to this were enlarged we would be greatly benefited. An effort is to be made to raise every minister's salary to \$700 per annum. One hundred dollars more to each of us would be very acceptable. My motion then is, that to faith and patience we unite an agitation for enlarged contributions to the Home Mission scheme of the Church.

Mr. Neeller,—The arguments for striking have been well answered, by previous speakers. The proposition savours too much of the spirit of retaliation; and if adopted, instead of striking at the root of it, would only aggravate the evil. It would certainly awaken many of our congregations from their indifference on this vital question. But what is the use proposing what we cannot carry out? Physically we cannot strike, morally we cannot. Pecuniary circumstances forbid, conscience for bids. Away with the idea of fleeing from the post of duty! Whatever be the character of the consciences of our people, we must have consciences void of offence toward God and man. "Better bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of." Faith and patience are not yet exhausted. An agitation for increased contributions to the Home Mission scheme is not likely to result in much, in the present spirit of the Church. What good will it do to us personally, supposing those contributions are to be greatly enlarged? Our monies will not be given back to us. Why should we with \$600 ask our people to help to raise to \$800 the salaries of others, whose expenses are not on the whole greater than our own. It is time that our city churches, and pastors were delivered from the delusion, under which they have been so long lying, that a much less salary will suffice in the country, than in the town or city. Granted—that house-rents in the latter are higher; that fuel is higher; but what are these when contrasted with expenses to us of which the ministers of the city know nothing? What is it worth to a man not to be under the necessity of keeping his own horse and carriage year after year? What is it worth to a minister not to be under the necessity of sending his children to a distant town for a little better education than the common school will afford? And why should not the sons and daughters of country pastors have facilities for a higher education too? They are as capable of receiving it as the children of city pastors are; and their fathers and mothers are just as ambitious on their behalf. These claims, however, have never been recognized, by church at large, or Home Mission Committee either; and until this is done, no good to us will arise from an increase in the Home Mission Fund.

Mr. Harper,—I believe that not even an approach to the solution of the difficulty has as yet been made. Supposing the funds for Home Mission purposes are greatly increased, we who are already settled will not be benefited. The Home Mission Committee have emphatically said that they will not place weak congregations with pastors on a similar footing with those receiving pastors. We ask them on what principle the difference is made? but they are silent. A former speaker has said they will not give us interest in our own funds; but more than that they are taxing our people again, to enable them to keep their *gratuitous* promise, to supplement other minister's salaries up to \$700. If we do not respond of course we will be branded as unfaithful, dishonest and disloyal to the Church. I am verily of opinion that some will risk the brand. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that our emancipation will take place only when the Assembly will consent to the establishing of a Sustentation Fund for the whole Church. For this I think we should agitate. I move to that effect.

Mr. Whately,—I fully sympathize with the remarks of the last speaker. It is sad to think that the ministers of weak congregations have so little sympathy from the Church at large, seeing that they are the great burden-bearers of the Church. It will be new to some, but still it is true, that the larger the congregation the less the anxiety, the less the labour, the less the persecution experienced by the ministers. We will no doubt at once be met with the reply "You know nothing about it." Well we will quote from one who does—one who has tried both sides of the case. "In beautiful Belleville on the banks of the Passaic, where I began my Christian ministry, it seemed as if all the work came down on my young shoulders. Going to the west the field was larger, and the care less. Going to Philadelphia the field was still larger, and the care still less. And standing to-day as I do among hundreds of warm personal friends, whose hands, and feet, and hearts, are all willing to help, I have less anxiety than I ever had." So says Dr. Talmage in his sixth anniversary sermon to his congregation in Brooklyn. Dr. Talmage admits that disturbers of the peace have a fair field in a small congregation, for he says in the same sermon:—"This congregation is now so large that if a man wants to make trouble, such a small proportion hear of it, that he soon gives up the undertaking as a dead failure." For whom then ought the best provision to be made? Surely for those who have the most to do, and the most to suffer. But we have never asked a distinction to be made in our favour. We only want to be put on an equality with others. This can best be done by means of a Sustentation Fund. In this way the Church will practically endorse her own principles of ministerial purity, and of congregational affiliation. Individual pastoral charges can supplement the sum received from the fund to whatever extent they please. For this the Church shall not be responsible.

Mr. Prince,—A general Sustentation Fund would certainly remove not a few of the evils under which we are lying. The small salaries are not the great evil. The necessity for frequent changes, and the odium to the ministers in connexion with

them, would not be experienced. In nine cases out of ten the pastoral relationship would be preserved but for arrears of stipend in the congregation. These may accrue from many causes, with which the pastor has no culpable connexion. If only three or four of the good families in a congregation withdraw, upon whatever pretence, arrears necessarily follow; for those who remain cannot supply the deficiency caused by those who have withdrawn. Many congregations have the idea that it is no part of their duty to make up the poor rents or subscriptions of others; and that all they have to do is to make good their own personal engagements. A minister, with a small salary, under these circumstances must go. A General Sustentation Fund would preserve the relationship.

Mr. Black,—The last speaker has given some reasons for the accumulation of arrears in a congregation. He might have mentioned a great many more. What would you think of this case if it should turn out that it has really occurred? A country minister with a small salary—perhaps not six hundred—with a good sized family too, has the misfortune to lose his horse. He has two stations some eight or ten miles distant, in each of which he has agreed to preach every Sabbath. Without a horse he cannot fulfil his contract with the people. He has not means to provide another. He cannot walk the distance between the Churches, and preach in each on the same day. He therefore announces that he will hold a service at each station on the alternate Sabbaths; and that he will walk the distance between during the week. For six months this arrangement continues. At the end of this period a half year's stipend is due, as the minister supposes. The Treasurer presents him with half the sum anticipated. On asking for an explanation he is told that as the congregation had been receiving only half supply, they considered themselves responsible for only half the promised salary.

Mr. Spencer,—Will the gentleman who has just set down be kind enough to say whether his case is a real or imaginary one?

Mr. Black,—Cannot answer the question. If I should I might have to answer others. I will say this however, that the thing did not occur with me personally, for I never lost a horse.

Mr. Knight,—Well, Mr. Chairman, presuming that that story of Mr. Black's is a fact and not a fiction, then, I have to ask, what was the congregation to do? They had contracted with the minister for every day supply. If he failed to keep his part of the contract, why should the congregation be bound to fulfil theirs? Looking at the matter from a commercial point of view we cannot condemn them. Of course it would have been better policy to have made good the loss to the minister; but the question still arises: were they bound to do so?

Dr. Fairbairne,—I think the congregation was morally bound to make up the loss to the minister. He did fulfil his part of the contract. He preached to the people to the extent that God enabled him. The people pledged themselves to support the minister to the extent of their ability. Did they do so when they kept back that portion of salary which they were well able to pay formerly? The question has been asked "Were the congregation bound to provide a horse?" To this I say, yes. Every congregation should, and all appendages too. Just think of a community of rich farmers giving a promise of \$60 per annum to a minister and expecting him to invest in advance, the one-half of this in procuring the means of reaching his two or three preaching places on the Sabbath! Even in a worldly point of view is this a fair transaction? Sometimes horses and vehicles are provided by the people. We have read flaming reports of such deeds, under the head of "*Handsome presents*," or "*Splendid display of liberality*," or some such caption. Great present, indeed! Splendid display of liberality for the farmer to give his servant the hoe, and the spade, and the plough, wherewith to cultivate his fields, or the merchant to give his clerk the pens, the ink, and the books, wherewith he is to keep his accounts! I am filled with loathing of all such proceedings of all such items of ecclesiastical intelligence.

The Chairman,—May I ask, are we not departing from our proper business? (Hear, hear.) The subject, as I understand it, is "The remedy for small salaries." Only for the affecting story of Mr. Black this divergence would not have taken place. It is time now, I think, that we should return to our point of departure. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Dunn,—I cannot see any advantage connected with a General Sustentation Fund which does not equally belong to our present Supplemental Fund. Supposing we abandon our present system and attempt a General Fund, I can easily see that our case may be worse. Some congregations now think they are contributing more than their share; most gladly would they avail themselves of the very first opportunity to throw off the yoke and fix it upon the neck of some one else. How many are there who will not help themselves, provided they can get others to work for them? It is said that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." This is a maxim worth thinking of at this present juncture. There is a story too, of which I would remind the meeting, the story of the dog crossing the stream with the beef in his mouth. Then again, if we have a few lazy ministers now, how many might we have, should the relationship between minister and people become a less dependent one? Until such time as a remedy can be devised for these drawbacks, I cannot agree to any change. At present, therefore, I am in favour of the motion for effort to increase contributions to the Home Mission Fund.

Mr. Harper,—I am glad of the remarks of the last speaker. They give us the opportunity of getting at the marrow of the matter under discussion. His objection to

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